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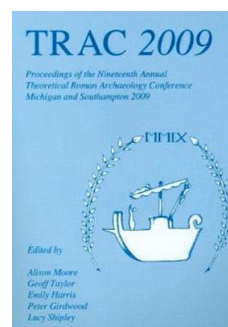
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Paper Information:

Title: Performativity of Place: Movement and Water in
Second Century A.D. Ephesus
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Pages: 66–74

DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/TRAC2009_66_74

Publication Date: 25 March 2010



Volume Information:

Moore, A., Taylor, G., Harris, E., Girdwood, P., and Shipley, L. (eds.) (2010) *TRAC 2009: Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Michigan and Southampton 2009*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

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Performativity of Place: Movement and Water in Second Century A.D. Ephesus

Cecelia Feldman Weiss

Introduction

To say that people and things move in space is not a particularly groundbreaking statement. It seems obvious, a taken-for-granted. However, only recently have the concepts of movement, performativity, and the experience of place been truly incorporated into archaeological thought and practice (Rogers 1991; Bergmann and Kondoleon 1999). For example, much of the discussion of urban space in Ephesus, one of the principal cities in western Asia Minor, has focused primarily on the formal elements of the city's architectural and artistic programs (Koester 1995; Thür 1995; Sherwood 2000; Scherrer 2001; Longfellow 2005). However, these architectural and art historical approaches have a tendency to foreground material remains and treat them as static entities, at the expense of investigating the changing and phenomenological aspects of lived space. Too often, such examinations fail to consider the dynamic and moving parts of cityscapes and the ways in which these aspects were integral to urban life in antiquity. I argue that the investigation of movement within the urban landscape can deepen our understanding of life in antiquity and contribute insight into the processes that make the city a lived and experienced place.

Drawing on the idea of 'flows,' (Appadurai 1986, 1994; Latour and Yaneva 2008) this paper explores movement within the urban environment of Ephesus as a means of re-imagining the dynamism of the city in antiquity. In an effort to break down the notion of a natural/cultural dichotomy, the two case studies presented in this paper were chosen as an illustration of the ways in which the city as place integrates these elements. First, I will discuss water use and management as exemplified in the Nymphaeum Traiani, and then examine the ritual procession recorded in the dedication of C. Vibius Salutaris. Thinking about what flows through the city – both things and people – promotes a more nuanced understanding of the performativity of a place.

For my purpose here, I define performativity broadly as the actions and movements of things and people, on scales from monumental to mundane. Much ink has been employed engaging with questions of what constitutes performance and how it can be identified in the archaeological record (Inomata and Coben 2006). Scholars from a variety of disciplines have positioned themselves on either side of a theoretical fence. Some define performance as ordinary and daily actions (Bourdieu 1977; Butler 1990; 1993; Hodder 2006), while others utilize the term performance to refer to large-scale public spectacle (Connerton 1989; Inomata and Coben 2006). Instead of positioning myself on one side or the other, I submit that both daily actions and monumental spectacle should be considered performance, with each operating in different ways to different ends. Further, all of these theoretical approaches are concerned with the transmission of culture, and therefore conceive of performance as a uniquely human action. In contrast, I suggest that action of both things and people should be considered to operate in a performative manner. Both human and non-human actors contribute to movement and action in the world which, in turn, are integral to place-making (Ingold 2000).

Bodily action and performance have long been considered of primary importance to those processes that make 'place' (Casey 1996, 2001; Smith 1987). As I have suggested, the action and movements of both things and people in mundane and extra-ordinary circumstances should also be considered within the milieu of place and place-making within urban environments. The humanist geographer Y-F Tuan (1977: 6) contrasts movement and pause to illustrate his understanding of place-making. '...If we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.' Here, approaching 'place' as that which arises from the cessation of action, Tuan emphasizes how movement is a necessary component in the place-making process. However, unlike Tuan, who suggests that place grows out of a suspension of movement, I believe that active engagement with the world makes place. This theoretical perspective offers insight into the ways in which we conceptualize ancient urban environments and presents a means to examine cities in antiquity as dynamic and experienced places.

Ephesus serves as an instructive case study because it has been thoroughly investigated and published. However, like many examples from the Roman world, the study of these urban environments has largely neglected the centrality of movement and human engagement as integral to the urban landscape. Admittedly, there are undeniable challenges implicit in a project that attempts to invoke impermanent actions and movements through the evidence that remains – namely architecture and the literary and epigraphic record. However, the detailed inscription of the *Salutaris* inscription, coupled with the extraordinary preservation of the urban fabric of Ephesus, provides a productive starting point.

Water and Movement in Ephesus

Ephesus is a city surrounded by water. West of the city, the harbour fed into the wide expanse of the Mediterranean Sea. On the eastern side of the urban centre the Selinos, Marnas, and Kaystros Rivers all flowed through a low valley around the city. The Marnas River, in particular, was a major source of water for the city and also appeared on several of the coinages produced by the Ephesian mint (Rogers 1991; Karwiese 2006). In addition to the abundant sources of water in the immediate vicinity of the city, an extensive system of aqueducts piped fresh water into the urban centre (Wiplinger 2006). Of particular consideration in this paper is the water that flowed into the city as the result of large-scale aqueduct construction. This water, as opposed to the self-propulsion of the sea and rivers, moved as a result of human engineering.

Because water is elemental – in all senses of the word – it is simultaneously pervasive, highly symbolic, and lends itself to being aesthetically manipulated. In a study of movement within an urban environment, water provides a productive case for study as it is essential for life and is consciously employed in urban design and civic benefaction.

The performative nature of water was harnessed in many monumental fountains and *nymphaea* throughout the Roman world. However, the use of water as a decorative element was a major innovation of the Hellenistic east. Their early hydraulic displays used water primarily as a landscaping element to provide a particular setting for sculpture (Longfellow 2005: 23). Although water was first utilized aesthetically in the east, it was in Italy that monumental artistic water displays first appeared in urban spaces, in addition to their more common uses in sanctuaries, baths, and residences. By the period under consideration here – namely the second century C.E. – the supply of water to cities, through aqueduct construction and the erection of monumental fountains, was a well-developed form of civic benefaction and elite competition throughout the Roman world (Rogers 1991; Longfellow 2005: 23; Ng 2007).

The Nymphaeum Traiani, or Trajan's Fountain, was the monumental terminus of a large-scale hydraulic project sponsored by the civic benefactors Claudius Aristion and his wife Julia Lydia Laternae (Fig. 1). The pi-shaped fountain was located on the Embolos, one of the major thoroughfares in the city, running between the heavily-trafficked State Agora and market district. The back wall of the *nymphaeum* was formed by a two-storied *aedicula* (an architectural frame consisting of columns or pilasters supporting a pediment), topped by a triangular pediment, which framed the space above which the water flowed. In the centre of the back wall stood a partially nude statue of Trajan in the guise of a hero. In addition, various other statues of divine, imperial, and Ephesian notables occupied the surrounding *aediculae* (Quatember 2006). Although none of the statues now survive, from the size of their bases it is possible to discern that they were most likely life-size on the first story and just under life-size on the upper story (Ng 2007: 201).



Figure 1: Nymphaeum Traiani, Ephesus (Photo by author).

An inscription on the entablature of the fountain records this gift to the city of Ephesus and its citizens (Ng 2007: 199). The inscription indicates that the water to the *nymphaeum* was provided by a 210 *stadia* (c. 32 km) long supply conduit. Recent research by Wiplinger has identified the source of this aqueduct near the modern village of Büyükkale, northeast of Ephesus (Quatember 2006: 73; Wiplinger 2006). In addition, a surviving statue plinth dedicated to the emperor reads, 'To the Emperor Caesar Nerva Sebastos Germanicos Dacius son of a god.' Based on the titulature, which is again repeated in the dedication by Aristion, the *nymphaeum* is dated to between 102 and 114 C.E. (Ng 2007: 201).

Analysis of the hydraulic management and delivery system by Ursula Quatember (2006: 74–76) provides insight into the movement of water into, around, and out of the Nymphaeum Traiani. She has identified the location at the back of the fountain where the conduit met with the building. A pipe system carried water from the main channel of the aqueduct to openings in the back wall of the *nymphaeum*. In at least three of the four *aediculae* in the rear wall, a small opening in each bay can be seen at about 25 to 30 cm above the floor level, probably for housing lead pipes. Quatember suggests that a low wall, which acted as a dam, would have provided sufficient hydrostatic pressure to push the water to the level of the pedestals on which statues rested.

The organization of pipes in Trajan's Fountain would have provided the necessary pressure so that water could flow into the main pool in a strong and constant stream. The statue of Trajan as hero was positioned in the centre of the back wall, beneath which the water gushed into the large central basin. It is probable that the water flowed from this large collecting basin over a parapet wall into a smaller, secondary basin. It was most likely from this shallower, narrower basin that the inhabitants of Ephesus collected their water.

The main drain of the fountain was located in the eastern end of the secondary pool. The unused water from the fountain was carried to the primary sewer underneath the Embolos, and was probably used as 'grey water' elsewhere in the city. When the secondary basin overflowed it presumably flowed over the parapet wall. Quatember suggests that there was probably a shallow channel in front of the *nymphaeum* that would take the excess water into another drain to avoid flooding in the street. This assumption is based on a similar installation at the Antonine *nymphaeum* in the Upper Agora at Sagalassos, although this cannot be confirmed at Ephesus due to the extant preserved paving dating to the late antique period. If her assumption is correct, the water used here as a decorative element and a resource for consumption literally spills out into the city.

Wiplinger and Quatember's work allows us to trace the movement of the water from its source outside the city, to the monumental fountain, and along the street. Using the raw materials they provide, it is possible to begin to re-imagine the activity of the water within the city. The *nymphaeum* engendered interplay between water and architecture, so that one was inextricably part of the other. The action of the water in the fountain as it gushed out of the opening, bubbled in the basin, spilled over the parapet wall, was scooped up by the inhabitants of Ephesus, gargled down the drain and slid down the street would have produced visual, auditory, and sensory effects. In this way, the Nymphaeum Traiani was a locus for the intersection of the built environment, water and people.

This interplay between architecture, water, and people was not the result of natural phenomena, but rather the conscious product of human engineering. The popularity of monumental *nymphaea* in the Roman world attests to a deliberate play with ideas of water and movement within the cityscape (Longfellow 2005). Prominently located on the Embolos, one of the major thoroughfares in Ephesus, Trajan's Fountain was a conspicuous monument in the urban landscape. Its position was made even more noticeable by its interruption of the colonnade that ran along the street. As people moved along the Embolos they would have been confronted by this imposing fountain with its gushing water. During their circuit of the city, the participants in the civic procession outlined in the Salutaris dedication also moved past the Nymphaeum Traiani.

The Salutaris dedication was bestowed on the people of Ephesus by C. Vibius Salutaris in the year 104 C.E. (Rogers 1991; Wankel *Inschriften von Ephesos* ("IE" below) 27.1–568). Both the Salutaris dedication and the Nymphaeum Traiani were bequeathed to the Ephesians

during the reign of the emperor Trajan, at a time when there was a considerable upsurge in building projects and civic benefaction (Scherrer 2001; Kalinowski 2002). The dedication itself consisted of the distribution of money given to various Ephesian civic and religious bodies. In addition to the allocation of money, a procession – the movement of people and statues through the city – was to be carried out according to Salutaris’ specifications. As they processed through the city with, among others, a silver statue of the emperor Trajan, the water from the Nymphaeum Traiani may have played with his image, reflecting it back.

The Salutaris dedication clearly outlined the route to be followed by the procession (*IE* 27.48–52) (Fig. 2). Travelling along the major thoroughfares, the path taken by the procession made a complete circuit within which the urban centre was circumscribed. Beginning at the Temple of Artemis, the participants crossed the *temenos* of the sacred precinct and followed the Sacred Way to the Magnesian Gate. The Sacred Way skirted the east side of the *Panayir-dağı* (the hill of ancient Pion) and led from the Artemision to the sacred Ortygian groves, the mythological birthplace of Artemis. Incidentally, the path from the Artemision along the Sacred Way was also the beginning of the route used for the sacred procession on the annual celebration of Artemis’ birthday, and therefore was surely an integral part of the urban civic and religious landscape.



Figure 2: Route outlined in the Salutaris dedication (after Scherrer 2006: Fig. 1, with modifications).

At the Magnesian Gate, Ephesus’ main southern entrance, the procession crossed into the heart of the city. The gathering of people would have passed through the State Agora (where the Prytaneion, Bouleterion and other governmental buildings were housed) and then down the Embolos, a busy commercial district and the street along which the Nymphaeum Traiani stands. The procession would then have turned a right angle to travel along the so-called Marble Street, the longest artery in the city. Approximately mid-way down the Marble Street

stood the Great Theatre, where the procession made its only stop during its route around the city. After the pause for ceremonies in the Great Theatre, the procession would have continued down the street leading to the Stadium, then out of the Koressos Gate and back to the Artemision. By means of this path the procession circumambulated the city centre, passing several of the major public, civic, and religious centres along the way.

The Salutaris procession played into the architectural and topographical setting of Ephesus. William MacDonald's concept of urban armatures provides a framework within which to understand the processional route as taking advantage of the directional and spatial cues embedded in Ephesus' urban fabric (MacDonald 1986). Transitional moments during the procession were punctuated by transitions within the urban space. For example, the Magnesian Gate was both the point at which the procession entered the city and where the statues were handed over to the *ephebes* (young males about to enter full citizenship) (*IE* 27.49–50). Moreover, Rogers (1991) suggests that the route taken by the procession traced the history of Ephesus from the Imperial present to its foundation, by means of the mythological and historical associations attached to the built environment and the surrounding landscape. Whether or not this was a conscious choice, the procession nevertheless moved through the core of the city which was laden with history and meaning.

The procession also worked with the topographical setting of the city. The processional route wound through the low valley between the Artemision and the urban centre to the east of *Panayir-dağı*. Once within the city limits the performers would have moved through the State Agora with buildings towering overhead on both sides. Then, processing down the Embolos, the participants would have descended down a relatively steep slope toward the harbour, visible at the base of the hill (Yegül 1994). As the procession wound its way back to the Artemision it moved through the relatively flat valley to the west and north of *Panayir-dağı*. Just as the undulating terrain was utilized in water use and management at Ephesus, so too did the procession play into the landscape as it travelled downhill with the flow of water.

Also incorporated into the ritual were twenty statues representing notable individuals, groups, and topographical features that played a central role in Ephesian civic identity. More than simply visual representations, these statues were also participants in this urban spectacle. The statues dedicated by Salutaris were as follows: a likeness of the Imperial couple, Trajan and his wife Plotina; an image of the Roman senate, the Ephesian *boule* (council), the equestrian order, and the *ephebes*; a silver image of the deified Augustus accompanied by a silver representation of the Sebaste (the Ephesian tribe named in his honour); a silver depiction of 'the loyal demos of the Ephesians' and a silver image of the tribe of the Ephesians; a silver image of Androklos, the mythological founder of the city, and a silver image of Lysimachos, a Hellenistic king and (re)founder of the city in the third century B.C. There were statues representing the other Ephesian tribes and an image of Pion, the god associated with the mountain around which the city of Ephesus was built (*IE* 27.148– 197). As participants in the procession, these statues moved through the city along with the people carrying them.

Based on the occurrences outlined in the dedication, Rogers (1991: 83) estimates that this procession may have occurred as often as once every two weeks. Although the actual frequency is ultimately unknowable, the dedication indicates that this performance occurred regularly over the course of the year. Indeed, if we assume that the procession generally happened in practice in the way it is outlined in the text – relatively frequently, through the major roads in the city, and during the principle civic and religious occasions – it is fair to conclude that the majority of the inhabitants of Ephesus would have, at some point, either participated in or been witness to the procession. We cannot be sure for how long the

performance was carried out. Yet, in its Imperial setting in the second century C.E., this performance was probably a regular part of urban rhythms in Ephesus.

The performance must have engendered an entanglement between the performers, the built environment and extra-urban landscape in a manner similar to which the Nymphaeum Traiani created an interplay between water, people and architecture (Casey 2001). The processional route literally tied the urban space to the extra-urban landscape, with the movement of people along this path activating it through their action. I suggest that through the frequent enactment of the performance, and the participants' continued engagement with the urban and extra-urban environment, the procession itself became part of the urban landscape. In contrast to the varied, every-day movements that happen within a city, the choreographed performance provides a clear framework within which to consider specific actions in a specific place. Through its staging and participants (human, architectural, topographic, statuary) the performance moved through and enlivened the urban landscape, and by means of its repeated enactment it continued to engage with the place.

Conclusion

From these two examples – the Nymphaeum Triani and the Salutaris Procession – the centrality of movement within the urban environment is brought into sharper focus. From the aqueduct water flowed into the city and out of both monumental and utilitarian fountains. By closely examining the interrelationship between the water itself, the architecture of buildings constructed to dispense it, and the means by which people accessed it, we get a better sense of the way water was incorporated into the urban landscape. Looking closer at the ways in which water figured in the cityscape highlights the centrality of this resource for urban design, public consumption and civic benefaction; melding together the natural and the cultural (if such a distinction can even be made) within the urban matrix.

Another way to conceptualize movement within the city is to think about civic ritual performance. Movement of people and things within urban environments was obviously a condition of life in antiquity but, in this case, the preservation of both the epigraphic document and the spaces in which the performance took place allow us to re-imagine (with some degree of accuracy) this movement in the city. As outlined in the dedication, the procession was probably carried out relatively frequently, contributing to the cadence of urban life in Ephesus.

Both water and the civic ritual performance flowed through the city. In both cases the flow of movement played into the architectural and topographic setting of Ephesus, with the performativity of water, people and things intimately tied to the broader landscape. Examining the flow of water, people, and things through urban space has been demonstrated to provide a strong case study for Ephesus, and this endeavour could well be expanded to other cities of the Roman Empire. Further, it is feasible to make a general case for the importance of performance in the flows of goods, building materials, light and even, potentially, waste and decay as the result of weathering and erosion. Whether further investigation of movement of a single element in a different context, or of the multiplicity of things flowing through a single city, the potential for further study demonstrated within this paper shows how much the consideration of movement has to offer Roman archaeology. In thinking about what makes a city a 'place', I argue that the movement of both things and people are integral to the process. Both flow through the city, activating the landscape and, in so doing, becoming a part of the place.

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