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978-0-521-19098-5 - Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative

Alex C. Purves

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SPACE AND TIME IN ANCIENT GREEK NARRATIVE

In this wide-ranging survey of ancient Greek narrative from archaic epic to classical prose, Alex C. Purves shows how stories unfold in space as well as in time. She traces a shift in authorial perspective, from a godlike overview to the more focused outlook of human beings caught up in a developing plot, inspired by advances in cartography, travel, and geometry. Her analysis of the temporal and spatial dimensions of ancient narrative leads to new interpretations of important texts by Homer, Herodotus, and Xenophon, among others, showing previously unnoticed connections between epic and prose. Drawing on the methods of classical philology, narrative theory, and cultural geography, Purves recovers a poetics of spatial representation that lies at the core of the Greeks' conception of their plots.

Alex C. Purves is assistant professor of classics at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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For Lionel and Orlando

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and the sleepless nights, which I tell myself must have led to moments of supernatural lucidity.

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