

SPACE AND TRAVEL IN PHILO'S *LEGATIO AD GAIUM**

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This essay explores the spatiality of Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*. This includes Philo's portrayal of travel, as travels are, after all, movements in space. As will become clear, the *Legatio*, like many of Philo's writings,¹ is replete with geographical and spatial terminology. Yet apart from studies on Philo's portrayals of Alexandria² and Egypt³ or social space in the *In Flaccum*,⁴ space in Philo has not attracted the scholarly attention it deserves. What is more, even works that do consider Philo's spatial descriptions are lacking explicit engagements with and reflections on the work of spatial theorists in other disciplines, such as geography, philosophy, or literary studies.⁵ Symptomatic of this lack of spatial interest among Philo scholars is Philo's absence from a recent volume on narrative space in Greek literature.⁶ In this article I aim to argue that Philo's spatial descriptions carry evocative alongside historical and symbolic aspects, by reading the *Legatio* against the background of Henri Lefebvre's and Edward Soja's theories of space.

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¹ Cf. Sean Adams's contribution in this volume.

² Dorothy I. Sly, *Philo's Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 1996).

³ Sarah J. K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt*, WUNT 208 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

⁴ Richard Alston, "Philo's 'In Flaccum': Ethnicity and Social Space in Roman Alexandria," *GR* 44 (1997): 165–75.

⁵ For a similar diagnosis regarding the book of Acts see Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, SNTSMS 146 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. 22–56.

⁶ Irene J. F. de Jong, ed., *Space in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, MnemosyneSup 339 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

Summaries of Lefebvre's and Soja's views on space are readily available and need not be repeated in extenso here.⁷ For my purpose, Lefebvre and Soja's most important insights are their trialectic approach to space and their understanding of lived space (or thirdspace) as being symbolically and politically laden.⁸ In *Production of Space*, Lefebvre distinguishes three manifestations of space: (1) perceived space or spatial practice (space as perceived and acted upon by human beings); (2) conceived space or representations of space (space as conceived and represented by human beings); and (3) lived space or representational spaces (symbolic and political spaces that human beings live by).⁹ Each manifestation of space presupposes the other two. At the same time, Lefebvre's category of lived space is the most interesting one both for analytical purposes and in view of the history of scholarship (which has focused mainly on perceived and conceived space). For both Lefebvre and Soja (who instead of "lived space" speaks of "thirdspace"¹⁰), this third manifestation of space disrupts the binary connection between the other two. "Lived space" is not merely a synthesis of perceived and conceived space, though: it incorporates and surpasses the other two manifestations of space. This trialectic informs a dynamic understanding of what space is and what it does. For Lefebvre and Soja, space is never static, but always in flux. As all three manifestations of space

⁷ See, e.g., Mark Gottdiener, "A Marx for Our Time: Henri Lefebvre and the Production of Space," *Sociological Theory* 11 (1993): 129–36; Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London: Routledge, 1999), 141–85; Kanishka Goodewardena et al., eds., *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Chris Butler, *Henri Lefebvre: Spatial Politics, Everyday Life and the Right to the City* (London: Routledge, 2012); Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*; idem, "Critical Spatial Theory 2.0," in *Constructions of Space V: Place, Space and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Gert T. M. Prinsloo and Christl M. Maier (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 49–66; Christopher Meredith, "Taking Issue with Thirdspace," in *Constructions of Space III: Biblical Spatiality and the Sacred*, ed. Jorunn Økland, J. Cornelis de Vos, and Karen J. Wenell (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 85–113; John M. VonderBruegge, *Mapping Galilee in Josephus, Luke, and John: Critical Geography and the Construction of an Ancient Space*, *AJEC* 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 8–10, 21–27. In addition to these works I have found the discussion of Lefebvre's and Soja's views in Els Klok, "Turning the Map: Construction and Deconstruction of Galilee in Luke-Acts" (MA Thesis, Protestant Theological University, 2017) very helpful.

⁸ There are notable differences between Lefebvre's and Soja's theories, but they do not affect the insights I apply in this article.

⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 36–46.

¹⁰ Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 53–82, 106–44, and *passim*. The terms "lived space" and thirdspace are not the same (see Soja, *Thirdspace*, 67–70), but for my purposes they are sufficiently similar to be equated.

are at work at the same time, spaces are, in Soja's words, always "real-and-imagined."

Lefebvre's and Soja's views raise a problem with regard to studies on Philo's portrayal of particular spaces. These studies tend to focus on perceived and conceived spaces (e.g., the spaces Philo saw and how he construed them in his works) rather than lived space. Even if the dividing line between conceived and lived space may be blurry,¹¹ this is a missed opportunity. Lefebvre's and Soja's trialectics suggest that Philo not only *represents* space (Soja's secondspace), but also *generates* it (Soja's thirdspace). In each of his works, Philo *creates* new spaces that he and his audience(s) inhabit, depending on the purpose of these works and the historical and social context in which they saw the light.¹² To take Alexandria as an example, Dorothy Sly's work on that city has demonstrated how Philo writes about and represents it, but she has not recovered the specific symbolic and political meanings the city carries in each of Philo's writings. By drawing a general picture of how Philo speaks of Alexandria throughout his oeuvre, Sly tends to overlook the specific contexts and purposes of Philo's individual writings, and how in each of them Philo revives (or chooses not to revive) the city of Alexandria as a lived space. From this perspective, Alexandria in the *Legatio* is a different city from Alexandria in, for instance, *De vita Mosis*.¹³

Lefebvre and Soja introduced the concept of lived space/thirdspace to foster a critical way of thinking about space. Their trialectic understanding of space—in which space is ever-changing—contrasts with imperialistic or dictatorial presentations of space in fixed terms. Due to the ever-changing character of space, thirdspace, for Soja, is a place of "radical openness," where all spaces coincide and anything can happen.¹⁴ As a result, thirdspace often is a place of resistance. This take on thirdspace ties in well with the purpose of Philo's *Legatio*.¹⁵ After all, this work is a work of resistance,

¹¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 43.

¹² Consider in this regard the trialectics between space, history, and sociality, which both Lefebvre and Soja present. This trialectics implies that space cannot be understood in isolation of the other two elements. At the same time, social and historical conditions cannot be understood in isolation of space (as had been common in historical scholarship before the so-called "spatial turn").

¹³ See more elaborately pp. 74–76.

¹⁴ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 83–144.

¹⁵ As has also been noted by Sandra Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 CE and the Persecution of the Jews: A Historical Reconstruction*, JSJSup 135 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), who rightly writes that "the dynamic of the riots is intelligible only if territorial and demographic factors are considered together" (181). My approach in this article differs from

in which Philo develops the idea that Gaius's actions against the Judaeans result from his arrogant and reckless departure from the ways of his predecessors, not from any provocations or hostilities on the part of the Judaeans.¹⁶ Rather, for Philo, the stability and the future of the entire Roman Empire depend on the Judaeans. This intricate political argument aims to convince those in power not to walk in Gaius' footsteps, but to follow the lead of Augustus and Tiberius and embrace the Judaeans as loyal inhabitants of the empire.¹⁷

As I intend to show, Philo's engagement with space in the *Legatio* is closely connected with his argument in and purpose for this work. To illustrate this point I will focus on several aspects of the spatiality of the *Legatio*. First, I will deal with Alexandria as Philo represents and creates it in the *Legatio*. Second, I will discuss Philo's portrayal of cultic spaces. Third, I will treat Philo's portrayal of travel. Fourth, I will illuminate Philo's use of theatrical language and the implications of his representation of the Maecenian and Lamian gardens as a stage where a play is performed.

Alexandria Real-and-Imagined

Born and raised in Alexandria, Philo refers regularly to the city in his various works. Most references to Alexandria occur in Philo's political treatises—*In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*—but the city also plays a role in other works, such as *De vita contemplativa* and *De vita Mosis*. In each of these works, Philo paints a different picture of the city and attaches different symbolic and political values to Alexandria. In Soja's terms, Alexandria, in

Gambetti's in that it concentrates only on the literary features of the *Legatio* and, thus, on Philo's presentation of the riots in Alexandria and their aftermath

¹⁶ More elaborately on resistance in the *Legatio* see Pieter B. Hartog, "Contesting *Oikoumene*: Resistance and Locality in Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*," in *Intolerance—Polemics—Debate: Cultural Resistance in the Ancient World*, ed. George H. van Kooten and Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten (forthcoming, de Gruyter, Berlin).

¹⁷ The audience of the *Legatio* has been the topic of some scholarly debate. Erwin Goodenough claimed that the *Legatio* was addressed directly to Claudius, Gaius's successor (*The Politics of Philo Judaeus: Practice and Theory* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938], esp. 21–41). Maren Niehoff, in contrast, argued for a Judaeian audience for the *Legatio* (*Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, TSAJ 86 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001], 39–40). I tend to side with those scholars who assume a mixed Judaeo-Roman audience for the *Legatio*; for a discussion see Pieter W. van der Horst, *Philo's Flaccus: The First Pogrom: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, PACS 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 15–16.

Yet even if the emperor Claudius was not the sole addressee of the *Legatio*, one of Philo's purposes with the *Legatio* was to convince those in power not to follow Gaius's ways and to acknowledge the Judaeans as loyal inhabitants of the Roman Empire.

Philo's works, is both real and imagined. Alexandria constitutes a lived space which Philo generates and inhabits, and which forms a trialectic with the historical and social circumstances in which Philo's various works saw the light.

A comparison between *De vita Mosis* and *De vita contemplativa* reveals how Philo's constructions of Alexandria and its surroundings as lived space differ between his writings. In *Mos.* 2, Philo's elaborate description of the Pharos peninsula as "the most open and unoccupied spot in the neighbourhood outside the city ... and enclosed by a sea not deep but mostly consisting of shoals, so that the loud din and booming of the surging waves grows faint through the long distance before it reaches the land"¹⁸ revives the peninsula as a lived space just outside of the city, where the Torah was translated into Greek. Pharos becomes a symbolically laden place; famous for its lighthouse, Philo describes the peninsula as "the place in which the light of [the Greek Torah] first shone out."¹⁹ As a lived space, Pharos becomes a symbol and source of universal wisdom closely linked with the connection Philo draws in *Mos.* between the Greek Torah and the universal Law of Nature.²⁰ In *Mos.* 2, Alexandria becomes the city where the Law of Nature was first written down in the form of the Torah, and those inhabiting the city are to serve as embodiments of that Law of Nature, shining out to the other parts of the Roman Empire. In *De vita contemplativa*, Philo shifts his gaze to a tract of land near Lake Mareotis where the Therapeutae are supposed to live. Philo offers an elaborate description of this place, writing that it constitutes "a somewhat low-lying hill very happily placed both because of its security and the pleasantly tempered air."²¹ This description shows that the Therapeutae are wise indeed, as Joan Taylor notes: "Rhetorically, this description appears to indicate the good sense of the people who have come together at this site."²² By offering this description of Alexandria and the land that

¹⁸ *Mos.* 2.34–35. Translations of *De vita Mosis* follow PLCL.

¹⁹ *Mos.* 2.41. On Philo's perception of the Pharos peninsula see also Sly, *Philo's Alexandria*, 22–27.

²⁰ On Philo's equation of the Greek Torah and the Law of Nature see Émile Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Alphonse Picard & Fils, 1908), 10–14; Hindy Najman, "The Law of Nature and the Authority of Mosaic Law" and "A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: An Unthinkable Paradox?" in *Past Renewals: Interpretative Authority, Renewed Revelation and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity*, JSJSup 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 87–118 and 107–18; Trent A. Rogers, "Philo's Universalization of Sinai in *De decalogo* 32–49," *SPhiloA* 24 (2012): 85–105.

²¹ *Contempl.* 22 (trans. PLCL).

²² Joan E. Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 76. See also Roland Bergmeier,

surrounds it, Philo generates a lived space that differs from that in *Mos*. In *Contempl.*, it is not Alexandria's universal appeal which is emphasized, but its rural aspects. The inhabitants of Alexandria and its surrounding as a lived space are not called to serve as a universal example, but as exemplars of wisdom that results from a life of freedom of the business of city-life (cf. *Contempl.* 19) and moderation.

In the *Legatio* Philo focuses on the city itself. The Alexandria Philo brings to life in this work is characterised by a strong ambiguity. On the one hand, Philo praises the city as the home of the Judaeans; on the other, Alexandria is the place where under Gaius's rule vicious attacks on the Judaeans take place. One of the clearest examples of Philo's positive portrayal of Alexandria is his exuberant description of the Sebasteum or Augusteum—a temple devoted to Augustus and situated close to the Alexandrian harbour:

There is no other precinct like our so-called "Augusteum," the temple of Caesar, the protector of sailors. It is situated high up, opposite the sheltered harbours, and is very large and conspicuous; it is filled with dedications on a unique scale, and is surrounded on all sides by paintings, statues, and objects of gold and silver. The extensive precinct is furnished with colonnades, libraries, banqueting-halls, groves, gateways, open spaces, unroofed enclosures, and everything that makes for lavish decoration. It gives hope of safety to sailors when they set out to sea and when they return.²³

As Maren Niehoff has noted, Philo's enthusiasm for the Sebasteum is remarkable, seeing that other Roman authors (e.g., Strabo) refer to the building only in passing. In contrast to other writers, who have pointed to the symbolic value of the Sebasteum for Philo,²⁴ Niehoff argues that Philo shares in the cultic symbolism of the place.²⁵ Whilst this may remain a matter of debate, Niehoff is correct to point out that Philo's portrayal of the Sebasteum belongs to a larger argument he develops concerning Augustus's rule and his attitude towards the Judaeans. In *Legat.* 143–159, Philo illustrates the virtues of the first Roman emperor and draws a marked contrast between Augustus and Gaius: whereas the first respected local

"Der Stand der Gottesfreunde: Zu Philos Schrift 'Über die kontemplative Lebensform'," *Bijdragen* 63 (2002): 46–70 (49–51).

²³ *Legat.* 151. Translations of the *Legatio* follow E. Mary Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden: Brill, 1970). I have replaced "Jews" in Smallwood's translation with "Judaeans."

²⁴ See, e.g., Sly, *Alexandria*, 40–41.

²⁵ Cf. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 131, where she writes that "the cultic veneration of Augustus in the Alexandrian *Caesareium* was in [Philo's] view compatible with Jewish values and Jewish identity."

laws and customs, particularly those of the Judaeans, and brought peace to the empire, Gaius set local laws at naught and is interested only in his self-deification.

In Philo's description, therefore, the Sebasteum becomes a symbol of Augustus's policy of granting the Judaeans their rightful place in the empire and the city of Alexandria. Yet it is more than a mere symbol: in the *Legatio*, Philo brings the Sebasteum to life as a beacon of hope to all inhabitants of the Roman Empire who would enter the harbour in Alexandria and as a constant reminder of what a good emperor looks like. In that capacity, the Sebasteum—as a thirdspace—becomes a place of resistance, as it accentuates the bitter contrast between Augustus's and Gaius's rule and ambitions. After all, in Philo's account, Gaius failed to achieve recognition by being honoured in a temple due to its violent attempt at desecrating the temple in Jerusalem, whilst Augustus, who “was never elated or made vain by extravagant honours” (*Legat.* 154) and refused to be called a god, succeeded and is now honoured in the Sebasteum.

The positive aspects of Philo's Alexandria are, thus, closely connected with the translocal set-up of the city.²⁶ If governed well, the city is a Roman Empire on a micro-level, where all sorts of people would come together and mingle, and where Roman officials would allow all of them to abide by their own laws and customs. Consequently, all these different peoples that follow their own laws and customs are integrated in the Roman Empire, which so becomes a multi-cultural unity. This image of Alexandria, which Philo brings to life in his *Legatio*, is directly connected with his argument that the Judaeans, with their own laws and customs, are an integral part of the Roman Empire and should be given the right to participate in its civic life.

This translocal Alexandria does not, however, correspond to reality in Philo's time. Thus the city has also a negative side in the *Legatio*. As Richard Alston has shown, Philo's account of the riots in Alexandria portrays Judaeans, Greek, and Egyptian spaces as spaces of conflict.²⁷ Philo goes different routes in the *In Flaccum* (on which Alston focused) and the *Legatio*, reviving Alexandria in different ways in these treatises.²⁸ Yet what unites

²⁶ For a fuller treatment of the ideas presented here, see Hartog, “Contesting *Oikoumene*.”

²⁷ Alston, “Philo's ‘In Flaccum’.”

²⁸ On the differences between Philo's description of the riots in these two works see Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 220. In the first treatise, Alexandrian public spaces, such as the gymnasium or the theatre, feature prominently, whereas the emphasis in the *Legatio* is on specifically Judaeans personal and public spaces, such as houses and prayer houses (*προσευχαί*).

these treatises is Philo's creation of Alexandria as a space torn apart by conflict and violence. Judaeans in Alexandria are under assault by the Alexandrian mob, which seek to eradicate Judaeans from the city. Alston notes that the house, for Philo, was a place of security, especially for women, whose presence in public life "was (ideally) strictly controlled."²⁹ So when the Alexandrian mob "invaded [Judaeans] homes and drove the householders out, wives and children and all, so as to leave the houses unoccupied,"³⁰ this was an act of great symbolic significance. Philo attaches a similar symbolic value to the attacks on Judaeans prayer houses. They too aim to remove the Judaeans from the city, but these assaults are even more vicious than those on Judaeans houses. As Philo stresses, by destroying the prayer houses the Alexandrian mob destroys signs of honour to the emperor that had been set up in these prayer houses. The fact that the Roman officials let this happen exemplifies Gaius's unfitness for his position. As a result of Gaius's recklessness and hatred towards the Judaeans, the secure position of the Judaeans in Alexandria has come to an end. Instead of a fatherland where Judaeans could proudly claim to belong,³¹ Alexandria had become a place of violent conflict where the Judaeans had been denied their spaces and their protection: they had to "live in the open air day and night and die either of sun stroke or of exposure by night"³² and were confined first to spaces in the city that were "extremely cramped," with "the surrounding air [becoming] foul and [surrendering] its life-giving qualities to the respirations ... of the dying"³³ and later, "no longer able to stand the lack of space," to "the desert, the shores, and the cemeteries" surrounding the city.³⁴ The space Philo inhabits has become contested: the city that once constituted a safe haven for the Judaeans has turned into a place of conflict, due to Gaius's recklessness and arrogance.

Philo's ambiguity towards the city is perhaps most clearly expressed in how he has enemies of the Judaeans describe it. These enemies speak of the city in highly positive terms, and in better circumstances Philo would not have hesitated to make these words his own. By placing these words in the mouth of his opponents, however, Philo creates the city as an ambiguous

²⁹ Alston, "Philo's 'In Flaccum'," 172.

³⁰ *Legat.* 121.

³¹ See *Flacc.* on Alexandria as fatherland; *Legat.* 194 on Judaeans as Alexandrians.

³² *Legat.* 123.

³³ *Legat.* 125.

³⁴ *Legat.* 127.

lived space.³⁵ Consider Helicon's and Gaius's words in *Legat.* 173 and 338. Helicon, one of Gaius's chief advisors, born and raised in Alexandria,³⁶ fantasises about the honours he will receive "by the greatest and most famous city of all in the presence of his master and of practically the whole world with him."³⁷ And Gaius himself had an "indescribable passion for Alexandria."³⁸ In both cases, Philo is keen to point out how Helicon's and Gaius's praise of the city result from their evil inclinations. Helicon had been given a bribe by the Alexandrian embassy,³⁹ and Gaius's passion for the city is the outcome of his self-centredness and self-deification:

[Gaius] believed that this city alone had originated the deification of which he dreamed and would foster it, and that by reason of its great size and commanding position in the world it had provided other cities with an example of how he should be worshipped, since inferior men and cities try to emulate the actions of great ones.⁴⁰

These portrayals of Helicon and Gaius contribute to Philo's creation of Alexandria as a lived space. By describing the city as praiseworthy in the eyes of his enemies, Philo criticises Gaius and his associates (including the rulers in Alexandria and the mob in that city). Alexandria as a lived city bears the stamp of the emperor's recklessness, but it is also a site of resistance. Philo's portrayal of the Augusteum lends support to his argument that the Judaeans are loyal to the emperor and have the right to defend their local laws and customs.

A final aspect of Alexandria as lived space is its universal significance. For Philo, the events in Alexandria threaten the stability of the Roman Empire as whole. So in *Legat.* 370–371 Philo writes:

But other circumstances terrified us, and we were in a great state of agitation and anxiety, wondering what decision Gaius would reach and give, and what sentence he would pronounce. For had he really heard our case, when he had taken no notice of some of the facts? Was it not hard that the future of all the Jews everywhere should be at stake in the persons of us five envoys? If Gaius were to give in to our enemies, what other city would remain quiet? What city

³⁵ Cf. *Flacc.* 163, where Flaccus praises Alexandria: "I am Flaccus, who until recently was the governor of the great city, or rather multi-city, Alexandria, and the ruler of the most blessed land of Egypt!" (trans. Van der Horst, *Philo's Flaccus*, 83).

³⁶ *Legat.* 170.

³⁷ *Legat.* 173.

³⁸ *Legat.* 338. Cf. *Flacc.* 23, where Philo writes that "the city of Alexandria ... has been honored from the beginning by the entire imperial family, especially by the present master." Van der Horst comments that this claim, put in the mouth of the Greek inhabitants of the city, is exaggerated; see his commentary at *Philo's Flaccus*, 113.

³⁹ *Legat.* 172.

⁴⁰ *Legat.* 338.

would refrain from attacking the Jews living in it? What synagogue would be left unmolested?

This passage exemplifies what is a running thread throughout the *Legatio*: Philo's conviction that the future and stability of the Roman *oikoumenē* depends on the preservation of local laws and customs by the emperor.⁴¹ The riots in Alexandria, as Philo presents them, result from Gaius's arrogance, which led him to dispose with the laws and customs of local groups in the empire. When the Alexandrians try to drive the Judaeans out of their city they mimic Gaius's behaviour on a local level. For that reason, Philo writes, the conflict in Alexandria has more-than-local consequences: if the Romans allow the laws and customs of Judaeans to be set aside in that city, this will lead to empire-wide attacks on the Judaeans. And this, in turn, would mean the end to the *pax Romana* Augustus had brought about because he "was very careful and cared as much for the preservation of the customs of the various nations as for the preservation of Roman ones, and ... received honours not for doing away with the practices of a particular people as an act of self-deception, but in accordance with the dignity of his great empire."⁴²

To sum up, Alexandria in Philo's *Legatio* is a real-and-imagined place. Philo conceives of and constructs the city in a particular way that suits his interests, but the effects of his spatial descriptions go further than this. In the *Legatio* Philo evokes Alexandria as a lived space/thirdspace, which is symbolically and politically laden and becomes a place of resistance. The central element in Alexandria as a lived space is the Augusteum, which symbolises Augustus's preservation and defence of the local customs of the Judaeans. This symbol contrasts with the riots in the city and the banishment of Judaeans from their spaces in Alexandria, as well as with the praise heaped on the city by Philo's enemies, Helicon and Gaius. Through his creation of Alexandria as a lived and contested space, Philo seeks to convince Claudius to allow the Judaeans to live by their local customs and to think of them as loyal inhabitants of the Roman Empire.

Cultic Spaces

Cultic spaces play a central role in Philo's *Legatio*. The most prominent cultic spaces Philo mentions in this treatise are the Judaeon prayer houses

⁴¹ See above and Hartog, "Contesting *Oikoumene*."

⁴² *Legat.* 153.

in Alexandria, the pagan altar in Jamnia, and the temple in Jerusalem. The prominence of this kind of space in the *Legatio* is connected with Philo's choice of Gaius as its main protagonist.⁴³ Just as with Philo's spatial descriptions of Alexandria, his treatment of cultic spaces can be understood along the lines of Lefebvre's and Soja's trialectic of perceived, conceived, and lived space. Evoking cultic spaces as thirdspace, Philo imbues these spaces with symbolic and political meanings that support his argument in the *Legatio*.

The cultic significance of Judaeian prayer houses (προσευχαί) in Alexandria is clear from Philo's reference to them as "sacred precincts"⁴⁴ and from their treatment by the Alexandrian mob: they destroy these prayer houses or turn them into shrines of the emperor cult by providing them with a statue representing the emperor.⁴⁵ In his depiction of these cultic spaces, Philo points out—with no little sense of irony—that these actions harm not only the Judaeans, but the emperor too: by destroying the prayer houses, the Alexandrians also destroy "the objects set up in honour of the Emperors—gilded shields and crowns, monuments, and inscriptions" (*Legat.* 133). This description of the Judaeian prayer houses imbues them with a different symbolic significance from the one they had for the Alexandrian mob: instead of symbols of Judaeian presence in Alexandria, Philo portrays them as symbols of Judaeian loyalty to the emperor. This move turns these prayer houses into a lived space, where resistance to the fate of the Judaeans in Alexandria can be voiced. Seeing that these buildings are symbols of Judaeian loyalty, the fact that Flaccus and Gaius condone the attacks by the Alexandrian mob⁴⁶ shows that they are unfit to hold responsible offices in

⁴³ This is why cultic spaces play a more modest role in Philo's *In Flaccum*, whereas public political spaces are more central to the latter treatise. The *Legatio* concentrates on Gaius, one of whose main problems is his self-deification. Gaius's proclamation of himself as a god impedes on Judaeian cultic spaces. *In Flaccum*, in contrast, concentrates on Flaccus, governor of Alexandria, whose hatred of the Judaeans comes to the fore in the political dealings of the city.

⁴⁴ *Flacc.* 48. For the connection between προσευχή and "sacred precinct" (ἱερός περίβολος) see also Horbury and Noy, *JIGRE*, no. 9. See also Aryeh Kasher, "Synagogues as 'Houses of Prayer' and 'Holy Places' in the Jewish Communities of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt," in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery*, ed. Dan Urman and Paul V.M. Flesher, 2nd ed., *Studia post-Biblica* 47 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 205–20.

⁴⁵ *Legat.* 134. For the implication that this action turned the Judaeian prayer houses into sanctuaries of the emperor cult, see Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 222.

On *proseuchai* in Philo and their central importance to Judaeans in Alexandria see Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria*, TSAJ 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 74–95.

⁴⁶ See *Legat.* 132, 346.

the Roman Empire. Thus, the lived space Philo construes in the *Legatio* includes prayer houses as symbols of Judaeen loyalty to the empire, and it is in this lived space that Philo expresses his critique of Gaius.

A similar move inspires Philo's portrayal of the Jamnia incident.⁴⁷ For Gaius and his associates, the incident may well have constituted a threat to the stability of the Roman Empire. Philo may not be off the mark when he describes this incident as the direct cause for Gaius's decision to set up his statue in the Jerusalem temple. The Judaeen response to the erection of a pagan altar in Jamnia would have demanded a reaction on the part of the emperor, and erecting his own statue in the centre of the Judaeen cult was a suited way of settling things.⁴⁸ Yet in my view this does not imply that "Philo tells a story which makes Gaius's decision perfectly reasonable from a Roman point of view," as Daniel Schwartz has argued.⁴⁹ The sharp contrast Philo draws throughout the *Legatio* between Gaius, Flaccus, and their associates on the one hand and previous emperors on the other serves to discredit Gaius as a truly Roman emperor who had the concerns of the empire in mind. Unlike Augustus and Tiberius, who united the empire under one ruler and brought peace among its inhabitants, Gaius overturns local customs and brings war between the inhabitants of the Roman Empire.⁵⁰ Philo's concern is not to portray Gaius in a reasonable light, but to show that the Judaeen response to the setting up of the pagan altar was legitimate in the context in which the incident took place.⁵¹

Philo achieves this goal by attaching a new symbolic significance to the Jamnia incident. Instead of a *threat* to the stability of the empire, Philo describes the incident as a *defence* of the *pax Romana*. Though acknowledging the demolition of the pagan altar as an act of Judaeen violence, Philo, as Smallwood noted, "makes the messenger [who tells the story] express no horror or even concern at this action of the Jews."⁵² The reason for this is

⁴⁷ *Legat.* 200–202.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., Per Bilde, "The Roman Emperor Gaius (Caligula)'s Attempt to Erect His Statue in the Temple of Jerusalem," *ST* 32 (1978): 67–93; Erich S. Gruen, "Caligula, The Imperial Cult, and Philo's *Legatio*," *SPhiloA* 24 (2012): 135–47.

⁴⁹ Daniel R. Schwartz, "Philo, His Family, and His Times," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9–31 (28).

⁵⁰ On peace under Augustus and Tiberius see *Legat.* 8 and *Legat.* 309. On Gaius as an enemy to peace see *Legat.* 90, 108, 301. On *polemos* to describe the conflict in Alexandria see *Legat.* 119, 121, 132.

⁵¹ This seems true even if Philo does not align himself entirely with the perspective of the Jamnian Judaeans. On Philo's reservations to make the views of these Judaeans his own see Schwartz, "Philo, His Family, and His Times," 29.

⁵² Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 263.

that the non-Judaean Jamnians who invaded Judaean space—i.e., the Holy Land (*Legat.* 202)—did so in order to “[violate] some one or other of the Judeans’ traditions [τὰ πάτρια Ἰουδαίους]” (*Legat.* 200). Elsewhere in the *Legatio* Philo gives the preservation of the *patria* of the Judeans—and other people—as the reason for the stability of the empire under Augustus and Tiberius,⁵³ and their violation as the root cause of the instability the empire faced under Gaius.⁵⁴ On this view, the action of the Jamnians is an action against the stability of the empire. In Soja’s terms, Philo evokes the Holy Land as a lived Judaean space, which, like other Judaean spaces, is invaded by pagans who try to force the Judeans to abandon their local customs. By so doing, the non-Judaean Jamnians subscribe to Gaius’s reckless policy, which is based on self-aggrandisement and hatred of the Judeans, and the emperor holds final responsibility for the conflict in Jamnia.⁵⁵ This living space, then, also becomes a space of resistance: the Holy Land symbolises the Judaean attachment to their local laws and customs. This symbolism implies a resistance to Gaius and his like (including the Jamnians), who sought to do away with Judaean observance of their own laws and customs. As Philo portrays it, this Judaean defence of their local customs benefits not just them, but the entire empire, whose stability, from Augustus onward, depended on the ability of its local inhabitants to live by their own laws and customs.

The zenith of Gaius’s arrogance was his attempt to desecrate the Jerusalem temple. Guided by his hatred of the Judeans and impressed by the temple’s grandeur, Gaius wished to install a cult of himself as Zeus there.⁵⁶ In his presentation of the temple as the central Judaean cultic space Philo stresses how Gaius neglects Judaean expressions of loyalty towards the emperor and how radically the emperor breaks with the policies of his predecessors. When the Judeans arrive at Petronius to complain against Gaius’s decision, they tell him that “when Gaius succeeded to the principate ... it was from our city that the good news spread to the others” and that their temple was “the first to accept sacrifices on behalf of Gaius’ rule.”⁵⁷ Philo’s Agrippa makes a similar argument: “It was in Jerusalem, Emperor, that your longed-for accession was first proclaimed, and from the Holy City the report spread to the adjacent countries.”⁵⁸ Moreover, the

⁵³ *Legat.* 153, 155–156, 300, 306.

⁵⁴ *Legat.* 335. Cf. also *Legat.* 117, where the Judaean defence of their *patria* against Gaius is implied to constitute a defence of the entire Roman Empire.

⁵⁵ *Legat.* 201.

⁵⁶ *Legat.* 198.

⁵⁷ *Legat.* 231.

⁵⁸ *Legat.* 288.

Jerusalem temple continues to yield “prayers, the dedication of offerings, and numerous sacrifices” to the emperor, so that the Judaeans “do not merely *say* that they are Caesar's friends, but really *are* his friends.”⁵⁹ Agrippa himself counts as an example.⁶⁰ These passages show how Philo constructs the temple as a lived space by attaching symbolic and political significance to it. Just as the prayer houses in Alexandria, the temple is not merely a symbol of the Judaeian cult, but of Judaeian loyalty to the emperor and the empire. As a consequence, Gaius's attack on the temple is an attack on the empire as a whole.

In Philo's construal of the Jerusalem temple as a lived space the attitude of previous Roman officials to the temple plays an important role. All of these previous officials, Philo emphasises, held the temple in high regard. Philo's Agrippa reminds Gaius that the emperor's grandfather Marcus Agrippa “respected the Temple, and so did Augustus ... As a result no-one, either Greek, barbarian, satrap, king, or bitter enemy, and no revolution, war, capture, sack, or anything else at all ever caused such a violation of the Temple as the introduction of a statue, an image, or any man-made work of art into it.”⁶¹ Tiberius, too, “safeguarded the Temple ritual which had been handed down from the distant past, and did not abolish or disturb a single item of it.”⁶² These descriptions of previous Roman officials contribute to Philo's construal of the temple as lived space. In Soja's terms, Philo's view on the temple is not just a matter of perceived and conceived space, but has a strong performative aspect. The temple is a place Judaeans and—according to Philo—Romans lived by. It is central to both the Judaeian cult and the stability of the empire. Gaius's attack on the temple, in this light, will have universal consequences and mean the end of the empire.

Like the city of Alexandria, then, these cultic spaces, as Philo describes them, can be analysed in light of Lefebvre's and Soja's trialectic view of space. Philo creates living spaces/thirdspaces by imbuing the Judaeian prayer houses in Alexandria, the Holy Land in the Jamnia story, and the Jerusalem temple with symbolic and political significance. Each of these cultic places, in Philo's view, embodies Judaeian loyalty to the Roman Empire. As a consequence, these living spaces become spaces of resistance. In Philo's view, the threat of Gaius and his associates to demolish these spaces poses a threat to the empire as a whole. Philo's spatial descriptions

⁵⁹ *Legat.* 280.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Legat.* 279–280, 286–287.

⁶¹ *Legat.* 291–292; on Marcus Agrippa visiting the temple see *Legat.* 294–297.

⁶² *Legat.* 298.

underline his purpose with the *Legatio*: to convince Claudius not to walk in the ways of his predecessor.

Travel: Reality and Metaphor

Just as the spaces Philo describes in his *Legatio*, so Philo's travel descriptions carry symbolic and political significance.⁶³ These travel descriptions, too, can be "real-and-imagined" and can be understood along the lines of Lefebvre's and Soja's trialectic approach. Philo was intimately familiar with the realities of travel in the Roman Empire, and his descriptions of these realities can be taken as analogous to what Lefebvre called "perceived space": it is travel as Philo perceived it. Philo travelled at least to Jerusalem and Rome,⁶⁴ and as a member of the Alexandrian social elite he was well-acquainted with the central position of that city in the networks of roads and waterways that spanned the Roman Empire.⁶⁵ In his description of the Alexandrian harbour, for instance, Philo employs the epic epithet εὖορμος, "well-moored" to indicate its significance.⁶⁶ In *Legat.* 15, Philo attributes the rapid spread of the news of Gaius's illness to the time of year. Philo's description of Helicon in *Legat.* 177 seems to imply knowledge of how to sail. And Philo's discussion of Gaius's journey from Rome to Alexandria in *Legat.* 250–251 echoes his familiarity with the practicalities of sea journeys. As Philo writes, Gaius's journey would not lead through the open sea, like the cargo ships, but along the coast of Asia and Syria. The reason for this is that Gaius and his entourage would need food and entertainment to an extent that would be impossible to realise at open sea. These examples demonstrate that Philo can be considered, as Niehoff recently suggested, a "Mediterranean thinker,"⁶⁷ who was closely familiar with the realities, possibilities, and conditions of travel in the Roman Empire.

At the same time, Philo is sensitive to the symbolic value of travel—which could be called, again with a reference to Lefebvre's terminology,

⁶³ Generally on Philo's portrayals of travel see Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Travel in Antiquity*, TSAJ 144 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 201–6.

⁶⁴ Jerusalem: *Prov.* 2.64; Rome: *Legat.*

⁶⁵ See, e.g., *Flacc.* 26, 110; *Legat.* 173, 250.

⁶⁶ On the meaning of the term see LSJ *sub* εὖορμος. Smallwood translates "sheltered," but this does not quite capture its sense. For the use of εὖορμος in ancient epic (always with λιμήν) see Homer, *Il.* 21.23; *Od.* 4.358, 9.136; Hesiod, *Sc.* 207.

⁶⁷ Maren R. Niehoff, "Wie wird man ein Mediterraner Denker? Der Fall Philon von Alexandria," in *Ein pluriverses Universum: Zivilisationen und Religionen im antiken Mittelmeerraum*, ed. Richard Faber and Achim Lichtenberger, *Mittelmeerstudien* 7 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015), 355–67.

“conceived travel.” An illustrative interplay between perceived and conceived travel occurs in *Legat.* 190, where Philo narrates how the Judaeian embassy from Alexandria travelled to the emperor in midwinter, despite the dangers this entailed. In Philo’s account, the perilous journey of the ambassadors becomes a symbol of the even greater danger that awaited them in Rome:

We sailed in the middle of the winter storms, without knowing what a storm awaited us on land, far worse than a storm at sea. For Nature, which regulates the seasons, is responsible for the latter, and Nature is a saviour. For the former, however, a human being devoid of human feeling is responsible, a young man with new-fangled ideas and possessed of universal power for which no-one can call him to account.⁶⁸

In this passage Philo’s acquaintance with the realities of travel coincide with his description of the emotions of the Judaeans as they heard about Gaius’s plan for the Jerusalem temple. What is more, by attaching symbolic and political significance to the journey of the ambassadors, Philo construes this journey as a lived reality—or thirdspace. This travel description is not merely a portrayal of the journey as Philo perceived it, but, like the spaces treated before, a symbolically and politically laden place of resistance against Gaius, whose behaviour Philo compares to the storms that await those who travel the Mediterranean in winter.

Philo can evoke the symbolic qualities of journeys even when no concrete journey is in sight. A conspicuous travel metaphor Philo employs in his *Legatio* is that of “the ship of state,” which compares seamanship and sea travel to ruling an empire. In *Legat.* 47–50, Philo’s Macro tells Gaius that government (ἡγεμονία) is the greatest and best art (τέχνη [*Legat.* 47]) and exhorts the emperor to “steer the common ship of mankind safely” (*Legat.* 50). Good metaphorical seamanship will lead to safe conditions for actual sea travellers: according to Philo’s Macro, the result of good government is that “merchant-ships safely navigate every sea” (*Legat.* 47). Gaius fails to be a good seaman, however, and Augustus serves as a counterexample. In *Legat.* 149 Philo applies the same metaphor to Rome’s first emperor:

[Augustus] was the first and greatest universal benefactor, who ended the rule of many by handing the ship of state over to a single helmsman [κυβερνήτης], namely himself with his remarkable grasp of the science of government [τὴν ἡγεμονικὴν ἐπιστήμην], to steer.

Philo points out that Augustus’s metaphorical helmsmanship had non-metaphorical consequences: “He ... cleared the sea of pirate-ships and filled

⁶⁸ *Legat.* 190.

it with merchant-ships" (*Legat.* 146). In Philo's hands, therefore, the metaphor of the "ship of state" becomes an effective tool to draw out the difference between Augustus and Gaius: whereas the latter is unfit for the complex art of ruling the empire, the former, in contrast, brought peace across the empire.

Philo did not invent this metaphor: the notion of the state as a ship occurs in various other works in Greek and Latin.⁶⁹ The most relevant parallel to Philo is in Plato's *Republic* (488a–489d). In view of Philo's description of government as an "art" (τέχνη) and his use of the term "helmsman" (κυβερνήτης), it seems that he was inspired by this work in particular.⁷⁰ Further support for a Platonic background to Philo's use of the metaphor comes from Philo's characterisation of Augustus as a philosopher in *Legat.* 310, which echoes the Platonic view that philosophers make the best rulers. Philo's adoption of the metaphor is appropriate in the context of the Roman Empire. One of the greatest achievements of the Romans was their control over the Mediterranean and—as Philo acknowledges⁷¹—their success in making the sea a safe place for travel and trade.⁷² The Roman Empire was very much a naval empire. Moreover, Alexandria was an important harbour city and occupied a central place in the networks that united the Mediterranean. The metaphor of the ship as a state corresponds with this reality. Thus, Philo's use of the metaphor of the ship of state shows that he was familiar with the importance of sea travel in the Roman Empire and the key position of Alexandria as a harbour city in the empire.

⁶⁹ On the "ship of state" metaphor in Graeco-Roman literature see Roger Brock, *Greek Political Imagery from Homer to Aristotle* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 53–67.

⁷⁰ On Plato's development of the metaphor in the *Republic* see David Keyt, "Plato and the Ship of State," in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*, ed. Gerasimos Santas (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 189–213; Alex G. Long, "The Ship of State and the Subordination of Socrates," in *Plato and the Power of Images*, ed. Pierre Destrée and Radcliffe G. Edmonds III, *MnemosyneSup* 405 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 158–78. For the specific terminology see Plato, *Resp.* 488d (κυβερνήτης) and 488e (steering a ship as τέχνη).

Note, incidentally, that Philo's adoption of this metaphor from Plato's *Republic* is not mentioned in David Lincicum, "A Preliminary Index to Philo's Non-Biblical Citations and Allusions," *SPhiloA* 25 (2013): 139–67 (esp. 151, 157–58).

⁷¹ See *Legat.* 146.

⁷² On conflicts between Romans and pirates see Philip de Souza, *Piracy in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 179–224.

Theatricality and Theatrical Space

Philo's works *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium* are replete with theatrical language. As Francesca Calabi has noted, Philo's attitude towards the theatre is a negative one, which mimics Plato's critical views of the theatre and poetry in general.⁷³ Theatrical language may fulfil different roles and have various connotations in these Philonic treatises, but it is always "evoked as a place of fiction and appearance, where the actor has to play a part."⁷⁴ The theatre, for Philo, is a place of deception, keeping up appearances, and frivolous entertainment. Hence, Philo's use of theatre language in his representations of Flaccus and Gaius is aimed to discredit these individuals as Roman officials.⁷⁵ Their association with the theatre shows that Flaccus and Gaius, rather than trustworthy, responsible, rulers, are opportunists who care only for their own interests.⁷⁶

This association of the theatre with frivolity surfaces at several places in the *Legatio*. In *Legat.* 42, Philo portrays Gaius as frequenting dances, plays, and dinner parties, "watching dancers with wild excitement or occasionally joining in the dance, or roaring with laughter like a schoolboy at comedians who indulged in obscenities and ribaldry instead of smiling at them in a dignified way, or carried away by the music of lyre." Macro criticises the emperor for his silly behaviour, arguing that "it is wrong for the *princeps* who rules land and sea to be overcome by a song or a dance or a scurrilous

⁷³ Francesca Calabi, "Theatrical Language in Philo's *In Flaccum*," in *Italian Studies on Philo of Alexandria*, ed. Francesca Calabi, SPhAMA 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 91–116. On Plato's view of the theatre see Calabi, "Theatrical Language," 91–92; Penelope Murray, "Plato and Greek Theatre," in *Attitudes to Theatre from Plato to Milton*, ed. Elena Theodorakopoulos (Bari: Levante Editori, 2003), 1–19. On Plato's attitude towards poetry more generally see Pierre Destrée and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, eds., *Plato and the Poets*, MnemosyneSup 328 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

⁷⁴ Calabi, "Theatrical Language," 92.

⁷⁵ The association of Gaius with the theatre is not unique to Philo. See Cassius Dio 59; Suetonius, *Cal.* 26.4–5; 45.3.

⁷⁶ I leave aside here the related notion of theatricality, which Ellen Muehlberger has recognised in the *Legatio*. Building on the work of Shadi Bartsch and others, Muehlberger argues that by portraying Gaius as an actor Philo also turns his audience into actors. Not just the emperor, but those around him too, play a role. They keep up appearances in the face of an ever-watchful emperor, but subtly undermine his authority through the development of "hidden transcripts." I am sympathetic to Muehlberger's argument, but the notion of "theatricality" as she uses it does not serve my interests in this paper, i.e., to understand how Philo writes about theatrical space in the *Legatio*. In this treatise Philo applies theatre language only to Gaius; thus it is on Gaius, not his audience, that I focus. For Muehlberger's analysis see her "The Representation of Theatricality in Philo's *Embassy to Gaius*," *JSJ* 39 (2008): 46–67.

joke or anything of that sort.”⁷⁷ Things did not turn out well for Macro, however: Gaius forces him to take his own life and persisted in his irresponsible lifestyle. In *Legat.* 79, Philo criticises Gaius for his arrogant attempt to accrue the virtues and honours of gods and demi-gods for himself. Theatrical language returns in this context to indicate Gaius's foolishness:

Then, as in a theatre, he put first one costume and then another, sometimes a lion-skin and club, both gilded, when he was arrayed as Heracles, and sometimes a cap on his head, when he dressed up as the Dioscuri; at other times he dressed up as Dionysus with ivy, thyrsus, and fawn-skins.

In spite of his efforts, however, Gaius's imitations of the gods were unsuccessful:

One might expect absolutely anything rather than that a body and mind such as Gaius had, both of them effeminate and enervated, could ever have resembled Ares's physical and mental prowess. But Gaius kept on changing his various masks as on a stage, and so misled his audience by his deceptive appearances.⁷⁸

Finally, Philo points out that Gaius's love for the theatre and the pastimes it had to offer determined his choice of advisors. Gaius promoted Helicon—who under Tiberius “did not enjoy any privileged position, since Tiberius detested childish jokes”⁷⁹—to one of his chief advisors. To achieve this position Helicon played a role before Gaius, whom he considered “the best possible audience [*ἀκροατής*] and spectator [*θεατής*] for showing off.”⁸⁰ Through joking and jesting and entertaining Gaius with “frivolous and amusing games and pastimes” (*Legat.* 168), interspersed with expression of his suspicions and hatred of the Judaeans, Helicon exerted a large influence on Gaius and became a target for bribery by the Alexandrian embassy.⁸¹ Helicon conspired with Apelles, Gaius's other advisor, whom Philo portrays as a tragic actor with a history of sexual promiscuity.⁸² Using theatre language, Philo ironically summarises the influence these advisors had on

⁷⁷ *Legat.* 44–45.

⁷⁸ *Legat.* 111.

⁷⁹ *Legat.* 167. This statement should be read against the background of Philo's positive portrayal of Augustus and Tiberius in the *Legatio*. This portrayal does not in all facets correspond with reality, but serves the rhetorical purpose of portraying Gaius as doing away with the policies of his predecessors and so discrediting himself as a Roman emperor. On Philo's portrayal of Augustus and Tiberius see Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 121–28.

⁸⁰ *Legat.* 168.

⁸¹ *Legat.* 172–173.

⁸² *Legat.* 203.

Gaius, which led the emperor to abandon his concerns for the stability in the empire:

Those who go on to the stage and do business with audiences and theatres are surely devotees of decency and modesty, and not of extreme forms of shamelessness and licence? For this reason Apelles was promoted to the rank of counsellor, in order that Gaius might take counsel from the one adviser about how to joke and from the other [*sc.* Helicon] about how to sing, while he gave up all thought for the affairs of state and for the preservation of peace and order throughout the empire.⁸³

A particularly compelling use of theatre language occurs in the final episode of the *Legatio*, where Gaius receives the Judaeian embassy in the Maecanian and Lamian gardens.⁸⁴ Philo calls specific attention to these gardens as the location of the meeting as he describes them as the scene where “the drama [δραματοποιία] concerning all our people was to be staged [σκηνοβατεῖσθαι], with us as principal actors.”⁸⁵ Through this employment of theatre language Philo imbues the gardens with symbolic significance and construes a thirdspace: the description of these gardens as a theatrical scene turns them into a symbol for Gaius’s frivolity and the futility of his meeting with the Judaeian embassy.⁸⁶ Philo carries the theatre analogy further when he describes how Gaius walks around the gardens with the Judaeans following his trails as they are being mocked by their opponents “as in farces on the stage” (ὡς ἐν θεατρικοῖς μίμοις).⁸⁷ Gaius never seeks to give the Judaeans a fair hearing, but asks silly questions to evoke laughter from their opponents. So Philo concludes: “the whole affair was a farce [μῖμεια]. The judge had taken upon himself the role [σχῆμα] of accuser, and our accusers that of a corrupt judge who has an eye to hostility and not to the facts of the case.”⁸⁸

As he turns the Maecanian and Lamian gardens into a thirdspace symbolising Gaius’s recklessness and frivolity, Philo at the same time construes these gardens as places of resistance. As Katharine von Stackelberg writes,

⁸³ *Legat.* 204.

⁸⁴ On these gardens and their architectural set-up see Annewies van den Hoek and John J. Herrmann Jr., “Chasing the Emperor: Philo in the *Horti* of Rome,” *SPhiloA* 28 (2016): 171–204 (180–85). Van den Hoek and Herrmann point out that some of the architectural features of the Maecanian and Lamian gardens add to the symbolic value Philo attaches to these gardens in his account of Gaius’s staged hearing of the Judaeans.

⁸⁵ *Legat.* 351.

⁸⁶ Cf. Van den Hoek and Herrmann Jr., “Chasing the Emperor,” 178: “[Philo] ultimately placed the situation on a much larger stage, setting the beliefs and future of the Jewish people against the desire of the emperor for divinization” (178).

⁸⁷ *Legat.* 359.

⁸⁸ *Legat.* 359.

"Philo fuses historical topography with his personal experience and political ideals."⁸⁹ She describes how the gardens in Philo's argument can be understood as a "heterotopia of deviation," which "enabled Caligula a ludic opportunity to transform the identity of the legates from civic leaders and scholars to mimes."⁹⁰ This, in Philo's perception, contrasts with what should have been the correct cause of action: an official hearing in a court, presided by the emperor as a judge, not a tyrant.⁹¹ What is more, Philo's construction of these gardens as thirdspace may involve an implicit reference to Gaius's demise. As we learn from Suetonius, it was in the Lamian gardens that Gaius was buried, after having been brutally killed watching some boys rehearsing for a play:

[S]ome say that as [Gaius] was talking with the boys, Chaerea came up behind, and gave him a deep cut in the neck, having first cried, "Take that," and that then the tribune Cornelius Sabinus, who was the other conspirator and faced Gaius, stabbed him in the breast. Others say that Sabinus, after getting rid of the crowd through centurions who were in the plot, asked for the watchword, as soldiers do, and that when Gaius gave him "Jupiter," he cried "So be it," and as Gaius looked around, he split his jawbone with a blow of his sword. As he lay upon the ground and with writhing limbs called out that he still lived, the others dispatched him with thirty wounds; for the general signal was "Strike again." Some even thrust their swords through his privates ... His body was conveyed secretly to the gardens of the Lamian family, where it was partly consumed on a hastily erected pyre and buried beneath a light covering of turf; later his sisters on their return from exile dug it up, cremated it, and consigned it to the tomb.⁹²

Considering that the *Legatio* was written after Gaius's death and directed (inter alii) to Gaius's successor Claudius, Philo's choice to situate the meeting between Gaius and the Judaeian embassy in the Lamian gardens and to stress the location of this meeting may well have been governed by the events described in Suetonius. If this argument is accepted, Philo's description of the space of this final meeting symbolises not only Gaius's frivolity, but also his punishment. The Lamian gardens stand for all that was wrong with Gaius and remind the reader of the *Legatio* of Gaius's brutal end.

⁸⁹ Katharine T. von Stackelberg, *The Roman Garden: Space, Sense, and Society* (London: Routledge, 2009), 134.

⁹⁰ Von Stackelberg, *The Roman Garden*, 139.

⁹¹ *Legat.* 349–351.

⁹² Suetonius, *Cal.* 58–59 (trans. Rolfe [LCL]).

Conclusion

Philo's descriptions of space tie in closely with his overall argument in the *Legatio*: Gaius is unfit as an emperor because he destabilises the empire, whereas the Judaeans, by defending their local customs, preserve the right of local groups to live by their own laws and customs and guard the stability of the Roman Empire. Many spaces Philo describes in the *Legatio* are real-life spaces, with which his readers would have been familiar and which they could visit. Yet at the same time, Philo offers a particular construction of these spaces and imbues them with symbolic and political values that support his argument. I have suggested that the dynamics between these different manifestations of space can be understood in terms of Lefebvre's and Soja's trialectic of perceived, conceived, and lived space. This trialectic also informs some of Philo's references to travel, which apart from the realities of travel explore the symbolic meanings of travel and imbue these with political significance. The result, I suggest, is not simply a carefully crafted literary work, in which Philo presents spaces he knew from real life in a particular way. The *Legatio* is an evocative work, in which Philo creates living spaces in order to convince Claudius, Gaius's successor, to acknowledge the Judaeans as loyal inhabitants of the Roman Empire and Gaius's treatment of them as an evil anomaly.

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