

ANCIENT GREEK TEXTS AND MODERN NARRATIVE THEORY

The taxonomies of narratology have proven valuable tools for the analysis of ancient literature, but, since they were mostly forged in the analysis of modern novels, they have also occluded the distinct quality of ancient narrative and its understanding in antiquity. *Ancient Greek Texts and Modern Narrative Theory* paves the way for a new approach to ancient narrative that investigates its specific logic. Jonas Grethlein's sophisticated discussion of a wide range of literary texts in conjunction with works of criticism sheds new light on such central issues as fictionality, voice, Theory of Mind and narrative motivation. The book provides classicists with an introduction to ancient views of narrative but is also a major contribution to a historically sensitive theory of narrative.

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ANCIENT GREEK TEXTS AND MODERN NARRATIVE THEORY

Towards a Critical Dialogue

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Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-33957-5 — Ancient Greek Texts and Modern Narrative Theory
Jonas Grethlein
Frontmatter
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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009339575

DOI: 10.1017/9781009339605

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First published 2023
First paperback edition 2024

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN	978-1-009-33959-9	Hardback
ISBN	978-1-009-33957-5	Paperback

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Acknowledgements

This book has grown out of three papers that were written separately: one on the significance of the Theory of Mind for responses to narrative in the light of Heliodorus' *Ethiopica* (*Style* 49 (2015): 259–83); one on the motivation of the Penelope scenes in *Odyssey* 18 and 19 (*CCJ* 64 (2018): 70–90); and one on the relation between authors and characters as seen by ancient critics (*CP* 116 (2021): 208–30). Only after writing these papers did I notice the common thread linking them: despite their different foci and objectives, all three papers were motivated by a deeper discomfort with how modern narrative theory, especially structuralist narratology, has made us view ancient narrative. Taken together, the three papers permit us to make a case that is significantly broader than the points for which they argue individually – a case about the study of ancient narrative at large. There can be no doubt about the rich fruits of narratology in Classics, and yet the application of narratological categories, while letting us see the complexity of many texts with fresh eyes, has also occluded the distinct quality of ancient narrative and its understanding in antiquity.

Ancient Greek Texts and Modern Narrative Theory: Towards a Critical Dialogue is the attempt to pave the way for new approaches to ancient narrative beyond narratology. It is an exploration, not a study that exhausts its subject – a book that aspires to be a first step instead of offering the last word. In addition to revising and expanding the original three papers, I wrote three more chapters: one that provides the groundwork by carefully assessing the current state of scholarship on ancient narrative and contemplating alternative approaches to it (Chapter 1); one that discusses the idea of fiction(ality) and the relation between world and words in antiquity (Chapter 2); and one that uses postmodern parallels to throw into relief ancient views of narrative that deviate from modern conventions (Chapter 6).

I thank the editors of *Style*, *CCJ* and *CP* for permitting me to use the material from the articles mentioned above. I have drawn on the following translations, modifying them where necessary:

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|---|---|
| R. Lattimore (1951) | <i>The Iliad of Homer</i> . Chicago |
| R. Lattimore (1965) | <i>The Odyssey of Homer</i> . New York |
| A. Laks and G. W. Most (2016) | <i>Early Greek Philosophers</i> . Cambridge, MA |
| H. N. Fowler and
W. R. M. Lamb (1925) | <i>Plato. Statesman, Philebus, Ion</i> . Cambridge, MA |
| G. M. A. Grube,
rev. C. D. C. Reeve (1992) | <i>Plato. The Republic</i> . Indianapolis |
| S. Halliwell (1987) | <i>The Poetics of Aristotle</i> . London |
| W. H. Fyfe (1927) | 'Longinus'. <i>On the Sublime</i> .
Cambridge, MA |
| J. R. Morgan (1989) | <i>Heliodorus. An Ethiopian Story</i> , in <i>Collected Ancient Greek Novels</i> , ed. B. P. Reardon.
Oakland: 407–686 |

The names of ancient authors are abbreviated in accordance with the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*; the abbreviations of modern journals follow *L'Année philologique*.

My debts are significant – many friends and colleagues have enlightened my thinking about ancient narrative in one way or another. I will not be able to list all of them here, but I wish to thank at least Markus Asper, Jaš Elsner, Renaud Gagné, Simon Goldhill, Stephen Halliwell, Luuk Huitink, Richard Hunter, Benedek Kruchió, Chris Pelling, Jim Porter, Michael Squire, Aldo Tagliabue, Stefan Tilg, Athanassios Vergados, Gregor Vogt-Spira and Tim Whitmarsh. I am particularly grateful to Monika Fludernik for numerous discussions about narratological issues and to Eva von Contzen for her insights into medieval narrative. Benjamin Allgaier, Emma Burton and Thomas Kuhn-Treichel have as circumspectly as kindly read a first draft of the book. Isabel Caspar, Leonhard Gerke and Sabine Hug were an indispensable help in preparing the manuscript. I am also grateful to Cambridge University Press's two anonymous readers for their instructive comments and to Kathleen Fearn for her excellent copy-editing. As in the past, it has been a privilege to work with Michael Sharp.

I dedicate the book to my daughters, Antonia and Klara – it has been a highlight of my life in the past years to tell them stories and to watch their responses as well as to follow their own beginnings as narrators.