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Architectonic and Rural Space in Ancient Greek Tragedy: Examples from Aeschylus and Euripides

Exploration of space ontology and epistemology, which first emerged in Homer and Hesiod, continued through Pre-Socratic philosophy and the lyric poets. Indicatively, Sappho's poetry reflects a multitude of philosophical and spatial ideas of her time¹. Besides the poetic and philosophical level, this investigation continued to preoccupy ancient Greeks intensively on a mythological and geographical level as well. Specifically, this study examines the geographical and cosmological dimensions of space as *ecumene*, as *cosmos* [24], and as a product of the four primary elements' materiality. The research also considered relevant theories such as the theory of content in Plato's *Timaeus*, Aristotle's theory of *topos* (*Physics II*)², as well as Stoic and Epicurean concepts of space and emptiness [1].

The paper intends to explore some spatial archetypes in Athenian tragedy, referring to architectural space, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to mountainous space as a carrier and receiver of aspects of the divine, as well as the interaction between the divine and the human in two emblematic mountains, Cithaeron and Caucasus, theaters of action or epiphany of Dionysus and Prometheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* and Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, respectively. Both of these tragedies unfold in the earthly sphere, even if in *Prometheus Bound* the troupe is divine [7, p. 96].

The analysis here includes the following: A brief account of the intertwining of myth, without which drama is inconceivable, and space; universal and particular dimensions of mountains as a reflection of the contrasting characteristics of Prometheus and Dionysus; a commentary on Cithaeron and Caucasus as seats of tragic divinity; an interpretation of the role of Thebes, a rival of Athens in the vicinity of Cithaeron, as the theater of most Athenian tragedies, and, finally, the aesthetic categories of the sublime, the uncanny and the beautiful in the two tragedies of reference.

¹ As I have shown recently [21].

² Aristotle praised Plato's spatial approach comparing it to that of earlier philosophers, who simply acknowledged the existence of space. Only Plato attempted to comprehensively investigate its nature (*Physics IV*). Aristotle discusses this last issue from his own epistemological point of view, namely the ontological nature of space, illuminating both the difficulties in defining it (210a. 9) and its kinds. Space, universal or terrestrial, was defined by the words *τόπος* (*topos*), *χώρα* (*chōra*), and *κενόν* (*kenon*). Aristotle distinguishes between space as a "container" and as an expandable quantity. In the first case, the place that hosts a thing as a container is not part of it, so Aristotle perceives it as a limit. On the contrary, if space is considered as an expandable quantity, then it is identified with the matter included within it. Additionally, Aristotle introduces movement and direction into the epistemology of space, considering that it is impossible to be perceivable without them, see [1; 18].

Links between space and myth

Myth irrigates ancient conceptions of space, of the cosmos and the arts, including tragedy. It mobilizes the visual imagination and metabolizes qualitative, non-spatial concepts into space. Further, myth's discursive qualities assume spatial dimensions of universal validity. Greek mythology fascinates as the product of incessant transformations and elaborations, which emerge new or additional aspects of the humankind [4; 34]. A typical case of the interaction between mythical discourse and space is Homer's description of the Shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*, which is considered an early example of cosmic mapping (*mappa mundi*) [15, pp. 55–59]. These findings on the function of myth happen to parallel those of modern space theoretician Henri Lefebvre [13], who argues that every form of social becoming, not just myth, necessarily also acquires a spatial manifestation. Furthermore, mythical and perceptual space are similarly apprehended. Their distinction harks back to the difference between the sacred and the everyday or profane [4, p. 87].

The appeal of Greek mythology owes much to its tendency towards continuous transformations and tolerance of new elaborations, which allows for the emergence of new or additional aspects of the human ethos [4; 34]. Precisely these emergent aspects were transferred from poetry to theater and the other arts³. Myth activates a special category of mental oversight and philosophical reflection [24]. Therefore, its necessity, enhanced and enriched through artistic articulation, is inextricable to the human condition. Mythologizing consciousness participates in the intellect, but does not obey its laws, something that has been true throughout the centuries [35]. Many theorists, including Detienne [5, pp. 89, 131–135], argue that a rapid transition from mythical to rational thought as a philosophical conception is warranted. Ancient Greece is still often portrayed as the beacon of absolute rationality⁴. But Greek thought contained the mythical dimension and emanated from a refined intellectual and perceptual agility. Myth and philosophy interact dynamically [23]. Moreover, as Cassirer [4, p. 177] argues, human communities are connected through myth. The absence of mythological thought in philosophers such as Kant has been criticized [4, pp. 180–181], possibly because it excludes such subtle but essential driving forces of mental functioning, social connectedness, and creative imagination.

Both the physical geographical location and the anthropogenic location of activities, social groups or phenomena are of particular importance [4, p. 92]⁵. The geographical loci of the two tragedies of reference are respectively Prometheus' Caucasus and Dionysus' Cithaeron. The anthropogeographic scheme of the edge of the ecumene is due to Homer [31; 28, p. 35], who first recognized that the earth is surrounded by the ocean. Pre-Socratic philosophers such as

³ Greek mythology was initially registered in the Homeric and Hesiodian epics, to subsequently fertilize creative inspiration locally and globally. The West relied on the artistic and cultural background created by Homer's Greece, influencing the entire world, for the formation of its art, philosophy and literature [34]. Case in point: The Minotaur myth that shook modernism [15; 16] and the Homeric myth that has inspired major modern authors. Tragedy plots come from Homer, see, indicatively, [7, p. 185]. Tragedies unfold in the earthly sphere, even those with a divine troupe such as *Prometheus Bound* [7, p. 96].

⁴ By theorists including [29].

⁵ Magical anatomy (parts of the human body as parts of the world) and mythical geography fuse. In the Hippocratic correspondence, the head is the Peloponnese, the Isthmus is the spine, Ionia is the diaphragm, i. e. the real center, the navel. Correspondingly, the moral qualities of the inhabitants are affected by this geographical distribution [4, p. 92]. The importance of location, as well as the relationship between natural and anthropogenic preoccupy human geography.

Anaximander (c. 610–540 B.C.), with their geographical imagination firmly grounded in the Homeric epics, conceived the development of the world around an axis that, starting from the Pillars of Heracles, crosses the Mediterranean, passes through Sicily and Delphi, and reaches as far as Taurus Mountains [28, p. 39]. Two Titans, Prometheus in the east and Atlas in the west, who carry the celestial dome, define the ends of the universe, in which there is a strong Greek presence. A corresponding geographical anchoring of the world is a constant reference in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (verses 347–350).

The architectural setting

Precisely these emergent aspects circulated among poetry and the other arts. Euripides uses Doric temples as settings in his tragedies *Ion*, *Orestes* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*⁶. I will limit myself to some observations regarding the architecture of the temple in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which can be defined as early Doric, with its wooden columns and triglyphs between the beams (Ill. 11): “See where between the triglyphs there is an empty space to let ourselves down” (verses 113–114). Having enjoyed daily the spectacle of his contemporary, the Parthenon, the utmost Doric building, and of the other monuments of the Acropolis, Euripides must have known the wooden origins of the Doric⁷.

In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Euripides shows familiarity with all periods and characteristics of Greek architecture, as I argued recently [17]. Euripides uses vertical forms, be they statues or columns, both of which are pivotal in this play, as metaphors of power, both male and female. The first scene encapsulates both themes: it opens with a colonnaded temple, which is set on a desolate shore and contains the ξόανον (wooden statue) of Artemis. The peristyle feature is distinctive of Archaic and Classical age Greek temples, setting them apart from Mycenaean architecture, but perhaps, fascinatingly, not from Minoan architecture⁸. Veneration of sanctified columns originated in Minoan Crete [9; 27]. Colonnades are stylized abstract representations of tragedy choruses [32, p. 370]. Euripides states in *Iphigenia in Tauris* that male children are “pillars of the house”, drawing from previous notions like those of Pindar and Aeschylus of guardians of cities like Hector as pillars [32, p. 370–71]⁹. In the ancient world columns were often gendered and anthropomorphic, as is the case with the “male” Doric columns and the “female” Caryatids of the Athenian Acropolis. In *Tauris*, columns are conspicuous but soiled with human sacrificial blood, therefore abhorrent and morally stained.

Homer's 8th-century B.C. epics diffused the 13th-century B.C. Mycenaean world, inter-

⁶ I owe thanks to the session organizers. Professor Nadezhda Nalimova brought the tragedy *Ion* to my attention in terms of its architectural interest. Further relevant analysis on this and other Euripidean tragedies in [35].

⁷ See analysis in [17].

⁸ See [17]. The peristyle is rooted in domestic architecture, though how and why this functional element of Greek monumental architecture acquired a symbolic character is unclear [22].

⁹ This statement followed a dream with a column becoming progressively animate and vociferous, which *Iphigenia* identified with her brother *Orestes*:

And, turning, I stood to see the cornice overhead reel,
and the beams and mighty door-trees down in blocks of ruin round me overthrown.
One single pillar, so I dreamed, stood of my father's house;
blond hair sprouted from its top and suddenly a human voice it had, and spoke. And I, fulfilling my office, built on blood of unknown men, sprinkled him clean for death, wept.
And this way I read my dream. *Orestes* is dead, it is him I cleansed.
Because pillars of a house are male children (verses 47–57).

perspersed with elements of his own time. Like Homer, Euripides mixes forms and periods, confirming the strong links between the Mycenaeans and their classical Greek descendants in material culture and in poetry. Abhorrence of human sacrifice ingrained in this tragedy counts as a demarcating aesthetic: the uncanny and the terrible are attributed to savages. The sacred is inextricably linked to the profane here, and the sublime to the base.

The rivalry between Athens and Thebes certainly made the latter city into a constant plot point in Athenian tragedies during the 5th century B.C., including works such as Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*, and Euripides' *Bacchae*, *The Suppliants*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Heracles Raging*. These works correspond to a wide range of unforeseen consequences, divine empowerment, crimes, dynastic strife, death and destruction, suffered by an enemy of Athens, Thebes¹⁰, since thus the citizens of Athens could shake off terrible passions from the ideal image of their city. However, from Scully we infer that an additional reason for the above may be some ominous characteristics of the relief of Thebes itself, such as sphinx-like forms.

Cadmeion, the Mycenaean palace on the Theban Acropolis, Cadmeia (Ill. 12), which is the largest in Mycenaean Greece¹¹, probably includes two successive palaces of different periods and orientations, one of which burned down around 1225 B.C. The placement of the palace within the acropolis, both real and theatrical, is indicative of a non-democratic regime [28, p. 27], and is apparently included deliberately in the plot by Euripides. Fires were usual in Greece at that time. In *Bacchae*, the scene with the earthquake and the scorching of the palace by Dionysus (verses 585–595, 632–33) is perhaps an atavistic nod by Euripides that allows us to suppose coexistence of mythical and historical elements in this play, such as those mentioned above.

Mountains and their significance for tragedy

Mountains, with their evocative natural features, are an ancient source of myths. They hold a special place in the global inheritance of holy spaces of religious importance. According to Theocritus (315–260 B.C.), they are networks of physical participation in the human drama [14, p. 91]. It is widely believed that mountains cannot be semantically limited to a narrow number of themes, symbols or archetypes, but that, on the contrary, they are their inexhaustible sources: They are the places of birth, upbringing, refinement, appeasement, worship, and also end of the divine; they preoccupy ancient discourse through most variations of the myths. They are also venues for poetic contests¹², inseparable companions of cities, theaters of love between gods, and cosmic bridges annihilating distances, as happens in Homer with Ida of Asia Minor. Mountains are the universal symbols of spirituality, but its kinds are different in the East and the West. The Five Sacred Mountains of ancient China existed before heaven and earth as the regions of insight into the secret essence of the universe and not as observatories

¹⁰ In 423 B.C. democratic Athens and oligarchic Thebes found themselves rivals in the context of the Peloponnesian War [3, pp. 36, 117]. The rich mythological tradition of Thebes is known today mainly thanks to the works of the Athenian tragic poets of the 5th century BC, who could attribute to it dynastic strife and destructive passions, unsuited to Athens.

¹¹ The Mycenaean period has yielded approximately 250 Linear B texts [3, p. 34]. Reference to Dionysus is not included in the Linear B tablets found. During the 14th and 13th centuries B. C. Thebes was already a powerful palatial center, equal to its contemporaries in the Aegean and the Near East. Few parts of the Cadmeia walls remain [3, p. 32].

¹² Poetess Corinna references the contest between Cithaeron and Helicon in an extant poetic fragment.

of a surveying vision, as is the case in the West [14; 20], but also, to the mountains of Japan, unapproachable and fearful places¹³. They are considered central points, which are identified with cosmic axes (axes mundi) because this is where heaven and earth converge, making every epiphany possible, according to Mircea Eliade [8, p. 39].

Vincent Scully has long ago interpreted the role of mountain masses, peaks and forms in the placement of prehistoric palaces and citadels, but also classical temples in the Greek space, which appears to be culturally continuous [26, pp. 29–30, 106]. The ancient deity, the ‘Great Mother’, is identified by Scully, as is by Euripides in *Bacchae*, with Demeter, the goddess of the earth (verses 274–276). Specifically, it is argued that the observance of alignment axes between elevations and anthropogenic structures increases the sanctity, sometimes even any inherently menacing quality of the latter. This is exactly what happens in the active relationship among Thebes, Cithaeron, and other elevated areas, where Scully identified ominous rock formations resembling monsters or sphinxes.

Cithaeron, the visual and landscape background of the city of Thebes, is called a sacred mountain in *Bacchae* (verses 789–790; 952–953), as well as a defiled one (verses 1384–1385), as a wild field of abolition and division of the human body, since Pentheus was brutally killed there. In addition, Actaeon was transformed into a stag and devoured by his dogs there. Cithaeron, which is part of the mountainous backbone of central Greece together with, among other heights, Helicon, its neighbor and poetic rival according to the poet Corinna (born c. 518 B.C.), peaceful seat of the Heliconian Muses before and after Hesiod [5, pp. 25, 41, 151, note 8], stands in the heart of the Greek world, separating Attica from Boeotia. The neutral zone extended from Mount Parnis to the Asopos River [28, pp. 367–368]. It is a controversial boundary as the tension between Athenians and Thebans was constant, even in times of peace, as we see in *Bacchae* (verses 750–755) and in Aristophanes’ *The Acharnians* (verses 1073 – 1078). Cithaeron is, in other words, a contested spatial threshold¹⁴. Multiple boundaries and corresponding polar relations in *Bacchae*, manifested in Cithaeron, also appear in the city of Thebes¹⁵, referring to a developed, albeit implicit, system of dialectical pacing. This includes, indicatively, the literally scorching love of Zeus and Semele, hapless mother of Dionysus (verses 1–3, 88), independence and submission, humans and animals — Cadmus is eventually transformed into a snake by Dionysus — city and region, rational and irrational. Philosophy and tragedy are again linked, since moral boundaries also become mythological in Pythagoras and Plato. Ultimately, this is about the opposition between form and formlessness, good and bad, but also about the sanctity of spatial thresholds as mechanisms for ordering global space.

Cithaeron is associated with many mythological traditions, most of which belong to the Theban cycle. Historical and mythical elements co-exist as do negative and positive facets. As an infant, Oedipus was abandoned there, an event with legendary consequences¹⁶. According to a myth, the wedding of Zeus and Hera took place on Cithaeron; the Daedala festival

¹³ According to Japanese literature [14, p. 91–92].

¹⁴ Necessary for organizing global geographies [4, p. 104]: “There is no place more suitable for return to the sources than this mountain” [12, p. 192]. Cithaeron confronts the visitor with a multitude of ancient names, bearers of history and myth.

¹⁵ Hermes was also a border god. His Roman counterpart was Terminus. Mountains are the protagonists of the satyric drama [4, p. 101].

¹⁶ He was found by a Corinthian shepherd and delivered to Merope, wife of the Corinthian king Polybus [28, p. 195].

honored Hera. Hercules freed the inhabitants from the fearsome Lion of Cithaeron by killing it. In Cithaeron, some future kings of Thebes were raised by shepherds¹⁷. It is also associated with music through Orpheus¹⁸. Last, but not least, this mountain proved to be pivotal for the defeat of the Persians in the Battle of Plataea (479 B.C.)¹⁹, which preceded Euripides' *Bacchae* by more than 70 years (Ill. 13).

The Caucasus and Prometheus

In *Bacchae*, Cithaeron serves as the poetic locus of a violently pursued dominance of the divine. The incomparably higher and larger massif of the Caucasus, located on the border of Europe and Asia forms, through Prometheus (Ill. 14), a field of defense of the human existence, dignity, enlightened intellect, knowledge, and wise management of nature. Tragedies such as *Prometheus Bound* distinguish between the civilized, that is, between citizens, and primitive nomads such as the Scythians with their coarse dwellings [7, pp. 96–97]. Even though the Caucasus is likened to a “high-cliff castle”, stone architecture is not mentioned in *Prometheus Bound*, compared to *Bacchae*. Consequently, the importance of technological development for human emancipation looms large here. Cutting-edge technological imaginings, even for today's robotics, such as “automata”, belong to the Homeric realm and appear frequently in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in order to describe self-moving machines propelled by internal energy. Their construction is attributed to the great Olympian craftsman, Hephaistos²⁰. Technological development is facilitated and promoted by a rebel and challenger god, a harbinger of the far future, visible to him, invisible to others, an excavator of the deep past²¹. Prometheus' speech is a huge space-time compressor, an elevator, as well as a descender.

The Caucasus region was located at the outermost periphery of ancient Greek knowledge. Greek presence in the region dates back to the 8th century B. C. [28]²². The Black Sea was colonized by Milesians and Megarians because of its mineral wealth, mainly copper ores, but also gold²³. It is related to the myth of the Golden Fleece, as well as to Prometheus' description of the Caucasian land as “mother of iron” in Aeschylus (verses 298–303). Agricultural production and timber stocks were also of note²⁴. Later, many Greek cities were founded in Media, the western part of the Iranian plateau that reaches as far as the Armenian Caucasus, due to the strategic importance of the region. The first geographic recording and documentation was implemented by Alexander the Great, along with the geographic exploration of India and Arabia [28, p. 45].

The pinning of Prometheus by Hephaestus to the desolate and otherworldly rock also ex-

¹⁷ These are the children of Antiope, Zithos and Amphion, who became kings of Thebes.

¹⁸ The name “Cithaeron” is associated phonetically with the guitar Orpheus played on Cithaeron.

¹⁹ Cithaeron to the west ends at the Corinthian Gulf. Its maximum height reaches 1409 m. At its northern foot is Plataea, an ancient Greek city-state near the frontier with Attica, field of the homonymous battle with the Persians (479 B. C.). For the selection of Plataea as battlefield, see [28].

²⁰ We cannot be sure whether such automata actually existed in Homer's time, or whether his poetic imagination anticipated them. More details in [10].

²¹ Prometheus foresaw the future, which included the fall of the Olympian gods.

²² From the ashes of the Titans, who were scattered by Jupiter's thunderbolt, humans emerge as union and multiplicity. All beings are magically related and intertwine [4, p. 189].

²³ Relevant is the depiction of the gold of Colchis in the Argonautic Expedition legend.

²⁴ See reference to the rich arable land of the Northern Black Sea area, the stocks of good timber in Asia Minor and Thrace [28, p. 399–401, 431]. Establishment of the first colonies started in the 7th century B. C., namely later than that of Magna Graecia, aiming at controlling the spacious “anteroom” of Propontis and the passages to Hellespont and Bosphorus.

presses a twisted but profound relationship between the body and the mountain²⁵. The universe shares in his suffering. Prometheus flashes through the generations with his purposeful narrative, as in his oracles to Io, whose descendants will deliver him (f. 870), and whose wanderings around the Sea of Azov and North Africa he foretells in detail. He defies the stormy fury of the four cosmogonic forces, fire, earth, air, and water, and even the combined energy of earthly and astral paths, of the ecumene and the cosmos (verses 1040–1055).

His image, masculine and philanthropic, is opposed to the ambiguous beauty of Dionysus in *Bacchae*, a punishing but also ravishing god, who merges death with pleasure, theatricality, religiosity, rich and fertile vegetation, transcendence of madness and passion, wild nature, the liberation of instincts and the unconscious, seduction²⁶. It also connects poles such as male–female, near–far, old–young. Nature’s vitality is represented by the satyrs [7, p. 48] who express the dangerously fluid world of Dionysus from 570 B.C. onwards²⁷. With names such as Orochares (meaning “he who rejoices on mountains”) or Oreimachos (meaning “he who battles on mountains”), satyrs are the opposite of their contrasting, self-controlling figure of good and sane Kourois.

Aesthetic categories of the sublime, the beautiful and the uncanny in tragic mountain geographies

The sublime is the feeling of awe and fear caused by magnificent physical, metaphysical, intellectual, or artistic forms, phenomena, or situations, which captivate us because they exceed the possibility of measurement, imitation, or reaction, at least momentarily, while often invoking the divine. The sublime was determined as an entity by Homer and thereafter by classical poetry and philosophy, and named by Longinus in the 1st century A. D., who proposed various categories²⁸. The concept of the sublime started to systematically occupy the Western thought from the 18th century onwards. Immanuel Kant’s 1790 contribution, the *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*) [11] maintains a dominant position in the field of aesthetic discourse. Simultaneously, the uncanny as a Freudian aesthetic category²⁹ refers to the disturbing dimensions of that with which we are only superficially intimate, something causing feelings of horror, eeriness, and creepiness. We realize that the two cases of tragic mountainous geography approached here represent different gradations of these categories. The aesthetic of the sublime is born mainly from descriptions or references to wild nature, whether mountainous, marine, or otherwise (P. B., B.)³⁰, as well as from the divine fire stolen

²⁵ Ancient literature and mythology reveal a great variety of bonds between the body, human or divine, and space. A cursory reference would include, apart from the case of Prometheus, mountains and caves as places of divine love (see the love encounter scene of Zeus and Hera on Ida of Asia Minor in the *Iliad*), as receptacles of the divine body (the Cretan Ida housed the infant Zeus), as seat of the Twelve Gods (Olympus) and as a refuge for wounded heroes (Philoctetes’ cave on Lemnos), among others.

²⁶ See also [6]. Ambiguities arise, partly in relation to *Bacchae* as poetic access to Dionysus, threatening to obscure the variety in the worship and importance of Dionysus throughout Greece, by emphasizing the urban-ness of the rites.

²⁷ For details of this world, see [30].

²⁸ Longinus related their conscious application in the art of rhetoric. Antiquity also established the theory of imitation and artistic expression, belief in the revelatory nature of art, and the formation of aesthetic judgments [19].

²⁹ Sigmund Freud proposed the aesthetic category of the uncanny through his text “The Uncanny” (1919).

³⁰ Abbreviations for *Prometheus Bound* and *Bacchae* respectively: P. B. and B.

by Prometheus or arson (P. B., B.), from divine apparitions (P. B., B.), Hades (P. B.), and even an earthquake, which was also viewed as a divine action (P. B., B.). The feeling of the uncanny is represented by Io, whom Hera transformed into a talking cow (P. B.) and, to a supreme degree, by the horrible transitions of Dionysus and the Bacchae (B.) into the Other and Others respectively, who, however, retain their familiar physical characteristics.

The two tragedies validate the accommodation of philosophical, moral, and aesthetic reflection in poetic speech. In the Promethean Caucasus, the sublime represents extreme forces and processes of an archetypal nature, ultimately converging in the liberation of the human race, aided by inventions, research, and resistance to subjugation represented by Prometheus. The other aesthetic category, the beautiful, which has attracted the passionate interest of antiquity in multiple ways [19], is almost completely absent in its current meaning. In *Bacchae*, by contrast, Dionysus's beauty seduces and disarms Pentheus (verses 457–460).

However, although the chorus exclaims, "All that is beautiful I love always", the beautiful here refers to divine help in overcoming enemies (verses 897–901). In other words, it is a moral manifestation of divine support. Such aesthetic ambiguities are repeated in *Bacchae*: in the despoiled Cithaeron, as Agave calls the mountain as soon as she regains her spiritual clarity, a nature of idyllic beauty, a place of constant divine epiphanies is reduced to the deceitful realm of Terror of a murderous, merciless and bloodthirsty god. We find that Cassirer's distinction between sacred and profane space does not apply here [5, p. 75–81 and sporadically]. On the contrary, it applies to the transformation of the familiar, like the pastures of Cithaeron, into places that are horribly unfamiliar. Moreover, with *Bacchae* we return to the constant reflection of antiquity on the moral content of beauty. After the horrendous acts committed by Bacchae with the moral authorship of Dionysus, who is as beautiful as Aphrodite, Cadmus courageously criticizes the god for his injustices [33], hinting that the only consolation in the face of terror remains a moral choice again, human solidarity.

To sum up, the previous analysis indicates the following:

First, that the Athenian tragedy corroborates the fact that peaks of different kinds and forms played a fundamental role in the creation of human-made space in ancient Greece. In this case, it is mainly the citadel of Thebes.

Second, that myth transforms into space qualitative (here: moral, aesthetic, political, epistemological) concepts, such as the menacing and deceptive ambiguities of the divine, inter-civic enmity, the earth-shattering impacts of human passions and weaknesses and the necessity of social cohesion, on the one hand. On the other hand, human emancipation is accomplished through courage, the development of episteme and technology, as well as the assistance of a benevolent daemon.

Third, that remote peripheries of the Greek world can be appropriated in order to explore highly ominous aspects of the human condition and of space, both geographical and architectural. The safe *nostos* (return) to the core of the Greek world, involving the audacious salvation of valuable persons and sacred objects, as happens in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, is then mandatory. This leads to the establishment of civilized cults, such as that of Artemis in Athens, through the transplanted re-creation of consecrated spaces, — temples and sanctuaries — on the metropolitan soil.

Fourth, and to some extent reverse to the second point above, that spatial exploration, like that of the mythical aspects of mountains in Athenian tragedy, involving the mobilization of

various categories and gradations of the aesthetic, including awe and the uncanny, are conducive to major qualitative elaborations, such as a deepened political, but also epistemological, awareness of the body politic. Cithaeron and the Caucasus, as core and peripheral parts of the Greek ecumene respectively, can also represent entirely different kinds of tragic divinity, are the constant sources of aesthetic experience, real and imaginary, as well as the cradles of geographic knowledge. The ambiguous geopolitical status of Cithaeron as a boundary between Athens and Thebes is personified in and through the figure of Dionysus explored here as a god who is simultaneously immensely alluring and destructive. The Caucasus, conversely, through the figure of Prometheus, personifies the quest for emancipation, humanity and knowledge-based progress.

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Title. Architectonic and Rural Space in Ancient Greek Tragedy: Examples from Aeschylus and Euripides

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Abstract. The exploration of the nature of space and of spatial archetypes has been very important in ancient Greek thought and art, including ancient theatre. Focusing on Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (PB) and Euripides' *Bacchae* (B), this paper investigates the aspects of the following archetypes as they emerge in Athenian tragedy:

1. Architectonic space earlier than, as well as contemporary with Euripides, as conceived and represented through his sophisticated architectonic awareness and imagination.

2. The role of mountains, as exemplified through Cithaeron and the Caucasus, theaters of tragic epiphanies of gods Dionysus and Prometheus in B and PB respectively. Both tragedies unfold in the earthly sphere, even if in *Prometheus Bound* the troupe is divine. However, while Cithaeron lies in the heart of the Greek world forming a natural background to the city of Thebes in Boeotia, the Caucasus lies on its edge. Alluring Dionysus, the master of Cithaeron in

Bacchae, represents moral and natural powers that threaten defiant humans, while tormented Prometheus epitomizes divine support for human dignity and wellbeing.

3. An interpretation of the city of Thebes in Boeotia as the locus of many Athenian tragedies.

4. Also, a brief reference to the aesthetic categories of the sublime, the beautiful and the uncanny, as they appear in ancient drama. Philosophical exploration of morality and beauty are reverberated in the vigilant concern with the moral aspect of splendor.

Keywords: ancient tragedy, aesthetics, Cithaeron, Caucasus, tragic mountains, Dionysus and Prometheus, Thebes in Athenian tragedy, Aeschylus, Euripides and architecture

Название статьи. Архитектурная и природная среда в древнегреческой трагедии: Эсхил и Еврипид

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Аннотация. В искусстве и философии древней Греции большое внимание уделяется исследованию сущности пространства и пространственных архетипов. В статье на примере «Прометейя прикованного» Эсхила и «Вакханок» Еврипида рассматриваются пространственные архетипы аттической трагедии, а именно:

Архитектурные пространства, современные или предшествующие Еврипиду, которые он осмысляет и представляет особенно чутко и изобретательно.

Роль горных вершин (Китерон и Кавказ), как «театры» трагической эпифании Диониса и Прометейя. Обе трагедии разворачиваются на земле, хотя в «Прометее прикованном» действующие лица — боги. Пока Китерон располагается в сердце эллинского мира, и служит фоном для событий в беотийских Фивах, Кавказ находится на краю света. Дионис в «Вакханках» представляет опасность смертным, а Прометей, наоборот, божественное покровительство.

Город Фивы осмысляется как основное место для ряда аттических трагедий.

В статье также затрагиваются категории возвышенного, прекрасного и жуткого в древней драматургии. Философское исследование морали и красоты отражены в озабоченности нравственными аспектами величия.

Ключевые слова: горы в древнегреческой трагедии, эстетика античной трагедии, Китерон и Кавказ, Дионис, Прометей, Фивы в античной трагедии, Еврипид, Эсхил, образ архитектуры в трагедиях Еврипида



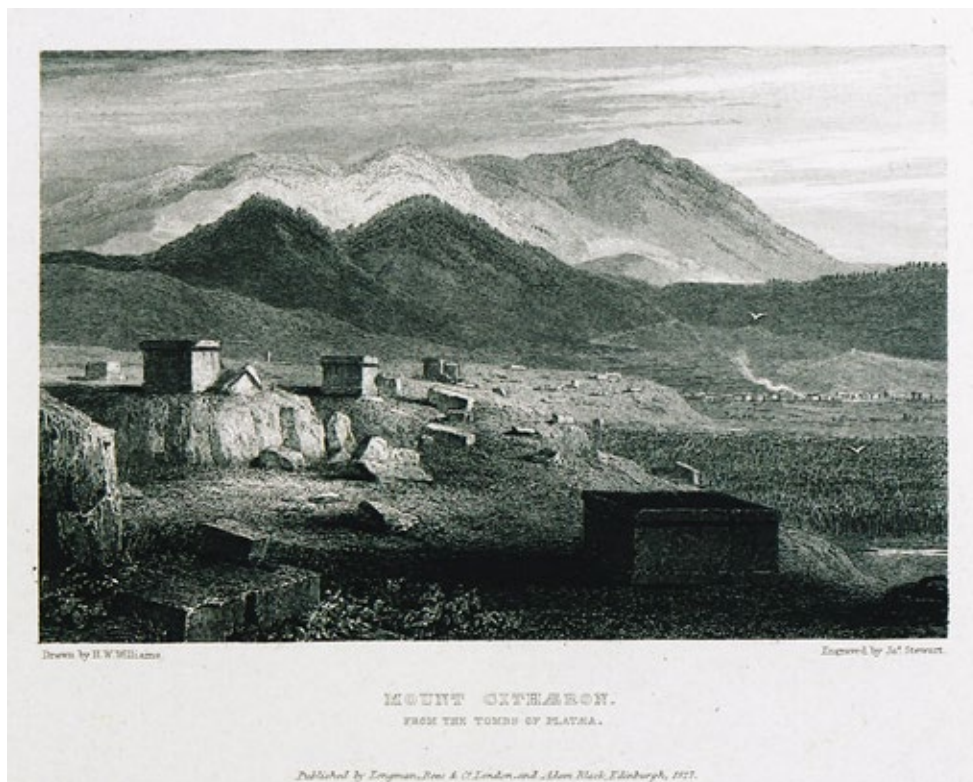
Ill. 11. Iphigenia as a priestess of Artemis in Tauris sets out to greet prisoners, amongst which are her brother Orestes and his friend Pylades; a Roman fresco from Pompeii, 1st century AD, National Archaeological Museum of Naples.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iphigenia_in_Tauris_MAN_Napoli_Inv111439.jpg

Ill. 12. Aspect of Cadmeion, the Mycenaean palace complex of Thebes.

Source: <http://wikimapia.org/31464402/Mycenaean-Palace-Complex-of-Thebes-Kadmeion#/photo/4370743>





Ill. 13. Hugh William Williams. Select Views in Greece with Classical Illustrations. 1829. Plataea and Cithaeron. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mount_Cithaeron_From_the_tombs_of_Plataea_-_Williams_Hugh_William_-_1829.jpg



Ill. 14. Heracles freeing Prometheus. Relief from the Sebasteion, south building, at Aphrodisias, Asia Minor. The twisting naked figure of Prometheus hangs with his hands manacled to the rocks above against the Caucasus mountainous background. He looks with a distressed, emotional expression towards Heracles, his liberator. Photographer: Hans Weingartz. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Heracles_freeing_Prometheus_relief_from_the_Temple_of_Aphrodite_at_Aphrodisias.jpg