

The chronotopic level of the structuring of space in Prudentius's *Cathemerinon* 7*

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Summary

In order to put the whole question of the chronotopic level in the right perspective the three levels of space (identified by Gabriel Zoran), i.e. topographical, chronotopic and textual, are by way of orientation and introduction briefly characterized. The aims of this study are (a) to apply the chronotopic principle (based on Zoran's theory of space in narrative) to the narrative components in the text of Prudentius's *Cathemerinon* 7, (b) to distinguish between and to discuss the synchronic and diachronic situations and relationships to be found in this hymn, and (c) to determine the functionality of the "chronotopos" in this text.

Explanations are offered for the fact that Prudentius's special treatment of the plot material differs significantly from the Biblical intertext on the chronotopic as well as on the textual level. In this article it is claimed that meaning is conveyed through the "chronotopos". From the textual evidence it also becomes clear that the plot's significance and message (especially in the Jonah episode) are considerably strengthened by the chronotopic structuring of the narrative space.

It is finally concluded that the *spatial* (to a larger extent than the temporal) dimension of the "chronotopos" proves to be extremely functional in this hymn, not only in accentuating the importance of the fast, but also in respect of the latter's consequences and ultimate aim.

Opsomming

Ten einde die chronotopiese vlak in narratiewe ruimte in perspektief te bring, word die drie ruimtelike vlakke (soos deur Gabriel Zoran beskryf), d.w.s. die topografiese, chronotopiese en tekstuele vlak, by wyse van oriëntering en inleiding kortliks getipeer. Die doelstellings van hierdie artikel is (a) om die chronotopiese beginsel (gebaseer op Zoran se teorie van narratiewe ruimte) op die narratiewe gedeeltes in die teks van Prudentius se *Cathemerinon* 7 toe te pas, (b) om die sinchroniese en diachroniese momente en verhoudings wat in hierdie himne voorkom, te onderskei en te bespreek en (c) om die funksionaliteit van die "chronotopos" in hierdie teks te bepaal.

Moontlike verklarings word gebied vir die feit dat Prudentius se besondere hantering van die plotmateriaal op die chronotopiese sowel as die tekstuele vlak betekenisvol van die Bybelse interteks verskil. Verder word aangevoer dat die "chronotopos" betekenisdraend is. Uit die teks word geïllustreer dat die betekenis en boodskap van die plot/verwikkellingsplan (veral in die Jona-verhaal) aansienlik deur die chronotopiese struktuurering van die narratiewe ruimte versterk word.

Ten slotte word tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat die *ruimtelike* (in 'n groter mate as die temporale) dimensie van die "chronotopos" besonder funksioneel in hierdie himne blyk te wees, nie alleen t.o.v. die beklemtoning van die belangrikheid van die vas nie, maar ook t.o.v. lg. se gevolge en uiteindelijke doelwit.

1 Introduction

The following study of the chronotopic level of space in the narrative components of the seventh hymn in Prudentius's *Cathemerinon* is based on Gabriel

Zoran's theory of narrative space. The aim of his theory is to present a general model of the structuring of space within the narrative text (Zoran, 1984: 309-335). He distinguishes three levels of space in the text, i.e. the topographical, chronotopic and textual (Zoran, 1984: 315).

1.1 Since the reader perceives space and its aspects on these three levels at once, together, and one through the other, without being able to separate them (Zoran, 1984: 316), our discussion will, from a practical point of view, and for the sake of convenience, be limited to the *chronotopic* level of the structuring of space (Barkhuizen and Mans, 1988: forthcoming). Therefore, in order to see the whole question of the chronotopic level in the right perspective, a brief introductory orientation as to the nature of all three these levels of space, important in their mutual relationships as they are, seems imperative.

The three levels of space in a narrative text as a whole:

1.1.1 On the level of the *topographical* structure of the reconstructed world, space is perceived as "self-existent and independent of the temporal structure of the world and the sequential arrangement of the text" (Zoran, 1984: 316). This structure forms a kind of map, based on elements from the entire text. This map is constructed according to horizontal oppositions (inside vs. outside, far vs. near etc.), vertical oppositions (up vs. down), patterns of quality (colours, substances, types), and ontological principles, i.e. modes of existence (world of gods and world of men; world of monsters and world of men).

1.1.2 The level of *chronotopic* structure. Contrary to Bakhtin (in *PTL* transcribed as Baxtin) (Bakhtin, 1978: 493-523) Zoran uses the term "chronotopos" (spacetime) not to signify the totality of space and time, but to describe a specific aspect, viz. the *integration of spatial and temporal categories of movement and change*, a concept that will also be implemented in this study.

1.1.3 The *textual* level refers to "the structure imposed on space by the fact that it is signified within the verbal text" (Zoran, 1984: 315). Put differently, it refers to the *organization of the reconstructed world, based on the linguistic nature of the text*. This linguistic nature comprises three aspects (Zoran, 1984: 319-322):

(a) Selection

Language cannot express and exhaust all aspects of space, and this results in a verbal selection which brings about information gaps to be filled in by the reader during the process of reading (Sternberg, 1985: 186; Perry and Sternberg, 1986: 275-278).

(b) Linearity

According to the principle of the temporal continuum of language the text passes from one unit of space to another. Space is thus expressed linearly.

(c) Perspective

The spatial perspective expressed in the text is based on a binary opposition of *here-there*, so that within the reconstructed world we have the perspective of foreground vs. background.

2 The purpose of this study will then be:

- to apply the chronotopic principle, as Zoran understands it, to the narrative components in the text of the seventh hymn in Prudentius's *Cathemerinon*;
- to distinguish between and to discuss the *synchronic* and *diachronic* relationships to be found in the chronotopic structure of this hymn;
- to determine the functionality of the “chronotopos” in this text.

3 Distinction between Synchronic and Diachronic situations

3.1 Synchronic situations

Within the chronotopic structure (dependent on the plot) of the reconstructed world Zoran distinguishes between synchronic and diachronic relationships. Firstly, the synchronic relations are those of motion and rest. At every synchronic situation in the narrative, objects or characters are at rest or in motion. The latter terms call for some explanation. The term “rest” does not refer to inactivity, but to “the state of being bound to a given spatial context” (Zoran, 1984: 318). The term “motion” is used with reference to a synchronic situation in which a character, although moving about freely, but without any defined direction or destination in space, is bound to one single context only, e.g. an island, a city or a ship.

3.2 Diachronic situations

Secondly, *diachronically* seen, movement in space, on the other hand, refers to “the ability to cut oneself off from spatial context and to switch over to different contexts” (Zoran, 1984: 318). The diachronic relations therefore refer to defined directions in space, and space is thus structured as a network of axes of movement having definite directions and a definite character. Objects or characters in one narrative may move from point a to point b, in another from b to a, with stations on the way between the point of departure and the target. A movement in space is a result of several powers, such as will, obstructions, ideal, characters' intentions etc. (Zoran, 1984: 318-319). The above-mentioned relations will be illustrated from the text later on.

3.3 *Cathemerinon 7*: outline of the structure

After the level of chronotopic structure has been briefly introduced and characterized by differentiating between synchronic and diachronic relations, the narrative parts in the text of Prudentius's *Cathemerinon 7* can now be

analysed in search of the above mentioned relationships. But first an outline of the structure should be given:

- (a) Prologue (1-25): *Invocatio*: “O Nazarene, lux Bethlehem, . . .”
 (“O Nazarene, Light of Bethlehem,”)
 “adesto Christe, . . .” (“be present, Christ, . . .”) (vv. 1-4).
Doxology: “lux Bethlehem, Verbum Patris . . . nostrum rex” (“Light of Bethlehem, Word of the Father . . . as our King”) (vv. 1-4).
 The theme is introduced: the fast (vv. 3-5).
 Extension of the theme (vv. 6-25)
 Prologue liturgical and thematic in nature.
- (b) Narrative (26-195): *Exempla of Fasting*

Exposition:

1. 26-35: Elias fasting in the desert.
2. 36-45: Moses fasting on the mountain Sinai.
3. 46-80: John fasting in wide solitude.
4. 81-175: Indulgence and eventual fast of inhabitants in the city of Nineveh; Jonah’s, and specifically God’s role in bringing Nineveh back to obedience again.

It is interesting to note that the episode comprising vv. 81-175, is a *complete plot* on its own, embedded in one of the hymn’s most forceful and distinct narrative components:

- 81-100: Nineveh’s indulgence gives rise to God’s wrath which is temporarily restrained.
- 101-140: Result of Nineveh’s disobedience and God’s wrath:
 Jonah’s mission, disobedience, flight and return to Nineveh:
 (i) Jonah’s intention to flee to Tarshish.
 (ii) God’s will: Jonah must go to Nineveh.
 (iii) Jonah’s return to Nineveh, his making for the mountain top:
 Jonah’s unmentioned, but inferable bitterness (more prominent in the Biblical Jonah).
- 141-170: Nineveh’s repentance.
- 171-175: Denouement: God’s mercy and forgiveness.
 Nineveh is saved.
5. 176-19: Jesus fasting in a remote inhospitable place.
- (c) Epilogue 196-220: *Exhortation*: to follow Christ’s example.

3.4 Application of the chronotopic principle

In order to distinguish between diachronic and synchronic relationships oc-

curing in the text, these relations will in each scene or episode be clearly indicated and discussed:

3.4.1 Vv. 26-35: Elias fasting in the desert

An analysis of lines 26-35 reveals a synchronic relation as well as a diachronic line. We first come across a synchronic situation determined by the narrative. In strophe six (vv. 26-30), for example, we initially find Elias, the priest of old, in a remote, dry land. Here it seems justified to accept Zoran's view that "rest" is the state of being bound to a given spatial context (in this case the remote, dry land), and also justifiable to conclude that in this spatial context the apparently inactive Elias, from a diachronic point of view, *appears* to be a character at rest:

"It was by such observance that Elias, the priest of old, grew strong, when he was a sojourner in a dry land, and they say that thus remote and separate from all the noise of the world he put from him a multitude of sins while he enjoyed the pure silence of the desert".**

However, a diachronic line can be observed in the reconstructed space of the given narrative in strophe seven (vv. 31-35), where Elias is cut off from one spatial context, i.e. the remote desert, and "afterwards" (which suggests a temporal dimension) switched over to another, i.e. heaven ("in auras"):

"But afterwards he was carried away by horses of fire in a swift-flying chariot and soared into the breezes, . . ."

Although one would at first be inclined to regard Elias as a character engaged in activity in a situation merely synchronic of nature, the actual movement of being carried away into the sky, is not only a result of God's will, but also a definite direction of movement determined by the "chronotopos": from the earth (the point of departure) up into the sky (the target) (Zoran, 1984: 318-319). It becomes evident that Elias surely has a capacity for movement, and his movement in this particular context is a defined direction in space. Therefore, on account of the diachronic line along which Elias's movement can clearly be distinguished, Elias in this narrative must be seen as a character in motion.

The functionality, if any, of the synchronic and diachronic relations in the above strophes, six and seven, (vv. 26-35), needs to be determined. In strophe six (vv. 26-30) the narrative reconstructs a *separate* wide open space, i.e. a remote, isolating desert, thus creating at this point in the text a synchronic situation which definitely not only reinforces the impact of the fast, but by way of Elias's abstinence from worldly sins also accentuates the purification of his soul: "lest from the near contagion of filth the fell world should breathe upon a man at peace, whose fasts approved had given him renown".

He is isolated from the civilized world in order to put to the test his basic characteristics as a human being and servant of God (Van der Moere, 1982: 126, 142; Bakhtin, 1986: 106).

The dramatic and dynamic ascension of Elias in strophe seven (vv. 31-35) is also aimed at the prevention of pollution by secular impurity. The significance

of the diachronic movement here also lies in its emphasis on the purification of Elias's soul. It is not only interesting to note, but also of great significance, that the *spatial* aspect of the "chronotopos" in these two relations is here not only more prominent, but also *much more forceful* than the *temporal*.

3.4.2 Vv. 36-45: Moses fasting on mount Sinai

Since Moses, the next character in strophes eight and nine (vv. 36-45), is tied to the spatial context of mount Sinai, *praying* and *waiting* for forty days to see the Lord, this narrative part can be defined as a synchronic situation, while Moses can be termed a character at rest. The movement of the sun "is, so to speak, incarnated in space." (Zoran, 1984: 319; Bakhtin, 1986: 209). Space (the sun's orbit and the space taken up by the constellations as well as the spatial context of mount Sinai) and time (the sun's movement of forty days) are thus combined in the narrative.

The synchronic situation in which we find Moses, consisting of a single spatial context (the dust and ground of the mountain) to which he is bound, and of the dimension of time (forty days), enables the narrator to focus more sharply on man's humiliation and repentance during a fast. (See also 4.1.1 below.)

3.4.3 Vv. 46-80: John's fasting in wide solitude

John's going before the Son of God in strophes ten and eleven (vv. 46-55), can be determined as movement in space, i.e. the earth (Brink, 1987: 107), having, as it initially appears, no definite direction (Zoran, 1984: 319). It will become evident, however, that John, moving about freely on earth, is, given the narrative, not bound to a single spatial context. In fact, John's character, as Prudentius renders it, reveals the capacity for movement: it should be pointed out that within this particular narrative the text continuum moves from his making a way for God on *earth* (spatiality) to the spatial context of his mother's *womb*, i.e. his birth, (not, as it should be, from his mother's womb to the earth), "into the *wide solitudes*," ("in patentes . . . solitudines", v. 61) and then to the spatiality of the *consecrated stream* ("nam sacratio in flumine", v. 72), i.e. the baptizing of men: the actual target that God had in mind for John. All this can be seen as *movement* and *change* brought about by an *integration* of *spatial* and *temporal* categories which must be described as a diachronic relation. It can also be imagined as a field of power directed by the will of God.

Attention must, however, also be drawn to the synchronic situation to be observed in the wide solitudes where John, wrapped in shaggy skins of beasts or covered with rough and coarse wool (cf. Math 3:4), dreaded defilement and corruption, and lived sparsely with devoted abstinence (strophes 13 and 14, vv. 61-70). Although temporarily bound to the single spatial context of the earth (vv. 46-55), John is cut loose from it and switched over to his mother's womb (vv. 56-60) by means of a hysteron proteron or *inversion of the natural*

order or what Genette would call an anachrony (Genette, 1980: 35-47), then he is withdrawn into the wide solitudes (vv. 61-70):

John was no less a master of this power, 46
 he who went before the Son of the everlasting God,
 who made straight the crooked paths
 and by setting right the twisting ways
 gave a direct course to follow. 50

This service the messenger made ready beforehand,
 making a way for God who was presently to come,
 so that the steep places should be changed to level and the rough places to
 smooth,
 and that Truth coming to the earth should find no devious way. 55

No common birth was his:
 it was a late child that strained nipples that had forgotten their milk,
 on his mother's shrunken breast;
 and ere he was brought forth from her aged womb
 he proclaimed a virgin pregnant with God. 60

Afterwards he withdrew into the wide solitudes, . . .

Diachronically seen, however, and as previously stated, the *actual chronological point of departure* (in the real world) would be John's mother's *womb*; then would follow his subsequent making a way for God on *earth*, and his stay in the *wide solitudes*, both being spatial stations on the way. The preaching and teaching of the new salvation, and especially the cleansing of the tainted bodies (vv. 71-80), the latter, of course, referring to the baptism in the *consecrated stream*, must be seen as John's divinely-destined target.

The synchronic spatial context of his mother's *womb*, the synchronic stations on the way, i.e. John's work as God's herald on *earth*, and the fast in the *desert*, respectively bring certain aspects of John's life on earth into perspective: first of all, while John was still in his mother's womb (vv. 56-60), the forecast of Christ's birth (Luke 1: 41; supplemented in the hymn text by "ad-futuro . . . Deo", "for God who was presently to come") is given prominence by means of the inversion of the natural order (i.e. from his mother's womb(birth) to earth). Then we have John's preparatory work on earth as God's messenger (vv. 46-55), and last, but not the least, his abstinence which leads to the purification of the soul, and the accentuation of the fast (vv. 61-70). All these stations, of course, lead to the actual target, viz. the baptism and rebirth of men on *earth*, symbolized by the spatiality of the consecrated stream.

3.4.4 Vv. 86-100: Indulgence of Nineveh's inhabitants

At the following point of the narrative, strophes 17-20 (vv. 86-100), the inhabitants of Nineveh, given over to indulgence, disregarding the worship of God, and tied to the city of Nineveh, are involved in activity but, according to

the narrative in the text, reveal no ability to cut themselves off from the spatial context of the city, and are thus found to be in a synchronic situation.

This situation underlines the cause of God's wrath: Nineveh's indulgence and disregard for the worship of God. It also emphasizes the promise of a brief space for repentance.

3.4.5 Vv. 101-140: Jonah's flight to Tarshish and his return to Nineveh

Lines 101-140 of this narrative text offer the most sustained examples of synchronic and diachronic relationships. On the chronotopic level I have encountered numerous examples of both synchronic and diachronic relations. These situations will subsequently be distinguished and discussed.

In strophe 21 (vv. 101-105) the disobedient prophet Jonah flees in secret to Tarshish, *his* target:

"but he, knowing that the Judge who threatened would rather save than strike and punish, *flees in secret* and turns his steps *privily* to Tarshish." (my italics)

This flight is a defined direction in space as a result of *Jonah's will* or *his intention* to get away from God. Consequently a diachronic relation can in this regard be observed in the narrative. In the next strophe (vv. 106-110) we find Jonah moving from the land (from his suggested, and unknown residence), onto a ship. The vessel sails and they make their way over the deep. In this given narrative, one moves from the land onto the ship, to the deep sea, and then en route to *Jonah's* initial target, Tarshish. Movement, and, of course, time are here incarnated in space while the actual direction of movement is determined by the chronotopic structure (Zoran, 1984: 319).

In the above mentioned strophe (vv. 106-110) along the same diachronic line, we come across a synchronic situation when, on board ship on their way to Tarshish, the sea grows stormy and search is made by the sailors for the cause. The lot is cast and falls on the fugitive Jonah. Contrary to the Biblical version, the sailors in Prudentius's account of the situation are merely implied. These *impersonally* rendered characters on board ship, although moving about, are bound to a single context, i.e. that of the space of the ship, and are therefore, in *contrast* to Jonah (who will prove to be a character in motion), characters at rest.

In strophe 23 (vv. 111-115), the diachronic line is continued when the chronotopic structure again determines a defined direction in space: Jonah is hurled and plunged in the deep, then caught in a monster's jaws, and swallowed alive. This movement, or rather change in course, is the result of a certain power, i.e. the will of God. Once inside, however, he passes swiftly over and escapes the stroke of the teeth, flies over the tongue, passes right through the mouth and beyond the palate. At this point in the narrative (vv. 116-125), temporarily tied to a single spatial context, i.e. the belly of the monster, Jonah finds himself in another synchronic situation. He nevertheless still has the textually given ability to move. This movement does also contain the ability to cut Jonah off from one spatial context and to switch him over to a different one. He therefore remains a character in motion. This situation is

an excellent example of space and time being combined: while time is passing outside, he is a character *on the move*, but *inside* the *spatial* context of the monster's belly:

While three days and nights went by he remained engulfed in the beast's maw, wandering there in the darkness of its inward parts . . . (vv. 121-125).

The diachronic motion is resumed in strophe 26 (vv. 126-130) the moment the monster spews him out: "From thence, when the third night comes round, the monster retching spews him out unharmed; . . .". This movement, as a matter of fact Jonah's entire flight and return to Nineveh (the ultimate target), forming an axis of movement, is definitely a result of God's will. The word "coactus" ("perforce") in the next strophe ("Back to Nineveh *perforce* (my italics) he turns with quickened step . . ." vv. 131-135), not only furnishes us with much stronger evidence of God's will resulting in the disobedient Jonah's quick return to Nineveh, but also stresses the conflict and tension that exist between *Jonah's intention* and *God's stronger will*; tension between the journey to *Jonah's intended target*, i.e. Tarshish, and the journey with *Nineveh* as destination, which *God* had in mind for Jonah. Jonah also makes for another target, the peak of a high mountain (i.e. a deviation), to see from there the smoke etc., i.e. the "destruction" of Nineveh (vv. 136-140). Once again this movement is a result of *Jonah's intention*. A field of powers can be observed in vv. 101-140 which reaches its climax in the form of a synchronic relation, when Jonah shelters under the shoots of a plant on the mountain top and enjoys the shade.

3.4.5.1 Finally, one can assert that Jonah moves from point A (the unknown residence on land, the point of departure) onto the ship, into the sea, into the monster, onto the shore, and then to point B (Nineveh: the actual target). The ship, the sea, the monster and the shore can be defined as *stations on the way*, and his making for the peak of the mountain as a *deviation*. This defined direction in space, as it occurs in vv. 101-140, clearly indicates a diachronic relation, and Jonah's movements in space, respectively determined by either Jonah's intention or God's will, may be regarded as a network of axes of movement (Zoran, 1984: 319).

3.4.5.2 The synchronic situation on the ship elucidates Jonah's illusion that this vehicle would save him from God's wrath and take him to Tarshish, and that the sailors would come to his rescue. However, God brings about the opposite, i.e. Jonah is thrown overboard. The next synchronic situation, with respect to Jonah's safety, is in perfect contrast to the one mentioned previously. When Jonah is subsequently swallowed by the monster, he must have been convinced that this would be the end of him, proof of which we find in line 30: "seque servatum stupet," "amazed at his preservation." This "fish" proves to be his salvation – again the result of God's will.

3.4.5.3 The point of departure (the land), the stations on the way (the ship, the sea, the monster, the shore), and the target (Nineveh) render a sequence of spaces differing in size and dimensions: e.g. vast space (land, implied in vv.

101-105), followed by limited space (the ship, v. 106); vast space (the sea, vv. 108-113) vs. enclosed (=limited) space (the monster, vv. 114-125); relatively “unlimited” space (the shore, vv. 128-129) finally alternated with limited space (Nineveh and the mountain, vv. 131, 136). It is as though the focus is “zoomed” in on Nineveh when this series of spatial dimensions ends in the *limited* spaces of Nineveh and the mountain. The *spatial* aspect of the “chronotopos” here is of paramount importance, i.e. with regard to the *plot* it is much more forceful than time, the other aspect or dimension of spacetime. *Each station on the way takes the disobedient Jonah closer to the goal God destined for him.*

3.4.5.4 From the outset Jonah’s purpose was clear, and the spatial structure was directed at a particular goal (Van der Moere, 1982: 133). Once Jonah’s flight is initiated his movements become a dynamic and dramatic diachronic line along which *movement* and *change* rapidly follow each other (Brink, 1987: 21). This diachronic structuring of the “chronotopos” takes the reader, and Jonah, of course, on a most remarkable journey through alternating spatial contexts to God’s real target, i.e. the city of Nineveh, and God’s ultimate objective, viz. mankind’s obedience to and reconciliation with Him.

3.4.6 vv. 141-170: Nineveh’s fast and repentance

When in strophes 29-34 (vv. 141-170), the reader is once again brought back to Nineveh, its inhabitants are *rushing to and fro* in crowds all about the wide city. Judging from the information given in the text they are most certainly characters moving freely about in the city, but, and this is important to note, although active, they are bound to the single given context of the city of Nineveh. Therefore, since they reveal no ability to cut themselves off from the spatial context of the city and switch over to different contexts, they must be termed characters at rest.

This synchronic situation enables the narrator not only to focus on the repentance, humiliation and self-chastisement resulting from the fast, but also on God’s forgiveness. The limited space of the city is made much more forceful by the synchronic situation: the inhabitants, with no hope of escaping, are *bound* to the city awaiting God’s sentence.

3.4.7 Vv. 176-195: Jesus fasting in a remote inhospitable place

In strophes 36-37 reference is made to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in fact the words “caducis cum gravatus artubus,” “when He was burdened with a mortal body” (v. 177), “Emmanuel”, “nobiscum Deus?”, “Emmanuel, God with us?” (v. 180), and “membris sit receptus terreis,” “whether it is God that has been received in an earthly body;” (v. 194), suggest Christ’s *descent* from heaven to earth, and His becoming a mortal. This suggested *movement* through space must be ascribed to God’s will. It is an example of a “chronotopos” which entitles us to define this relation as diachronic of nature, and Christ as a character in *motion*. The point of departure being heaven and the target earth, i.e., metaphorically speaking, the liberation of man’s body and

spirit. We encounter yet another example of the combination of space and time in strophe 38 (vv. 186-190):

“For, living remote in an inhospitable place, while forty days passed He never claimed the pleasant taste of food, . . .”

The remote inhospitable place (space) mentioned in strophe 38 (vv. 186-190), and the forty days that passed (time) result in a chronotopic structuring of space, a synchronic situation which reinforces the theme of the hymn, i.e. the fast, and the eventual liberation of body and soul.

4 Concluding remarks

Before a final conclusion can be drawn, the following decisive observations and concluding remarks should, however, be considered:

Although most of the plot detail in Prudentius’s version of, for example, Moses’s fast and meeting with God, of the abstinence of Elias and his ascension, and of the story of Jonah, also appear in the Biblical intertext, Prudentius’s special treatment of the plot material in the narrative parts of *Cathemerinon* 7 differs significantly from the Biblical intertext, on the chronotopic as well as on the textual level.

4.1 Chronotopic level

4.1.1 Diachronic line

The Moses episode

On the diachronic line the narrator changes the order of the two synchronic situations, i.e. Moses’s meeting with God, and the former’s fast, by letting Moses’s fast precede his meeting with God, and in so doing not only differs from Ex. 24:18 and Ex. 34:28, but also brings about a climax and thus emphasizes God’s overwhelming appearance, as if it were in reward for Moses’s fast.

The Elias episode

The Biblical narration of Elias’s work on earth begins in 1 Kings 17:2-7, and two chapters further on, in 1 Kings 19:4, he flees from Jesebel, seeking refuge in the desert. It is, however, not until 2 Kings 2:11 that he is eventually carried away into heaven in a fiery chariot drawn by horses of fire. In Prudentius’s *Cathemerinon* 7 the narrator bridges this enormous information gap with one single word, “mox” (“afterwards”) in v. 31: he simply omits all the Biblical events which do not per se illustrate or accentuate the fast and abstinence. Such a drastic shortening of the diachronic line, from a literary point of view, results in a much more striking rendering of events.

The Jonah episode

A very significant reversal of the Biblical chronological order of Jonah’s withdrawal from Nineveh, and its inhabitants’ fast and repentance is to be observed in vv. 131-170: whereas in the Biblical version the fast and repentance take place first, and are then followed by Jonah’s departure from Nineveh (Jonah 3, 4:5), the order in *Cathemerinon* 7 is just the other way

about: Jonah first makes for a high mountain peak, and then Nineveh's fast and repentance follow. The narrator's purpose with this obvious change of order of the synchronic moments along the diachronic line (compare his treatment of the Moses episode above), is apparently a literary one, i.e. to focus the reader's attention much more forcefully on the fast and repentance, an episode which, by means of this same change of order, is also presented as a climax resulting in God's merciful cancellation of the guilt of men when they humble themselves, vv. 171-175.

4.1.2 Synchronic situations

The Jonah episode

As far as the synchronic situations in the Jonah narrative are concerned, it can be said that some situations which occur in the intertext are omitted, some are presented more explicitly, others more implicitly than the corresponding ones of the intertext. For example, the following synchronic moments in the Biblical version do not at all occur in *Cathemerinon 7*: Jonah in the *dark hold (or inner part)* of the ship (Jonah 1:5); Jonah in the *tranquilized sea* (Jonah 1:15); Jonah's prayer from the belly of the monster (Jonah 2:1-9), a prayer teeming with (metaphoric) spatialities such as the realm of death, the sea, the holy temple, sea weeds, mountains, and the earth; Jonah's one day travel through the city (Jonah 3:4) etc.; Jonah building a booth or shelter (Jonah 4:5); the worm attacking (by eating through the stem of) the plant (Jonah 4:7). Perhaps, for the sake of maintaining the most effective narrative quality, these synchronic situations are simply omitted or implied (Basson, 1985: 99-100).

The explicitness of the description of the monster's belly in vv. 114-125 exceeds that of the intertext (Jonah 1:17) where no details whatsoever of the monster's belly, teeth, tongue, mouth, palate, windings of its guts, and the heat of the entrails are given. Contrary to the scanty information supplied in the intertext, the shore, with its waves and rocks, is more extensively depicted in vv. 126-130. Suffice it to say that the synchronic situation of Nineveh's fast, humiliation and repentance is also much more elaborately pictured by the narrator in vv. 141-170. For example, a wide variety of persons (commons, councillors, citizens of every age, men, women, matrons, fathers, children, babes crying for food that has been withheld from them, animals plainting in foodless stalls), objects and places are referred to, all, of course, detail that are either lacking or very scantily referred to in the intertext.

4.2 Textual level

The Jonah episode

4.2.1 Selectivity

Obviously the spatialities in especially the synchronic moments are handled and depicted selectively (see Introduction 1.1.3(a)), and consequently differ

from the intertext: in some cases they are more explicitly expressed, in others more implicitly depicted.

4.2.2 Linear expression of space

The linear expression of space in the Jonah episode of *Cathemerinon* 7, as can now be expected, also differs from the linear expression of space in the intertext, e.g. the omission of events (4.1.2 above) and the change of order of Nineveh's fast and repentance, and Jonah's withdrawal from the city already referred to above.

4.2.3 Perspective

The scene presented in vv. 136-140 refers to Jonah's retreat from the city to a *mountain peak* (in Jonah 4:5 just (a place) "east of the city"), "so that we have in this movement space seen from a horizontal as well as vertical perspective, i.e. from the city (here) to the mountain (there) (horizontal), and from the mountain top (up here) down onto the city (down there) (vertical), *both oppositions symbolizing estrangement between Jonah and the inhabitants of Nineveh*. The narrator also uses patterns of quality or spatial qualifications to emphasize this estrangement: *first* by means of the idea of distance between safety (mountain top) and anticipated destruction (city), and *secondly* by means of the idea of comfort (shade) vs. anticipated dire circumstances (fire, smoke and ruins)" (Barkhuizen and Mans, 1988: forthcoming; ((here), (there), (up here), and (down there), are my additions). The perspective in this scene is undoubtedly much more forceful than in the corresponding one of the intertext, because the tension caused by the anticipated destruction not merely *exists* as in the Biblical version, but is definitely *intensified* by adding the vertical opposition, *a high mountain peak* ("apicem ... ardui montis", v. 136), and not just giving a rather vague topographic reference and *horizontal* perspective, *east of the city* (Jonah 4:5).

5. Conclusion

When it comes to a structure imposed on space by events and movements, space is not a neutral material just existing in the world, but, the "chronotopos", a combination of space and time, i.e. an integration of spatial and temporal categories of movement and change, determines a defined direction in space (Zoran, 1984: 318). Furthermore, space, and for that matter the chronotopic structuring of space, must always be regarded as a means to certain ends (Zoran, 1984: 333). Also in this text it has been indicated that the chronotopic structure is being exploited in different ways, and that meaning is conveyed through it. (Van der Moere, 1982: 142; Venter, 1985: 19-20; Brink, 1987: 108)

Judging from the above implementation of the "chronotopos" (spacetime) in the structuring of space in the narrative text, it is clear that synchronic and diachronic situations have a most central, if not dominant status, and a

meaningful purpose in this hymn, especially in the Jonah episode. The drastic shortening of the intertextual diachronic line (e.g. in the Elias episode above) results in a more effective portrayal of events. From the above evidence it can also be inferred that the omission of, as well as the explicitness or implicitness of synchronic situations are aimed at the most effective narrative quality. It has become evident in our discussion of this particular narrative that the plot unfolded in the Jonah episode is not only undoubtedly *space* orientated, but its significance and message are also considerably strengthened by the chronotopic structuring of the narrative space (Bakhtin, 1986: 243-244, 250).

Finally, in all the narrative parts of this entire hymn, the spatial dimension of the "chronotopos" (to a larger extent than the temporal) makes the accentuation of not only the fast much more forceful and effective, but proves to be particularly functional also in respect of the latter's consequences and ultimate aim, i.e. the purification of the soul, man's humiliation and repentance, as well as his obedience to and reconciliation with God.

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**The text and translation used are that of H.J. Thomson, 1969: 56-71.

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