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A funeral to remember: The imagined past of the Athenian funeral oration as a source of resilience.

The aim of this paper is to study the funeral oration given by Demosthenes in 338 BC, to better understand the role of the past as a source of resilience during the Athenian identity crisis after the defeat by Macedon at Chaironeia.

The funeral oration or epitaphios has often been offhandedly treated as an uninventive and repetitive genre, employing stock themes to reach a never-changing goal: to praise the war dead by promoting polis identity. In 1981 however, Nicole Loraux published a groundbreaking work on the Athenian funeral oration, *L'invention d'Athènes*. In this book, she focused on the shared mythical and historical past as an important theme in the genre. This type of 'memory study' has become immensely popular in the past two decades, but where the ancient world is concerned it has mostly focused on classical fifth-century Athens. I would however like to shed more light on the function of memories of a shared past at the end of the fourth century BC, in what is now known as the Lycurgan period.

Ushered in by the battle of Chaironeia in 338 BC, at which Athens suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of Philip II of Macedon, the Lycurgan period was a time of identity crisis for the Athenians. This sense of desperation and loss of identity inspired a series of reforms aimed at reinforcing not only military strength, but also civic pride. New insights into the mechanics of the shaping of civic identity have greatly increased interest in this turbulent episode of Athenian history in the past five years, coinciding with the current 'boom' in memory studies. The funeral oration, even though two of the six extant samples are dated to this period, has however not received much attention in this light.

Indeed, after Loraux, the only one to devote serious attention to the epitaphios was Rosalind Thomas in her 1989 *Oral Tradition & Written Record in Classical Athens*. The funeral oration is however still only rarely seen as a useful source from which we can learn more about a specific moment in time. The goal here is to bring the funeral oration by Demosthenes into narrower focus, relating it to its specific historical circumstances and focusing on its evocation of social memory to show its unique and inventive character. Contrasting this epitaphios with that of Hypereides, which was held in 322 BC after Athens had booked several victories over Macedonian armies, will especially highlight its importance as an instrument of resilience in the city's time of crisis.