
Space and time are not so much conceptual opposites but complementary parameters of experience in Western thought. This volume collects together fifteen essays on time and/or space in Latin language and Roman culture, and is divided into two (unbalanced) sections: nine linguistics papers to do with lexicology or semantics, and six squashed under the umbrella ‘literature and civilisation’. Moussy’s opening gambit is Varro *De lingua Latina* 5, which parcels out discussion into a) vocabulary of space, b) vocabulary of time and c) both categories together, as «grasped/understood by poets» (*a poetis comprehensa*), and goes on to explain that we cannot conceive the movement of time outside of the frame of space. The vocabulary of space is often transformed into, or borrowed as, the vocabulary of time, as words like *intervallum* (temporal interval, but literally space between posts, *inter valla*) and *spatium* (‘space’ but also, often with *temporis*, ‘duration’) put on display. This ‘rencontre’ between conceptual domains is everywhere once we begin to hunt it out, marked not only in the fabric of Latin language, but also visually and thematically, in literature and art – though literature falls by the wayside in Moussy’s ensuing, programmatic examples which round off the preface: astrological symbolism in the Roman circus, and the fourth century mosaic found at Carthage which figures the association between circus factions and the (cyclic) seasons.

Despite its manifold micro-insights along the way, the book begins to disappoint here: this particular arena of overlapping categories is both fascinating and of great heuristic import because it might tell us something new about how we conceptualise, and how the Romans conceptualised, time – time being the hardest of subjects which constantly escapes us. In his *Confessions*, St Augustine points to all the things he is able to say about time without knowing what it really is or knowing even vaguely what it is he does not know, before arguing that time doesn’t exist outside of the mind. Bergson agreed with him. Despite the fact that by 1800 BC the ancient Babylonians had divided the day into hours, the hour into sixty minutes, and the minute into sixty seconds, we still cannot agree on, and often stumble in articulating, how we feel time pass today. Can we hope to get an insight into how the an-
cients perceived time? How like space is time, really? Is it tenseless, or a dynamic changing entity? Is time a path, or is there no becoming, branching, or passage? It is not an original observation that in language after language, spatial terms and expressions are used to express temporal ideas. Language seems to distill such ideas about time as a) times are moving objects coming towards us b) times are locations in a landscape or c) events are moving objects. It would make sense that all languages make use of time-as-space metaphors of some kind and to some extent, since an abstract, conceptually elusive category like time is only knowable to our embodied mind via our more concrete experiences in physical space. Yet when is a linguistic metaphor a conceptual metaphor? What exactly can such analysis tell us? Is the spatialisation of time a universal slippage, at least in European languages/cultures? How culturally or historically specific, and how ‘poetic’, is the phenomenon Varro pinpoints?

Yet the ‘why’ of intersecting space/time doesn’t much concern the contributors to this book. The burgeoning bibliography on Roman conceptions of space in empire, as it is moulded and nuanced by the industry of mapping and by evolving geographical identities (which might have been used to frame arguments about the historicocultural specificity of such permeable categories in Latin) barely gets a look in. Neither does groundbreaking interdisciplinary work on Roman time, by scholars such as Maurizio Bettini (Antropologia e cultura romana, 1986) and Denis Feeney (Caesar’s calendar. Ancient time and the beginnings of history, 2007: the first paragraph of Feeney’s book makes the preliminary point that ‘Roman conceptions of space and time are inextricably linked’), or even recent studies in linguistics updating and critiquing Martin Haspelmath’s From space to time (1997) such as Tho-ra Tenbrink’s Space, time and the use of language (2007). The hotch-potch of papers lacks much internal dialogue or a substantial disciplining frame, while the exciting sounding second part, which takes up just a third of the book, appears as an inadequate coda within the context of the book’s structure. A positive reading would be to say that the book appears to take on much more than it can chew, that its rubric is in fact a much more modest one.

The most interesting and successful papers, in my view, appear in part one of the volume and have a sociolinguistic bent: García Hernández kicks us off in chapter one (L’espace, le temps, le mouvement et l’aspect: perspectives sur leur organisation linguistique), and moves straight from the notion of time as the measure of movement to unpicking the relationship between aspect and time. Within a language system which contains multiple anomalies within predictable pattern, different parts of language zigzag between expressing space and time more easily than others: while in the case of adverbs, prepositions and preverbs the expression of time is secondary to that of space, in the case of verbs we can trace how the expression of time begins to detach
itself from aspect. Anna Orlandini’s and Paolo Pecetti’s contribution (La référence spatio-temporelle et métalinguistique des verbes de mouvement en Latin et leurs évolutions romanes) analyses ‘coming and going’ verbs in Latin from Plautus onwards which are polysemous in their capacity to express both temporal and spatial relations, and maps out the process of grammaticalisation which sees a sliding of concrete spatial into abstract temporal value – a semantic development which is especially marked, they note, in a colloquial or ‘oral’ register. The third essay, by Jean-François Thomas (Problèmes de polysémie et de synonymie dans la lexicalisation de l’espace et du temps en latin) also confronts the much-argued theory that space, not time, is first in the chain of lexicalisation, yet forges ahead with a valuable argument for calling that hierarchy into question: when we scan uses of the adjective longus, for example, it often proves impossible to distinguish primary spatial from secondary temporal sense. I only wish Thomas had fleshed out his vague parting comments on various manifestations (the god Janus, for one) of an interdependency between linguistic usage and ideas or symbolism core to Roman culture more generally. In paper 4, another pair, Alessandra Bertocchi and Mirka Maraldi, discuss Les adverbes de répétition rursus, iterum, denuo: adverbs of repetition are usually linked to time, but in the case of rursus, archaic language seems to indicate a spatial connection (‘turned backwards’, the basis for a restitutive sense of ‘again’). Again, they confirm the (partial) story of secondary temporalisation-as-abstractification. Next, Antonio María Martín Rodríguez’s Les lacunes lexicales dans le vocabulaire latin dénotant l’espace et le temps argues that holes in the lexical structure of Latin may better explain the reconfiguration over time of certain semantic microstructures relating to the expression of space and time: the absence of subsum (alongside adsum and insum) in Latin itself, and the failure of temporal adjectives hesternus, hodiernus and crassinus to make it into romance languages. This comparative discussion is highly suggestive but offers little insight into Roman conceptualisation of time and/or space. Moussy (Continuus, perpetuus et inuis, Expression de la continuité dans l’espace et dans le temps) makes productive links with Thomas’ paper: he interrogates the extent to which adjectives in Latin which signify durationality can also indicate spatial continuity, and also the extent to which the spatial sense is always anterior to the temporal one (he by and large confirms that this is so). With Lyliane Szajder’s paper (L’expression de la longue durée et de l’éternité dans la Vulgate), apart from a brief re-survey of the doubleness of perpetuus and inuis, we almost lose the space-time thread: she is interested in probing the distinction between the long term and the eternal in classical versus biblical Latin. Szajder takes detailed note of the richness of this lexical field in the latter, and explores the notion that unlimited duration in time is not distinguished from eternity outside of time in the Vulgate, before finally tracing some linguis-
tic contingencies between Latin, Greek and Hebrew in the use of terms such as saeculum. In the penultimate piece of this section, Pedro Duarte (Subdium, Formation, sens et place dans le lexique latin) homes in on the adverb subdium, specifying the intriguing terms of its (first) spatial and (then) temporal connotations. Maryse Gaynor rounds off part 1 by offering an adept answer for the apparent looseness, even confusion, in the use of prepositions in late authors like Gregory of Tours, especially between ab and ad, which in classical Latin denote opposite directions (La confusion entre les prépositions ab et ad à valeur locale chez Grégoire de Tours): the ambiguity would have been limited and smoothed out by context, but more interesting, as Gaynor communicates well, is how the slippage between ad and ab betrays a crucial moment in a process of linguistic evolution.

Part two consists of six short papers: while many essays in part one were united by their space and/or (then?) time brief, the first of the ‘civilisation’ pieces is strictly about the (juridical and religious) division of space in the city of Rome. In Les lieux de culte à Rome: ara, templum, aedes Jacqueline Champeaux focuses on defining the three terms of her title along structuralist lines. In the second essay, L’année scandée par les constellations extrazodiacales, Wolfgang Hübner turns our attention to astrology, exploring the reversibility inherent in the spatial hierarchy space/time. Danièle Porté’s Du quotidien au cosmique. La conception romaine du temps is, within the space of this book, a long overdue whizz-through of ‘Romans on/in time’: yet in the context of surrounding, meticulous analysis, it often looks truncated and is prone to what in their unqualified state are rather simplistic statements such as «on conçoit bien l’homme romain, tendu opiniâtrement vers l’avenir, anticipant presque sur la durée du jour qu’il vit pour le projeter vers ces Nones, ces Ides ou ces plus lontaines Kalendes dont deux, cinq, dix, seize jours peuvent le séparer. Violà qui dénote une mentalité positive; et positifs, le Romains l’étaient» (182). According to Porté there was no such thing as a Roman ‘veilleur de nuit’ (she might read James Ker on Nocturnal writers in imperial Rome, «CPh» 99, 2004, while Alfonso Traina’s work on the semantics of carpe diem is loudly missing from discussion on p. 181 [Semantica del carpe diem, «RFIC» 101, 1973, 1-21]), the end of Ovid’s Metamorphoses is pure, unadulterated certitude and optimism, and the epitaph has hardly been studied by classicists. She concludes, strangely, that for ‘Romans’, ‘the new’ represented untold horrors, and change was ‘synonymous with death’. This paper is followed by Étienne Wolff’s Martial entre l’Espagne et Rome, which attempts to say something about Martial’s exploitation of Spanish identity in what appears for the author to be a literary vacuum. That Wolff can only cite one paper on Martial (C. Notter, Martial et l’hispanité: réflexions sur une identité poétique, in Actes des journées d’études sur les Identités romaines tenues les 27-29 mars 2003 à Paris X e à l’Ecole Normale Supérieure, for-
theoming) is indicative of the extent of his immersion in the substantial recent bibliography on the Epigrams, including several contributions on the issues of space and cultural identity.

We return to ‘espace et temps en Latin’ in Annick Stoehr-Monjou’s piece *L’expression de l’espace et du temps chez Dracontius: de l’expérience personnelle à la profession de foi romaine* – a thought-provoking reading of Dracontius’ idiosyncratic take on space and time from prison which also proposes a greater conceptual unity between Dracontius’ profane and Christian writings. The enclosure results in a painful experience of the present which Dracontius dilutes with a creative ‘mixing of temporalities’: here, it is the peculiarity of space that inspires and becomes implicit in an altered vision of time, rather than merely being supplanted by time’s ‘abstract’ geometry. In a final swerve, Michèle Ducos’ *L’expression du temps et son interprétation chez les juristes romains* plots out the role of time in Roman law, allowing us to better understand the multiple references to time in Roman jurists. This is an interesting paper, though it again reminds us of the volume’s lack of coherence. That said, *Espace et temps* may inspire individual scholars to make connections precisely because it does not serve up a neat, finished product: the ‘et’ of the title remains a barbed conjunction.

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