



University of Strasbourg
Institute for Advanced Study

THE ATHENIAN FUNERAL ORATION: 40 YEARS AFTER NICOLE LORAUX

An International Conference

9-11 July 2018

**The University of Strasbourg
France**

CONVENOR

David M. Pritchard

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Athenian Funeral Oration: 40 Years after Nicole Loraux. This international conference is taking place at the University of Strasbourg (France) from 9 to 11 July 2018. We have with us conference-delegates from eleven countries. It is especially pleasing to welcome French and German colleagues to the city that symbolises Franco–German cooperation.

English-, French- and German-speakers often read Pericles’s famous funeral oration at school or university. Once a year, in democratic Athens, such an oration was delivered in honour of the war dead. For the Athenians it was a vitally important speech because it reminded them who they were as a people and why they had sacrificed their sons in war. This conference is undertaking the most-thorough study of this genre in forty years.

In 1981 the great French ancient historian, Nicole Loraux, published a transformational study of the funeral oration (figure 1). Loraux proved that it had played a central part in maintaining Athenian self-identity. Yet, despite her study’s huge impact, it was far from complete. Her study did not compare the funeral oration and the other genres of Athens’s popular literature. Therefore Loraux could not prove her claim that the funeral oration was the most important of these genres. This conference completes Loraux’s study by making this comparison. In doing so it furnishes new studies of the five extant funeral orations and the most-comprehensive account to date of war’s place in democratic Athens’s popular culture.



Figure 1: Nicole Loraux

PRACTICAL MATTERS

The convenor of the conference is Dr David M. Pritchard (Queensland/Strasbourg). Conference-delegates can contact him at any time on +33 (0)7 87 47 41 97 or at dpritchard@unistra.fr. The chief conference assistant is Ms Célicia Landau, who is a French doctoral student at the University of Strasbourg. Conference-delegates can contact her on + 33 (0)6 73 18 76 04 or at clandau.uds@gmail.com.

Paper-givers and session-chairs are staying at the **Ibis Hotel Strasbourg Centre Gare**. This is located across the square from the Strasbourg train station at 10 Place de la Gare (figure 2). This hotel is different from the Ibis Budget Hotel. The phone number of the Ibis Hotel Strasbourg Centre Gare is +33 (0)3 88 23 98 99. The manager of our group booking is Ms Wéronika Boureau. Our booking is in the name of L'Université de Strasbourg.



[Click here for online map](#)

| Venue | Travel | Hotels | Restaurants |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ★ MISHA - | 🚆 Gare de Strasbourg | 🏠 Hôtel Ibis Strasbourg Centre-G | 🍷 Restaurant Santa Elena |
| | 🚆 Tram: Observatoire | 🏠 Hôtel du Dragon | 🍷 Restaurant Le Maharaja |
| | | | 🍷 Le Stras' |

Figure 2: General Map of Conference Venues

The main venue for the conference is **La Maison interuniversitaire des sciences de l'Homme – Alsace** (MISHA) on the Esplanade campus of the University of Strasbourg (figure 3). The official address of the MISHA building is 5 allée du Général-Rouillois. All conference-sessions are taking place in the Salle de Conférence on the ground floor. The tables directly in front of this lecture theatre are being used for the conference-registration and the catering. The MISHA is marked with a blue dot in the map over the page.

The **Observatoire tram stop** is the closest one to the MISHA. This tram stop is named on the map below. From the square where the Ibis Hotel Strasbourg Centre Gare is situated there is a direct tramline to Observatoire. This is Tram C. But there is a trick here. The tram stop for Tram C is *not* the one that is directly opposite the hotel. Rather the stop for Tram C is to the right of the hotel in the northern part of the square. It may take 40 minutes to get from the hotel to the MISHA if you go by Tram C.

The conference-dinner is taking place at 8 pm on Monday 9 July in **Restaurant Santa Elena**. The address of this excellent Argentinian restaurant is 11 Rue Sainte-Hélène. This dinner is for all conference-delegates. The two other dinners are reserved for paper-givers and session-chairs only. For them there is a dinner at 8 pm on Sunday 8 July at the **Maharaja Restaurant**. This French-influenced Indian restaurant is located at 15 Quai des Bateliers. The other dinner for paper-givers and session-chairs takes place at 8 pm on Tuesday 10 July at **Le Stras'**. This classic French restaurant is located at 9 Rue des Dentelles. A party of delegates will leave the foyer of the Ibis Hotel for each dinner at a set time (see the program below).

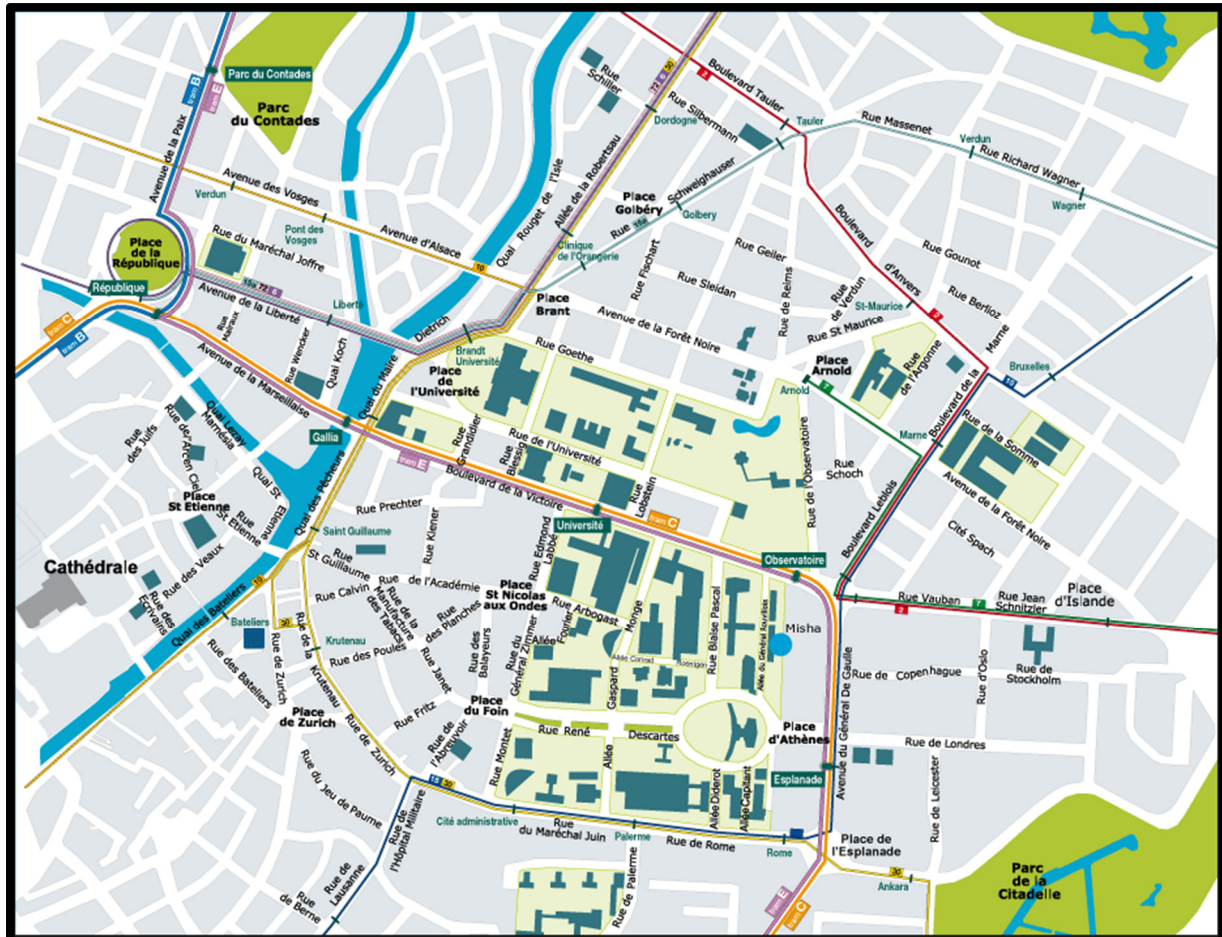


Figure 3: Map of the Esplanade Campus of the University of Strasbourg

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The two keynote speakers are Prof. Peter Hunt of the University of Colorado Boulder and Prof. Dominique Lenfant of the University of Strasbourg. They are delivering their keynote addresses in the afternoon of Tuesday 10 July 2018. The two keynote-speaker sessions as well as the afternoon tea between them are free events that are open to the general public. These sessions – along with Session 6: Intertextuality II – will be recorded for podcasting after the conference.

Peter Hunt is Professor of Ancient Greek History at the University of Colorado Boulder. He is a specialist on warfare and society, slavery, historiography and oratory in the ancient Greek world. His first book, *Slaves, Warfare and Ideology in the Greek Historians* (Cambridge University Press 1998), explored the conflict between the extent of slave and Helot participation in Greek warfare and the representation of their role in contemporary historians. His second book, *War, Peace and Alliance in Demosthenes' Athens* (Cambridge University Press 2010), used the evidence of

deliberative oratory as evidence for Athenian thinking and feelings about foreign affairs. His third book, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery* (Wiley Blackwell 2018), has just been published.

Dominique Lenfant is Professor of Greek History at the University of Strasbourg. She is a specialist on classical Greece, Greek historians, relations between the Greeks and the Persian empire, Greek perceptions of 'the Orient', Athenian democracy and Greek oligarchy. Prof. Lenfant has published three major editions of Greek historical works with French translations and historical commentaries. They are *Ctésias de Cnide La Perse, l'Inde et autres fragments* (Les Belles Lettres 2004), *Les Histoires perses de Dinon et d'Héraclide* (de Boccard 2009) and *Pseudo-Xénophon Constitution des Athéniens* (Les Belles Lettres 2017). Prof. Lenfant is the editor of the journal *Ktèma*, and the Director of both the Institute of Greek History and the Department of History at the University of Strasbourg. She is a member of the National Council of French Universities.

CONFERENCE THEME

Each year the classical Athenians held a public funeral for fellow citizens who had died in war. On the first two days they displayed the war dead's coffins in the town centre of Athens. On the third day they carried them in a grand procession to the public cemetery. There they placed the coffins in a funeral monument that the democracy had built at great expense. Beside it a leading politician delivered an oration ostensibly in the war dead's honour. In 1981 Nicole Loraux published a transformational study of this funeral oration. Before her *The Invention of Athens* ancient historians had considered this speech of little importance. But Loraux proved that it played an absolutely central role in the self-perception of the Athenian people. Each funeral oration rehearsed the same image of them: the Athenians were always victorious and capable of repelling foreign invaders, as they were braver than the other Greeks, while their wars brought only benefits and were always just. *The Invention of Athens* proved that the funeral oration typically created this image by narrating Athens's military history in mythical and historical times.

This study also made bold claims about the genre. For Loraux it was the most important one for the maintenance of Athenian self-identity, whose content, she asserted, was confined to what the funeral oration rehearsed. *The Invention of Athens* claimed that this self-identity adversely affected how the *dēmos* ('people') conducted foreign affairs. Yet, her study did not systematically compare the funeral oration and the other genres of Athens's popular literature. Consequently Loraux was unable to prove these bold claims.

This conference builds on Loraux's rightly famous study by making this comparison. The first way that it does so is by exploring the extent to which the other genres reproduced the funeral oration's commonplaces. In dramatising the genre's mythical military exploits tragedy certainly rehearsed its image of the Athenians, while comedy regularly parodied it. All this attests to the funeral oration's importance. At other times, however, these two genres of popular literature contradicted its commonplaces, depicting, for example, not just the benefits but also the huge human costs of war. If Loraux's claim about the funeral oration's adverse impact is correct, its image of the Athenians must have had a big part in the assembly's debates about war. The political speeches that survive partially support her claim; for they do show how proposals for war often were couched in terms of justice. However, it appears, again, that this genre's treatment of war also went well beyond the funeral oration.

The second way that the conference makes this comparison is by studying how these different genres depicted the state's military history, democracy and sailors. This, too, will force us to modify Loraux's claims. There is no doubt that the funeral oration set the pattern for the depiction of Athens's wars. But this, apparently, was not the case with the other common topics; for tragedy, it

seems, took the lead with democracy, while all genres equally reflected the *dēmos*'s positive view of sailors.

The Invention of Athens showed the need to study the funeral oration's intertextuality. By completing such a study this conference measures how important this genre was in Athens's popular culture. The conference will provide what is the richest account yet given of war's depiction in democratic Athens. It also studies anew the five complete examples of the funeral oration, because each continues to have ongoing problems. The first funeral oration, which is said to be the one that Pericles delivered in 431 BC, comes from Thucydides, who did not accurately record speeches. There is uncertainty, too, about the funeral orations from the Corinthian War, as their authors, clearly, did not deliver them; for Lysias, as a metic, was not entitled to do so, while Plato detested Athens's democratic politics. With each of these examples the conference considers why each writer wrote or recorded it and to what extent it is good evidence of the genre. The other two funeral orations must be re-examined as well, because, in spite of the fact that they were delivered in, respectively, 337 and 321, the authorship of Demosthenes's still raises doubts, while Hyperides's breaks so many of the genre's commonplaces.

Since Loraux's 1981 book a lot more has been learnt about Athens's funeral monuments and cultural history. Consequently the conference will also re-examine how the funeral oration related to the public funeral as well as Loraux's claim that both were a democratisation of elite practices. Because Reception History is now a major sub-discipline, the conference can also do what Loraux never attempted: to begin to write the history of the funeral oration's reception in ancient and modern times.

PUBLICATION

Cambridge University Press has expressed the firmest-possible interest in the publication of our conference-papers as an edited volume. This volume is being edited by the conference's convenor. The arrangements for producing our volume are as follows. Paper-givers are going to revise their papers on the basis of the feedback that they are receiving at the conference. The deadline for the first submission of book-chapters to the editor will be December 2018. The maximum extent, excluding the bibliography, for each book-chapter is 8000 words. The editor's first reports on all book-chapters will be sent out by February 2019. Authors will have until June 2020 to return their revised book-chapters to him. The editor's second set of reports will be sent out to all authors by August 2020. The final versions of all book-chapters are due back to him in December 2020. The complete manuscript will be submitted to the Press in March 2021. It is anticipated that *The Athenian Funeral Oration* will have a print publication date of 2022.

FINANCIAL SPONSORS

The University of Strasbourg Institute for Advanced Study (France)

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Figure 3: Australian soldiers admire the view from the Erechtheum in April 1941.

PROGRAM

Sunday 8 July 2018

- 7.30 pm Paper-Givers and Session-Chair Leave from the Hotel Foyer for Their First Dinner
8 pm First Dinner for Paper-Givers and Session-Chairs at the Maharaja Restaurant
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Monday 9 July 2018

- 9.00 am Conference Registration
- 9.30 am Session 1: Contexts I
Session-Chair: Kurt A. Raaflaub (Brown)
1. Vincent Azoulay (Paris) and Paulin Ismard (Sorbonne) 'From Ideology to the Imaginary: Inventing *The Invention of Athens*' (in French)
- 10.30 am Morning Tea
- 11 am Session 2: Funeral Speeches I
Session-Chair: Christophe Pébarthe (Bordeaux)
2. Jonas Grethlein (Heidelberg) 'A Subversive *Epitaphios Logos*: Pericles's Funeral Speech in Thucydides'
3. Alastair J. L. Blanshard (Queensland) 'The Problematics of Lysias's Funeral Speech'
- 1 pm Lunch
- 2 pm Session 3: Funeral Speeches II
Session-Chair: Johannes Wienand (Braunschweig)
4. Ryan Balot (Toronto) 'Reconstructing the Athenian Self-Image: The Case of Plato's *Menexenus*'
5. Thomas Blank (Mainz) 'The Delight of Our Neighbours': Isocrates on Commemorating the War Dead'
- 4.00 pm Afternoon Tea
- 4.30 pm Session 4: Contexts II
Session-Chair: Violaine Sebillote Cuchet (Sorbonne)
6. Nathan Arrington (Princeton) 'An Imaginary without an Image': Reconsidering the Funeral Oration and Material Culture'
- 7.45 pm Delegates Leave from the Hotel Foyer for the Conference Dinner
- 8 pm Conference Dinner for All Delegates at Restaurant Santa Elena
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Tuesday 10 July 2018

9.30 am Session 5: Intertextuality I

Session-Chair: Christophe Pébarthe (Bordeaux)

7. Johanna Hanink (Brown) 'Euripides and the Funeral Oration: Problems of Chronology and Possibilities of Influence'

10.30 am Morning Tea

11 am Session 6: Intertextuality II

Session-Chair: Claudia Tiersch (Humboldt)

8. Sophie Mills (North Carolina) 'Making Athens Great Again'
9. Bernhard Zimmermann (Freiburg) 'Back Then, When the Persians Came': Old Comedy and the Funeral Oration' (in German)

This session is being recorded for podcasting after the conference.

1 pm Lunch

2 pm Session 7: Keynote Address I

Session-Chair: Violaine Sebillotte Cuchet (Sorbonne)

Welcome by David M. Pritchard (Queensland/Strasbourg)

10. Peter Hunt (Colorado) 'Imagining Athens in the Assembly and on the Battlefield'

This session is being recorded for podcasting after the conference.

3.15 pm Afternoon Tea

3.45 pm Session 8: Keynote Address II

Session-Chair: Violaine Sebillotte Cuchet (Sorbonne)

General Remarks on the Paris School by the Session-Chair

11. Dominique Lenfant (Strasbourg) 'Is the Funeral Oration the Best Evidence for the Depiction of Democracy in Public Discourse?' (in French)

This session is being recorded for podcasting after the conference.

7.40 pm Paper-Givers and Session-chairs Leave from the Hotel Foyer for Their Second Dinner

8 pm Second Dinner for Paper-Givers and Session-Chairs at Le Stras'

Wednesday 11 July 2018

9.30 am Session 9: Reception

Session-Chair: Johannes Wienand (Braunschweig)

12. Neville Morley (Exeter) ‘‘Make Them Your Examples’’: The Modern Reception of Pericles’s Funeral Speech’

10.30 am Morning Tea

11 am Session 10: Funeral Speeches III

Session-Chair: Kurt A. Raaflaub (Brown)

General Remarks on the Funeral Oration by the Session-Chair

13. Leonhard Burckhardt (Basel) ‘Demosthenes after the Defeat: The Funeral Speech’ (in German)

14. Judson Herrman (Allegheny) ‘The Timeliness of Hyperides’s Funeral Speech’

1.15 pm Lunch

2.15 pm Session 11: Comparisons I

Session-Chair: Claudia Tiersch (Humboldt)

Remarks on the Pericles Project in Dutch High Schools by Diederik Burgersdijk

15. Jason Crowley (Manchester) ‘Fighting Talk: Athenian Military History in Speeches and on Stage’

3.30 pm Afternoon Tea

4 pm Session 12: Comparisons II

Session-Chair: Claudia Tiersch (Humboldt)

16. David M. Pritchard (Queensland/Strasbourg) ‘The Standing of Sailors in Democratic Athens’

5 pm Alsatian Crémant Served for Marking the Closing of the Conference

ABSTRACTS

Vincent Azoulay (Paris) and Paulin Ismard (Sorbonne)

From Ideology to the Imaginary: Inventing *The Invention of Athens*

Few historians would associate Nicole Loraux with the great Marxist historians who wrote on classical antiquity. Nevertheless Loraux implicitly presented herself as such, when, in 1981 and, again, in 1993, she made ideology and the imaginary central notions in her work on the funeral oration. Our paper investigates the complex uses of these two 're-invented' notions in *The Invention of Athens*. In particular the paper situates the career of Nicole Loraux within her rich intellectual milieu and teases out how she broke from it. This encompassed classical studies because *The Invention of Athens*, by moving the object of study to the imaginary, was clearly responding to some Marxist readings of antiquity, such as those of Moses Finley and the Italian School. But this milieu included as well the French intellectual scene because Loraux, in fact, was always engaged in a dialogue with philosophers and anthropologists, such as Louis Althusser, Claude Lefort, Cornelius Castoriadis and Pierre Clastres.

Nathan Arrington (Princeton)

'An Imaginary without an Image': Reconsidering the Funeral Oration and Material Culture

Nicole Loraux's understanding of ideology as a system of representations and her analysis of the beauty of the dead would all seem to offer an opening for the incorporation of material culture into an analysis of the funeral oration. In spite of this, images had almost no function in her *The Invention of Athens*. For Loraux the denial of an oracular spectacle of the body offered a contrast with Homeric valuations of death. She charted a move from the beautiful dead to the beautiful death that entailed a shift from aesthetics to morals. Loraux denied any role for visual culture in the funeral oration because, she argued, hearing had replaced sight. While Loraux's analysis emerged from iconographic and structuralist approaches that implicitly contrasted abstraction and figuration, a conception of material culture that incorporates materiality and phenomenology offers important new perspectives. The funeral oration was only one component of a ritual that moved through spaces that were laden with objects and images articulating, manipulating, appropriating and, at times, rejecting the funeral oration's beautiful death. Considering this wider material frame allows us to nuance some of Loraux's central arguments.

Ryan Balot (Toronto)

Reconstructing the Athenian Self-Image: The Case of Plato's *Menexenus*

Compared to other extant examples, Plato's *Menexenus* presents an unusual funeral speech: an oration delivered by Socrates, embedded within a Platonic dialogue and supposedly written by Pericles's lover, Aspasia, whom Socrates claims as his own tutor in rhetoric. Nicole Loraux's *The Invention of Athens* convinced almost all of the necessity of reading this speech alongside the others, without, however, investigating Plato's own political and philosophical aims. Building on the work of Salkever, Monoson, Stauffer and Collins, Petrucci, and Kahn, this paper re-opens the question of the dialogue's tone. Is the fictional Socratic *epitaphios logos* ('funeral speech') ironic or serious, or somehow both? In order to approach this question, it is necessary, first, to examine the speech's intertextual relations with Pericles's funeral speech in Thucydides. Then, with the 'gender politics' of this speech in mind, it will be possible to grasp the largely neglected significance of Aspasia, both as a woman and a foreigner. These considerations lead to the conclusion that Plato had both a critical and a constructive purpose: critical, in challenging the Periclean presentation of democratic *aretē* ('courage'), and constructive, in providing a kind of political therapy for democratic citizens, who stood, albeit unwittingly, in need of a healthier and more coherent self-understanding.

Thomas Blank (Mainz)

'The Delight of Our Neighbours': Isocrates on Commemorating the War Dead

In 1981, when Nicole Loraux published *The Invention of Athens*, it still seemed possible to take Isocrates's *Panegyricus* as evidence for the funeral oration because of his treatise's explicit appropriation of this genre. At the time Isocrates was seen as a simple pamphlet-writer, who reflected the popular morality of fourth-century Athens. Forty years later, however, Isocrates's 'pamphlets' are now seen as rhetorical declamations or even real philosophical works. This paper re-considers Isocrates's relationship to the funeral oration in light of this new reading of his oeuvre. It demonstrates that Isocrates took a critical, if not hostile, stance towards the public funeral for the war dead. While he acknowledged myth's value as a moral paradigm for contemporary politics, Isocrates repeatedly argued that history since the Persian Wars had all been a moral decline for both Athens and Sparta. Since the public funeral had always commemorated the Athenian war dead of this period, Isocrates described it as a display of Athens's abject failure. While he did appropriate some aspects of the funeral oration for his own purposes, Isocrates's breaking of the continuity between Athens's mythical and historical exploits challenged a central contention of this prestigious genre.

Alastair J. L. Blanshard (Queensland)

The Problematics of Lysias's Funeral Speech

Lysias's funeral speech is a paradoxical work. In theory a funeral speech by a foreign speech-writer should not exist. At first glance this oration seems to point to a failure of process. What does it say about Athenian democracy that it had carefully selected a man to deliver a speech who needed to employ a speech-writer because, presumably, he was not up to the task of writing the speech myself? Moreover, how could it be that the best person to write an encomium of Athens is not an Athenian, but a metic? Lysias, what is more, was not just any metic, but one to whom Athenian democracy had repudiated a grant of citizenship. Whether we regard it as genuine or not, Lysias's funeral speech potentially disrupts any straightforward story that we might want to tell about the relationship between the funeral oration, citizenship and civic ideology. His speech highlights the constructed nature of the genre's statements about normative values. This speech's circulation as a literary text raises questions about the importance of the performative context for the funeral oration. This paper explores the implications of this speech for our understanding of the epitaphic tradition. It reviews the evidence for the authorship and authenticity of Lysias's funeral speech. It canvasses the various possibilities for the construction and dissemination of his text.

Leonhard Burckhardt (Basel)

Demosthenes after the Defeat: The Funeral Speech

There are two reasons why the funeral speech of Demosthenes has largely been ignored by ancient historians. The first reason is that it has always been judged as less important than the great funeral speeches of Pericles, Lysias and Hyperides. The second reason is that many ancient historians have thought it unworthy of Demosthenes in terms of content and style. The lack of sustained research on this funeral speech is thus unsurprising. This speech, however, putting aside the question of authenticity, is of considerable historical interest. Demosthenes, like other funeral orators, may have manipulated the genre's commonplaces, but his speech is the only example of the surviving ones that had to react to a crushing Athenian defeat. Indeed, when, in 338, he delivered his funeral speech, Athens's future was uncertain and its outlook decidedly grim. In this situation evoking the glorious past, which was a mainstay of the genre, seemed inappropriate. This, surely, is the reason why Demosthenes decided to focus on the tribal heroes, who, despite being easy figures for all citizens to identify with, were sufficiently in the past so that glorifying them did

not increase the melancholy of his fellow citizens. This paper discusses the historical context of this neglected work and compares its lines of argumentation with those of other funeral speeches. It attempts to explain why Demosthenes delivered the funeral speech of 338 at all and why he said what he did.

Jason Crowley (Manchester)

Fighting Talk: Athenian Military History in Speeches and on Stage

The Athenian military history that emerges from drama was well as from deliberative and forensic oratory is very different to that in the funeral oration. Whether on the stage, in the assembly or in the law-courts, when the Athenians spoke about their military exploits, they often acknowledged the human experiences of war. Their speeches and plays echoed the chaos of combat, the corrosive effects of war as well as Athenian imperfections on the battlefield. Athenian combatants, they acknowledged, sometimes proved to be cowards, their commanders incompetent and their political leaders as having led the *dēmos* astray. War occasioned fear, pain, grief, shame and recrimination. In the funeral oration, however, such negative details dissolved into a smoother narrative of good deeds, selflessness and self-sacrifice. This divergence was closely tied to the different function of the funeral oration. This included, of course, the commemorating of the war dead but also the stimulating of patriotism and a desire on the part of the living to emulate the glorious deeds of the war dead. The funeral oration, therefore, constituted a demand to fight, and as such, it depicted Athenian military history very differently.

Jonas Grethlein (Heidelberg)

A Subversive *Epitaphios Logos*: Pericles's Funeral Speech in Thucydides

Pericles's funeral speech in Thucydides deviated from the conventions of the historical *epitaphioi logoi* ('funeral speeches') in important respects. It did not, for example, contain the canonical account of mythical and historical events. My paper argues that this speech was not only strongly shaped by Thucydides but also furnished a critique of both the genre and the role that it played in Athenian democracy. The initial reflections of Pericles about the occasion's requirements as well as the strong tension between his funeral speech and Thucydides's historical narrative highlight the shortcomings that the historian saw in this genre. Pericles's famous speech thus affords us an insight into how an aristocrat who was hostile to Athenian democracy viewed the funeral oration. More fundamentally it puts beyond doubt that Thucydides identified the *epitaphios logos* as a core institution of Athenian democracy. The paper argues that he also packed his example of the speech with neologisms and novel phrases in order to make the reader reflect back on what he had written about historical method in book 1 of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

Johanna Hanink (Brown)

Euripides and the Funeral Oration: Problems of Chronology and Possibilities of Influence

This paper considers how Euripides engaged with, and, as far as we can, subverted the funeral oration. A number of his monologues in *Suppliant Women*, *Trojan Women*, *Electra* and *Erechtheus* have been read as funeral speeches that were supposed to evoke the actual oration for the war dead. This paper begins by reconsidering how these Euripidean speeches participated in Athens's broader discourse about war and the war dead. The paper's second part focusses on Euripides's treatment of the so-called *epitaphioi muthoi*: the myths of early Athens that funeral speeches regularly treated. Three of those four *muthoi* ('stories') are the stuff of Euripidean *muthoi* ('plots'), namely *Erechtheus* and the so-called political plays: *Suppliant Women* and *Children of Heracles*. These Euripidean tragedies predate other sources for Athenian speeches that contained epitaphic tropes. A likely exception here is the speech that Herodotus gave the Athenians at the battle of

Plataea in book 9 of his *History*. The third and final part of this paper explores the possibility of Euripidean influence on the funeral oration itself. In particular it argues that the depiction of multiple layers of dramatic performance in Plato's *Menexenus* reprises the Euripidean tendency to subvert the conventions of the funeral oration by locating women and foreigners as the source of what Loraux famously called that 'very Athenian' *logos*.

Judson Herrman (Allegheny)

The Timeliness of Hyperides's Funeral Speech

Nicole Loraux's great study of the funeral oration stresses the theme of timelessness. Loraux argued that the funeral orators typically presented an account of Athenian military history that avoided any focus on recent military actions. For this argument Hyperides's funeral speech presented a difficulty. Loraux described it as the 'least conformist' of the surviving speeches and as a 'subversion' lacking 'fidelity' to the epitaphic tradition. Certainly the unique features of this speech have always been emphasised since its first publication in 1858. This speech focussed almost exclusively on the recent actions that led up to the public funeral of 322. It broke with the genre's general anonymity by singling out the fallen general, Leosthenes, for extensive praise. Moreover, Hyperides's funeral speech is unusual in its references to non-Athenian allies and groups other than combatants in Athenian society. Loraux tried to account for all this by referring to the 'exceptional circumstances' that motivated Hyperides to compose his speech as a eulogy for an individual. This paper studies closely the timeliness of this funeral speech. It connects the depiction of recent events with Hyperides's wider political policies. The paper cautions against regarding the speech as an unusual subversion by recalling how few funeral speeches we have and by linking Hyperides's speech to other examples of timeliness in what survives of the genre.

Peter Hunt (Colorado)

Imagining Athens in the Assembly and on the Battlefield

Assembly-speeches and funeral speeches invite comparison. In both prominent politicians addressed a large and predominantly non-elite audience, and war played a predominant role. Yet contrasts between them abounded. The funeral oration emphasised the nobility of Athens and more particularly the selflessness and the patriotism of the war dead, whereas assembly-speeches criticised the decadence of Athenian politics and the short-sighted selfishness of Athenian citizens. The speaker of a funeral speech was self-effacing. The speaker in the assembly, by contrast, asserted his insight and knowledge, while he criticised his fellow citizens almost undemocratically. The funeral oration addressed a united Athens and avoided divisive issues, whereas disagreement was the *raison d'être* of assembly-speeches. In the assembly, speakers thus regularly excoriated this or that subset of the *dēmos*. While Loraux aligned the funeral oration with an idealised image of Athens, the assembly speakers professed, at least, a commitment to reality, however unpalatable. In spite of all these differences, similarities lay just below the surface. Insofar as their advice for the future depended on the past, assembly speakers invoked the patriotic and slanted history that was conspicuously promulgated in the funeral oration. Funeral speeches insisted on Athenian exceptionalism in the Greek world. Assembly-speeches did the same, if only to contrast Athens's current policies with its true role as the leader of the Greek world and the guardian of freedom and justice.

Dominique Lenfant (Strasbourg)

Is the Funeral Oration the Best Evidence for the Depiction of Democracy in Public Discourse?

Democracy is a central topic in Nicole Loraux's *The Invention of Athens*. Loraux argued that Pericles's funeral speech in Thucydides is vitally important evidence for how the Athenian *dēmos* thought about their democracy. The funeral oration was, of course, closely tied to democracy because the public funeral where it was delivered was organised by the state and the democratic council had selected the funeral orator. The praise of the Athenian constitution was one of the genre's commonplaces. Yet the funeral oration's depiction of democracy did not match exactly what we find in the other genres of Athenian popular literature: comedy, tragedy, and forensic and deliberative oratory. By comparing these different depictions we can see more clearly the common ground and the divergences between them. Much of this can be explained by the purpose of each genre as well as its specific audience and context of delivery, not to mention each author's literary agenda. All in all none of these genres should be privileged as the most important evidence for Athenian democracy's self-portrait.

Sophie Mills (North Carolina)

Making Athens Great Again

The audience of the *epitaphios logos* assembled to hear a leading politician recount the earlier military exploits of the Athenians and how they had shaped the contemporary exploits of the war dead. The funeral oration upheld an idealised image of Athenian action in which Athens excelled in war and undertook warmaking only for noble ends. This focus attempted to reconcile the mourners to loss and grief by appealing to common and unquestionably good outcomes. By contrast, it is now orthodox to state that Athenian tragedy encouraged questioning and self-critique among the Athenians. Although the funeral speeches intimately connected past and present, at another level they clearly distinguished between them, as one speaker on one day showed how the war dead of a particular year had exemplified eternal Athenian superiority. Tragedy, however, avoided explicit coverage of the present, operating in a vague space between ancient and contemporary. This vagueness might have offered theatre-goers opportunities for critique of Athens and self-critique. However, what they brought to tragedy from the funeral speeches might equally have pushed them to a strongly affirmative idea of Athenian action. Recent readings often argue that tragedians criticised Athenian warmaking. Yet, every surviving tragedy where Athens features is fully intelligible as an endorsement of Athenian action, often combined with the spectacle of the suffering of others. Clearly to identify as a citizen of a state that helped those who were suffering while remaining untouched by this suffering was pleasurable. The funeral oration and tragedy probably worked together from different perspectives to solidify a strongly positive view of Athens for Athenians.

Neville Morley (Exeter)

'Make Them Your Examples': The Modern Reception of Pericles's Funeral Speech

From the speeches, excepting Abraham Lincoln's, after Gettysburg to calls for courage and unity after 9/11, from the First World War's propaganda and public war memorials to war-veterans on Twitter, the funeral speech of Pericles in Thucydides has been a pervasive influence in the modern Western world. Or, at least, parts of it have been. One of the striking aspects of this speech's modern reception has been its reduction to a limited number of sentiments and quotations. Whether it is attributed to Thucydides or Pericles, or both, the speech has been read in a selective and superficial way. There is little attempt to contextualise it, beyond noting that Athens was at war, since this establishes the basis for claims that the speech is relevant to the present. No attempt is made to consider it in relation to the rest of Thucydides's narrative. The sentiments that Pericles expressed are taken entirely at face value and compared directly to contemporary institutions and

values, without any consideration of the differences between ancient and modern ideas of democracy or freedom. Certainly this process has been assisted by the practices of translators in modernising and universalising Pericles's sentiments. The usefulness of this carefully sanitised version of the funeral oration, both for the modern state and for various interest groups, lies in the presentation of self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation as an unquestioned duty that is founded in claims about the nature of society. But there have been a few dissenting voices, not least Nicole Loraux's own reading of the genre in the shadow of the horrors of the mid-twentieth century.

Estelle Oudot (Burgundy)

Is the Eulogy of Athens during the Roman Empire a Decline?

In closing *The Invention of Athens* Nicole Loraux reflected on what happened to the funeral oration during the Roman empire. Although several Roman-period Greek texts drew heavily on the funeral oration's *topoi*, these commonplaces, as far as Loraux was concerned, had been emptied of their original meaning: war-related motifs were erased, the eulogy of democracy no longer resounded with contemporary politics and, if there still was Athenian superiority, it was only cultural. Loraux focussed on Aelius Aristides's *Panathenaicus*, which she defined as 'an abstract oration on a symbolic city that is no longer a *polis* except in name'. This famous display speech may have kept the funeral oration's periodisation of history into ancestral, paternal and contemporary ages. Yet, such a periodisation, Loraux wrote, 'no longer has any function but to throw back into the past any history of acts', with the contemporary age consisting now only of rhetoric and culture. Whereas Pericles, in his funeral oration, had depicted Athens as a remarkable city because of its military and political superiority, in the hands of Aelius Aristides, it became a 'universal' city and 'a sort of common place of Hellenism'. Loraux's analysis may contain some truth. Yet, by characterising this speech as a degradation of a rhetorical form she misrepresented what Aelius Aristides was doing. His *Panathenaicus* is, rather, a novel appropriation of a classical-period genre for different ends, which serves as a good case study of the reception history of the *epitaphios logos* in imperial times. Aelius Aristides drew on the funeral orations that we find in Thucydides and Plato just as much as he did on the appropriations of this genre by Isocrates. In his strong re-invention of Athens he reflected on the long history of Greek rhetoric. His *Panathenaicus* attests to the central place of Athens and its classical-period literature in the higher education of the Greeks in imperial times.

David M. Pritchard (Queensland/Strasbourg)

The Standing of Sailors in Democratic Athens

Ancient historians regularly argue that the Athenian *dēmos* held sailors in much lower esteem than hoplites. They cite in support of this the extant funeral speech of Pericles. Certainly this famous speech said a lot about courageous hoplites but next to nothing about sailors. Yet it is also clear that this was not a typical example of the genre. Funeral speeches usually gave a fulsome account of Athenian military history. In 431 Pericles decided to skip such an account because of the difficult politics that he faced. In rehearsing military history funeral speeches actually always mentioned naval battles and recognised sailors as courageous. Old comedy and the other genres of public oratory depicted sailors in the same positive terms. Their sailors displayed no less courage than hoplites and both groups equally benefitted the state. All these non-elite genres assumed that a citizen fulfilled his martial duty by serving as either a sailor or a hoplite. They used a new definition of courage that both groups of combatants could easily meet. In tragedy, by contrast, characters and choruses used the hoplite extensively as a norm. In epic poetry heroes spoke in the same hoplitic idiom. By copying this idiom the tragic poets were setting their plays more convincingly in the distant heroic age. In spite of this, tragedy still recognised Athens as a major seapower and could depict sailors as courageous. In Athenian democracy speakers and playwrights had to articulate the

viewpoint of non-elite citizens. Their works put beyond doubt that the *dēmos* esteemed sailors as highly as hoplites.

Bernhard Zimmermann (Freiburg)

‘Back Then, When the Persians Came’: Old Comedy and the Funeral Oration

Old comedies regularly had choruses of old men who had taken an active part in the battles of Marathon and Salamis or even the founding of Athenian democracy. It is striking that these choruses, when they were presenting themselves in their entry songs as well as in their dramatic-illusion-rupturing interludes, took up commonplaces of the funeral oration. They referred to the ‘place of remembrance’ where this oration was delivered and recounted some of the history that it usually recounted. Aristophanes thus really brought the *progonoi* (‘ancestors’) whom the funeral speeches praised onto the comic stage. In so doing he created a connection between the comic plot that was based on current events and the past. This paper’s case studies are his *Archarnians* (425), *Wasps* (423) and *Lysistrata* (411). Nevertheless it also considers Aristophanes’s other plays as well as the fragments of the other comic poets who wrote around the end of the fifth century.



Figure 4: British soldiers take in the Erechtheum in October 1944.

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18 August 2016

Dear David

The Athenian Funeral Oration

I have read your outline of this proposed volume and would like to express very strong interest in considering it for Cambridge University Press in due course. The topic is a very important one and you have assembled an excellent team of contributors. Moreover, you have already demonstrated your editorial skills in two books published with the Press.

All good wishes

Michael

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THE “BEAUTIFUL DEATH” FROM HOMER TO DEMOCRATIC ATHENS

NICOLE LORAUX

Translated by David M. Pritchard

1. INTRODUCTION

From Homer’s *Iliad* to the Athenian funeral oration and beyond, the “beautiful death” was the name that the Greeks used to describe a combatant’s death.¹ From the world of Achilles to democratic Athens, in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, the warrior’s death was a model that concentrated the representations and the values that served as [masculine] norms.² This should not be a surprise: the *Iliad* depicts a society at war and, in the

1 Translator’s note: This article was published as “Mourir devant Troie, tomber pour Athènes: de la gloire du héros à l’idée de la cité” (Loraux 1982). It was delivered as a paper at the conference, “Funerary Ideology in the Ancient World,” which took place in Ischia, Italy, in 1977. Cambridge University Press and the Éditions de Maison des Sciences de l’Homme co-published the conference proceedings. My translation appears here courtesy of these presses. In translating Loraux’s footnotes, I include English-language publications in lieu of the French translations that Loraux cited or in lieu of French-language works that have been translated into English. The paper’s stated purpose was to summarise the major findings of the three conference papers about the “beautiful death”: those of A. Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1982, J.-P. Vernant 1991.50–74, and Loraux herself, which she published in *The Invention of Athens* (Loraux 1986.98–118). In discussing the major findings of this last book, Loraux went well beyond this purpose. I remain indebted to P. Cryle and, especially, M. Mardon for their valuable help with this translation.

2 Therefore I keep the *Iliad* distinct from the *Odyssey*; on the latter, see, e.g., Finley 1979. With the Achaean camp and the classical city, of course, it is a question of the two absolute endpoints of a long history that the three conference papers did not cover. Consequently, in what follows there are gaps, especially on the hero, which is treated by Bérard 1982. On the development of the *cult* of heroes in the cities, which was an essential stage in the process of abstraction, see below.

Achaean camp at least, a society of men without children and legitimate wives. Certainly the Athenian polis reversed the traditional combatant-citizen relationship by claiming that one must be, *first*, a citizen before being a soldier.³ Nevertheless, this polis distinguished itself from others by the splendour of the public funeral for its citizens who had died in war and, especially, by repatriating their mortal remains (Thuc. 2.34). In a society that believed in autochthony, this repatriation was, undoubtedly, significant. Since the beautiful death crystallised the *aretē* (“courage”) of Achilles and Athenians alike, it was, from the outset, linked to speech. Indeed, heroic death *and* the civic beautiful death were the subject matter of elaborate speech-making. Such a celebratory discourse gave the warrior’s death an eternal existence in memory. This discourse gave his death its reality, but, conversely, also took for itself all that was valued in his exploit and claimed to be its truthful expression. In short, the beautiful death was a paradigm.

2. THE LANGUAGE OF THE FUNERAL: THE LIVING’S TREATMENT OF THE DEAD

In order to bury their dead, two communities came together: the army of the Achaeans and the Athenian city. The former used two markedly different procedures, depending on whether it was burying the ordinary dead or the elite of the heroes. For the non-elite anonymous dead who had not fallen in the front rank, the army of the Achaeans acted quickly: they washed the dead bodies, removing blood and dust, and built a funeral pyre. Once the cremation was finished, they departed, without, apparently, saying a word (e.g., *Il.* 7.424–32); for it is certain that the Achaeans, just like the Trojans, abstained from any lamentation before piling the bodies on the pyre (Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1982.79).⁴ To the living’s silence corresponds the silence surrounding the dead, who, as an indistinct cohort, will go and rejoin, in Hades, the *nōnumnoi* (“the nameless”), that is, the masses who are deprived of glory.⁵

3 This relationship went back to the so-called hoplite reform; see, e.g., Detienne 1968 and Vidal-Naquet 1986.85–106.

4 Since wailing was essentially feminine, it is significant that women in this particular setting were absent. The text also emphasises the ban on lamentation *on the Trojan side* (e.g., *Il.* 7.427). Therefore it is was an important departure, when, among the Trojans, the dead heroes were brought home and met with female wailing.

5 In Hesiod’s myth of the races, only the elite among the heroes arrive in the Isles of the Blessed, while the rest reach Hades, like the men of bronze, as *nōnumnoi* dead men (Hes. *Op.* 152–55, 166–73).

In order to bury the heroes, by contrast, whether it be Sarpedon, Hector, or, especially, Patrocles, a ritual was required to which significant time had to be allocated. This funeral accommodated lamentations, a display of the body (*prothesis*), a banquet, and/or games.⁶ Next it fell to the poet to celebrate the *klea andrōn*, namely, the glorious deeds of the heroes. In brief, one did not bury Thersites, if he were to die, as one would Achilles or as one did bury his "other," Patrocles. There was, clearly, one lot for ordinary men and another lot for the heroes.

Democratic practice, in contrast to the epic funeral, granted everyone the same honour; for, at Athens, the funeral was collective, as were the tomb and the eulogy. But each citizen still had an individual right to his share of glory and to the eternal memory of his name that was inscribed on the funeral monument. A name, it is true, that was both "abstract" and political: without a patronymic and a demotic, the citizen's name was stripped naked, as it were, and detached from all relationships, such as those in a family or any other group. His name was placed on a list, next to the names of the year's other dead, who were enumerated within the civic framework of the ten Cleisthenic tribes. In this way, democratic egalitarianism was able to integrate the aristocratic value of glory. Some anonymity, certainly, governed this funeral, but it was moderate; for if the remains of the dead, which were collected by tribes, were not individualised, each family, at least, had the right to bring offerings to its deceased loved one during the *prothesis*. An unwritten law encouraged the orator not to praise any individual's glory in his *epitaphios logos* ("funeral oration"). But the public monument still implemented a fair division between collective glory, which was given by the verse epitaph, and personal renown, which came from the name's inscription (Loraux 1986.15–42).

Might burying a dead individual or the collective dead be a way for a community to give full expression to the values that provide the society of the living its structure? If we leave to one side the truly anonymous dead of Book 7 of the *Iliad*, this question can be answered by returning to two funerals: those of Patrocles and Athenian citizen-soldiers. Yet before doing so, it is right that we anticipate a criticism. It could be objected that between, on the one hand, the "literary" funeral, whose described ritual is all there is (even if it is realistic: Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1982.81), and, on the other hand, the funerary practice attested by archaeological evidence, the

⁶ I am using the term hero strictly in the Homeric sense and not in the cultural sense; on the latter, see, e.g., Bérard 1982 and Hartog 1982.

distance is much too great. Importantly, however, our principal document on the Athenian collective funeral *is still a text*, namely Thucydides 2.34—a text that plays an essential role in the overall economy of this historian’s account of the Peloponnesian War. Consequently, in both cases, the funeral has already become the subject matter of speech, which is something that we will need to take into account.

Let us go, first, to the funeral of Patrocles. It furnishes, at first sight, the classic schema of a hero’s funeral in the *Iliad*. To begin, the dead man’s body is cared for in multiple ways, after which it is displayed in all its beauty and, next, burnt on a funeral pyre. In this cremation, J.-P. Vernant sees a process that was the opposite of the one characterising sacrificial practice (Vernant 1991.69–70). In the funerary rite, certainly, the corruptible flesh, which was totally consumed, departed in smoke, while the “white bones” survived, which were all that remained of the dead man’s body. In the sacrificial rite, by contrast, the white bones went up as smoke towards the gods, while the flesh remained, destined to be consumed by the community of men. Yet Patrocles’s funeral only appears to conform to this cremation schema, since this ritual completely mixes up funeral and sacrifice (Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1982.83–85). The sacrifices in it are made aberrant by the status of the victims (men, dogs, and horses). In what is an excessive funeral, Patrocles, who is burnt by a double fire, both sacrificial and funerary, is the object of a funeral ritual as well as the recipient of sacrificial practice. In a word, he is a divine corpse.

What is essential here is that this is what Achilles will soon be, because, by honouring Patrocles with whom he had a “living connection,” Achilles accepts his destiny, a destiny inscribed by death.⁷ Patrocles’s funeral is, in reality, celebrated by Achilles alone, although it takes place in the middle of the Achaean army and includes his own people, the Myrmidons. This funeral tacitly expresses *the complex status of Achilles as a hero*: his *hubris* (“insolence”), which constantly leads from all to nothing, and his standing as a living man whose death is written in his (short) life. Being neither completely dead nor, for that matter, alive, and a mortal, who is, nevertheless, treated like a god, Patrocles reveals Achilles’ status as a

7 “Living connection” is borrowed from what Vernant said in the discussion that followed this conference presentation. As for Patrocles as the “double” of Achilles, E. Cassin evoked the analogous couple in the Mesopotamian tradition of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and the hubristic funeral that the former held for the latter, whose life is, from then on, no more than a long march towards death.

living man. Until Achilles dies one day, Patrocles will not truly be one of the dead. His absolutely temporary tomb contains what looks like the white bones and the double layer of fat for a sacrifice that has not yet taken (nor will ever take) place. Until he, in his turn, departs for Hades, Achilles alive is the immortal face of Patrocles, just as Patrocles was his mortal part. In the end, only death will reunite the two halves of this *sumbolon* ("token"). Patrocles' funeral therefore brings up to date Achilles' status, his difficult integration into the societies of the living and the dead, and the tension within him that constantly opposes life to death and god to man. In short, Achilles and Patrocles are the inside and the outside. There is no better way to say that the hero is double.

After the heroic funeral, let us turn to the civic funeral's democratic egalitarianism. Again we need to note how this egalitarianism consisted of giving to all what aristocracy reserved for some. Aristocratic features of this funeral included the *prothesis*, which was longer than for the ordinary dead, the use of chariots for the cortège (*ekphora*), the placing of the bones in caskets of cypress, which, as a rot-proof timber, was the bearer of memory and the symbol of immortality, and, especially, the eulogy. This prose oration may have used the language of political debate. But the *doxa athanatos* ("immortal renown") of the civic orators looks suspiciously like the *kleos aphthiton* ("imperishable glory") of the poet. Therefore, the civic funeral certainly did give everyone what the past's aristocrats had given only to some. To everyone the oration and the verse epigram also gave, officially, the title *agathoi andres* ("courageous men"). We might ask: did death erase differences? It is better to say that it was the city that erased differences in death, as if democracy's interchangeable egalitarianism was (only) fulfilled on such an occasion. In death, Athenian combatants, who were hoplites, archers, rowers, and peltasts all mixed up, looked like *homoioi* ("peers"). In light of words such as *homoioi* and *agathoi*, was this the equality of democratic Athens or an aristocracy? What the public funeral spoke of was *democracy as it wanted to be*, that is, as it wanted to be thought of. Consequently, we can say that the Athenian funeral did indeed give expression to the "reality" of the society of the living—as long as we designate as real what this society wanted people to say about it or what it said about itself.

This society kept saying the same thing, despite all the transformations that it underwent. In the fourth century, the funeral oration with its strict orthodoxy resisted the intrusion of private values that were again growing in the city (Loraux 1986.109–10). But the historian cannot forget

that even on the edges of the *dēmosion sēma* (“public cemetery”), private tombstones began again to proliferate. Some of them even went so far as to celebrate individually citizens who had been interred in a collective monument. In this way, family devotion duplicated official values, just as, in the Ceramicus, the “street of tombs” duplicated the *dēmosion sēma*. The most remarkable case is that of Dexileos, who was, probably, interred in the collective monument of 394. He was definitely twice celebrated individually: first, with the *hippeis* (“horsemen”) who had distinguished themselves at the same time as him and, second, by the monument that his family erected for him.⁸ This tomb’s epitaph formed a biography, while its relief cut him off from the other combatants (Loraux 1986.31).⁹ In the face of all this, however, the civic funeral and the funeral oration never tired of saying that the collective had primacy over the individual and the public over the private. It is time that we really examine this speech.

3. HEROIC AND CITIZEN DEATHS: FROM THE BEAUTIFUL DEAD TO THE BEAUTIFUL DEATH

In Homer’s world as much as in the Athenian city, an important place was made for speech on the beautiful death, because ceremonial practices in both honoured the dead by speaking to the living. While speaking of the “language” of rites, we are not overlooking that the combatant’s death is literally surrounded on all sides by speech. This speech, whether it be the poet’s or the orator’s, formed the beautiful death by celebrating it. Yet inside this speech, there was another speech that the combatants were supposed to have rehearsed for themselves before risking their lives. We find this internal deliberative speech in, for example, Sarpedon’s address to Glaucus, this “other” who is just like him, in Book 12 of the *Iliad* (Vernant 1991.55–57), and in the monologue of the Athenian combatant in Lysias’s

8 These monuments’ inscriptions are, respectively, Rhodes and Osborne 2003.nos. 7A and 7B.

9 The casualty list of 394 (*IG* ii² 5221) is too lacunose to affirm with certainty that it included Dexileos’s name. During the discussion that followed, C. Bérard objected that this young Athenian had probably been buried not in, not the collective monument, but the one for the *hippeis*, among whom he was counted. Yet I would be inclined to see the latter as a simple honorific monument, probably a cenotaph, which duplicated the collective monument where *all* the year’s dead were buried. As for the private *mnēma* (“funeral monument”), I agree with him in seeing there something like a claim on the part of the family for the “personal part” of the combatant.

epitaphios logos (Loraux 1986.155–71). This internal speech is like the poem's matrix and the funeral oration's truth. The bard and the orator take it upon themselves to be its faithful interpreters.

Certainly this internal speech had a "deliberative" form, because it came before a choice, even if it was only possible to choose immortal glory and so the beautiful death. The reasons for this choice, in Homer, were "metaphysical," because men can escape neither death nor old age, which was like a living death, and because it was better to immortalise the hero's beautiful youth (Vernant 1991.59–60). The reasons in the funeral oration were "political," because the city wanted it so, but we could say that this politics was another form of metaphysics. Because the warrior's death, as a supreme exploit, irresistibly called for the poet's song or the orator's prose, it turns out that *the beautiful death was already in itself speech*. It was a rhetorical *topos* ("commonplace") that was the privileged place for the implanting of an ideology. From the heroic death to the civic death there was, like a long chain's outermost links, a real continuity, even if gaps and ruptures or, most accurately, a series of gaps and ruptures had their place.

Speech about the beautiful death was built on a certain number of common claims. In one go, this death realised the *aretē* of a combatant. It established the youthfulness of Homeric warriors, who were immortalised in the flower of their life, and sanctioned the Athenian soldier's access to the status of an *anēr* ("man," that is, a virile adult), who was inextricably both a citizen and a soldier. There are two ways to understand "they died, after having shown themselves to be courageous men" (*andres genomenoi agathoi*), which was the funeral speech's key phrase depending on whether we put the emphasis on *agathoi* or privilege *andres*. In the first reading, which is the most common, it appears that an Athenian only became courageous in death. If more weight is given to *andres*, the more unusual reading, the funeral oration appears to be saying that an Athenian becomes a man, that is to say, a citizen, only in death.¹⁰

The glorious death also widened a gulf between the hero, or the *agathoi*, and the rest of humanity. In the *Iliad*, where people only died in war, a line divided the anonymous death of ordinary people from the

10 The funeral oration appears to make no distinction between *andra gignesthai* ("to become a man"), which designated political majority (registration in the deme register), and the dead man's registration on the official casualty list (*andra genesthai agathon*, "having become a courageous man").

beautiful death of Sarpedon or Patrocles. In the funeral oration, the spectacular death of the *anēr agathos* (“courageous man”) separated him forever from passive humanity, who, trapped on earth, waited to suffer their fate (Loraux 1986.104). Yet in both cases, the elite’s chosen death is opposed to ordinary men’s unchosen one. Therefore the glorious death unfurled in the domain of the absolute: all the world’s treasure could not counterbalance the demands of honour that drove Achilles, while no prestige [off the battlefield] would be sufficient to launch Sarpedon into battle’s melee. The military exploits of the Athenians likewise responded not to any utilitarian consideration but only to the quest for *aretē*.

All occurred as if the heroic beautiful death continued to inform the civic version of the combatant’s death—as if, as it were, the city’s discourses were feeding off epic representations. Yet this does not mean that there was no rupture between the civic beautiful death and the heroic one. Indeed, we can detect multiple gaps from one to the other. We can observe them more easily by taking as our reference point the civic beautiful death, which looks like the end of a long history. While epic gave itself as subject matter the *klea andrōn*, that is, glory that had already been realised in actions, the Athenian speech resolutely erased the action behind the decision to die (Loraux 1986.101–204). In the funeral oration, everything comes down to this choice, which leads to death. Between the decision to die and the report of the beautiful death (*andres genomenoi agathoi*), there is no room for action or for an account of exploits. Consequently, life is erased behind death for the reason that all that counts is the instant of the decision that is both the beginning and the end of the (true) life. Another reason for this erasure is that the eulogy’s collective character requires that all the dead share the same praise, without consideration being given to the quality of their past lives.

For epic’s heroes, such as Achilles in Book 9 of the *Iliad*, there was, by contrast, no other value than life. It was precisely for this reason that it was worth putting one’s own life at stake: one found death but became exemplary, while the beautiful death took on all the weight of the lost life. It was left to the poet to sing of the hero’s life that had been perfected forever by his death. The hero went to his death because life was everything for him. The funeral oration, by contrast, encouraged the citizen to risk a life that was nothing in order to serve the city that was everything: for there was no other life than the city’s, which was also his [personal] history. To the citizens there remained only death. Whereas epic, which, once again, was more “realistic,” mentioned casualties who got better, the

Athenian speech celebrated the citizens only in death. In brief, everything in the Athenian funeral conspired to erase life. This is the meaning of the transfer that made eternal youthfulness, characterising the *person* of the dead warrior in epic, a feature of the glory or praise of citizens. To the Athenian dead, the funeral oration promised *agērōs epainos*, that is, praise that did not grow old. But who, if not the city, possessed this praise? We might wonder whether, according to the funeral speech’s criteria, a citizen was even a person.

A person is a *sōma* (“body”) and a *psukhē* (“soul”). In epic, *sōma* is the term for the dead person, while what gives formal unity to his body, after his death, is his face. It is this face that an enemy tries hard to destroy and that a dead man’s relatives immortalise in the funeral ritual. The body, which has been embellished and consumed, is broken down, but the *psukhē*, which is liberated in this way, reaches Hades’ shores (Vernant 1991.68–69). Finally, seated atop the white bones, which are the absent body’s sole remains, the *mnēma* (“funeral monument”) speaks to the living about the dead man. In the kingdom of the shades, there is the *psukhē*, and in the world of humans, the memory of the dead man, which is immortalised by the *mnēma* and the poet’s song.¹¹ In epic, all is played out between these three terms: *sōma*, *psukhē*, and *mnēma*.

The funeral oration, which is based on cut-and-dry oppositions, knows only two terms: there is, on the one hand, *mnēmē* (“memory”), which is always immortal, and, on the other, “life,” of which citizens can only have usufruct. This life is always undervalued and described indiscriminately as *sōma*, *psukhē*, or *bios*, almost to the point of unfamiliarity. From this there is an enormous consequence: the dead, it appears, have no more body than they do life. Here the essential point is evident: the change *from the beautiful dead man to the beautiful death*.

In epic, the body was a spectacle. By immobilising it, the heroic death dramatised the body’s beauty. This beauty of the young fallen warrior was his glory’s visible sign. The ritual aimed to emphasise it by focusing on it. Such is the meaning of the *prothesis*, in which a corpse that has been meticulously embellished is displayed, because, at this point in the funeral, the dead man’s person is entirely linked to his *sōma* (Vernant 1991.59–60). The Athenian funeral, by contrast, was built around the

11 Here I am drawing on Vernant’s course at the Collège de France (1976–77) on the funeral code in ancient Greece.

systematic occultation of the body. In the speech, first of all, there appeared no beautiful dead man but only always the beautiful death. In it all aesthetic value had disappeared and the “beautiful” was moral. Therefore a double transfer had taken place: from *the dead man* to *death*, that is, from an exemplary individual towards a formal model of civic behaviour, and then from the beautiful as the body’s quality to the beautiful as the action’s quality (Loraux 1986.98–118).¹² As the action, moreover, was absorbed into *logos* (“speech”), in the end, the beautiful was used to describe the quality of the civic speech. For Priam, “all that appears (*phanēēi*) on the young dead warrior is beautiful” (*Il.* 22.73). The civic speech responded to epic’s “appears” with the always repeated epiphany of Athens’ *aretē*.

Yet it was not just the funeral ceremony that failed to make room for showing the dead’s bodies. In the *Iliad*, the assembly of the gods decided to force Achilles to return Hector’s corpse (24.35–137), because it had to be delivered before the eyes of, first, his spouse, then, his mother, son, and father, and, finally, his people. In Athens, by contrast, the dead no longer looked like a *sōma*, and what the city agreed to display for family devotion were bones.¹³ In this way, *the dead were already abstract* and already deprived of all that gave them their physical appearance and all that permitted them to be identified.¹⁴ In actual fact, the order of the funeral ritual had been reversed for Athens’ citizens: first, the funeral pyre, on the battlefield,¹⁵ and, then, for the families, a *prothesis* without spectacle or individualisation.

In view of this, we cannot underestimate the significance of the cremation of the bodies. Was burning the dead instead of burying them only a prophylactic measure? Was it simply about conserving their remains until the funeral ceremony at the combat season’s end? Certainly there are a

12 In classical Athens, the notion of the “beautiful dead man” no longer had a reality. Therefore in Euripides’ *Suppliant Women*, the dead’s mothers must be spared the sight of “disfigured bodies, which are a hideous spectacle, the blood and the wounds of the corpses” (944–45).

13 Thuc. 2.34.2: *ta osta protithentai* (“they display the bones”).

14 In Homer’s *Iliad*, the impossibility of identifying the dead characterised the mass of the ordinary dead (e.g., 7.424). Euripides’ *Suppliant Women*, which is a tragic reflection on the public funeral, presents the stages in the same order: first, the funeral pyre in the presence of the political and military leaders and then the display of the bones, which the mothers can attend (941–49, 1123–64).

15 It is significant that there was in attendance at this cremation the army, which was the inheritor of the *laoi* (“peoples”) that were, in epic poetry, the last invitees to the funeral spectacle.

great number of historians who are convinced that the real is rational and so answer in the affirmative. But to him or her who acknowledges that ancient Greece is also a matter of anthropology,¹⁶ such rationality appears really suspect. To tell the truth, the recourse to cremation strongly resembles a choice that was dictated by ideological imperatives. We can note that this prophylactic measure would have had no *raison d'être* if the Athenians did not repatriate the remains of their citizens. In doing so, they distinguished themselves from other Greek cities who normally buried their dead on the battlefield. Now the meaning of this Athenian practice is clearer still when it is related to the dominant myth of autochthony. For the Athenians, their civic earth was both "a mother and a fatherland."¹⁷ Was entrusting their war dead's bones to it therefore not a way to guarantee the city's reproduction? This choice of repatriation, at least, made it necessary for the Athenians to concern themselves with prophylactic measures.

Yet there was more to cremation than this. As a funerary practice, it was a matter of symbolism and could, itself, be subject to choice. After the battle of Marathon, combatants were buried on the battlefield. What was absolutely symbolic, in this case, was the dividing up of, on the one hand, the citizens, for whom the Athenians resorted to cremation, and, on the other, the Plataeans and the slaves, who were simply buried some distance away. In interpreting this division, we can take into account that cremation, as a more costly practice, was reserved for those whom the city wanted to honour highly (Kurtz and Boardman 1971.246). Undoubtedly, we need also to take into account that the Athenian citizens, who, by their deaths, had put beyond doubt their status as *andres*, were, as was natural, on the side of the cooked, while the Plataeans and the slaves, like the children in Eretria's princely tombs (Bérard 1970), were on the side of the raw. Earlier we noted how the funeral oration habitually presented those who had fallen in battle as having, at last, definitively left behind their childhood.

When it comes to funerary practice, were there, it can be asked, behaviours that escaped symbolism? Because I do not believe that there were, I have had to dwell at some length on the Athenian refusal to make

16 To those who, in the discussion that followed, insisted on the importance of "health reasons," the talk by D. Lombard on the ancient south-east Asian funeral (1982) provided a definitive answer: in this funeral practice, which consisted of keeping a corpse rolled up in cloth inside the house for years (sometimes up to three), where is there a prophylactic measure?

17 Plato said this explicitly in his *Menexenus* (237c).

room for display in their funeral ceremony. From the beautiful dead man to the beautiful death, a major change had occurred: the effacing of the person of the dead man or, more precisely, the dead themselves before [the ideal of] the city. To put it differently, this was the creation of the *city ideal* beyond all the representations of the polis as a community. In short, this creating of an ideal was a process of abstraction.

4. THE DEAD AND THE ABSTRACTION OF THE CITY: ACHILLES AND ATHENS

Such a process is not carried out in a day. Indeed, clearly, this process was not carried out in all places nor at the same speed. Different speeds, delays, and gaps are, of course, peculiar to ideological phenomena. While limiting this examination to the two extremes of the beautiful death's history, we must not forget that between the Homeric world and Athenian democracy essential stages had intervened, such as the archaic period's aristocratic cities or Sparta.¹⁸ In the classical period, the Greeks saw Sparta as embodying very rigorously the civic obligation of the beautiful death. It is worth studying this, if only briefly, in order to take note of the remarkable discrepancy there between discourse and practice. This city, from its sixth-century beginning, was protected from the temptation of development by its immoveable social structures and, in the next century, looked like an archaic polis that had been miraculously preserved.¹⁹

Sparta demonstrates that the process of abstraction was not an irresistible phenomenon across the Greek world. In many respects, Sparta's choices are even reminiscent of those of epic. In Sparta, room was made for the *life* of the courageous warrior. Let us recall the quasi-institutional opposition, in the city of the *homoioi*, between he who had fought gloriously and so merited, in his lifetime, honours, admiration, and sexual attention, and the *tresas* ("trembler"), who was pushed out of the city and even its age classes, since he was required to give up his seat to a younger (and more courageous) Spartan (e.g., Tyrtaeus 7.29–30, 9.35–42 Prato).²⁰ Along the same lines, probably, the Spartans, like the Homeric

18 On the aristocratic funerary practices in archaic cities, see, e.g., Bérard 1982.

19 On the unequal development of different Greek cities in the classical period, see, e.g., Austin and Vidal-Naquet 1977.17, 78. On Spartan social structures, see, e.g., Finley 1968.

20 On the *tresantes* ("tremblers") and the Spartan representations of the beautiful death, see, e.g., Loraux 1995.63–74.

laoi ("peoples"), judged it essential to possess not just the remains but also the *bodies* of their kings. If a king died away from Sparta, his body, which was embalmed in honey or wax, had to be brought back, with special care taken to preserve his face.

Sparta's male–female opposition included women in the city more than in Athens. Attic women had to be content with the (small) place that was allotted them in the civic funeral. Beyond this ceremony, as Pericles politely reminded them (Thuc. 2.45.2), they were counselled not to be spoken of. For Pericles, feminine *aretē* was simply a contradiction in terms.²¹ Spartan women, who enjoyed the right to attend a royal funeral, could also win renown in the sphere of reproduction, even if this sphere, it is true, was tightly confined.²² Only Spartan men who had fallen in battle and Spartan women who had died in childbirth had the right to the inscription of their names on their tombs. While this equivalence might conform to the Greek orthodoxy about the division between the sexes, it is no less remarkable for being institutionalised. From the Spartan viewpoint, we can see more clearly the abstraction process that was implemented in Athens. Yet this does not mean that other essential stages did not exist along the way to this Athenian beautiful death.²³

This process of abstraction, besides not being implemented in every place, was implemented or, at least, was orchestrated on an exceptional scale in a very exact place: Athens. This, too, happened at a very exact time. The funeral oration's moment, let us say, fell between Cleisthenes and Ephialtes.²⁴ More generally, it fell between Cleisthenes and the start of the Peloponnesian War. This period witnessed the disappearance of the dead's figurative representation on Athenian private tombs, although such representation did continue on public monuments. In funerary representations there existed, therefore, a gap separating archaic sculpture, such as the

21 In the discussion that followed, D. Lanza drew my attention to the strange *epitaphios logos* that Electra delivered over Aegisthus's body (Eur. *El.* 906–56). This is a "bad" funeral oration because it is a question of blame, not praise; the *kratos* of the situation is emphasised; and, most importantly, it is a *woman* who delivers it. Only tragedy could subvert the tradition of the funeral oration by giving speech to, of all people, a woman.

22 On the equivalence of marriage and war as the respective natural accomplishments of men and women, see, e.g., Vernant 1988.34–36.

23 E.g., the triumphing of speech in the world of the cities, and the claim, constantly repeated in Pindar, of the total supremacy of celebratory speech over action.

24 While I am inclined to date the funeral oration's introduction to around 460, I believe, along with Jacoby 1944, that it stood at the end of a long maturation process that was carried out between Cleisthenes and Ephialtes (Loraux 1986.56–76).

kouros stela, from the late classical period's innumerable figurative reliefs. Certainly this phenomenon merits an in-depth study. To understand this gap, we, undoubtedly, would need to explore the civic ban that weighed against the individual's representation in death and—in a more general way—against sight to the benefit of speech. Subsequently, we would need to bring together this ban and the study of the public funeral.

Clearly the Athenian city never stopped exorcising sight: it substituted white bones for bodies. It diverted the eye from the collective monument, on which a relief sculpture celebrated symbolic combatants,²⁵ towards the rostrum of the *dēmosion sēma*, where the official orator's speech transformed the public into an audience.²⁶ Therefore, the speech that the classical city heard about the beautiful death was formed by a rejection of archaic representation or, indeed, of all representation.²⁷ Here, perhaps, we see less the rejection of archaic *discourse* than of *representation*.

Let us return to this speech one last time. Everything occurs in the funeral oration as if Athens were taking the place that Achilles occupies in epic.²⁸ Achilles, the most valorous of the Greeks, parallels Athens, the city of *aretē*, to which the Greeks, by mutual agreement, supposedly award the *aristeion* ("the first prize for valour"). No one in the Achaean camp contests Achilles' eminent merit. No Greek city, if we are to believe the orators, denies for a second that Athens merits universal admiration and placement in the first rank. Like Achilles, the city can only be the greatest. This is why the victory at Marathon, which was an initiatory exploit of the hero-Athens, gained paradigmatic value. While Plataeans actually fought besides the Athenians, the orators "forget" them, because Athens gives no thought to allies (Loraux 1986.155–71). Finally, just as Achilles-bard sings of the *klea andrōn*, so, too, within civic discourse, the city gives speech to the orator and glory to its dead citizens.

This heroic position of the city in the funeral speech was not without consequences. It basically gave the combatants an interchangeable face,

25 A. C. W. Clairmont objected that on a public monument, the relief sculpture praised generally the physical beauty of the combatants. My response to this objection is that it was a question of a "beauty" that was thoroughly symbolic and that the eye is not the only thing that can perceive; see, e.g., Loraux 1975.

26 This transfer from sight to hearing can clearly be seen in the preamble of Lysias's *epitaphios logos*.

27 In rejecting all representation, the funeral oration can be characterised as deploying an imaginary with an image.

28 For what follows about Achilles, see, especially, Vernant 1991.51–54, 58–59.

which, in reality, meant that they did not have a face at all. Therefore, the funeral oration proclaimed the dominance of the polis over *andres*, of the city over men. To speak plainly, this should discourage the historian of the Greek city from overemphasising the importance of the well-known adage: “men are the city.” Against the idea that Greece of the *poleis* knew only the community’s concrete lived experience, the study of the funeral oration’s beautiful death urges us to emphasise the dominant position that the abstraction of the polis held in civic discourse (Loraux 1986.263–327). This abstract polis was the indivisible unity around which speech was organised.

In order to complete the comparison of Achilles in epic and the city in the *epitaphios logos*, we should also note that the city, if it takes Achilles’ place, does so in a moralising fashion. The funeral oration is a (civic and hoplitic) lesson in morality, which epic poetry, clearly, was not. Therefore this speech represents the end of the *hubris* that formed the Homeric hero in all his ambiguity (e.g., Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1982.82, 85–86; Vernant 1991.51–52). In the *epitaphios logos*, excess lies elsewhere, among enemies, while all justice has taken refuge in Athens. With this major difference is associated the very strong opposition between, as I called it earlier, epic’s realism and the Athenian speech’s metaphysical absolutism.

We can also associate it with the funeral oration’s systematic occultation of the *kratos* (“power”) that was a big part of epic’s definition of the warrior. When it came to the *kratos* that the people exercised within the city, the *epitaphioi logoi* suggested that democracy was not the *kratos* of the people, but the fatherland of *aretē* (Loraux 1986.172–220). Funeral speeches, likewise, suppressed the imperial city’s *kratos*, transforming it into a recognition of the merit of Athens in a contest for excellence (Loraux 1986.81–96). Power *per se* simply did not have a place in the funeral oration.

Therefore, what was said in the public cemetery on the occasion of the death of Athenians merits the label “ideology of the city.”²⁹ To this, perhaps, we should add “ideology of democracy,” since manifest egalitarianism existed only in death and by a claimed adherence to *aretē*. Yet it is very significant that the funeral oration contained the only methodical discourse that the Athenian city officially maintained on democracy. Democracy spoke for itself in the public cemetery. It described itself as the one true value, and even as the model of the polis. Yet in order for this

29 In the sense that it is the “city” that gave this speech such coherence and enabled it to resist the discordant material that the “real” could have introduced. For a different approach, see Lanza and Vegetti 1977.

description to succeed, the democratic city still had to depart from political practice, for in the *ekklēsia*, the citizens had fewer scruples about calling *kratos* by its name, and also from the town, because the Ceramicus, as the “most beautiful *suburb*” (Thuc. 2.34.5), was still beyond the walls. The city also deliberately departed from time, as Pericles all but stated in Thucydides (“we *will be admired* by men today and in the future,” 2.41.4). The pause that death brought allowed such a breaking away.

5. CONCLUSION: IDEOLOGY AND “FUNERARY IDEOLOGY”

But was this *funerary* ideology? Rather I would say: ideology in death. Unless we are prepared to read the ideology in funerary ideology vaguely as a “system of representations,” we really must try to understand the process that allowed an ideological discourse’s dissemination in a death celebration. A ritualised death had become an effective factor in social cohesion. Thus it is important that civic ideology was formed against the beautiful death’s background. The hero, Achilles, set up a unique ceremonial for honouring Patrocles in a manner that had never (and would never) be seen. But this hero was unique among the heroes. At least he should be or even had to be in order to fit in—in his paradoxical manner—in Homeric society. Against time and against its own history, which had not consisted of [heroic] agonistic wars nor of unsullied prestige, the Athenian city set up a ceremonial that distinguished it from other cities and in which it proclaimed that it was the only polis. This is a discourse that historians have had (and continue to have) difficulty in leaving behind. We are accustomed to pay little attention to the phraseology of our modern speeches for the dead. It is, therefore, pleasing to me that the most effective of the Athenian models of Athens was articulated in a cemetery.

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