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VISUALIZING THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES: APPROACHING ITS LANDSCAPES VIA COGNITIVE PATHS

My investigation into the cognitive aspects of landscape description takes as its focus the landscapes that the poet evokes on the Shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.478–608). Drawing on studies in cognitive psychology I note the extent to which an audience might derive a 'spatial mental model' from the topographical or 'locative' indicators that the Homeric poet offers. Then I consider the 'non-locative' information that the poet conveys about the landscapes of the Shield. In this connection I develop Barbara Tversky's notion of landscape representation as a 'cognitive collage'. What makes the scenes on the Shield vivid, however, is human presence. Finally, therefore, I draw on enactivist theories of cognition, recently introduced into Classics, which offer a valuable supplementary approach to 'reading' and enjoying landscape descriptions in Homer.

For some years there has been considerable scholarly interest in landscape, particularly in the location of myth in its landscape and the interaction of memory over time with those landscapes. This paper too is landscape-focussed: it seeks to understand the means by which landscape is described, especially, but not only, in oral contexts, and how landscape descriptions, by contrast with purely narrative text, are processed by their audiences. The approach adopted here is a cognitive approach. The testing ground for this investigation is that cluster of landscapes that adorn the Homeric Shield of Achilles, a creation that, Hephaestus claims, will inspire wonder in all who behold it.[1] The kinds of questions I ask are: what strategies do oral poets use to evoke a landscape? What, from the poet's viewpoint, is salient in the landscape and what is not? What aspects of this landscape do audience members (or subsequent readers) conjure up in their own minds? How do they do this? And, finally, how is it that the poet's descriptions of the landscapes of the Shield achieve their effects? I refer here to the delight and pleasure that the poet's audiences find in these scenes.

The discussion will, appropriately, follow a circuitous path. I propose to trace out a search for a cognitively credible—cognitively realistic—approach to landscape description in a poetic context. I then apply my findings to a selection from the ten separate and distinct static scenes—a skyscape, some cityscapes and some rural landscapes—rendered in bronze, tin, gold and silver, that the god Hephaestus works on the Shield

[1] *Il.* 18.466–7. There has been much work now on the cognitive underpinnings of narrative composition and comprehension both in the Homeric epics and elsewhere, but there have been few attempts to analyse descriptions of landscape from a mind-based perspective. On the poet's memory for narrative in the epics, see E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Oxford, 2001) and the bibliography therein. I thank not only audiences in St Andrews and Sydney but also the anonymous reviewer for *CQ* for helpful feedback on this paper.

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that he creates for Achilles at Thetis' request (18.478–608).[2] Taken together these individual representations of landscape (the term is used here in its most general sense) make up what we might call the topography of the Shield; they are elements of a remarkable imagined *ekphrasis* that, in narratological terms, precedes a crucial moment in the epic: Achilles' return to the fighting.[3] What has attracted my interest in this cluster of landscapes is that the poet *tells* us that these scenes should be envisaged in two dimensions, worked in precious metals across the Shield's surface; but what he *offers* us, and what we in turn reconstruct, is a landscape in three dimensions. And what is remarkable is that, although the scenes the poet describes are generic scenes of everyday living, they are, each one, vivid—and memorable.[4]

One outcome of this descriptive vividness has been that industrious scholars in past generations attempted to reconstruct the Shield on paper as though the poet had described a splendid creation in metal that he had himself seen or that he could envisage in every detail: it was assumed that the poet had a 'picture' in his mind that he strove to reproduce in words.[5] This belief generated a number of detailed plans, which demonstrated the futility of the exercise.[6] The poet was more interested in emphasizing the wonder of this object, and its capacity to evoke the world as he knew it (or wanted to know it), than in detailing precise dimensions and precise details of its decorative topography—a point to which I return below. The Shield is, as Alex Purves notes, 'protocartographic'.[7] Such an artefact was not to be found in the real world; it was to be conjured up in the mind.

So let us consider some important cognitive approaches to landscape description and assess their appropriateness to the task in hand. I begin with a purely spatial approach. In the 1990s, as studies in cognition expanded their scope, there was considerable interest in how our cognitive apparatus responds when we encounter discourse that includes spatial terminology—information about direction, landmarks, spatial relationships, distances. Until then it had been generally supposed that, when we read or listen to a description of a spatial environment, we each develop a 'mental map' that represents the landscape described. But Barbara Tversky and Holly Taylor's studies demonstrated that this was not the case.

[2] Bronze (562); gold (517, 549, 562, 574, 577); tin (574); silver (563).

[3] For discussion of the Shield as an example of *ekphrasis*, see J. Francis, 'Metal maidens, Achilles' Shield and Pandora: the beginning of "ekphrasis"', *AJPh* 130 (2009), 1–23; A. Purves, *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative* (Cambridge, 2010), 45–55; C. Tsagalis, *From Listeners to Viewers: Space in the Iliad* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 419–40; M. Squire, 'Ekphrasis at the forge and the forging of ekphrasis: the Shield of Achilles in Graeco-Roman word and image', *Word and Image* 29 (2013), 157–91; for the term 'imagined ecphrasis' [*sic*], see J. Kakridis, *Homer Revisited* (Lund, 1971), 109; and see too, usefully, on the divergent ancient and modern accounts of *ekphrasis*, R. Webb, 'Ekphrasis ancient and modern: the invention of a genre', *Word and Image* 15 (1999), 7–18. On the Shield in its Iliadic context, see O. Taplin, 'The Shield of Achilles within the *Iliad*', in D. Cairns (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Homer's* Iliad (Oxford, 2001), 342–64; and M. Alden, *Homer Beside Himself: Para-Narratives in the* Iliad (Oxford, 2000), 48–73, at 49–50.

[4] This vividness is well recognized: see E. Leach, *The Rhetoric of Space: Literary and Artistic Representation of Landscape in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), 12–14, to whose observations on the poet's achievement of 'persuasive *enargeia*' I shall return, and further references below.

[5] K. Fittschen, *Bildkunst, Teil 1: Der Schild des Achilleus* (Göttingen, 1973), N 1–17.

[6] For excellent discussion, see M. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1991), 200–9.

[7] Purves (n. 3), 48.

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Tversky and Taylor have shown that, as we follow a description of a landscape, we do not create a two-dimensional cognitive map; rather, we adopt a more constructivist approach. If there is a generous quantity of what they call 'locative' information—the kind of information identified above, such as spatial terminology, topographical details, directions—we construct, step by step, a three-dimensional 'spatial mental model'.[8] That locative information may take one of two forms: it may be presented as on-the-ground 'route' information, which takes readers or listeners on a mental tour of the landscape, moving them through the environment, with directional pointers at every step, as Pausanias so often does; or it may be presented from a 'survey', or bird's eye, perspective, describing landmarks relative to one another, and capturing spatial relations.[9] Whether we are considering a route or a survey perspective, locative information is integral to Taylor and Tversky's spatial model.

A second category of information that may assist us in constructing a three-dimensional model is not topographical but elaborative. Taylor and Tversky use the term 'non-locative information' to describe this material, which conveys further details about landscapes: this material may tell us more about landmarks and their appearance, their significance, or their history, for example.[10] Information of this kind supplements purely spatial (or locative) information; it will enrich the mental model that we develop.

To illustrate these points here is an example from Pausanias, on the road from Mycenae to Argos; describing this landscape from a route perspective he presents a combination of locative (underlined) and non-locative (italicized) information (Paus. 2.18.3, transl. P. Levi):

From the Rams, *as they call the monument of Thyestes*, a little further to the left is Mysia, and a sanctuary of Mysian Demeter, *named after a man called Mysios*, *who the Argives say was another host of Demeter*. *It has no roof*, but *inside is another shrine of terracotta*, *with wooden idols of the Maid and Pluto and Demeter*. Further on is the river Inachos, and beyond that a temple of the Sun. From there you come to the gate *named after its near-by sanctuary*, *which is consecrated to Eileithuia*.

For contrast, consider another passage from Pausanias. We are now in Phokis. This time we are not, as it were, travelling with Pausanias across the landscape; rather, evoking a landscape from afar, he presents a survey perspective (Paus. 10.34.1, transl. P. Levi):

Elateia is the biggest city in Phokis after Delphi. It lies opposite Amphikleia; the road between them is twenty or twenty-five miles mostly across a plain, but then rising a little close to the city of Elateia. The Kephisos flows in the plain, and *bustards are particularly numerous amongst the riverside birds*.

Now we turn to the landscape of the Iliadic story itself—the Trojan landscape. Thanks to the topographical markers that the poet indicates, we can begin to build a coherent spatial model of the action on the Plain of Troy, as Jenny Strauss Clay demonstrates.[11] Sometimes the poet takes us along a route, as Priam makes his way to Achilles' domain in *Iliad* Book 24: from the citadel, past the tomb of Ilus, across the river at its ford,

[8] H. Taylor and B. Tversky, 'Spatial mental models derived from survey and route descriptions', *Journal of Memory and Language* 31 (1992), 261–92; on 'locative information', see 263.

[9] Taylor and Tversky (n. 8), 261–3.

[10] Taylor and Tversky (n. 8), 263.

[11] J. Strauss Clay, *Homer's Trojan Theater: Space, Vision, and Memory in the* Iliad (Cambridge, 2011): the poet's locative information allows us to follow the heroes' movements across the battlefield. I shall argue, however, that it is enactive information that enables the creation of a spatial model.

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towards and into the camp of the Achaeans, with their ships on the shore (24.322–467). At other times the poet offers us a survey perspective: we look down on the plain from Olympus, with Zeus and the other gods (24.23–4), or from Mount Ida (8.47–52) or Samothrace (13.10–14), and watch the fighting from above.

But when we move from Homeric narrative to the poet's account of the Shield of Achilles, to this long Homeric *ekphrasis* (18.478–608), there is little chance that we can construct such a cognitive model for the Shield as an entity, for the poet has provided us with limited spatial information. Only the final element, the River of the Ocean, is explicitly located in its structure (18.607–8):

> ἐν δ' ἐτίθει ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο
> ἄντυγα πὰρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο.
>
> He made on it the great strength of the Ocean River
> which ran around the uttermost rim of the shield's strong structure.[12]

What is contained *within* that outer rim is presented by the poet in narrative form, and in temporal order, as a catalogue of separate scenes, in each case introduced by the verb 'he made' (ἔτευξ' and its equivalents, at lines 483, 490, 541, 550, 561, 573, 587, 590, 607).[13] We are never allowed to forget that we are witnessing a shield under construction.[14] But the poet offers us no specific information about spatial (by contrast with temporal) relationships—about the location of one component scene relative to another.[15] It is simply not possible for audience members to construct for the Shield *as an entity* either a map or a coherent mental model of the kind that Taylor and Tversky propose.[16]

If we consider the individual scenes on the Shield, we find only one that includes identifiable points of spatial reference: the first scene that the poet describes offers a global view of the poet's world, with special attention devoted to its skyscape (18.483–9):

> ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', ἐν δ' οὐρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,
> ἠέλιόν τ' ἀκάμαντα σελήνην τε πλήθουσαν,
> ἐν δὲ τὰ τείρεα πάντα, τά τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται,
> Πληϊάδας θ' Ὑάδας τε τό τε σθένος Ὠρίωνος
> Ἄρκτόν θ', ἣν καὶ Ἅμαξαν ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσιν,
> ἥ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καί τ' Ὠρίωνα δοκεύει,
> οἴη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο.

[12] Translations from the *Iliad* are (with occasional minor alterations) from R. Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago, 1951).

[13] On the predominantly temporal underpinning of narratives by contrast with the largely spatial underpinning of pictures, see J. Grethlein, *Aesthetic Experiences and Classical Antiquity: The Significance of Form in Narratives and Pictures* (Cambridge, 2017), 29–38. On Iliadic catalogues, see Minchin (n. 1), 73–99, 128–30.

[14] de Jong describes this as 'description by action', noting how subtly the poet blends description with narration: I. de Jong (ed.), *Space in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* (Leiden, 2012), 21–38, at 28–9: cf. G. Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (transl. E. McCormick) (Baltimore and London, 1962), 95; A.S. Becker, 'The Shield of Achilles and the poetics of Homeric description', *AJPh* 111 (1990), 139–53, especially at 141–2; and Edwards (n. 6), 207–8.

[15] On the disarticulated nature of the sequence, see W. Marg, *Homer über die Dichtung: Der Schild des Achilleus* (Münster, 1971), 30–2.

[16] Lessing (n. 14), 95 would agree; cf. Squire (n. 3), 158 and 160.

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> He made the earth upon it, and the sky, and the sea's water,
> and the tireless sun, and the moon waxing into her fullness,
> and on it all the constellations that festoon the heavens,
> the Pleiades and the Hyades and the strength of Orion
> and the Bear, whom men give also the name of the Wagon,
> who turns about in a fixed place and looks at Orion
> and she alone is never plunged in the wash of the Ocean.

The poet here conjures up a three-dimensional model from an earth-based survey perspective, looking up, not looking down—a perspective that includes the earth, the ocean, the sun, the moon and constellations visible to audiences in the northern hemisphere from May to November. The spatial markers that he offers allow us to construct a spatial mental model along Taylor and Tversky's lines. There are, however, two details worthy of note at this point. First, this is no inanimate image. These bodies have been arrested in motion: the moon is waxing (πλήθουσαν, 484); the Bear is turning about (στρέφεται, 488). And there is, besides, a modest degree of personification, which holds our attention: the Bear is keeping an eye on Orion (δοκεύει, 488).[17]

In the subsequent scenes from the Shield, however, we find little precise spatial terminology: there are few spatial or directional pointers; and topographical detail is sparse. The poet's landscapes, such as the elements of two cityscapes evoked in the long passage 490–540, the field described at lines 541–9, and the precinct of a king described at lines 550–60, are presented impressionistically, with only occasional specific allusion to spaces and places. And yet, as introspection tells us, despite these limitations, audience members are able to construct a three-dimensional representation of each individual scene. What are the features of these brief passages that enable us to do this in the absence of explicit spatial terminology? And what mind-based resources do we draw on to help us in this project?

To respond to these questions let us set aside for the moment Taylor and Tversky's spatial model. Although their concept of a spatial mental model, and their terminology, will continue to be useful, it is clear that route and survey perspectives alone are insufficient to account for our ability to imagine landscapes like those of the Shield. I now turn to some further work by Tversky, who has proposed that in the absence of topographical information it is possible to make use of the non-locative information described above to assist in the creation of something akin to a mental model. She proposes the metaphor of a 'cognitive collage' to describe the result.[18] Like the elements of a collage in the world of art and design, the elements that we assemble may be disparate and fragmentary. Such a collage may comprise, as Tversky sees it, occasional elements of route and survey perspectives; it may include epithets, discursive commentary and, as George Miller has proposed, items supplied from our own memory store: a proposal that is in line with Quintilian's observations.[19] Tversky describes this accumulation of unrelated information as a sequence of multimedia 'overlays' that represent different points

[17] Cf. Edwards (n. 6), 211.

[18] B. Tversky, 'Cognitive maps, cognitive collages, and spatial mental models', in A. Frank and I. Campari (edd.), *Spatial Information Theory: A Theoretical Basis for GIS, Proceedings COSIT '93* (Berlin, 1993), 14–24, at 14–15, 21–22.

[19] See G. Miller, 'Images and models, similes and metaphors', in A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge, 1993[2]), 357–400, at 360. On the ancient approach to description, see Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.64–6, at 66 (*quaedam etiam ex iis quae dicta non sunt sibi ipse adstruat* 'he may build up certain things for himself from indications that have not been spoken').

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of view.[20] As she notes, however, it is unlikely that this collation of fragmentary information could be organized into a single coherent cognitive structure like the route and survey accounts of landscape that Pausanias offers. The 'model' obtained on the basis of this collation of information will always be less precise, more impressionistic.

Clearly, this approach holds promise for an exploration of the ways in which audiences respond to the landscapes of the Shield. But, whereas Tversky uses the expression 'collage', a term that seems, to me at least, to emphasize two-dimensionality, I prefer the expression 'cognitive assemblage' to describe what we construct in our minds, in three dimensions, as we process largely non-topographical material.

But there is one element that Tversky and Taylor have not yet integrated into their proposals: this is the human element. Landscape in the viewer's eye may be more than an assemblage of topographical features. Landscape may also represent a realm of experience. It is notable indeed that almost all the landscapes evoked on the Shield include the activities of men and women, whose presence sparks our interest. As an important study in perception indicates, when people view scenes of any kind, whether in the real world or in a range of media, they pay special and sustained attention when human figures are included.[21] Even that first scene on the Shield, the skyscape, featured the movement of the moon and the humanlike behaviour of one of the constellations. In all but one of the subsequent scenes we observe people going about their daily activities, marking important events in the life-cycle, in conflict and at peace—and each cameo-like action-sequence is set in its own appropriate environment. These landscapes, which are often only roughly sketched in, are nevertheless so very vivid to us, not so much because of their topographical form but because of human presence and, more important, human activity within each one.

In order to trace the function and the effect of human participation in the scenes of the Shield, we should now bring to bear enactivist theories of cognition, which are currently being absorbed into classical studies. These theories, which draw on contributions from the broad field of psychology, and from studies of perception and neuropsychology in particular, offer valuable insights into the ways in which storytellers create sequences of narrative action and in which we audience members reconstruct these sequences in our minds as we follow them.[22] Whereas others have discussed enactivist theories in relation to Homer's narrative passages, I shall test the idea that, in Homer at least, we can fruitfully apply these theories also to a sample of his non-narrative passages—specifically to the evocation of landscapes on the Shield.[23] I argue that it is the incorporation of the activities of men and women, older and younger, into each small scene that both encourages and enables the audience to trace out and to visualize the landscapes in which the actions take place. The poet's account of their activities, therefore, plays a vital role in our conceptualization of each of the landscapes of the Shield.

As a preliminary exercise, however, let us take a sample of Homer's Iliadic narrative and consider—very briefly—the neuropsychological evidence. These lines recount Hector's actions as he breaks through the gates in the Achaean wall (12.457–9, 12.462–3):

[20] Tversky (n. 18), 15.

[21] S. Fletcher-Watson, J. Findlay, S. Leekam and V. Benson, 'Rapid detection of person information in a naturalistic scene', *Perception* 37 (2008), 571–83, at 580–2.

[22] A. Kuzmičova, 'Presence in the reading of literary narrative: a case for motor enactment', *Semiotica* 189 (2012), 23–48; E. Troscianko, 'Reading imaginatively: the imagination in cognitive science and cognitive literary studies', *Journal of Literary Semantics* 42 (2013), 181–98.

[23] J. Grethlein and L. Huitink, 'Homer's vividness: an enactive approach', *JHS* 137 (2017), 67–91.

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στῆ δὲ μάλ' ἐγγὺς ἰών, καὶ ἐρεισάμενος βάλε μέσσας
εὖ διαβάς, ἵνα μή οἱ ἀφαυρότερον βέλος εἴη,
ῥῆξε δ' ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρους θαιρούς . . .

. . . ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἔσθορε φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ
νυκτὶ θοῇ ἀτάλαντος ὑπώπια . . .

He came and stood very close and taking a strong wide stance threw
at the middle, leaning into the throw,
and broke asunder the hinges on either side.

Then glorious Hector burst in
with dark face like sudden night.

What is our experience as we read (or hear) these lines? Recent work in psychology has shown that, when we conjure up in our imagination a scene that depicts human action, we do not achieve this by simply visualizing that action as though we were passive third-person observers.[24] Behavioural studies and experiments using neuroimaging have demonstrated that, as we process passages of this kind, we experience in our cerebral cortex sensory traces related both to the movement in question and to the object it is directed at.[25] This experience is called 'motor simulation' or 'motor resonance':[26] the hand area of the cortex responds in the moment to hand-related actions described in the text and the foot area responds to foot-related actions noted there; we have evidence too of vicarious visual perception as we trace the movement of objects.[27] Furthermore, regions involved in the navigation of spatial environments are activated when we encounter indicators of movement through space. Thus, as movement through space is registered cognitively, a so-called 'multimodal image' is registered of the environment in which that movement occurs.[28] The spatial imagery that has been prompted may be fragmentary, instantaneous and extremely short-lived, but it provides an intense but momentary sense of having physically entered a tangible environment—this is that sense of 'presence', of 'being there' that we all can recognize from our own experiences of listening and reading, as, for example, along with Hector, we burst through the gates in the Achaeans' wall.[29]

On the basis of extensive support in experimental psychology for the covert movement that readers or listeners experience,[30] these sensorimotor responses, taken together, have been described as 'enactment';[31] and it is to these momentary experiences of enactment, along with the associated experience of 'presence', of 'being there', that we may attribute much of a narrative's intensity, its impact and its memorability.[32]

[24] Kuzmičova (n. 22), 24, 43–4.

[25] N. Speer, J. Reynolds, K. Swallow and J. Zacks, 'Reading stories activates neural representations of visual and motor experiences', *Psychological Science* 20 (2009), 989–99, at 995–8.

[26] See Kuzmičova (n. 22), 26 (on imagery), 29 ('imagery' implies any vicarious experience whatsoever).

[27] Kuzmičova (n. 22), 29.

[28] Kuzmičova (n. 22), 35–6.

[29] Kuzmičova (n. 22), 25–6; on intensity, see Troscianko (n. 22), 189.

[30] Kuzmičova (n. 22), 29; for experimental data, see Speer et al. (n. 25).

[31] For early use of the term: J. O'Regan and A. Noë, 'A sensorimotor account of vision and visual consciousness', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 24 (2001), 939–1031; A. Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge, MA, 2004).

[32] Kuzmičova (n. 22), 28–9, on 'presence'. When bodily actions are simulated from a first-person perspective, the reader (or listener) experiences the phenomenon of motor simulation: this becomes the

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Let us return now to the scenes on the Shield. My aim is to demonstrate that here too, as we process the poet's account of human actions and human movement, these actions and these movements create the environment in which they occur. The first example is a townscape (18.490–6):

> ἐν δὲ δύω ποιήσε πόλεις μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
> καλάς. ἐν τῇ μέν ῥα γάμοι τ' ἔσαν εἰλαπίναι τε,
> νύμφας δ' ἐκ θαλάμων δαΐδων ὕπο λαμπομενάων
> ἠγίνεον ἀνὰ ἄστυ, πολὺς δ' ὑμέναιος ὀρώρει·
> κοῦροι δ' ὀρχηστῆρες ἐδίνεον, ἐν δ' ἄρα τοῖσιν
> αὐλοὶ φόρμιγγές τε βοὴν ἔχον· αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες
> ἱστάμεναι θαύμαζον ἐπὶ προθύροισιν ἑκάστη.
>
> On it [Hephaestus] wrought in all their beauty two cities of mortal
> men. And there were marriages in one, and festivals.
> They were leading the brides along the city from their maiden chambers
> under the flaring of torches, and the loud bride song was arising.
> The young men whirled around in the dance, and among them
> the flutes and the lyres kept up their clamour as in the meantime
> the women standing each at the door of her court admired them.

In her study of motor enactment Anežka Kuzmičová tells us that, if an enactive sense of presence is to emerge in a passage of literary narrative, it is essential that the poet should have interspersed obviously dynamic indicators of human movement throughout that passage.[33] This is precisely what we find as we read lines 492–6 above. Although the default verb tense used to describe human movement throughout this series of landscapes is past progressive (or imperfect), which might represent the static nature of the scene worked on the Shield, the scene itself is presented by the poet as cinematic, as a video clip of action.[34] The effect of this representation of movement and action on us audience members is immediate; it stirs motor resonance. At lines 492–3 we leave home along with the brides and we move along the streets; we see the flaming torches and hear the wedding song: there is a suggestion of excitement in the air. We dance (494) with the young men; and we hear the sound of flute and lyre. And now changing perspective, just as Tversky suggested we might, we look out from our doorways to watch approvingly as the merry band passes by (496).

In following the movement of the brides and their escorts, we make our way through a notional three-dimensional space, a generic space, in which all this action occurs.[35] What I construct in my mind is a street in a town (although the poet does not mention a street); this street is filled with activity; there is movement and dancing. And along the street I locate houses, and in their porches I see women, like us, watching the parade.[36]

vehicle for 'presence and immersion'. The phenomenon was recognized also in the ancient world (Pl. *Ion* 535).

[33] Kuzmičova (n. 22), 33.

[34] This video clip of action has no beginning and no end-point. It is simply a clip. On this, see, briefly, Marg (n. 15), 29. Recent work on the Greek imperfect suggests that it serves to create in the mind of the listener or reader an impression of ongoing events ('as if they are seen on the spot'): J. Grethlein, 'The presence of the past in Thucydides', in A. Tsakmakis and M. Tamiolaki (edd.), *Thucydides between History and Literature* (Berlin and Boston, 2013), 91–118, at 96.

[35] Just as the space is generic so is the activity within it: no one is named in the scenes on the Shield —by contrast with the Iliadic narrative: Marg (n. 15), 32–3.

[36] On the motif of the spectator, see below.

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As we process the poet's description we do not consciously build up a picture, or a map, in our heads, as Taylor and Tversky suggest; rather, through the language cues that we receive, we gradually acquaint ourselves with a three-dimensional environment, factoring in as we proceed the landscape elements that we need. In the absence of further information from the poet, we draw on our own memory store to supply generic non-locative data: my memory store, for example, provides rough paving in the street and stone facades for the houses.[37]

It must be the case, therefore, that any one audience member's representation of the setting in which this action takes place will not be exactly the same as another's; nor will it be what the poet himself has envisaged.[38] Our imaginative responses will certainly not have the accuracy and the completeness of a detailed picture; such an outcome would be cognitively unrealistic—unrealistic for the poet to present and unrealistic for his audience to process.[39] In this first city-scene, the street and the houses that line it are represented vaguely. They are shadowy forms; but they are adequate for the purpose. What we listeners or readers bring to mind will be just enough to allow us to make sense of the action represented: a scene of joyful celebration in a small community.

It is remarkable that, although the poet is describing a representation in metal, he invites us to observe the sounds that accompany the bridal procession that he describes: we register the bridal song (ὑμέναιος, 493), the sound of flutes and lyres and the shouting (αὐλοὶ φόρμιγγές τε βοὴν ἔχον, 495). This aural information has nothing to do with landscape, if we are thinking only of visual elements, but it contributes another dimension to the cognitive assemblage that represents *this* landscape.[40]

Finally, before we leave this example, we should pause over the image of the spectator: the women, that is, who offer a survey perspective on the merry bridal procession as they trace out their route. The poet has used this same device for the same purpose on three other occasions in this series of cameos: the constellation of the Bear which keeps an eye on Orion (18.487–8), the king who quietly surveys his reapers (18.556–7), and the crowd that watches the dancers (18.603–4). In each case the watcher takes pleasure in the scene—and frames it.[41] And yet, in using this device in this context, the poet is playing with his audience. We believe initially that we are witnessing the construction of a series of images on a shield; and yet, as we study each image while it is being constructed, we find ourselves embedded in the scene both by our enactive responses to human movement of all kinds and by the poet's insistence that we take the cue from his silent observers within the landscape, and enjoy the scene he presents.[42]

After the celebration of the wedding the poet takes us to a judgement-scene in this well-ordered community and from that scene he proceeds to his second town, which,

[37] Cf. Miller (n. 19), 358–63. The houses we bring to mind may not resemble the houses of the ancient world (as we have come to know them); they are instead a convenient approximation. We draw on a resource of generic imagery to supply this material.

[38] Miller (n. 19), 360; for discussion, see Troscianko (n. 22), 185–96 (who notes that 'indeterminacy is a capacity, not a constraint', 187).

[39] Miller (n. 19), 360: 'the vagueness of the image is critical to its utility'; Troscianko (n. 22), 187–8.

[40] On the poet's use of synaesthetic effects: Squire (n. 3), 161. On the inclusion of aural information, see also de Jong (n. 14), 30.

[41] On the participants' pleasure in communal life, see Edwards (n. 6), 208–9.

[42] On the poet's cues: W. Wyatt, 'Homer in performance: *Iliad* 1.348–427', *CJ* 83 (1987–8), 289–97.

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like Troy itself, feels the pressures of war; life is chaotic (18.509–40).[43] From there he moves to landscape proper, my second example. This is a rich agricultural landscape, a scene of productive order that, simply by its co-location in the narrative of the Shield's creation, provides vivid contrast to that city at war. The poet takes us now to a field dotted with human figures (18.541–6):

> ἐν δ' ἐτίθει νειὸν μαλακὴν πίειραν ἄρουραν
> εὐρεῖαν τρίπολον· πολλοὶ δ' ἀροτῆρες ἐν αὐτῇ
> ζεύγεα δινεύοντες ἐλάστρεον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.
> οἱ δ' ὁπότε στρέψαντες, ἱκοίατο τέλσον ἀρούρης,
> τοῖσι δ' ἔπειτ' ἐν χερσὶ δέπας μελιηδέος οἴνου
> δόσκεν ἀνὴρ ἐπιών· τοὶ δὲ στρέψασκον ἀν' ὄγμους, . . .
>
> [Hephaestus] was making on [the Shield] a soft field, the pride of the tilled land,
> wide and triple-ploughed, with many ploughmen upon it
> who wheeled their teams at the turn and drove them in either direction.
> And as these making their turn would reach the end-strip of the field,
> a man would come up to them at this point and hand them a flagon
> of honey-sweet wine, and they would turn again to the furrows, . . .

The length of this field is marked out by the movement of the ploughmen, its breadth by that of the man who approaches them at each furrow's end with a refreshing drink. The evocation of this agricultural landscape through our enactive experience is supplemented by a number of epithets that elaborate on the richness of the land and on a bountiful lifestyle for those who reap its harvests: we find a soft fertile field that is wide and triple-ploughed (νειὸν μαλακὴν πίειραν ἄρουραν | εὐρεῖαν τρίπολον, 541–2); and those who plough it are offered wine that is μελιηδής, honey-sweet, 545.

Later again, and this is my third example, we are in a vineyard surrounded by a fence (18.561–72). The landscape is introduced through some sustained visual detail (18.561–5):

> ἐν δ' ἐτίθει σταφυλῇσι μέγα βρίθουσαν ἀλωὴν
> καλὴν χρυσείην· μέλανες δ' ἀνὰ βότρυες ἦσαν,
> ἑστήκει δὲ κάμαξι διαμπερὲς ἀργυρέῃσιν.
> ἀμφὶ δὲ κυανέην κάπετον, περὶ δ' ἕρκος ἔλασσε
> κασσιτέρου·
>
> [Hephaestus] was making on it a great vineyard heavy with clusters,
> lovely and in gold, but the grapes upon it were darkened
> and the vines themselves stood out through poles of silver. About them
> he made a field-ditch of dark metal, and drove all around this
> a fence of tin;

As he does throughout his account of the creation of the Shield, the poet's description of the vineyard emerges through a representation of the god at work, as narrative:[44] the interventions of the god at line 561 (ἐν δ' ἐτίθει) and again at line 564 (περὶ . . .

[43] On the city under siege and the relation of this account to the main narrative, see Alden (n. 3), 60–7.

[44] In specifying these metals the poet reminds us that this is a work of art; but he quickly moves beyond that limitation as he peoples the vineyard's paths with happy grape-pickers. An exploration of the differences between describing an actual landscape and describing the representation of a landscape is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

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ἔλασσε) ensure that this scene holds our attention. And with the introduction of a path in the following line, at 565, the poet introduces human presence (18.566–72):

μία δ' οἵη ἀταρπιτὸς ἦεν ἐπ' αὐτήν,
τῇ νίσοντο φορῆες ὅτε τρυγόῳεν ἀλωήν.
παρθενικαὶ δὲ καὶ ἠΐθεοι ἀταλὰ φρονέοντες
πλεκτοῖς ἐν ταλάροισι φέρον μελιηδέα καρπόν.
τοῖσιν δ' ἐν μέσσοισι πάϊς φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ
ἱμερόεν κιθάριζε, λίνον δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν ἄειδε
λεπταλέῃ φωνῇ· τοὶ δὲ ῥήσσοντες ἀμαρτῇ
μολπῇ τ' ἰυγμῷ τε ποσὶ σκαίροντες ἕποντο.

and there was only one path to the vineyard,
and along it ran the grape-bearers for the vineyard's stripping.
Young girls and young men, in all their light-hearted innocence,
carried the kind, sweet fruit away in their woven baskets,
and in their midst a youth with a singing lyre played charmingly
upon it for them, and sang the beautiful song for Linos
in a light voice, and they followed him, and with singing and whistling
and light dance-steps of their feet kept time to the music.

The grape-pickers run along the track, carrying off the fruit, in the company of a lad playing on his lyre, whose song sets the pace as they skip along. The abundance of indicators of movement and sound (the notes of the lyre, the singing, whistling, and thump of feet on the ground) brings this landscape to life. The relevant areas of our brain respond. And, along with this enactive experience, there is the poet's elaborative material to factor in: the fresh youth of the participants and the pleasing image of baskets of sweet fruit.

There is an interesting contrast between the two components of this scene. What we focus on is not so much the vineyard itself but the path that leads away from it. Although the path that each of us envisages may be different from the path envisaged by others, we all bring to mind a generic track, from a route perspective, and we each develop an individual cognitive assemblage, drawing on the effects of motor resonance as we follow the action, and factoring in the elaborative information that the poet has offered us.

CONCLUSIONS

When we talk about the Shield of Achilles, we talk about its landscapes: these are what linger in our minds. And yet we have seen that the poet does not describe each scene in detail; rather, he creates each landscape largely through his report on human action within it; this is description through motor imagery. And he relies on his audience members to supply from their own memory stores, even as Quintilian, long ago, suggested, the generic material that fills out each scene. The poet is clearly reluctant to engage in extended landscape description in and of itself. This observation makes sense, as both George Miller and Emily Troscianko have pointed out that detailed descriptions are cognitively extravagant, especially in an oral context; because of their special nature they make extraordinary demands on the poet who composes in performance—and on his or her audiences.[45] Indeed, many readers and listeners today tend to assign a negative

[45] An oral poet finds it harder to compose extended descriptive passages, for which he has no

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value to extended descriptive passages. Recent studies reveal that, when we encounter such passages on the page or even aurally, we do not set about developing detailed images in our minds; for the most part, it seems, such long passages try our patience.[46] For this reason the poet of the *Iliad* responded, perhaps intuitively, to his own reluctance and that of his audiences to engage with sustained description.[47] He has not invested poetic energy in the generation of such material: a significant consideration for an oral poet.

But when we think about how we bring a landscape—any landscape—to mind and what it is that we 'see', it is useful to acknowledge the two ways that have been identified in this paper of envisaging panoramic scenery. One approach, as we have observed, is through an account of topography (and in this respect Taylor and Tversky's three-dimensional spatial models are most helpful). The other approach, especially in the absence of substantial topographical information, is to view landscape as a realm of experience; and in this case we can use information gleaned from a range of sources to fill out what I call a cognitive assemblage. As my reading of the scenes on the Shield has shown, neither model alone is sufficient for explanatory purposes. Instead, I propose that, as we engage with this imagined *ekphrasis*, we create a cognitive assemblage from a range of information of different kinds. We register the meagre topographical information the poet gives us—fixed points such as houses or trees, the positions of individuals relative to each other, and fragments of route and survey perspectives; we use our own sensorimotor responses to the human action he describes to evoke spatial dimensions and to navigate them; and we supply from our own memory store a certain amount of generic imagery as required. As enrichment we add the poet's elaborative material, factoring in the epithets he uses as well as the information he suggests about emotion: the joy, grief, happiness and pride that are at different times evoked in these scenes. And there is aural information as well. What we develop in each case is not a coherent cognitive structure. Each scene on the Shield is a loosely defined multimedia assemblage, one that comprises information of different kinds.[48] My assemblage may be different from yours. And yet, as we work at this cognitive task, and as we register the multiple cues suggested by the poet, we find pleasure in our achievement: in being able to envisage to our own satisfaction the lively scenes that he suggests to us.[49] Herein lies their impact and their memorability—as landscapes.

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supporting template, than narrative passages with their strong storyline, for which he has recourse to scripted memory. On this see, for example, Minchin (n. 1), 100–31, at 112–19. A poet who composes at leisure, in writing, faces no such limitation.

[46] Troscianko (n. 22), 188.

[47] Cf. Troscianko (n. 22), 188 on writers and readers: 'literary descriptions which keep things short and simple may work better in terms of eliciting an engaged and fluent imaginative response from the reader.'

[48] This mind-based account overlaps with Leach's discussion of engagement with the Shield (Leach [n. 4], 12–14). Note her comment (at 13): 'verisimilitude and narrative coherence are not intrinsic properties of the shield, but rather come into being as the spectator lends animation to the images … It becomes a microcosmic replica of nature because the spectator supplies this coherence.'

[49] On the engagement that readers or listeners feel when they are active participants in a story event, see Troscianko (n. 22), 188; and on the pleasure audiences find in the processing experience, see R. Reber, N. Schwarz and P. Winkielman, 'Processing fluency and aesthetic pleasure: is beauty in the perceiver's processing experience?', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 8 (2004), 364–82.

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