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Templum de marmore ponam – Poetic Sacred Places in Imperial Epic as Manifestation of Mute and Resonant Self—World Relations

The significance of the interface between narrative and ritual has been recognised for some time (e.g. Barchiesi, Rüpke & Stephens 2004; Nünning & Rupp 2013; Rüpke & Degelmann 2015). But the specific role of ancient fictional poetry, in particular epic poetry and ancient fables, still offers a broad field for further research (e.g. Beard 2004; Grethlein 2007; Nasse 2012; Agoustakis 2013). It seems especially fruitful to combine traditional literary-narratological approaches with the approach of the IGDK that is the investigation of resonant self–world relations. We will not only gain information about rituals or socio-religious practices themselves and reflections on them, e.g. how characters locate themselves through horizontal, vertical, diagonal and introspective dimensions in the world and how the author lets the recipient perceive and evaluate this. We will also learn to understand how ritual and narrative influence each other, how ritual practices are restaged, how author and recipient develop resonant relation and how poetological statements (Robert 2015) can thus be read in a new light.

The focus of the project will be on a specific narrative element, the *ekphrasis*. Ancient *ekphrasis* was and is a well-tilled field of research (e.g. Webb 2009; Squire 2009; Koopmann 2018; Harrison 2020). Nevertheless, the conceptual context provided by the IGDK, and especially the *new four foci* of the second phase, will offer a fresh perspective. In all genres of ancient epic poetry sacred places are described, where a person (usually a character of the plot) perceives and locates himself in relation to the world, mute or resonant. The question will not be how and what kind of sacred places are described and what role the descriptions play within the text. It will also be examined how the description itself restages the on-site-visit for the reader, viz. how the experience can be *repeated*, and how the reader can experience axes of self–world relations as resonant or if he can merely observe them from the outside, mute to himself. The effect of these poetic passages may create *second-order resonance*. As described places are often places where power is negotiated, the interaction of *power, agency and resonance* becomes relevant. And the description of place, though fictitious, puts materiality to the fore.

These places often serve as poetological images for the poem or for poetry itself, hence the approach of the IGDK offers the innovative possibility to discuss metapoetic questions. In the context of the resonance theoretical heuristic, a new impulse will be gained by including modern sociological theories on emotion. The new methodology of this project will not only have a most welcome impulse on narratological research, it will also enrich the questions provided by resonance theory. The project itself will be specified based on the existing knowledge and interests of the PhD student, e.g. one period, one author, one kind of sacred place or a comparative study

on exemplary descriptions from various texts. Possible texts are from the Roman (early) Imperial period and (pagan and Christian) Late Antiquity.

In *Aen.* 8,347ff. we are presented, e.g., with virtual temples while wandering through a not-yet existing Rome with Euander and Aeneas; although the temples are not there (yet) the characters feel the numinous atmosphere of the place and the recipient feels the diachronic relevance. Other texts describe existing monuments, for example Paulus Silentiarius and Venantius Fortunatus. These examples are particularly interesting as they offer the possibility to compare pagan and Christian authors as well as Greek literature from the east and Latin literature from the west. The PhD candidate could analyse what happens on the different axes and levels of self–world relations when a recipient reads *ekphraseis* of sacred places in epic and when the epic – through the narrative – becomes a sacred place itself, wherein the reader finds himself wandering around in admiration.

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