Ancient Greek ekphrasis: Between description and narration
Koopman, N.

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7.1 Introduction

The last ekphrasis of this study is found in Moschus’ *Europa*, a small-scale epic poem of 166 lines, commonly dated to the middle of the second century BC. The poem is named after its heroine, Europa, and relates her abduction and seduction by Zeus. While Europa and her companions are on their way to the meadows by the sea to gather flowers, the narrator meticulously describes the basket that Europa is carrying (37-62). This basket contains three images, all depicting a scene from the Io myth.

As in the case of the other ekphraseis, scholars have mainly focused on the meaning of the ekphrasis within the poem as a whole. It is generally assigned a proleptic function: the Io myth provides a number of parallels for what will happen to Europa. The ekphrasis has also been assigned a metapoetical value. The narrativity and descriptivity of the ekphrasis have received little attention; this chapter does therefore not start with a state of the art. From the scattered remarks by various scholars, it would seem that the ekphrasis is both narrative and descriptive. The three

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2 E.g. Harrison 2001: 84: “[the basket] depicts Io, Europa’s ancestor, whose story provides many parallels for what is about to happen to her descendant (...). Both Io and Europa are virgins raped by the same god, Zeus, and in both stories love is the motive for a bovine transformation of beloved (Io) or lover (Zeus); Io crosses the sea from Europa to Asia, Europa from Asia (Phoenicia) to Europa; both stories end with a return to human form; and both are implicitly aetiological. None of these resemblances would have occurred to Europa at the narrative time in the poem, since at that point she is peacefully gathering flowers in a meadow, and nothing significant has happened; this produces dramatic irony and pathos (...) Thus the proleptic ekphrasis here functions as a device for raising sympathy with a character as well as informing the reader of multiple future developments in the plot”; the idea that the ekphrasis foreshadows the future is already found in Friedländer 1912: 15. Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004: 223 draw attention to the “paraded avoidance” of exact parallelism between both stories.


4 For example, Zanker 1987: 93 writes that “[the basket description (...) deals with scenes which are connected in that they represent three moments of the same myth. The description thus has a unity (...). This unity extends to an internal connection between the inset and its frame. The
images which depict different moments from the same myth seem to be regarded as a narrative element.\(^5\)

In this chapter, the narrativity and descriptivity of the ekphrasis will be investigated (section 7.2). As in the other chapters, a distinction is made between text and image. After the conclusion (section 7.3), the chapter ends with a coda that deals with the visualization of the basket (section 7.4).

### 7.2.1 Europa's Basket: Its Descriptivity and Narrativity. Text and Translation\(^6\)

> οἱ δὲ οἱ ἀργά φάνην ἔχον β' ἐν χερσίν ἐκάστην
> ἀνδράκον τάρατον· ποτὶ δὲ λειμώνας ἔβαλεν
> ἀγχυλόνως, ἐδί τε αἰέν ὁμιλαθὼν ἕγερθον
> τερπόμεναι βοῶθε τε φυῇ καὶ χόματος ἄρχῃ.
> αὐτὴ δὲ χρύσεν τάρατον φέρεν Εὐρώπεια
> θητὸν, μέγα οὐκ ὁμιλία, μέγαν πόλιν Ἑραίστοιο,
> ἐν Λυβίᾳ πέρα δώρον, δτ' ἐς λέχος Ἐννοσιγαίου
> [impf.]
> [impf.]
> [aor.]
> θητὸν, μέγα νῦν ὁμιλία, μέγαν πόλιν Ἑραίστοιο,
> ἐν Λυβίᾳ πέρα δώρον, δτ' ἐς λέχος Ἐννοσιγαίου

\(^{35}\)

> ἢ τέ οἱ αἵματος ἔσκεν· ἀνύμφῳ δ' Ἑὐρωπεί
> μὴν αἰὲν ἤγερθεν ἀγχιάλους, ὅθι τ' αἰὲν ἠγερέθον
> ῥοδέῃ τε φυῇ καὶ κύματος ἠχῇ.
> αὐτὴ δὲ χρύσεν τάρατον φέρεν Εὐρώπεια
> θητὸν, μέγα οὐκ ὁμιλία, μέγαν πόλιν Ἑραίστοιο,
> ἐν Λυβίᾳ πέρα δώρον, δτ' ἐς λέχος Ἐννοσιγαίου

\(^{40}\)

> [aor.]
> [impf.]
> [impf.]
> plupf.
> plupf.

\(^{45}\)

> ἀνύμφῳ δ' Ἑὐρωπεί
description forms a narrative illustrating Zeus' desires, Hera's thwarted attempts at hindering their fulfilment and his leniency once he has accomplished his aim" (emphasis mine); Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004: 222 state that “Europa's basket is decorated with three scenes which depict moments from the myth of Io (…). The ekphrasis itself has now become a narrative, and a narrative quite different from that of the framing poem, which is focused on one specific incident (the abduction of Europa) (…)”; later on they note that “[t]he scenes of Io as a cow and of Zeus' impregnation are described in the chronological sequence of the myth, and therefore imply or create a narrative” (emphasis mine).

\(^{5}\) See also Schmale 2004: 124-5 (“[e]ine Neuheit besteht darin, dass verschiedene Szenen aus demselben Mythos abgebildet sind, also eine kleine Bildergeschichte vorliegt, denn mit dem zweiten Bild schreitet das zeitliche Geschehen voran, es entsteht sukzessive Handlung, obwohl die Bilder selbst als Tableaux beschrieben sind”), and Petrain 2006: 251-4 (who I discuss below in 7.2.5, 4).

\(^{6}\) Text by Bühler; translation based on Gow 1953: 129-30.
And quickly they came to her, each with a basket for flowers in her hand; and to the meadows in the vicinity of the sea they went, where they were always gathering in groups, delighting in the roses that grew there and the murmur of the waves. (37) Europa herself was carrying a golden basket, wondrous, a great marvel, a great work of Hephaestus, which he had given to Libya as a gift, when she went to the Earthshaker’s bed; and she had given it to the very beautiful Telephaassa, who was of her blood; and to the maid Europa her mother Telephaassa gave that renowned gift. On it had been wrought many gleaming intricate motifs; (44) on it had been wrought of gold Inachus’ daughter Io, still a heifer, not having the shape of a woman; and wandering in a mad frenzy she was going over the briny paths with her feet, looking like one who was swimming; and the sea was made of dark-blue enamel. High on the brow of two coasts people were standing, together, and they were gazing at the seafaring cow with wonder. (50) And on it was Zeus, the son of Cronos, while lightly touching with his hands the heifer, child of Inachus, whom by the seven-mouthed Nile he was changing back from a cow with beautiful horns into a woman; the stream of the Nile was silver, and she, the heifer, [was] bronze, and Zeus himself had been wrought of gold. (55) Round about, beneath the rim of the rounded basket, Hermes had been wrought; and nearby him was lying outstretched Argus, endowed with unsleeping eyes; and from his crimson blood was springing up a bird, glorying in the multicoloured hues of its wings; having spread these out like a swift ship it was covering all
around the rim of the golden basket with its wings. Such was the basket of the very beautiful Europa. (63) And when they had come to the flowery meadows, one was delighting in this bloom, one in the other.

7.2.2 Europa’s Basket: Its Descriptivity and Narrativity. Overview of Tenses
In this section, I will establish which discourse modes are found in this passage (33-64). I start with the lines that refer to the images on Europa’s basket (43-62). These lines consist of the descriptive discourse mode: only pluperfects and imperfects are found. Progression is spatial and/or enumerative. The surrounding lines (33-8 and 63-4) feature, of course, the diegetic discourse mode. Lines 33-8 contain one aorist and three imperfects; lines 63-4 feature two imperfects, as well as subordinate temporal clause (ἐπεί…, 63) and a temporal adverb (τότε, 64). Lines 39-42, which start off as a relative clause, also feature the diegetic discourse mode. They form an external analepsis; the aorists are anterior. In sum, the textual organization of the lines that refer to the images is prototypically descriptive. The rest of the passage has a prototypically narrative textual organization.

7.2.3 Europa’s Basket: Its Descriptivity and Narrativity. Preliminaries
The last ekphrasis of this study concerns an object that is owned by a woman. The basket is a container for flowers (ἀνθοδόκον τάλαρον, 34). There could be no greater difference with the shield of Achilles, a martial object of immense size, which contains a multitude of images. By comparison, Europa’s basket is small. It contains only three images, just as the goatherd’s cup in Theocritus first Idyll.8 Nevertheless, the ekphrasis of the flower basket marks Europa as a heroine9 – but one quite different from Achilles

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7 One could perhaps also argue that lines 63-4 contain the descriptive discourse mode. In the lines that follow (64-71), only imperfects occur (ἀπαίνυτο, 66; ἀνάλεσθε, 67; ἔβρεπτον, 69; δέπρεπεν, 71). Hence, one could say that in lines 63-71 the picking of the flowers is “described” (cf. Sistakou 2009: 316, who states that “[t]he gathering of flowers as a time-consuming process is stressed by a series of imperfects tenses and iterative forms (...”). In any way, a scenic effect is created. Cf. further Crump 1931: 51, 70-1 and Schmiel 1981: 270.

8 For a discussion of the similarities and differences between the basket and the cup, see Manakidou 1993: 195-8.

9 Merriam 2001: 66: “[t]he description of Europa’s flower basket (...) also emphasizes Europa’s position as a singular character and the hero of the poem. That an article so closely related to her natural attributes is so thoroughly described clearly identifies Europa as a hero of potentially epic proportions”; cf. also Hunter 2004: 96-7.
or Heracles. Rather than going off to do battle, Europa is armed to pick flowers with her companions. This is, however, a pastime that is not wholly devoid of danger: if Europa had read the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, she would have known that women may be abducted while picking flowers.

The ekphrasis of Europa’s basket is focalized by the primary narrator. As in the other ekphraseis of this study, there is no indication that a character looks at the images on the object. Ekphraseis are usually meant for the primary narratee only (the exception being the goatherd’s cup). In the Europa, the narrator uses this convention to create dramatic irony: Europa does not pay attention to what is depicted on the basket, and even if she had done so would have failed to understand its relevance for her own fate. The external narratee, on the other hand, will immediately understand the relevance of the images for Europa’s situation.

This obvious correspondence between ekphrasis and main story is regarded by Friedländer as an important innovation in the technique of ekphrasis. He also regards the fact that the ekphrasis consists of three moments taken from the same myth as a novel element. It should be noted, however, that the Homeric shield ekphrasis also contains stories that are depicted in more than one image (the city at war in 18.509-40;..."

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For this intertext, see e.g. Campbell 1991: 71; Hopkinson 1988: 205 writes that “[y]oung girls who pluck flowers do so at their own risk, as the sequel shows. Europa stands in a long line of literary heroines who are themselves plucked in flower-meadows by gods”. For the so-called ‘meadow of love’ motif, see Bremer 1975: 268-74.

However, Fusillo 1983: 94, note 44 argues that such an obvious connection is already present in the ekphrasis of Jason’s cloak: “riguardo al periodo alessandrino non condivido che sia stato Mosco il primo a stabilire un nesso fra la scene descritta e il racconto centrale, bens Apollonio: la pertinenza narrativa dell’ekphrasis apolloniana è innegabile almeno per il riquadro centrale di Pelope e Ipomodia, per Afrodische che si specchia nello scudo e per l’ultima scene di Frisso”.

the attack on the cattle in 18.573-86). For example, the city at war consists of six different moments in time. The subject matter of these stories is not mythical, however. The novel element, then, is not the different moments of time, but the mythical subject matter that is divided into three different images.

7.2.4 Europa’s Basket: Its Descriptivity and Narrativity. The Lines surrounding the Images (37-42 and 62)
The main theme of the ekphrasis is found at the beginning, in lines 37-8: αὐτὴ δὲ χρύσεον τάλαρον φέρεν Εὐρώπεια / θηητόν, μέγα θαῦμα, μέγαν πόνον Ἡφαίστοιο, “Europa herself was carrying a golden basket, wondrous, a great marvel, a great work of Hephaestus”. The imperfect φέρεν (37) makes clear that the basket is described while Europa is walking to the meadow. Indeed, in line 63 she and her companions have reached the meadows. Thus, the narrator suggests that fabula time moves on while the basket is described.14

The ekphrasis has a clear structure, which is marked by ring composition.15 It is framed by an outer ring, which encloses four consecutive smaller rings. This can be schematized as follows:

A αὐτὴ δὲ χρύσεον τάλαρον φέρεν Εὐρώπεια (37)
B ὃν Λιβύῃ πόρε δώρον, δέ γε λέχος Ἑννοσιγαίου (39)
B’ μήτηρ Τηλεφάασσα περικλυτὸν δώρον (42)
C ἐν μὲν ἔην χρυσοῖο τετυγμένη Ἰναχὶς Ἰὼ (44)
C’ φῶτες ἀολήδην, θηεῦντο δὲ ποντοπόρον βοῦν (49)
D ἐν δ’ ἦν Ζεὺς Κρονίδης ἐπαφώμενος ἠρέμα χερὶ (50)
D’ χαλκείη, χρυσοῦ δὲ τετυγμένος αὐτὸς ἔην Ζεύς (54)
E ὧμωξ δὲ δινήντος ὑπὸ στεφάνην ταλάροιο (55)
E’ χρυσείου ταλάροιο περίσσεπε χείλεα ταρσοῖς (61)
A’ τοῖος ἔην τάλαρος περικαλλέος Εὐρωπείης (62)

14 This technique is already found in Homer, for which see e.g. Od. 13.95 (discussed in section 2.3.2). Sistakou 2009: 315 writes that “[n]arrative time comes to a standstill for almost 30 verses, dedicated to the detailed description of the basket (37-62)”; this is not wholly correct.
The ekphrasis is marked off from the surrounding lines by an introductory and a closing line (37; 62). It can be further divided into two parts (37-42 and 43-62). The first part may itself be divided into two sections. The first section (37-8) contains an introductory line (37), and names the quality of the work and its maker (38). The second section (39-42) relates the lineage of the basket. The second part also contains an introductory line (43), which introduces the images as a whole, as a separate subtheme (δαίδαλα πολλά...μαρμαίροντα). The images are described in three separate sections, all introduced by a spatial indicator (ἐν μέν, 44; ἐν δὲ, 50; ἀμφὶ δὲ... ὑπό, 55).

A basket is a novel object for an ekphrasis, but it is not wholly unfamiliar. Both shield ekphraseis do contain images which depict baskets: in Il. 18.567-8, young girls and boys are carrying grapes in wicker baskets (πλεκτοῖς ἐν ταλάροισι φέρον μελιηδέα χαρπόν, 568); in Sc. 293-4 and 296, people are carrying grapes into baskets (οἳ δ' αὖτ' ἐς ταλάρους ἐφόρευν ὑπὸ τρυγητήρων / λευκοὺς καὶ μέλανας βότρυας, 293-4). Europa’s basket is used for a more or less similar purpose, in a more or less similar environment. It is as if the narrator of the Europa has zoomed in on one of the baskets of the ekphrastic tradition. He has taken an everyday object featuring in archaic ekphraseis, and transformed it into an object that is itself worthy of an ekphrasis.

Europa’s basket is also reminiscent of Helen’s wool basket in the Odyssey (4.125, 131-2). Helen’s basket (τάλαρον) has wheels underneath it (ὑπόκυκλον, 131). It is made of silver and it has golden rims (ἀργύρεον, χρυσῷ δ’ ἐπὶ χείλεα κεκράαντο, 132). The basket was also presented to Helen as a gift (ὄπασσεν, 131). The similarities between both baskets must set the narratee thinking about the similarities between their owners. Both Helen and Europa can be regarded as victims of Aphrodite. At the same time, both women seem to have had more than a small share in what happens to them.

Scholars have noted that the use of a golden basket for collecting flowers is not realistic. According to Bühler, “[e]s ist bei M[oschos] mit literarischer Erhöhung zu rechnen”. Hence, the narrator is able to recall Helen’s basket, but also Achilles’ shield, which is made from bronze, tin, gold and silver (Il. 18.474-7; 20.268-72) as well as

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16 I discuss the shape of the τάλαρος in 7.2.5 below.
17 Cf. Dubel 2010: 22: “un humble détail récurrent dans les modèles archaïques est devenu chez Moschos le support même de l’écphrasis”. Likewise, one may wonder whether the goatherd’s cup in Theocritus’ first Idyll – called a δέπας in 55 and 149 – in some way recalls the δέπας μελιηδέου οἴνου of Il. 18.545.
18 Bühler 1960: 87 lists four known examples of metal baskets in ancient Greek literature.
19 Bühler 1960: 87; see also Campbell 1991: 53.
Heracles' shield (Sc. 141-3). Gold, furthermore, characterizes the basket as a precious object; this ekphrasis contains many more references to precious metals. It is fitting that Europa, a princess, carries such a valuable object. Lastly, it should be noted that objects in ekphraseis are often "unrealistic". Narrators of ekphraseis are usually not led by considerations of realism.

In a rising tricolon, the narrator emphasizes the great value of Europa’s basket. It is θητόν, μέγα θαῦμα, μέγαν πόνον Ἡφαίστοιο (38).22 The expression of wonder is common in ekphrasis. The phrase may serve to heighten the credibility of the narrator.23 Thus, it could well be that Europa is carrying a golden basket – it is, after all, a μέγα θαῦμα. At the same time, the line has a comic effect. The repetition of μέγας seems inappropriate for an object that cannot be very large. The line would certainly be fitting for Achilles’ shield, but less so for a flower basket. Hephaestus has, furthermore, made this basket as a gift for a bride of Poseidon. The line, then, does not apply to arms made for a hero, but to a precious trinket made for a woman; this discordance has a humorous effect.24

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21 Cf. note 302 in section 3.5.
22 According to Faber 1998: 55, the phrase μέγαν πόνον Ἡφαίστοιο is here for the first time applied to a wicker basket rather than to a term denoting metal-work. However, it would seem that the basket is wholly made of metal. According to Cusset 2001: 69, “[c]e μέγας πόνος d’Héphaïstos (...) est bien en fait l’image intradiégétique de la narration elle-même qui est aussi le résultat de μέγας πόνος poétique (...)” (emphasis mine).
23 For which see 3.3.3.2, 3.
24 Cf. Merriam 2001: 68, note 25: “[t]he introduction of Hephaestus at this point again suggests Moschus’ humorous exploitation of traditional epic machinery in this poem. Rather than manufacturing weaponry and arms, as is his usual role, Hephaestus is here portrayed as making trinkets to aid the other gods in their seduction of mortal women”. It should be noted that in the Iliad Hephaestus makes trinkets, too. In book 18, when Thetis visits Hephaestus, he tells his wife Charis that after his fall from Olympus he spent nine years crafting trinkets for Eurynome and Thetis (τῇσι παρ’ εἰνάετες χάλκευον δαίδαλα πολλά, / πόρπας τε γναμπτάς δ’ Ἐλλαξας κάλυκας τε καὶ ἐρμουσ / ἐν σπῆι γλαφυρῷ, “for them I made nine years many intricate things, brooches and curved spirals and buds and necklaces within the hollow cave”, 18.400-2). According to Purves 2010: 52, “[t]his image of the craftsman at work on beautiful curved objects in his cave prefigures the description of the Shield [the Homeric shield ekphrasis]. We might imagine Hephaestus in
Lines 39-42 contain a catalogue of previous owners. As in general, the catalogue forms an external analepsis, which starts off as a relative clause. Europa’s basket is the only object in the ekphrases of this study of which the previous owners are mentioned in catalogue form. A striking feature of the catalogue is that all the previous owners of the basket are women. The catalogue thus once more emphasizes the feminine nature of the object, and perhaps also adds to the humour of the passage.

The catalogue has various functions. First, it underscores the precious nature of the basket. Second, it has a proleptic function: Europa will be raped by a god, just as her grandmother Libya. In this light, commentators draw attention to the words ἀνύμφῳ δ’ Eὐρωπηΐ in line 41: Europa is emphatically not yet a bride. Third, Hopkinson has suggested that the catalogue of owners can also be understood metapoetically.

the cave as a prototype for a scene within the ekphrasis; in both cases a figure, surrounded by the ever-flowing Ocean, performs and reperforms a continuously revolving activity.

Such catalogues are also found in the Iliad and the Odyssey. For a discussion of the history of objects in the Iliad and Odyssey, see Minchin 2001: 119-22.

Only the goatherd’s cup has a previous owner (for which see 5.3.4).


It is thus not “a studiedly arid and stiff reflection (the succession of proper names at line-end, 37-41, does nothing to enliven the description) of an Homeric routine (...), as Campbell 1991: 56 contends.

Hopkinson 1988: 206: “[t]hus Europa’s basket belonged to her grandmother Libya, who was raped by a god and gave her name to Libya; and it depicted the rape by a god of her grandmother Io, eponym of Ionia. Europa inherits not only the basket, but also the experiences depicted on it” (emphasis in the original).


Hopkinson 1988: 201: “this stress on lineage and pedigree provides an interesting parallel with the self-conscious literary ancestry of the ekkhrasis itself, which is part of a venerable line stretching back to Homer’s Shield of Achilles at Iliad 18.478-608”.

7.2.5 Europa’s Basket: Its Descriptivity and Narrativity. The Images (43-61)

In line 43, the images are introduced together (ἐν τῷ δαίδαλα πολλά τετεύχατο μαρμαίροντα). The pluperfect τετεύχατο refers to the opus ipsum. The phrase δαίδαλα πολλά, which also introduces the images on Achilles’ shield and Jason’s cloak, is here modified by another adjective, μαρμαίροντα, “gleaming”. This adjective pertains to the shining qualities of the metal images. As in the case of Achilles’ shield, only the last image (55-61) is assigned a specific location, under the (upper) rim (ἀμφὶ…ὑπὸ στεφάνην ταλάροιο, 55). The first two images are simply enumerated (ἐν μέν, 44; ἐν δέ, 50). As in all other ekphraseis, then, the narrator remains vague on the precise lay-out of the object.

Nevertheless, some scholars have assigned the images a specific location on the basket. Before discussing some proposed arrangements, first the shape of the basket itself merits discussion. The basket is called a τάλαρος (37; 61; 62). It has three images depicted on it (ἐν τῷ... τετεύχατο, 43); it is round (δινήεντο) and it has a rim (στεφάνην, 55). For the shape of a τάλαρος, Campbell refers to Gow and Page, who note that a κάλαθος is also called a τάλαρος: “a funnel-shaped basket with a wide mouth tapering down to a base of much smaller diameter”; it was used for various purposes. Gow and Page do not refer to any sources for this statement. Webster notes that what Moschus calls a τάλαρος we should call a κάλαθος. Yet the text offers no indications that this is the case.

As for the position of the images on the cup, the narrator locates the third image under the upper rim. Scholars usually locate the other two images below the third

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32 As Campbell 1991: 59 has noted, in Il. 18.480, the rim of Achilles’ shield is called μαρμαρέην; in 18.617 the armour as a whole is called μαρμαίροντα. The narrator of the Europa has transferred this quality to the images.

33 See e.g. Webster 1964: 154 (“[n]or need we suppose that Moschos worried much about how the three scenes fitted the basket”) and Beckby 1975: 540 (“[d]ie Beschreibung des Körbchens ist nicht immer klar”).

34 Campbell 1991: 53; Gow and Page 1965: 37 (ad καλαθίσκον). Bühler and Hopkinson remain silent on the shape of the basket.

35 The LfgvE translate τάλαρος with “open basket” and note that the handle is not mentioned (s.v. τάλαρος ι). In archaic epic, τάλαροι are used for the gathering of grapes and for the making of cheese (in which case they are made of wicker-work); Helen’s silver basket is used for holding wool.

36 Webster 1964: 154, who continues: “Europa already holds one on an Attic vase of the earliest fifth century, and in Alexandria Demeter’s kalathos was draw by white horses through the city”.

image, opposite each other. This seems the most likely solution. Alternatively, the images could run around three separate bands across the basket, all below each other. In this case, the ekphrasis can be called iconic, in that the ring composition mirrors the way the images are located on the basket. However, one could wonder whether the basket is large enough to accommodate three separate bands with figures. On the other hand, the size of the basket – and the figures – is unknown. Although it has been suggested that the images are located on the inside of the basket, the exterior seems to be the most likely location.

The following three images are depicted on the basket:

1. Io is wandering over the sea in bovine form; people are watching her (44-9)
2. Zeus is changing Io back into a woman (50-4)
3. Hermes, and next to him Argus; from his blood a bird is rising up (55-61)

All images are introduced by a verb that expresses stasis; in the introductory lines, two pluperfects (ἔην…τετυγμένη, 44; ἤσκητο, ἐκτετάνυστο, 56) and one imperfect (ἦν, 50) occur. The narrator thereby makes clear that he is describing static figures.

In the following, the images will first be discussed separately (1-3), then in conjunction (4).

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37 Gow 1927:168: “the description suggests two bands of decoration, the upper with one figure, the lower with one scene, on each side of the vessel. (...) In the lower zone, which occupies the shorter circumference of the vessel, are scenes which must take considerable space, for they include an expanse of sea and the river Nile. It is natural, therefore, to think of the scenes each occupying half the circumference (...); Bühl 1960: 93: "[m]ann kann sich die Verteilung aber kaum anders denken, als daß sich das eine Bild gegenüber dem anderen befand; beide entsprechen sich ja ganz offenkundig"; and Campbell 1991: 53: “each of the lower scenes (44-49; 50-54) contains in addition to figures an area of water: the sea (46/47) matched by the Nile (51/53). So it is natural to assume that each will occupy one half of the shorter circumference and a substantial proportion of the main body; the points of demarcation must be the twin shores (48) flanking the wandering Io” (emphasis mine). It should be noted that the twin shores are a conjecture (δοιοῦ for δοιοί; see further below).

38 Bühl 1960: 93: that the images could be on the outside is regarded as a possibility by von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1906: 229. Könnecke 1914: 550-1 locates the images on the inside of the basket. For a similar discussion regarding the images on the goatherd’s cup, see 5.3.5.

39 In this respect, it is similar to the goatherd's cup (see 5.3.5) and Jason's cloak (see 6.2.5).
1. Io is wandering over the sea in bovine form; people are watching her (44-9)

The text that represents the first image has a prototypically descriptive organization. Textual progression is enumerative; two spatial indicators occur (ἐπὶ, 46; ὑψοῦ ἐπί, 48). Of the six occurring verbs, four designate states (ἔην…τετυγμένη, 44; εἶχε, 45; ἐτέτυκτο, 47; ἔστασαν, 48). Only two imperfects refer to ongoing actions (βαῖνε, 46; ὕθευντο, 49). The following other prototypically descriptive elements are present. Two visual details pertain to the material of which the figures are made (χρυσοῖο, 44; κύανου, 47). Both refer to the opus ipsum. Other details refer to the res ipsae (γυναίην, 45; ἁλμυρά, 46; δοιοῦ, 48; ποντοπόρον, 49). The phrase νηχομένῃ ἰκέλη (47) stresses the fact that the narrator is describing an image.

The image depicts Io passing over the sea in the form of a cow (44-7) and a number of people watching her (48-9). In the text as printed by most editors – among whom Bühler – the number of spectators is unspecified. In fact, line 48 contains two conjectures. The manuscripts read δοιοὶ δ' ἔστασαν ὑψοῦ ἐπ' ὀφρύος αἰγιαλοῖο. Editors emend for the following reasons: 1) δοιοί does not easily combine with ἀολλήδην; 2) with δοιοῦ… αἰγιαλοῖο (“two/twin coasts”), reference is made to the Bosporus with its coasts on both side; the name of the Bosporus was commonly derived from βοὸς πόρος.

40 In line 47, the manuscripts read κυανή or κυανῆ. This reading is defended by Arnott 1971: 154-5 (but cf. the remarks by Campbell 1991: 62).

41 For the meaning of the use of various metals throughout the ekphrasis, see Manakidou 1993: 178-81.

42 Bühler 1960: 97, who speaks of a comparison between what is depicted and reality (“Schwimmen auf dem Bild und Schwimmen in Wirklichkeit”). For such phrases, see also section 4.3.2, 6-9.

43 The reading of the manuscripts is retained by Legrand in the Budé; Manakidou 1993: 175, note 243 argues against emendation of δοιοῦ. Gow’s OCT, Bühler, Campbell and Hopkinson print both emendations.

44 So Campbell 1991: 62-3: the reading δοιοῦ “was prompted by the awkwardness of ‘two men … in a throng/crowd’. (It is hard to believe that Moschus meant ‘two men crowd-wise’, representing a crowd.) One would expect more than the ‘two’ main subjects commonly encountered in the ekphrasis (e.g. ἰ.28.604, [Hes.] Scutum 21, A.R.i.732), the more so as ἁλμυρά can be used of a massed body of spectators (e.g. A.R.iv.1182), while on the shield in ἰ.28.603f. an ὅμιλος is set against two individuals”.

45 Campbell 1991: 63. Gow 1927: 168 further notes that with δοιοῦ, “[t]he scene containing Io will then be flanked with the rising shores of Greece and Egypt respectively, each with its group of
3) ἐπ’ ὀφρύσιν must almost certainly be plural, when ὀφρύος… αἰγιαλοῖο refers to more than one coast; and 4) ἐπ’ ὀφρύσιν is a traditional epic expression.

However, the change from ὀφρύος to ὀφρύσιν is unnecessary, if not unwanted. First of all, the specification of the number of figures is typical for Hellenistic ekphraseis. Furthermore, whereas archaic ekphraseis contain many figures, Hellenistic ekphraseis usually focus on a few individuals – an example being the goatherd’s cup, on which the number of figures depicted in an image is never more than three. Manakidou has noted that by retaining ὀφρύος, the number of figures depicted by the three images is symmetrical: three figures in the first image (Io and two men), two figures in the second (Io and Zeus), and three figures in the third image (Hermes, Argus and the bird). In addition, on such a relatively small object, a large number of spectators seems hard to accommodate. As for ἀολλήδην, I see no reason why this word cannot be combined

people; and the two groups, one on each side of the τάλαρος, will effectively separate the two scenes [images one and two] in this zone of the composition”.

46 Bühler 1960: 99: “[e]ine Herausgeber haben die Änderung ὀφρύος, nicht aber die von ὀφρύσιν angenommen; aber wenn mit αἰγιαλοῖο hier eine Zweizahl gemeint ist, scheint der sg. ὀφρύος sehr schwierig, wenn nicht unmöglich”.

47 Bühler 1960: 98; Campbell 1991: 62, though noting that this emendation “is certainly right”, does not state anything regarding the necessity of this change.

48 This also means that the reading ἐπ’ ὀφρύσιν can be retained. In fact, as editors note, ὑψοῦ ἐπί is usually followed by a genitive (Bühler 1960: 99; Campbell 1991: 62).

49 Campbell’s argument (see note 44 above) that more than “two main subjects” would be expected (by whom?) is odd; he refers, furthermore, to two archaic ekphraseis. As for Jason’s cloak, A.R. 1.752 contains four figures; Campbell could have referred to the Cyclopes (730-4) or the fight between the Teleboae and the sons of Electryon (747-51), the number of which is unspecified. In the latter image, the unspecified number of fighters seems to be an imitation of the shields of Achilles and Heracles.

50 Manakidou 1993: 175, note 243. She also notes that this creates an exact parallel with the goatherd’s cup. Legrand 1927: 146, note 2, on the other hand, sees a parallel between the first and the second image. The two men stand together: “[d]e façon à ne pas tenir plus de place qu’un personnage unique. Ils pouvaient ainsi faire pendant à eux deux à la figure de Zeus; et la symétrie entre les deux scènes représentées subsistait”. This idea derives from Wilamowitz (quoted in note 52 below).

51 Pace Campbell (see note 44), it may well be that these two men represent a crowd.
with two people; LSJ translate with “in a body, together”. Lastly, Bühler notes that δοιός in the singular is nowhere found with the meaning “two, both”. It is thus preferable to retain the reading of the manuscripts; lines 48-9 can be translated as “high on the brow/cliff of the coast two men were standing, next to each other, and they were gazing at the sea-faring cow with wonder.” The image, then, consists of three figures.

The image depicts one moment in time: Io is traversing the sea while two men are watching. Event sequencing is absent, but the image suggests both a previous and a future event. By speaking of Ἰναχὶς Ἰώ (44), the narrator reminds the narratee that Io was a human being before she was turned into a cow. In line 45, the narrator refers to a future event: Io is still a heifer and does not have the shape of a woman (εἰσέτι πάρτις ἐσώσα, φυὴν δ’ οὐκ ἐχε γυναῖκν). The adverb εἰσέτι, in combination with the negation οὐκ, looks forward to a future moment in time, when Europa is no longer a heifer, but a woman again. In the ekphrasis of Jason’s cloak, ἔτι looks forward to a moment that is not depicted.

In this ekphrasis, εἰσέτι looks forward to a moment that is depicted on the basket, but in another image (50-4). Of course, this is something that the narratee does not yet know.

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52 S.v. ἀολλήδην A. There is, furthermore, one instance of ἀολλής that refers to two people (LSJ s.v. ἀολής Α; they refer to S. Tr. 514). Cf. also von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1906: 228: “[d]as sind zwei genau respondierende Szenen, eine Kuh auf dem durch Farbe bezeichneten Wasser und aufrecht neben ihr stehend einmal Zeus, das anderemal zwei Zuschauer, ἀολλήδης, gedrängt nebeneinander: das sagt er im Anschluss zugleich und im Gegensatze zu ἀμοιβαδὶς ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος, wie bei Theokrit die Männer stehen. Die beiden Figuren überschnitten sich: so entsprechen sie dem einen Zeus” (emphasis mine).

53 Bühler 1960: 98-9; it rather means “twofold, double” (see LSJ s.v. δοιός 2). Campbell 1991: 63 does not discuss this issue, but refers to Gow and Page 1965: 205, who note ad AP 7.89.3 (which is also one of the passages discussed by Bühler) that δοιός, in spite of the singular, equals δύο.

54 Cf. the translation by Legrand 1927: 146, “[h]aut placés, deux hommes se tenaient debout sur l’escarpeinent du rivage, serrés l’un contre l’autre; ils regardaient la vache qui traversait la mer”.

55 For ἔτι…οὐκ, cf. ἔτι δεύετο in A.R. 1.732 (discussed in section 6.2.5, 1) and ἔτι θεργάτως δ’ ἐτι Θήβη in A.R. 1.735.

56 Cf. Ravenna 1974: 26: “[q]ui il rapporto con lo stato futuro è dato in praesentia, poiché poco più avanti (…) è rappresentata la nuova trasformazione in donna” (italics in the original); in other ekphrases (e.g. A.R. 1.736), ἔτι creates “un rapporto con uno stato futuro, i cui termini sono in absentia”. 

World disruption is present. Not only has Io been turned into a cow, she is also traversing the sea, "wandering in a mad frenzy" (φοιταλέη, 46). Traditionally, it is the gadfly sent by Hera that drives Io over the sea. The gadfly is not mentioned by the narrator, which probably indicates that it is not depicted in the image. Nevertheless, the adjective φοιταλέη suggests that the gadfly torments Io and drives her ceaselessly here and there.

The element of 'what-it’s-like' is present, too. The adjective φοιταλέη refers to the experiences of Io as cow. The feelings of the spectators are also included: the men are gazing with wonder (θηεῦντο) at the seafaring cow (ποντοπόρον βοῦν, 48). The words ποντοπόρον βοῦν refer to the focalisation of the spectators; they are astonished by the sight of a cow traversing the sea. The striking nature of this sight is further strengthened by the fact that ποντοπόρον βοῦν forms a ring with Ἰναχὶς Ἰώ in 44; it is the only instance of ring composition in this ekphrasis which does not include verbatim repetition (see 7.2.4 above). By ending the image with these words, the eye of the narratee is, as it were, drawn to the central figure of the image, Io.

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58 References in Bühler 1960: 93. For a brief overview of Io’s story, see Griffith 1983: 189; more extensively Gantz 1993: 198-203.
60 In both shield ekphraseis, spectators are also found (for Homer, see the references in Clay 2011: 9, for the Shield, see 214 and 242-4). Only here are the spectators watching something extraordinary. Cf. also Manakidou 1993: 175: "[h]ier wird das Sehen (der dargestellten Zuschauer) zum Hauptmotiv der Szene, das zur Bewunderung führt und dem Sehen des wirklichen Zuschauers, d.h. des jeweiligen Lesers entspricht und es somit andeutet".
61 According to Hopkinson 1988: 207, "Io is shown passing through the Bosporus, whose etymology is hinted at in the words ποντοπόρον βοῦν"; Campbell 1991: 63 notes that "folk watch Io pass either from Europe into Asia (...) or (...) from Asia into Europe". Though the name ποντοπόρον βοῦν suggests that the sea depicted in the image is the Bosporus, this need not be the case: Io has roamed widely (see Bühler 1960: 100). It should be noted that the idea that people are standing on two coasts is based on emendations in line 48.
62 On the spectators, see also Zanker 2004: 50-1. He concludes that Moschus "shows us fascinatingly how sculpture and painting have trained his eye in the selection of detail, here simultaneously giving spatial depth of field, providing an emotional perspective, and directing the reader’s eye toward the central figure" (ibid.: 51).
The narrativity of the image is high: both world disruption and ‘what-it's-like’ are present. Though the image does not contain a sequence of events, it does refer to an earlier and a later event.

2. Zeus is changing Io back into a woman (50-4)
The text which represents the second image has a prototypically descriptive structure. The text proceeds by enumeration; one spatial indicator is found (παρά, 51). The first three lines (50-2) are devoted to the res ipsae; they contain two details (ἑπταπόρῳ, 51; εὐκεράοιο, 52). The last two lines (53-4) focus on the opus ipsum: the material of the three most important elements in the image is mentioned; only verbs designating states are found. Seeing that these lines focus on the appearance of the basket, they can be called prototypically descriptive in every respect.

The image consists of two figures: Zeus and Io. The location of this action is specified, the seven-mouthed Nile (51). Io traditionally recovers her human form in Egypt. The image follows this tradition: the fact that the river has seven mouths identifies it as the Nile. Event sequencing is absent. One action is depicted: Zeus is touching the cow lightly with his hands (50-1), and transforms Io back into a woman (52).

It is unclear how Io is depicted. Two options may be considered. First, one could argue that Io still wholly has the form of a cow.63 The narrator twice refers to Io as heifer (πόρτιος Ἰναχίης, 51; πόρτις 53). In this case, Zeus' touch sets her transformation in motion, but the transformation itself is not depicted. This means that line 52 (ἐκ βοὸς εὐκεράοιο πάλιν μετάμειβε γυναῖκα) does not refer to what is depicted in the image, but must be regarded as an interpretation of ἐπαφώμενος.64 Second, one could also argue that Io is partially cow and partially human; for example, the narratee might envisage her with a human body, but the head of a cow.65 In this case, line 52 does refer to what is

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63 Bühler 1960: 100: “wie aus V. 53/4 hervorgeht, war die Rückverwandlung nur durch die Berührung angedeutet, nicht wirklich ausgeführt. Durch das Auflegen der Hand (...) vollzog Zeus die Rückverwandlung”.

64 So Bühler 1960: 102, who notes that ἐπαφώμενος and μετάμειβε are two aspects of one and the same action (“[i]n der Tat handelt es sich um eine in zwei Aspekte zerlegte Handlung”).

65 See e.g. Manakidou 1993: 176: “[m]öglicherweise läßt sich Io halb als Kuh und halb als Frau wiedergegeben denken, obwohl eine solche Einzelheit von Moschos nicht zu erwarten ist”; and Campbell 1991: 60: “Moschus does not pause to exploit fully the theme of partial metamorphosis (...): he is not interested in spectacle for its own sake. What does matter is that, although Io has
depicted in the image: Io is both cow (ἐκ βοὸς εὐκεράοι) and woman (γυναῖκα). This would mean that the image represents a pregnant moment: by depicting Io as cow-woman, both what has gone before (Io was a cow) and what will come after (Io will be a woman again) can be easily deduced from the depicted moment. In this light, I draw attention to μετάμειβε, which is an imperfect of a telic verb. By using a telic verb in the imperfect, the narrator anticipates the outcome of the action: it will not take long before the metamorphosis is fully completed and Io has regained her human form. Line 52, then, not only refers to the now of the picture, but also looks to the immediate past (ἐκ βοὸς εὐκεράοι) as well as to the immediate future (πάλιν...γυναῖκα).

Lines 50-1 (ἐπαφώμενος ἡρέμα χερσι / πόρτιος Ἰναχίης) also refer to a future event: by touching Io (ἐπαφώμενος), Zeus also impregnates her. As a result of this so-called ἐπαφή, Io will give birth to Epaphus. With the adverb ἡρέμα ("gently, softly"), the narrator underscores the erotic nature of Zeus’ touch. Traditionally, it was also by touching that Zeus had transformed Io into a cow. In line 52, the adverb πάλιν ("back") reminds the narratee that Io was originally a woman. Thus, Io’s metamorphosis of cow into woman also recalls her metamorphosis as woman into cow. By depicting one moment, the image tells, as it were, Io’s whole metamorphosis.

As in the previous image, world disruption is present: Io’s metamorphosis from human to cow and back again from cow to human are disruptive events. When Io regains her human form, her torment comes to an end. Although a metamorphosis from cow to human is a disruptive event, this metamorphosis also brings the world back to its normal state. As for the element of ‘what-it’s-like’, I note ἡρέμα. Taking into consideration the fact that the image also suggests a number of earlier and future events, I conclude that its narrativity is high.

still not left her bovine form behind when we leave her for good, the process has been set in motion, and her torment will soon be a thing of the past”; he later notes that “[p]resumably Moschus is thinking of Io as βουκέρως [horned like a cow] or at most βουκέφαλος γυνή [a woman with the head of a cow] at this stage [in line 52]” (ibid.: 65).

Telic verbs have a natural endpoint (see further 6.2.5. 5).

See e.g. Bühler 1960: 100.

Manakidou 1993: 85. Commentators draw attention to line 95, where the words ἡρέμα χείρεστον are used in an explicit erotic context (on which see Gutzwiller 1981: 69).

3. Hermes, and next to him Argus; from his blood a bird is rising up (55-61)

The text which represents the last image has a prototypically descriptive structure. Textual progression is spatial (πέλας, 56; ἀπό, 58; περίσκεπε, 61). Of the four verbs, two refer to the opus ipsum (ἤσκητο, 56; περίσκεπε, 61); one to the res ipsae (ἐξανέτελεν, 58); the pluperfect ἐκτετάνυστο (56) may refer to both. The following other prototypically descriptive elements are present. A number of visual details pertains to the opus ipsum (φοινήεντος, 58; πολυανθέι, 59; χρυσείου, 61); δινήεντο (55) describes the shape of the basket. In contrast to the two previous images, the narrator does not refer to the material of which the figures are made.70 One other detail refers to the res ipsae (ἀκοιμήτοισι, 57). In the comparison in line 60, the ship is called ὠκύαλος.

Although I speak of image, what is described in lines 55-61 is not so much the representation of an action as the decorative scheme of the basket. In addition, the term image suggests a clearly demarcated part of the object, whereas lines 55-61 pertain to the whole circumference of the basket.71 Thus, the representation has become part of the ornament.72 In other words, the decoration is of a narrative nature, too.73 It is therefore no surprise that the image does not have a setting. As has been noted, the killing of Argus by Hermes comes before Io’s wanderings and metamorphosis from cow to woman. Thus, the narrator refers to the first event of the myth last. I further discuss this point below.

The image depicts one moment: a bird is rising from the blood of Argus. Event sequencing is thus absent. By depicting Hermes and the dead Argus, however, the image does refer to a previous event, the killing of Argus by Hermes. The imperfect ἐξανέτελεν (“was rising up”, 58 – another telic verb) looks forward to the completion of the action, viz. the birth of the peacock. It should be noted that the bird is not named.74

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71 E.g. Bühler 1960: 104.
73 Cf. the goatherd’s cup, of which parts of the decoration also possess some narrativity (see 5.3.4).
74 Scholars have noted that this is the first instance where the death of Argus and the birth of the peacock (“ornithogony”) are connected; and that only here the bird arises from the blood of
What is perhaps the most disruptive event in the story, the killing of Argus, is not depicted. The birth of the peacock from the blood of Argus is also a disruptive event: world disruption is present. As for the element of 'what-it's-like', the bird is "glorying in the multicoloured hues of his wings" (ἀγαλλόμενος πτερύγων πολυανθέι χροιῇ, 59). Notwithstanding the fact that the narrator focuses on the decoration, I conclude that its narrativity is high.

The spatial arrangement of the figures on the basket is not wholly clear. The wings of the bird run around the rim (60-1). The wings (ταρσοί, 61) most likely refer to the tail of the peacock; the χείλεα must refer to the upper rim. Line 60 (τὰς [sc. πτέρυγας]

Argus (Bühler 1960: 104; Campbell 1991: 66). It has been tentatively suggested that the bird could be the phoenix (Schmiel 1988: 270-1 and Cusset 2001: 71-2; they note, among other things, that Europa’s father is called Phoenix in line 7; cf. also Merkelbach 1962: 327-8). This seems far-fetched, as the phoenix does not have anything to do with either Argus or Hermes (Campbell 1991: 55 writes that “[a]ttempts to accommodate here, in any meaningful way, either the phoenix or Phoenix, Europa’s father (…) seem to me fanciful; he does not provide any arguments for this statement).

75 Dubel 2010: 21 notes that “[l]a périphrase qui désigne l’oiseau est très clairement un souvenir de la seule véritable notation de couleur de l’ecphrasis de Théocrite: καρπῷ ἕλιξ έλείεται ἀγάλλομένα κροκόεντι (I, 31…). Dans l’un et l’autre cas, le verbe ἀγάλλομαι associe le plaisir à l’éclat de la couleur et souligne l’art”.

76 In line 60, most editors print τὰς γ’ ἀναπλώσας ὡσεί τέ τις ὠκύαλος νηῦς (Gow, Bühler, Hopkinson, Campbell), τὰς γ’ is a conjecture by Maas; the manuscripts read ταρσόν ἀναπλώσας ὡσεί τέ τις ὠκύαλος νηῦς; Legrand prints ταρσὸ δ’ ἀναπλώσας (…). The reading ταρσὸν is perfectly acceptable, as Arnott 1971: 156-7 has demonstrated: nothing is wrong with the meaning of ταρσὸν (“[i]n 60-1 Moschus’ bird, a peacock, spreads his ταρσὸν like the sail of a ship, and fills the rims of the golden τάλαρος with his ταρσοί. It may be repetitive, but it is not nonsensical; the reference in both cases will be to the bird’s outstretched tail, viewed as unit (ταρσὸν ἀναπλώσας) and as a collection of feathers covering the rim of the τάλαρος (ταρσοί)”, ibid.: 156); the repetition is not only acceptable but intentional (the lines constitute a reference to Od. 9.219 and 246-7: “[h]ut τάλαρος was originally a wicker-work receptacle used in cheese-making (…). In Od. 9.246-7 Polyphemus ἣμισυ μὲν ἄφρας λεικοῖο γαλακτὸς / πλεκτοῖς ἐν ταλάροισιν ἀμφράμενος κατέθηκεν. But these wicker-work crates have been mentioned shortly before (219) under a different name: ταρσοὶ μὲν τυρῶν βριθῶν. Originally there would not have been much difference between wicker-work ταρσοὶ and wicker-work τάλαροι. What design then could have been more appropriate for a golden τάλαρος than a peacock with outspread sail (…)”, ibid.: 157). For this last point, cf. also Dubel 2010: 22 (quoted in note 80 below).

77 Hopkinson 1988: 208; Campbell 1991: 70.
either compares the outspread wings of the peacock with the unfolded sails of a ship, or with the oars on either side of ship. In light of the fact that ταρσοί can also refer to the rows of oars on the sides of ships, the latter interpretation seems to be the most obvious one. Indeed, the tail of the peacock resembles the oars on the side of a ship, in that the multitude of the central shafts (so-called rachises) look like oars.

Below this decorated rim, three figures are depicted: the bird itself, Argus and Hermes. The text provides the following information: Hermes is fashioned (ἤσκητο, 56) round about (ἀμφί, 55); nearby him, Argus is lying outstretched (πέλας δέ οἱ ἐκτετάνυστο,
endowed with unsleeping eyes (ἀκοιμήτοις κεκασμένος ὀφθαλμοῖς, 57). The adverb ἀμφί indicates that Hermes is fashioned "round about", and therefore must take up quite some horizontal space. It is thus most likely that Hermes is depicted in a horizontal position, too. Scholars usually envisage both figures opposite each other.

The position of the bird remains unspecified, but from the fact that it springs from Argus’ blood, it can be surmised that it is positioned close to Argus. It covers, at the same time, the rim of the basket with its wings. From this fact, it has been deduced that the bird is depicted as rising above Argus and Hermes, and that he must be bigger than both figures so as to be able to cover the whole rim. It must be noted that the position of the bird remains hypothetical, in that the text offers no definite clues.

4. The Images Together
Europa’s basket depicts three moments from the same myth, the story of Io. As such, the basket as a whole contains the first basic element of narrative, event sequencing. It is the repetition of the figure of Io in two different actions (as a cow traversing the sea, and...
and her being metamorphosed into a woman) which makes clear that the first two images depict two different moments of time. Event sequencing in the visual arts is always implicit. This is mirrored by the text, since the images are not temporally but spatially connected (ἐν μὲν, 44; ἐν δὲ, 50). On the basis of his knowledge of the Io myth, the narratee will understand that there is a temporal connection between the images, i.e. that they follow after each other. This temporal connection is also hinted at in the description of the first image (εἰσέτι πόρτις ἐοῦσα, φυὴν δ’ οὐκ εἶχε γυναίην, 45).

The third image does not contain a repeated figure. The narratee can only rely on his knowledge of the myth to connect this image to the previous ones. In addition, whereas the first two images depict actions that follow after each other, the third image depicts an action that is temporally situated before the previous two images. Thus, the order in which the images are described does not follow the order of the fabula of the Io myth. This can be explained by the fact that the so-called Randstücke (framing elements) are described last, a procedure also found in other ekphraseis. The narrator is led by spatial considerations in the order of his description.

In order to capture this distinction, Petrain speaks of fabula and sjuzhet: “the temporal sequence of the scenes (fabula) is disrupted by a different, anachronous ordering of narration (sjuzhet) determined by their spatial distribution on the basket”.

Petrain, who has also taken the goatherd's cup in Theocritus’ first Idyll and the temple ekphrasis in Aeneid into consideration, concludes that “[t]here seems to have been a

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87 See further section 1.4.3.
88 As has been noted by Bühler 1960: 104; in the ekphrasis of Jason’s cloak, the images are woven into the borders; in the ekphrasis of the goatherd’s cup, the goatherd starts with the rim. Only in the ekphrasis of Europa’s basket do spatial considerations lead to a visual narrative that is described “out of order”, for it is only in this ekphrasis that a visual narrative is depicted by three images of which the last is a framing element.
89 Petrain 2006: 253: “the spatial position of the Argus scene explains and justifies its deviation from narrative sequence because, as a framing element, it is a natural candidate for being described last despite its chronological priority”.
90 Petrain 2006: 253. He further states that “[o]ther treatments of ancient ekphrasis have employed ‘story’ and ‘narration’ to distinguish the visual artwork itself from the particular way in which its elements are ordered and mediated by a specific viewer’s verbal (or textual) description; my terms, by contrast, refer solely to phenomena of sequence in ekphrases featuring narrative content” (ibid.: 254; emphasis mine).
marked interest in viewing ‘against the grain’, that is, in neglecting an obvious narrative sequence in favour of striking juxtapositions not sanctioned by chronology”.

Whereas the Io myth certainly has a *fabula*, I do not think the term *story* should be used in connection with the ekphrasis of the basket of Europa, which is essentially a *description* (see 7.2.2 above): the narrator views the basket primarily as an *object*, not as a narrative. In the case of a narrative, the term *story* would make sense, because the underlying *fabula* has a fixed temporal order. In descriptions, however, no such fixed order exists. There is no fixed order in describing an object. Hence, there is no order from which one can deviate. Even though Petrain suggest that the narrator deviates from an order (anachronous ordering), he notes himself that it is logical and natural that the narrator ends with the framing elements. Certainly, the images are not described in their chronological order, but the term *story* should not be applied.

In addition, we may wonder whether one can speak of ‘viewing against the grain’ in the case of the basket of Europa. The narrator first looks at its two principal images, after which he turns to the decorative scheme. This seems a very natural way of looking at an object. If anything, we may credit the “artist” of the basket, Hephaestus, with creating an object which directs the look of the viewer in such a way as to produce an effect of surprise – the decorations depict the very first event of the myth. Lastly, we may credit the narrator with creating an ekphrasis that allows for both processes to be seen by the narratee.

91 Petrain 2006: 267. For a discussion of Petrain’s argument in the case of the goatherd’s cup, see 5-3.5-4.

92 Cf. Fowler 1991: 29, who refers to Levelt’s notion of the speaker’s linearization problem (for which see 1.3.1): “when we describe in words a scene, we have to decide the order in which we are to present the details and the duration – which may be zero – of the description of each of them. Narratologically, that is, the visual scene described functions as story to the narration of the verbal description. There is no neutral, zero-focalized way of linearizing a visual scene: a point of view is necessarily inscribed, though there may be accepted ways in a particular culture of ordering the elements (…)”; cf. also Laird 1996: 100-1.

93 In the words of Fowler 1991: 29-30 (for the terms employed, see the previous note): “[t]he converse of the speaker’s linearization problem is the artist’s non-linearization problem, how to represent time through simultaneity, and there are various ways of solving this. In the literary description of a work of art, we may find traces of both linearization and non-linearization: the cleverest example I know is that of the ekphrasis in Moschus, where the story of Argos and Io which was non-linearized by the artist in spatial terms is then relinearized by Moschus in a way which allows both processes to be seen”.
At any rate, the basket depicts a sequence of three events. It is up to the viewer to determine the order in which these events happen. The images on the basket most likely resemble a picture series.94 The only other object in the ekphraseis of this study which depicts a story in a number of separate images is the shield of Achilles, viz. in the city at war (509-40) and the attack on the herd of cattle (573-86), consisting of respectively six and two images.95 Europa’s basket is different in that it depicts a well-known myth, whereas the shield of Achilles depicts anonymous figures. In the Homeric shield ekphasis, it is only by the repetition of identical figures in different actions that different moments of time can be indicated.96 The basket of Europa does not rely on repetition only – as is demonstrated by the third image – because it depicts a well-known myth.

All three images depict disruptive events: Io as a cow traversing the seas, Io being transformed back into a woman, and a bird rising up from the blood of Argus. Indeed, the basket represents the three most striking moments of the Io myth.97 On the basket, these three disruptive events combine to depict a disruptive story.98 It is especially the third image that increases the disruptive nature of the events. Argus was sent by Hera to guard the cow Io. Furthermore, according to most accounts, it was Hera’s anger at Argus’ death that made her send the gadfly to plague Io.99 Argus’ presence on the basket, then, helps to remind the narratee of Hera’s role in tormenting Io.100 In addition,

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94 See for this term 1.4.3. It could well be that certain elements of the setting of the first two images (the coast in 48; the sea in 46-7; the seven-mouthed Nile in 51, 53) are positioned in such a way so as to separate these images from each other.
95 See sections 3.3.3.2 (2a and 6) and 3.5.
96 Lines 18.525-6 are an exception, for which see 3.3.3.2, 2a.
98 The three images together on the goatherd’s cup in Theoc. Id. 1 work in a different way, for which see 5.3.5. 4.
99 Campbell 1991: 56. In the Prometheu Vinctus Io is plagued by a gadfly directly after her metamorphosis; after Argus’ death, she is also haunted by the image of Argus (εἴδωλον Ἄργου, A. Pr. 567, for which see Griffith 1983: 195). In the Supplices, the gadfly is sent by Hera only after Argus’ death (see Bömer 1969: 214).
100 Merriam 2001: 71-2: “[b]ut the events shown demonstrate the machinations of Hera, who caused them all. It was, after all, for fear of Hera that Zeus originally transformed Io into a heifer, and it was then Hera who set Argus to guard the creature thus created. That Hera’s part in the
it was out of fear of Hera that Zeus transformed Io into a cow. Thus, the third image not only broadens the temporal scope of the story depicted on the basket, but also refers – both directly and indirectly – to other unsavoury episodes of the Io story.

According to some scholars, the basket depicts a version of the Io myth that has been stripped of its more unpleasant elements. Campbell speaks of a “specially tailored, diluted version (…), with stress laid on the happy outcome”. Indeed, the basket does not depict the whole story – a realistic touch in the case of a visual narrative. I do not, however, believe that by not depicting certain elements of the story – Campbell mentions, among other things, the unwillingness of Io, Hera’s anger, the gadfly, and the slaying of Argus – the basket therefore does not imply these elements. Because the myth is known, the ‘viewer’ of the basket will be reminded by these elements simply by looking at the images. Can the viewer look at Io as a cow and believe that she is having a good time? In addition, I draw attention to φοιταλέη (46) and the fact that Argus’ blood is mentioned (τοῖο δὲ φοινήεντο ἀφ’ αἵματος, 58). Of story is not mentioned explicitly in Moschus’ poem does not negate her importance. Rather, she seems by this distance to become an ever more powerful figure, controlling the events without herself becoming involved (…)

101 In some versions it is Hera who transforms Io into a cow (Griffith 1983: 189; see for discussion Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 239 ad A. Supp. 299).
102 Campbell 1991: 55-6: the Io myth “(...) is an unpleasant, harrowing tale, of a common type (...). But Moschus can of course be selective, and is: he nowhere states that Io was (...) an unwilling party to the proceedings (...). The Zeus we see here is majestic and benign, not selfish and arbitrary. Further, there is none of the shock of an initial metamorphosis, nothing on the actual slaying of Argus, while φοιταλέη (...) is as close as we get to the tormenting gadfly. Indeed, by placing the Argus-Hermes-peacock scene last, Moschus has created the illusion (...) that the story ended there, in a blaze of colour. In fact, according to most accounts it was her sense of outrage at the killing of Argus that induced Hera to plague Io with a gadfly. Hera’s anger simply does not come into the picture” (emphasis in the original); Manakidou 1993: 191: “jede Szene entweder in der Korbbeschreibung oder in der Hauptgeschichte entfaltet sich mit der Absicht, ein mehr oder weniger fröhliches Bild zu präsentieren. Dies gilt merkwürdigerweise auch in den wirklich traurigen oder schlimmen Momenten der Geschichte (etwa beim Tod des Argos (...)); she later notes that “die Szenen auf dem Korb so dargestellt sind, daß der Eindruck einer Geschichte mit gutem Ende und großem Glück erweckt wird” (ibid.: 194).
103 Campbell 1991: 56.
course, a bird arises from Argus’ blood, but I wonder whether this can be called a happy outcome.

The element of ‘what-it’s-like’ is not very prominently present in any of the three images. This can be viewed as a realistic touch, in that visual narratives can only indirectly refer to feelings and the like. Io’s experiences as cow are mentioned (φοιταλέη, 46), but emphasis in the first image lies on the feelings of the spectators (48-9). In the second image, the touch of Zeus is soft (ἠρέμα, 50), but Io’s feelings in the midst of her metamorphosis are unknown. Io’s feelings are apparently of no importance to the narrator.

The three images together form a sequence of events which consists of three disruptive events. The basket, then, depicts a story with a high degree of narrativity.

7.3 Europa’s Basket: Its Descriptivity and Narrativity. Conclusion

The ekphrasis of Europa’s basket features two discourse modes. The text that represents the images (43-62) contains the descriptive discourse mode; the surrounding lines (33-42; 63-4) feature the diegetic discourse mode. Lines 37-42, which also pertain to the basket, are not devoid of descriptive details. I note especially lines 37-8, which refer to the basket’s material and spectacular nature.

The text that represents the images does not only have a prototypically descriptive textual organization, but also features a number of other prototypically descriptive elements. In comparison with the other two Hellenistic ekphrases of this study, references to the opus ipsum occur relatively often. It is especially the mention of the materials in lines 44-54, and the bird surrounding the basket in 59-61, which constitute eye-catching visual details. This relatively large emphasis on the opus ipsum may be due to the fact that Europa’s basket is the only object in the three Hellenistic ekphrases of this study that is made of various materials: the cup is of solid wood, and the cloak wholly of cloth. Nevertheless, these references create the strong impression that the narrator is describing an actual object. They can be said to create an effet de réel.

All three images have a high degree of narrativity. As such, Europa’s basket is unique in the corpus of this study: none of the other objects features only images with a high degree of narrativity. The narrativity of the images is mainly due to the fact that they depict disruptive events. In addition, they suggest both earlier and later events.

105 In a sense, Io’s transformation from cow to human can be called a happy outcome. However, it seems that it is mainly Zeus who will profit from this metamorphosis.
The element of ‘what-it’s-like’ is not prominently present. In fact, references to thoughts or emotions are absent – as are references to sound. Indeed, when referring to the images the narrator limits himself to what is readily representable.106

The three images combine into a visual narrative with a high degree of narrativity. The depiction of a mythological story in three more or less separate images is a novel element. The shield of Achilles also contains a story – the city at war, which is not of a mythological nature – that is depicted by six different images. In those lines (509-549), the text contains many narrative elements – even the diegetic discourse mode occurs.107

In the ekphrasis of Europa’s basket, on the other hand, the text contains only one temporal adverb (line 45). Thus, we have a text with a high degree of descriptivity. This text, in turn, represents a series of images with a high degree of narrativity. Such a text strongly suggests a visual narrative: both do not contain explicit event sequencing. It is the “viewer” who must connect the various events.

7.4 Coda: Visualizing Europa’s Basket

As in all other ekphraseis of this study, the narrator is not very clear on the precise layout of the basket. Thus, the location of the images on the basket or vis-à-vis each other is not clear. Furthermore, the shape of the basket itself is unknown.108 This does not mean that the narratee should not attempt to visualize Europa’s basket.109 In fact, it has even been argued that the narrator is describing an object that has existed in reality.110

106 Manakidou 1993: 185 notes only one element that is alien to the visual arts (ἁλμυρά...κέλευθα, 46); see ibid.: 69-71 and 116-7 on such elements in the ekphraseis of the goatherd’s cup and Jason’s cloak.

107 See further 3.3.3.2b.

108 See section 7.2.5 above. According to von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1906: 229, on account of the peacock, the object must have a spout; Moschus has not described a basket but a large metal vessel (“Dagegen für eine Schnauze des Gefäßes ist das sehr angemessen, eine wirklich artige Erfindung. (...) Moschos hat in Wahrheit keinen Blumenkorb, sondern ein außen skulptiertes großes Metallgefäß beschrieben”).


110 Legrand 1927: 143: ”[e]ncore que l’agencement des motifs n’apparaisse pas clairement d’après les vers de Moschos, il se peut qu’en écrivant ces vers le poète se soit figuré avec exactitude un talaros décoré de la sorte, ou même qu’il ait décrit un talaros réel, un talaros qu’il avait ou qu’il avait eu sous les yeux”; Nicosia 1968: 47: ”(...) le varie scene sono legate per il contenuto,
The narratee may visualize the basket by making use of his knowledge of (contemporary) visual art. First, metal baskets, even though none remain, existed in antiquity. Second, the basket is made of precious metals, and it is thus likely that it is reminiscent of Hellenistic silver and goldware. In connection with Europa's basket, Fowler refers to Hellenistic silver work. She notes that Hellenistic silver work is often gilded; and that polychrome inlays are a mark of Hellenistic gold work. She compares a small silver dish in the Brooklyn Museum, dated to the second half of the second century BC. The dish itself and most of the exterior relief are cast; the details are chased and the reliefs gilded. Although the metals of which Europa's basket is made certainly recall the shield of Achilles, they were also used in the fabrication of contemporary works of art.

svolgono alcune fasi di uno stesso mito, possono essere il riflesso di un'opera d'arte realmente tenute presente`; for further references see Manakidou 1993: 174, note 240.

Webster 1964: 154, on the other hand, argues that the various metals of Europa's basket refer to "the technique of Achilles' shield, and we need not look for parallels in Alexandrian art"; similarly Bühler 1960: 87: "M[oschos] wird aber in der Beschreibung der Metalle weniger Vorbildern aus der Kunst als vielmehr der literarischen Tradition (homerische Schildbeschreibung) verpflichtet gewesen sein (...)".

Bühler 1960: 87.

Fowler 1989: 20: "[t]his basket is imaginary and of course extraordinary, but Hellenistic silver work was often gilded, and polychrome inlays were a mark of Hellenistic gold work. The ecphrasis has a basis in reality".

Fowler 1989: 20-2, who also compares an elaborate silver cosmetic box dating to the second or first century BC.