

REVIEW–DISCUSSION

RHETORICAL EXPLOITATION, SOCIAL
MEMORY, AND THE ATTIC ORATORS’
TREATMENT OF THE RECENT PAST

Aggelos Kapellos, ed., *The Orators and Their Treatment of the Recent Past*. Trends in Classics—Supplementary Volumes 133. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2023. Pp. x + 531, fig. 1. Hardback, €164.95. ISBN 978-3-11-079181-5.

With its twenty-eight chapters, solicited from leading experts on Greek oratory and fourth-century Athenian social, cultural, and political history, Aggelos Kapellos’ edited volume *The Orators and Their Treatment of the Recent Past* offers important and wide-ranging reappraisals of the longstanding research question of how best to understand the Attic orators’ references to historical events, with a specific focus on the most recent historical period. Before turning to this focus and discussing each individual contribution in turn, I will briefly outline the various scholarly approaches available for investigating oratorical representations of the past in general, thereby providing the methodological framework for a proper appreciation of this remarkable volume.

1. Methodologies and Approaches

The orators’ historical allusions have been a primary object of scholarly attention for nearly a century, whereby four (overlapping) approaches can be discerned.¹ First, some scholars—including Jost, Nouhaud, and Worthington—have analysed historical allusions through the lens of classical rhetoric. According to this perspective, well-known historical examples are employed as artful means of persuasion to illustrate current political situations, to encourage emulation, or to deter imitation (cf. Isoc. 4.9–10; Arist. *Rh.* 1368a29–30; 1393a26–b2).² These examples are thought to be drawn from a relatively fixed set of historical *topoi*³ and often categorised in an attempt to reconstruct

¹ For a discussion of the first three approaches, see Perlman (1961) 150–3; Perlman (1986) 359; Robertson (1984) 382–3; Steinbock (2012) 38–41; Canevaro (2019) 136.

² Jost (1936); Nouhaud (1982); Worthington (1992).

³ Worthington (1992) 20; *contra* Perlman (1961) 150–1.

the underlying rhetorical doctrines.⁴ Second, historians have investigated the mutual influence between the Attic orators and the Greek historians. Some have explored Isocrates' impact on fourth-century historiography,⁵ while others sought to identify the orators' historiographical sources. However, these efforts often met with disappointment since the orators' version of historical events frequently diverged considerably from extant historiographical accounts, which inspired Felix Jacoby's famous verdict of 'the truly astonishing ignorance of most of the Attic orators and the little use they made of the history of their city'.⁶ In an influential article, Pearson proposed that the well-educated orators 'were willing to respect the prejudices and the sensitiveness'⁷ of their ignorant audience and sought to avoid appearing to lecture them on history. A third group of scholars is more sensitive to the political aspects of Athenian oratory and focuses on the truthfulness and the reliability of representations of the past. Apparent distortions in the orators' historical allusions are understood as deliberate manipulations and propaganda used to advance their immediate political goals.⁸

In all three of these approaches, scholars focus primarily on the role of the speakers and assume that an accurate knowledge of history was indeed available to them, just as it is in the archive culture of a modern state. However, following the 'cultural turn' in our discipline in the late twentieth century,⁹ a fourth approach to the orators' historical allusions has emerged. This approach shifts the focus from the speakers to the audience and analyses the orators' use of the past from the perspective of social or collective memory.¹⁰ Many of the tacit assumptions underlying earlier studies are now being called into question, particularly regarding both the communicative conditions in Classical Athens and the societal function of what the Athenians considered their history. Drawing on Jan Vansina's anthropological concept of oral tradition, Rosalind Thomas compellingly argues that fifth- and fourth-century Athens—despite the existence of writing—retained many features of an oral society, where the written word was far less authoritative. Knowledge of the past was predominantly constituted and transmitted orally, comprising a multilayered web of family traditions, popular traditions, and the 'official' polis

⁴ See especially Nouhaud (1982).

⁵ Cf. Barber (1935) 75–83 on Ephorus and Murray (1946) 150–3 on Theopompus.

⁶ Jacoby *FGrHist* 3b (Suppl.) I.95.

⁷ Pearson (1941) 229.

⁸ Cf. Perlman (1961); Nouhaud (1982); Harding (1987); Worthington (1994); Weißberger (1996); Paulsen (1999).

⁹ For the study of fourth-century Athenian public discourse, this 'cultural turn' involved a shift from the 'modern' to the 'premodern' paradigm; cf. Ober (1989a) and Manville (1994).

¹⁰ Canevaro (2019) 136–8.

tradition embodied in the Athenian funeral oration.¹¹ One of the greatest merits of Thomas' seminal study is her demonstration of the inherent dynamism of oral traditions, their malleability, and their capacity to adapt to present societal needs.¹²

Thomas' concept of the 'official' polis tradition converges with the insights of other scholars who regard the Athenian funeral oration as an invaluable key to understanding the Athenians' notion of their history. In her groundbreaking study *The Invention of Athens*, Nicole Loraux makes a compelling case that the idealised version of Athenian history found in the *Tatenkatalog* of the funeral oration may appear chauvinistic and full of historical distortions to us, but was 'true for the Athenians, in that it conform[ed] to the idea that they wish[ed] to have of themselves'.¹³ Such shared remembrances of group experience—which create collective identity and belonging, and provide an explanation of the present and a vision of the future—lie at the heart of three influential (and closely related) conceptualisations of a community's memory of its past: Jan Assmann's 'kulturelles Gedächtnis' ('cultural memory'),¹⁴ Hans-Joachim Gehrke's 'intentionale Geschichte' ('intentional history'),¹⁵ and Maurice Halbwachs' 'collective memory'.¹⁶ To counter concerns that social or

¹¹ Thomas (1989); cf. Vansina (1985).

¹² This appreciation of the dynamic nature of oral traditions also had significant effects on ancient authors drawing on them. For Herodotus, see, for instance, Luraghi (2001).

¹³ Loraux (1986) 171, emphasis original. Loraux was the first to argue that the extant *epitaphioi logoi* ought to be viewed as written manifestations of a long-stable oral genre and be understood as integral elements of a cultural institution that was vital for the maintenance of Athenian collective identity. For a recent assessment and re-evaluation of Loraux's seminal work, see Pritchard (2024).

¹⁴ J. Assmann (1992). According to J. Assmann (1995) 132, cultural memory 'comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose "cultivation" serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image'.

¹⁵ Gehrke (2001) 286 has coined the term 'intentional history' to denote 'that which a society knows and holds for true about its past, [which] is of fundamental significance for the *imaginaire*, for the way a society interprets and understands itself, and therefore for its inner coherence and ultimately its collective identity'. For the application of Gehrke's concept to ancient Greek representations of the past, see especially Foxhall–Gehrke–Luraghi (2010).

¹⁶ The sociological function of collective memory was first explored by Maurice Halbwachs, a student of the French sociologist Émile Durkheim; cf. Halbwachs (1925), (1941), and (1950), which was first translated into English in 1980. To avoid suspicions of social determinism—which resulted from misunderstanding Halbwachs' concept, as Giangiulio (2019) has shown—most scholars in the field today prefer the term 'social memory' to Halbwachs' 'collective memory'. The body of scholarship on social memory is enormous. For a concise introduction to the concept, see Alcock (2002) 1–35 and Steinbock (2012) 1–29. For a comprehensive treatment, see Fentress and Wickham (1992); Misztal (2003); and Erll and Nünning (2010).

collective memory might be envisioned as a monolithic group mind—and thus risk reviving outdated essentialist categories—proponents of the concept emphasise its inherent multipolarity and its dynamic nature.¹⁷ The Athenians' social memory, for instance, was constituted, negotiated, and transmitted across multiple venues, societal levels, and media. Ordinary Athenians learned about their past through commemorative rituals and religious festivals, in the theatre, the assembly, and the law courts, as well as through membership in various subgroups, such as families, sympotic circles, *demes*, and tribes, each with its own memorial traditions.¹⁸ Meanwhile, members of the educated elite could also draw from the works of the Greek historians, poets, and other orators. Additionally, landmarks, monuments, and inscriptions formed the Athenian *cadre matériel*, serving as tangible reminders of crucial events.¹⁹

This new conceptualisation of the nature and social function of the Athenians' historical memory carries significant implications for how we understand the orators' use of the past. Proponents of the social memory approach argue that we can no longer assume *a priori* that the orators possessed a definite knowledge of historical events which they then deliberately distorted to manipulate their audience.²⁰ Instead, since the Attic orators operated within a complex and dynamic memorial framework, these scholars advocate shifting the analytical focus from the speakers to their audience. The first step is to investigate what the Athenian audience knew about the events in question, what those events meant to them on a cognitive and emotional level, and how the past was contested and negotiated within Athenian public discourse. Such investigations reveal (1) widely shared historical distortions,²¹ (2) the existence of alternative versions,²² and (3) the emotive force behind particular references

¹⁷ Cf. Fentress and Wickham (1992) ix; Thomas (1989) 11–13; Misztal (2003) 5; Erll (2010) 4–6; Manier and Hirst (2010) 254; Steinbock (2012) 8–13 and (2017).

¹⁸ For these various 'carriers' of social memory, see Steinbock (2012) 48–99. Cf. Barbato (2020) 24–81; Westwood (2020) 9–26.

¹⁹ Halbwachs' concept of the *cadre matériel* as physical setting for collective memories was further developed by Nora (1996) into the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, which comprises both real and imagined places. For Marathon and Plataea as *lieux de mémoire*, see Jung (2006). For the *cadre matériel* of Roman Greece, see Alcock (2002). For *Erinnerungsorte* in ancient Greece, see Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp (2010) and Haake and Jung (2011).

²⁰ Cf. Steinbock (2012) 40–1.

²¹ Apart from deliberate falsification, there are several alternative explanations for common distortions in people's representation of the past, such as those owed to distanciation, narrativisation, and conformation to a community's self-image; cf. Fentress and Wickham (1992) 92–9; Schudson (1995) 348–59; Steinbock (2012) 13–18.

²² For family traditions in Athens, see Thomas (1989) 95–154; Steinbock (2013) 91–8.

to the past.²³ This approach better equips us to assess both the orators' intentions and the rhetorical skill involved in crafting their particular historical paradigms. It is important to emphasise that, by recalling the past in the assembly and law courts, the orators themselves played a vital role in the formation, contestation, and transmission of Athenian social memory. For this reason, their historical allusions can also serve as valuable sources for reconstructing that social memory.

Over the past three decades, several studies have approached the orators' use of the past through the lens of social memory. Wolpert examines how the divisive memory of the Athenian civil war of 404/3 BC was contested and negotiated in fourth-century Athenian public discourse.²⁴ Similarly, Shear investigates the politics of remembering and forgetting of both the oligarchic coup of 411 and the tyranny of the Thirty in an analysis of the legal, ritual, and architectural responses to these failed revolutions on the individual and collective level.²⁵ In a phenomenological study linking memory and temporality, Grethlein charts the landscape of literary memory in fifth-century Greece, highlighting the continuity and regularity promoted by the Athenian *epitaphioi logoi* as well as the exemplarity of the past found in deliberative oratory.²⁶ Steinbock focuses on the manifestation and transmission of the Athenians' multipolar memory of four events in the 'history' of Athenian-Theban relations, explaining common distortions and situating the orators' references to Thebes within the complex net of remembrances and beliefs held by their Athenian audience.²⁷ Shear further explores the memory-making processes embedded in the Athenian public funeral ceremony, arguing convincingly that collective memories were generated there that otherwise would not exist, both for various subgroups (e.g., the children, parents, and brothers of the dead) and for the Athenians as a whole.²⁸ Kostopoulos uses the orators' references to honorific statues, inscriptions, walls, tombs, and trophies to explore the relationship between space, memory, and public speech in the creation of 'spaces of memory' (*Erinnerungsräume*) in fourth-century Athens.²⁹

²³ For arguments from social memory as vital political factors in Athenian decision-making, see Hunt (2010) 1–10, 69–71; Steinbock (2012) 30–6 and (2013) 69–75; and Michels (2022).

²⁴ Wolpert (2002).

²⁵ Shear (2011).

²⁶ Grethlein (2010) 105–45. For an illuminating exploration of Greek historical memory across various literary genres beyond Greek historiography, see also Marincola–Llewellyn-Jones–Maciver (2012).

²⁷ Steinbock (2012).

²⁸ Shear (2013), employing the model of collective memory developed by Olick (2007) 17–35.

²⁹ Kostopoulos (2019).

Barbato combines a social memory framework with new institutionalism to analyse the treatment of several quintessential Athenian myths as manifestations of Athens' democratic ideology within the distinct discursive parameters of different Athenian institutions, including dramatic festivals, the state funeral of the war dead, the law courts, the assembly, and the council.³⁰

The social memory approach offers clear benefits but also presents methodological challenges. Given the scarcity of evidence for the views of average Athenians regarding their city's past, scholars often rely on the orators' historical allusions themselves for the reconstruction of Athenian historical consciousness, based on the assumption that—since the orators' goal was persuasion—they would present the past in ways familiar and acceptable to their audience.³¹ Such a procedure, however, risks reducing the orators to mere mouthpieces of their audience, thereby overlooking their agency as active creators of social memory.³² Consequently, it is a principal concern of the social memory approach to determine both the leeway orators had in departing from known versions and to elucidate the audience's general attitude towards the orators' historical representations. Challenging Ober's view of the orators' historical paradigms as relatively stable and predictable elements of the 'repertoire of Athenian common knowledge',³³ Hesk demonstrates in his analysis of political trials in the 330s BC that while the past itself was known, the lessons to be drawn from it were fervently contested. This contestation fostered a high degree of self-consciousness in both the orators and their audiences regarding the 'manipulative potential and "rhetoricity" of historical *paradeigmata*'.³⁴ Canevaro, for his part, refutes the old orthodoxy that orators had to avoid displaying excessive historical knowledge for fear of alienating their mass audience.³⁵ He shows convincingly that familiarity with the past, the laws, and cultural traditions was considered a necessary attribute of every Athenian citizen and that a high degree of this type of expertise was expected of public speakers in the assembly and law courts.³⁶ Yet, he also demonstrates that this very pride in their own presumed extensive knowledge of the past made the audience susceptible to manipulation: skilled orators could freely construct historical claims presenting them as part of an ostensibly remembered past through appeals to the elders or the familiar 'as you all know'

³⁰ Barbato (2020).

³¹ Thomas (1989) 200; Clarke (2008) 300, 303; Steinbock (2012) 41.

³² Cf. Canevaro (2019) 156–7; Barbato (2020) 13; Westwood (2020) 63; Wojciech (2022) 24.

³³ Ober (2008) 192.

³⁴ Hesk (2012) 219.

³⁵ For this view, see Pearson (1941) 212–21 and Ober (1989b) 177–81.

³⁶ Canevaro (2019) 137–9, 155–6.

topos. Canevaro rightly insists that when analysing historical paradigms, ‘taking into account what the hearers probably did not remember is as important as recognizing [...] that the orators acted in specific mnemonic communities’.³⁷ Like Hesk and Canevaro, Wojciech focuses on the Attic orators’ *Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten* (‘creative possibilities’) in shaping competing representations of the past. Stressing the complexity and dynamism of the Athenian *Erinnerungskultur*, Wojciech criticises the notion of an ‘official polis tradition’³⁸ or a singular ‘Athenian master narrative’,³⁹ emphasising instead the continuous *Verhandlung* (‘negotiation’) of the content and meaning of the past in the agonistic setting of assembly debates and political trials.⁴⁰

The recent surge in social memory studies of the Attic orators has not, however, rendered earlier approaches to the orators’ use of the past obsolete. On the contrary, important monographs continue to focus on the orators’ rhetorical strategies in crafting persuasive representations of the past, while building on key insights from social memory research. Wojciech’s own attempt to classify different types of historical paradigms belongs to this category; she shows, for instance, that affirmative representations of the past could serve to legitimise past, present, and future conditions, to encourage imitation of the ancestors, or to criticise contemporary developments.⁴¹ This rhetorical focus is even more pronounced in Westwood’s detailed analysis of the use of the past in the political speeches of Demosthenes and Aeschines. While acknowledging the importance of the Athenians’ memorial and communicative conditions, Westwood analyses their treatment of the past primarily as part of their rhetorical technique rather than from a social memory angle, emphasising the agency of these two orators in crafting distinct versions of Athenian history and presenting themselves as its authoritative interpreters.⁴²

One final issue to address in connection with the social memory approach is the distinction between collective memories of events in the recent versus the distant past, which leads us directly to the collected volume at the centre of this review-discussion. In her seminal study of oral traditions in Classical Athens, Thomas restricts her analysis to ‘testimonies which have been transmitted over at least a generation’,⁴³ effectively excluding historical allusions to the recent past. Steinbock, by contrast, makes a case for their inclusion in his

³⁷ Canevaro (2019) 156.

³⁸ Thomas (1989) 208.

³⁹ Steinbock (2012) 20 and (2013) 77. See also, Forsdyke (2005) 242.

⁴⁰ Wojciech (2022) 1–12.

⁴¹ See Wojciech (2022) 50. This type of categorisation of historical allusions according to different rhetorical strategies is reminiscent of Nouhaud (1982) 55–104.

⁴² Westwood (2020).

⁴³ Thomas (1989) 13.

analysis of Athenian social memory, on the grounds that two fundamental constitutive elements of social memory—the *communicative aspect* of sharing memories of the past and their *social relevance* for the members of a group⁴⁴—apply equally to collective memories of events ranging from the mythical period to the most recent past. But there are also significant differences. Jan and Aleida Assmann make a useful distinction between ‘communicative memory’ (‘remembered history’) and ‘cultural memory’ (‘commemorated history’).⁴⁵ The former refers to history as experienced and remembered by individuals. It is part of the collective memory that is based on everyday communication.⁴⁶ By its very nature, it is ‘partial, biased, subjective and, therefore, also highly variegated’.⁴⁷ These private memories are embedded in familial and social communications and thus supported by the individual memories of others and encompass not only one’s own experiences but also the shared recollections of parents and grandparents. In this way, an embodied historical memory spanning roughly 80 years is built up by oral transmission.⁴⁸ This three-generational oral memory is transient, and the memories of the first generation fade as the memories of the fourth generation are added. By contrast, ‘cultural memory’ comprises those past events deemed significant enough by the community to warrant collective commemoration; it is thus the result of ‘intentional, formalized, and collective action’.⁴⁹ In the transition from ‘remembered’ to ‘commemorated history’, both material media (monuments, relics, inscriptions, books) and performative media (rites, festivals, ceremonies) play a vital role. ‘Communicative memory’ and ‘cultural memory’ are not two independent phenomena, however. On the contrary, public and private memory mutually influence and sustain each other.⁵⁰ This interplay between personal memory and public commemoration is particularly relevant to the central theme of the volume here under discussion—*The Orators and Their Treatment of the Recent Past*. As will become clear, orators in their (re)presentation of crucial events of the recent past (such as the battle of Aegospotami, the tyranny of the Thirty, the defeat at Chaeronea, etc.) could draw on both their

⁴⁴ Steinbock (2012) 28, emphasis original. For a similarly broad definition, see Fentress and Wickham (1992) x.

⁴⁵ J. Assmann (1988), (1995), and A. Assmann (2001). See also Wojciech (2022) 30–2.

⁴⁶ For this reason, J. Assmann (1988) 9 also calls it ‘Alltagsgedächtnis’. Cf. J. Assmann (1995) 126 and Steinbock (2012) 24–6.

⁴⁷ A. Assmann (2001) 6822.

⁴⁸ J. Assmann (1988) 11.

⁴⁹ A. Assmann (2001) 6823. Aleida and Jan Assmann’s ‘cultural memory’ is therefore closely related to Gehrke’s concept of ‘intentional history’; cf. Gehrke (2001).

⁵⁰ Fentress and Wickham (1992) 100–1. For a fascinating study of the mutual influence of cultural memory and the communicative family memory of the Nazi past in Germany, see Welzer–Möller–Tschuggnall (2002).

personal memories and the emerging cultural memory shaped by their own and other orators' contributions to the public contestation, negotiation, and memorialisation of these very events. The same was true for members of the audience, who judged the orators' credibility as well as the plausibility and truthfulness of their respective accounts in light of both their own recollections and the emerging cultural memory of the community. Having outlined these various and often overlapping approaches to the orators' historical allusions in general, I now turn to Kapellos' edited volume with its particular focus on the most recent period of Athenian history.

2. Volume Contents and Introductory Essays

For *The Orators and Their Treatment of the Recent Past*, Aggelos Kapellos recruited twenty-seven internationally renowned experts on Athenian oratory and fourth-century Athenian social, cultural, and political history to analyse the Attic orators' treatment of—and by implication their audience's knowledge and attitude towards—the Athenians' recent past, which, for the purposes of this volume, he defines as comprising the previous twenty years (4). Aimed at 'advanced students and professional scholars' (8), the volume covers events from the revolt of Mytilene in 428/7 BC, mentioned in Antiphon 5, to the Harpalus Affair of 324 BC, which stands at the centre of Dinarchus' *Against Demosthenes*. It includes contributions on every single one of the ten canonical Attic orators and covers all three branches of Attic oratory, dicanic (forensic), symbouleutic (deliberative), and epideictic (demonstrative). A. Kapellos' introduction is followed by T. Blank's methodological remarks on the 'truthfulness' of the orators' historical narratives. The bulk of the volume consists of chapters devoted to a particular orator's treatment of recent events. There is one chapter on Antiphon (M. Gagarin), one on [Lysias] 20 (P. Rhodes), two on *On the Peace*, ascribed to Andocides, (F. Pownall, E. M. Harris), three on Lysias (C. Bearzot, D. Piovan, M. Zimmermann), one on the funeral speech in Plato's *Menexenus* (A. Kapellos), two on Isocrates (D. Whitehead, Y. L. Too), one on Isaeus (S. Ferrucci), one on [Demosthenes] 49, written by Apollodorus (N. Siron), five on Demosthenes (B. L. Cook, G. Martin, J. Trevett, N. Crick, P. Brun), one on Demosthenes and Aeschines (P. A. O'Connell), one on Aeschines (D. Bajnok), one on Lycurgus (J. Roisman), two on Hyperides (C. Cooper, J. Kucharski), one on [Demosthenes] 7, composed by Hegesippus (Z. Wang), and one on Dinarchus (I. Worthington). The final three chapters address broader themes: the cultural memory of the conquest of Samos (J. P. Nudell), the orators' use of state inscriptions (J. Sickinger), and the historical context of the *Rhetoric to Alexander* (P. Chiron). The volume is fittingly dedicated to the late Peter Rhodes—a paragon of Classical Greek history—who contributed to this volume and whom A. Kapellos considers 'a second father' (19).

While each of the studies outlined in the preceding sketch of the *status quaestionis* is characterised by its adoption of one particular methodological approach to the orators' use of the past, this does not apply to the collected volume under discussion. The book comprises twenty-eight individual chapters written by scholars from a variety of subfields, each bringing their own assumptions and scholarly interests. Every contributor was tasked with analysing one or more allusions to recent events in the corpus of the Attic orators, with the aim 'to give a new or different interpretation of the texts under investigation' (8). In order to 'produce a volume written in a uniform manner' (8), the contributors were asked to follow a shared basic structure: to begin with a historical outline of the specific recent events under discussion and then to juxtapose these with their rhetorical treatment by the orators 'by comparing the rhetorical texts with the historical sources and/or by examining the rhetorical means through which the speakers model the recent past' (8). The mention of these two distinct approaches—although several others are in fact also employed by the contributors—is the first indication that this volume is marked by an absence of methodological uniformity. However, I regard this as a strength rather than a flaw, insofar as this impressive collection of first-rate essays reveals not only each Attic orator's distinctive treatment of the recent past but also the wide scope of contemporary methodological approaches to this fascinating aspect of Athenian oratory and political culture.

A. Kapellos' concise introduction (1–21) sets out the parameters of the investigation, lists the various issues addressed by the contributors (4), and provides a brief summary of their findings. Kapellos identifies a 'trichotomy in the way the orators treated the past' (1): the distant past, known to the audience only through hearsay (*ἀκοή*) and encompassing both mythical and historical events that predate the Athenians' 'remembered history' (in Assmann's term); the middling past, which older listeners remember and can tell the younger; and the recent past, in which the speaker assumes a shared knowledge among all listeners—a period which Kapellos, following Nouhaud, defines as spanning 'twenty years' (4).⁵¹ He rightly points out, however, that 'this temporal distinction is artificial' (3) and that the boundary between myth and history was 'rather fluid' (3). There is, in particular, a 'marked predilection for recent events' (3), especially in symbolleutic and forensic speeches.

Citing Gorg. *Hel.* 11.3 (ed. Schollmeyer), Kapellos asserts that the orators 'knew that their audiences could not have true knowledge of all past things, so they used their speech and covered their listeners' gap of knowledge with their opinion about the past' (4–5). In addition to this emphasis on the orators as knowledgeable and skilful *creators* of persuasive representations of the past, the volume as a whole reflects the full range of perspectives on their historical

⁵¹ Cf. Nouhaud (1982) 10, 369.

allusions outlined above. The orators are studied with respect to their rhetorical ability ‘to interpret the recent past according to their interests’ (4), with a view to the perennial question of the ‘reliability of their historical precision’ (4) when compared with other extant historical sources (7), and, finally, as evidence for their audience’s attitude towards the past. In this context, Kapellos notes both the Athenians’ apparent inability ‘to make an objective assessment of persons and events of the recent past’—citing as an example the divergent views on Alcibiades (5–6)—and the citizens’ unwillingness ‘to hear the truth, make self-criticism and take responsibility for bad results’ (4).

Presumably in lieu of a concluding chapter, Kapellos provides a helpful prospective summary of the volume’s diverse findings, referencing the individual contributors. He observes that while a speaker on occasion could indeed be accurate (cf. Harris), ‘the opposite was the rule’ (5). An orator might ‘allude to the recent past [cf. Gagarin], recall it [cf. Worthington], shape and/or distort it [cf. Trevett], interpret it from his own perspective, or even lie, believing that it would help him win his case [cf. Brun; O’Connell; Bajnok; Roisman]’ (5). These conclusions stem from the studies committed to the traditional focus on the orators’ rhetorical (and manipulative) techniques. The insights of the contributors employing a social memory approach are no less impressive. The studies by Piovan, Kapellos, and Crick of the treatment of the recent past, especially in the Athenian funeral orations, demonstrate that ‘an orator could create an official memory’, by ‘suppress[ing] unpleasant events of the city, such as inner conflicts and military defeats’ (5).⁵²

Kapellos succeeds in providing a clear introduction to the subject under discussion and in preparing readers for the wide-ranging findings of this diverse group of experts. Yet, in my view, he also has missed an opportunity by taking up a substantial part of the introduction with the abstracts of each contribution (9–19)—which then reappear verbatim at the beginning of each chapter—rather than offering the reader a more sustained discussion of the different methodological approaches employed and drawing out further connections between individual chapters.

T. Blank’s ‘Methodical Remarks on the “Truthfulness” of Oratorical Narrative’ (23–45) functions in many ways as a second, methodological, introduction and is an absolute must-read chapter thanks to its comprehensiveness and sophistication. After critiquing the anachronistic focus of earlier scholarship on the factual accuracy of the orators’ historical allusions, Blank makes the compelling suggestion that any evaluation of oratorical narrations of the past must take into account not only how the speakers and their audiences conceived of ‘truthfulness’ in fourth-century Athens, but also

⁵² For the socio-psychological dimension of this type of suppression in the funeral oration, see Steinbock (2025).

‘how historical memory as a collective phenomenon usually evolves from an amorphous polyphony and multipolarity of very different personal accounts of a given event’ (26). Especially in assessing the orators’ treatment of the *recent* past, Blank urges us to consider the manifold processes in Classical Athens through which this multipolar ‘communicative memory’ evolves over time to achieve the status of a more stable ‘cultural memory’, thus drawing on Jan Assmann’s well-known concepts. Consequently, with respect to the recent past, Athenian orators were, in fact, ‘less using or manipulating established narratives than they were at the forefront of shaping such narratives from the background noise’ (29). In the form of a hermeneutical program, Blank magisterially delineates the various contexts of communication pertinent to the analysis of the orators’ ‘historical’ arguments. For each historical allusion, one ought to situate the orator’s version within the complex net of remembrances and beliefs held by the audience about the event in question, while carefully considering the time (e.g., immediately or long after the event), the performance context (funeral oration versus assembly speech), the circumstances of composition (e.g., epideictic versus forensic speech), and the particular audience (e.g., Athenian assembly versus reading elite).

3. Fifth-Century Oratory

M. Gagarin examines the sole historical allusion found in the extant judicial speeches of Antiphon (47–52). In *On the Murder of Herodes* (Ant. 5), the Mytilenean defendant Euxitheus, charged with murdering an Athenian citizen on Lesbos, seeks to dismiss the plaintiff’s accusation that his father had been involved in the Mytilenean revolt against Athens (428–427 BC) about a decade before the trial. Gagarin reasonably assumes that ‘[m]emories of this episode must have been fresh in the minds’ of the Athenian jury and rightly notes that Euxitheus did ‘not wish to remind his audience of the recent revolt’ (47). However, he does not further explore the Athenians’ social memory of this betrayal or the emotive weight of the plaintiff’s accusations. Instead, the chapter primarily focuses on the speaker’s trustworthiness and on the limited value of this historical reference as a historical source for the revolt itself. Gagarin rightly observes that Euxitheus’ claim that *all* Mytileneans now regret their revolt (Ant. 5.79) ‘is an exaggeration’ but one should ‘not call the statement a lie, since it clearly is not intended to be an expression of historical fact, but rather a rhetorical supplement of Euxitheus’ defence of his father’ (49). Gagarin’s conclusion regarding Antiphon’s use of the past in his court speeches is as unsurprising as it is important: ‘Antiphon, it seems, has no interest in historical events as history but only alludes to them for their broad relevance to the case at hand’ (52).

The next text under discussion is [Lysias] 20, a speech delivered shortly after the democratic restoration of 410 BC in defence of Polystratus, a member of the Four Hundred (53–62). Following a rather traditional line of inquiry, the late P. Rhodes used the putatively ‘more reliable sources’ (55 n. 8)—Thucydides and [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.*—both to assess the truthfulness of the account of the roles Polystratus and his three sons played in the recent past and to evaluate the reliability of the additional information provided by this speech to our historical knowledge of this period. Of course, we can never know with certainty whether any particular claim about the defendant’s past actions is true. Yet by considering the ‘known’ historical facts and the lines of argument that would have been expected before a democratic jury, Rhodes offers a magisterial assessment of the likelihood of deliberate distortion in each case and presents a persuasive interpretation of this speech within its historical context.

4. Andocides’ *On the Peace*

F. Pownall’s (63–80) and E. M. Harris’ (81–99) diametrically opposed studies of the treatment of the recent past in *On the Peace*, an assembly speech in the corpus of the orator Andocides, provide an excellent illustration of how our findings depend to a large extent on our own assumptions about the socio-political, cultural, and communicative conditions of Classical Athens. After representing Athens at peace negotiations in Sparta in 392/1 BC, Andocides and his fellow ambassadors recommended that the Athenian assembly conclude peace with Sparta; however, they failed to persuade the Athenians and in anticipation of condemnation went into exile (Philochorus *BNJ* 328 F 149a and 149b). *On the Peace* has generally been regarded by modern scholars as Andocides’ speech from this occasion. In a 2000 article, Harris vigorously challenged this speech’s authenticity, based on—among other things—Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ alleged doubts (Philochorus *BNJ* 328 F 149b) and the numerous gross errors in the speaker’s historical paradigms. For Harris, this speech is a later forgery composed as a rhetorical exercise.⁵³ His arguments have been accepted by several scholars,⁵⁴ though many remain unconvinced.⁵⁵

In his chapter ‘Recent Events in Assembly Speeches and [Andocides] *On the Peace*’ (81–99), Harris doubles down on his earlier position and launches a

⁵³ Harris (2000).

⁵⁴ See, for instance, Martin (2009) 220 n. 4; Canevaro (2019) 140 n. 20; Barbato (2020) 71 n. 52.

⁵⁵ Cf. Grethlein (2010) 128–9 n. 9; Rhodes (2016) 182–6; Kostopoulos (2019) 55 n. 249; Wojciech (2022) 18–19.

three-pronged attack against *De pace*'s authenticity.⁵⁶ He first seeks to demonstrate that the historical allusions in Demosthenes' symbouleutic speeches 'are accurate and confirmed by other sources' as well as 'brief and to the point' (82). This finding is then generalised and used as the standard for evaluating—and ultimately dismissing—the lengthy and historically inaccurate accounts of the recent past in *On the Peace*: 'Speeches delivered to the Athenian Assembly had to contain reliable information about the recent past and the contemporary situation. Any speech that did not contain reliable information about major events could not have been a genuine speech composed in the fourth century BC' (98). The alleged misuse of the term *presbeis autokratores* in *On the Peace* is presented as the final nail in the coffin of the speech's authenticity.

This chapter stands out for the author's detailed knowledge and intellectual rigour. Yet many of Harris' implicit assumptions concerning the nature of Athenian public discourse are open to question and may therefore cast doubt on his conclusion. The discursive parameters Harris deems acceptable for the use of the past in assembly speeches in fourth-century Athens appear somewhat restrictive and methodologically problematic, since they are based primarily on Demosthenes' assembly speeches—all delivered by a single politician over a relatively brief period (354 to 340 BC).⁵⁷

Moreover, Harris' argument that historical errors in symbouleutic speeches are proof against authenticity leaves two important issues insufficiently addressed. First, there are alternative—and arguably more plausible—explanations for such errors than the ignorance of a later forger. As studies of the multipolar and dynamic nature of Athenian social memory have shown, it may not be safe to assume that both speaker and audience possessed accurate knowledge of the past. In Classical Athens, people derived their knowledge of the past predominantly from oral sources and generally lacked both the means and the inclination to fact-check.⁵⁸ Consequently, a speaker might simply misremember the details even of relatively recent events⁵⁹ or, if recalling them correctly, might deliberately manipulate or spin them so to serve his rhetorical aims, as Pownall rightly points out (64 n. 7). Second, the studies by Westwood and Wojciech have demonstrated that, in

⁵⁶ Harris' chapter is a short version of Harris (2021).

⁵⁷ On this important point, see Herrman (2019) 9–10.

⁵⁸ Thomas (1989) 201–2; Steinbock (2012) 40–1.

⁵⁹ With respect to historical accuracy, Harris appears to hold both the orators and their Athenian audience to standards that may be unrealistically high. Given the extensive multi-media coverage characteristic of the current Information Age, contemporary readers may wish to consider how detailed their own memories are of events such as the surge of U.S. troops in Iraq, the rise and fall of ISIS, or the U.S. involvement in Syria, and whether they would be able to detect historical errors in politicians' or pundits' allusions to these events, all of which took place within the last two decades. On this point, see also Fisher (2024) 103.

contrast to our modern archive culture where public figures are routinely called out for historical inaccuracies, Athenian orators in fact enjoyed considerable leeway in departing from commonly held views of the past.⁶⁰

Rejecting Harris' apparent premise that *De pace's* 'historical inaccuracies necessarily imply inauthenticity' (64 n. 7), F. Pownall considers it an authentic work of the orator Andocides and—following Rosalind Thomas—ascribes his 'notoriously inaccurate survey of fifth-century Athenian history' (67) in Andoc. 3.3–9 to the tendentious distortions typically found in patriotic Athenian oratory and orally transmitted family memories.⁶¹ Pownall's main focus in 'Andocides, the Spartans, and the Thirty' (63–80) lies elsewhere, however, namely on *De pace's* surprisingly philo-laconic sentiments, first and foremost Andocides' elision of Sparta's responsibility for the establishment of the Thirty (Andoc. 3.10–11). Taking the Athenians' collective memory of the brutal reign of this pro-Spartan junta into consideration, Pownall makes the keen observation that this blatant rehabilitation of the Spartans would presumably have appeared unpalatable to most Athenians in the assembly in 392/1 BC. Following Missiou, Pownall views *De pace*, therefore, as an 'oligarchic document' (66).⁶² Yet whereas the former considered it a subversive oration actually delivered in the Athenian assembly, Pownall makes the intriguing suggestion that *De pace* in its current form represents an—in some points—revised version of Andocides' actual assembly speech, now turned into a political pamphlet addressed to fellow oligarchic-minded Athenians. Even though, as Edwards reminds us, 'the problem of how close the surviving speech is to what was actually delivered is an insoluble one',⁶³ Pownall's arguments nevertheless provide further support for those scholars who defend the attribution of this speech to Andocides.

5. Lysias and Athenian Defeat

The next three chapters by C. Bearzot (101–18), D. Piovan (119–33), and M. Zimmermann (135–50) should also be read together, since they all deal with Lysias' representation of Athens' recent *symphorai*, albeit in different rhetorical genres. C. Bearzot's chapter (101–18) tackles the treatment of Athens' painful recent past in Lysias' *Against the Subversion of the Ancestral Constitution of Athens* (Lys. 34), the only symbolleutic speech known from this author, a substantial fragment of which has come down to us in a quotation by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Lys. 31–3). Bearzot first provides a concise discussion of the

⁶⁰ Westwood (2020) 63; Wojciech (2022) 24.

⁶¹ Cf. Thomas (1989) 118–23.

⁶² Missiou (1992).

⁶³ Edwards (1995) 108.

democratic reappropriation of the oligarchic slogan *patrios politeia* in the title, Phormisius' proposal to restrict citizenship (which this speech written for a prominent democrat opposes), and other key issues mentioned in Dionysius' hypothesis. In a second step, she turns to the speech itself. In the form of a commentary, she magisterially explicates both textual and interpretative problems in each of its eleven paragraphs and, in a concluding section, shares her verdict on the issue under discussion: the speech invites the Athenians in the assembly to remember the past—both the recent past, characterised by the *symphorai* of military defeat and the painful experience of the first and second oligarchies, in order to avoid repeating past mistakes that could lead to another oligarchy; and the distant past of the fifth-century empire, in order to become 'worthy heirs of a glorious tradition' (115). Addressing the question of Lysias' relationship with the truth, Bearzot rightly emphasises the powerful force of the shared memory of defeat and oppression. The past discussed in Lys. 34 is 'too recent to be heavily manipulated and, perhaps, too painful to be a simple subject of propaganda' (116), which she sees at full display, however, in Lysias' depiction of the Athenians' fifth-century naval empire and their forefathers' altruistic interventionism (cf. Lys. 34.9–11). Lysias clearly echoes here core principles of Athenian ideology known, for instance, from the public funeral orations, but I would nevertheless refrain from characterising these historical allusions as 'manipulation and propaganda' (116), since these terms imply, in Thomas' formulation, '(i) systematic dissemination and (ii) that the disseminators know their propaganda to be untrue',⁶⁴ which in Lysias' case we cannot simply assume, as we learn in the next chapter.

D. Piovan offers a persuasive interpretation of Lysias' allusions to the Athenian defeat at Aegospotami in 405 BC and the subsequent civil war in his *epitaphios logos* (119–33). Unlike in some of Lysias' forensic speeches (Lys. 12; 13; 14; 18; 30), where the conspiracy against the democracy is at the core of the narration of events of 405–403 BC, in the funeral oration (cf. Lys. 2.58), this theme is 'evoked only vaguely' (123), which Piovan rightly attributes to the conventional focus of this genre on the celebration of Athenian greatness. In this context, I found Piovan's explanations of the socio-psychological functions behind the divergent treatments of the events in question particularly compelling. Lysias' judicial orations offered scapegoats—such as Alcibiades and Adeimantus in Lys. 14.38—who 'were indispensable to relieve the citizens of responsibility for the evils that occurred, such as the momentous defeat of Aegospotami or the vote that established the government of the Thirty' (123). His *epitaphios logos*, on the other hand, presented the restoration of democracy as the result of a triumphant victory over external enemies, i.e., the Spartans (Lys. 2.63), downplayed the role of the oligarchic supporters of the Thirty, and

⁶⁴ Thomas (1989) 206 n. 39. Cf. Steinbock (2012) 40.

completely omitted the vital Spartan mediation between the returning democrats and the oligarchs in the city—all of which helped the Athenians ‘to forget the gravity of the division of a city torn between two parties’ (125). Yet why did Lysias (as well as Plato’s epitaphic orator in Pl. *Menex.* 243e–244b) not simply omit these embarrassing events altogether? Once again, Piovan provides a compelling explanation: ‘it was not possible to be completely silent’ about Aegospotami, the siege and fall of Athens, the end of democracy and empire—events ‘whose impact was too heavy and still present’ and ‘about which the city continued to ponder for years, trying to find a reason for the loss of its former power and glory’ (127). Piovan also raises the perennial question whether Lysias (or any other orator, for that matter) ‘is personally convinced of what he writes or is just an unscrupulous manipulator’ (128) and answers it persuasively by referring to pertinent social memory studies, according to which the memory of individuals is socially conditioned and shaped by the needs of the community in which they live. It is impossible, therefore, to know what was in Lysias’ heart, but he was ‘certainly influenced by a collective memory that [was] formed during the years of the democratic restoration and, in his turn, help[ed] to shape it’ (128).

Lysias’ treatment of the Athenian *symphorai* at the end of the Peloponnesian War is also at the centre of M. Zimmermann’s perceptive analysis of Lysias 14 (135–50), a forensic speech written for one of the *synēgoroi* in Archestratides’ prosecution of Alcibiades the Younger for having illegally served in the cavalry during the victorious Haliartus campaign in 395 BC. The charges against the son of the famous Alcibiades ‘seem far-fetched’ (137) and this lawsuit is just one of several (cf. Isoc. 16.1–2) which focus to a large extent on ‘the alleged crimes of his father’ (136). Zimmermann is therefore surely right to see these trials as politically motivated attempts by ‘Conon and his supporters’ (147) to damage the reputation of the defendant’s late father and—by association—his father’s former companion, Thrasybulus, one of Athens’ leading politicians and Conon’s rival in the 390s. Zimmermann highlights the speaker’s audacity in blaming the Athenian defeat at Aegospotami on Alcibiades’ and Adeimantus’ treasonous cooperation with the Spartan admiral Lysander (Lys. 14.38), an alternative interpretation not found in any other ancient account of this calamitous event. Preceding from the premise that ‘an orator would only say things that the jury was likely to believe’ (142), Zimmermann reasonably concludes that (a) the responsibility for the defeat at Aegospotami in 405 BC ‘was still a matter of debate’ (144) ten years later; (b) Alcibiades was a highly controversial figure, whose well-known temporary support for Sparta during the Peloponnesian War must have made the false accusation of his betrayal at Aegospotami appear plausible; (c) the mere fact that Alcibiades had indeed visited Adeimantus and the other Athenian generals at Aegospotami before the battle would have provided ample fuel for this type of conspiracy theory; and finally (d) that ‘even decisive events of the recent past like the defeat at

Aegospotami could be interpreted very differently depending on the context and audience' (147)—a salutary warning against using forensic speeches uncritically as sources for the reconstruction of historical events. Zimmermann's conclusions seem right on the mark; yet, in light of the recent trials of U.S. President Trump and Hunter Biden, I wonder whether Zimmermann's premise should be somewhat modified to acknowledge the often uncanny willingness of partisan supporters to believe almost any assertion about the recent past, so long as it conforms to their political worldview.

6. Plato and Isocrates

In 'Plato's *Menexenus* on the Sea Battle-trial of Arginousai and the Battle of Aegospotami' (151–69), A. Kapellos tackles the treatment of the recent past in one of the most difficult oratorical texts to interpret: the *epitaphios logos* featured in Plato's *Menexenus*. In this dialogue, we learn that this funeral speech was supposedly composed by Pericles' mistress Aspasia from leftovers of Pericles' famous *epitaphios* and delivered by Socrates after the conclusion of the King's Peace in 386 BC. Thanks to these blatant anachronisms and the combination of a playful frame with a seemingly serious oration this work has baffled ancient and modern commentators. Following the majority of contemporary scholars, Kapellos views the *Menexenus* as Plato's way of implicitly 'alert[ing] his audience to the dangers of funerary oratory' (166), by having Socrates deliver a speech that 'follows the trends of the genre in the way he treats Athens' self-identity and self-praise' (152). Plato's readers were meant to detect 'possible inaccuracies, omissions or falsifications' (153) by critically comparing them to either their own memories of the recent events in question or to the more reliable historiographical accounts of Thucydides, Xenophon, or the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, which we today can grasp—via Ephorus—in the work of Diodorus Siculus. Kapellos illustrates this procedure, expected of Plato's attentive reader, in a penetrating analysis of Socrates' praise of the Athenians' naval victory at Arginusae and his explanation of Athens' fall as the result of internal discord (Pl. *Menex.* 243b7–d2). While some of his individual interpretations may invite further debate,⁶⁵ Kapellos largely succeeds in demonstrating

⁶⁵ Kapellos, for instance, interprets the phrase *ἀναξίου τύχης τυχόντες, οὐκ ἀναιρεθέντες ἐκ τῆς θαλάττης κεύνται ἐνθάδε* (243c6–7) as a sincere reference to the *κλίνη κενή* ('empty bier', not 'chest' (158)), mentioned in Thuc. 2.34.2, intended to indicate 'that those who were drowned at Arginusae are now classified along with all the other warriors who are buried in the Ceramicus' (158). In contrast, Sansone (2020) 143 athetises *οὐκ ἀναιρεθέντες ἐκ τῆς θαλάττης* as a later interpolation derived from a gloss on *ἀναξίου τύχης τυχόντες*, arguing that 'it is patently nonsensical to say that those who were not recovered from the sea are lying here'. I consider the transmitted text defensible, if we see in it one of those

that, although Socrates' historical distortions might go undetected by an audience accustomed to the Athenians' chauvinistic epitaphic rhetoric, perceptive readers would notice Socrates' blatant omission of the shameful Arginusae trial and Plato's subtle critique of the Athenian *demos*' unwillingness to take responsibility for its past mistakes.

The next two chapters offer examinations of Isocrates' attitude towards, and uses of, the past across his extensive oeuvre. D. Whitehead explores Isocrates' rhetorical treatment of what we—following Thucydides—call the Peloponnesian War, a conflict that cost Isocrates his family fortune (171–87). He provides a comprehensive survey of the circumlocutions with which the orator refers to this time period (e.g., 'the war against the Lacedaemonians' in Isoc. 15.161), to particular events (e.g., 'the misfortune that occurred in the Hellespont' in Isoc. 4.119), and to leading figures (e.g., Alcibiades in Isoc. 16). In his discussion of the alleged benefactions by the speaker in Isoc. 18.59–65, Whitehead establishes the important methodological principle that 'the essential historicity of this account [is] guaranteed' (178) by the speaker's appeal to the honorific decree awarded to himself and his brother, since 'Isocrates would not have risked such a claim if enough of the listeners knew it to be false' (178). While he finds most of Isocrates' references to the Peloponnesian War marked by 'their relative matter-of-factness' (182), Whitehead rightly singles out a longer passage in *On the Peace*, where Isocrates vehemently attacks the Athenian *demos* for its aggressive imperialism and the resultant blunders (Isoc. 8.84–8) and makes the intriguing suggestion that Isocrates' decrying of the substandard education of children and forced absence from country estates (8.92)—in a discourse written more than half a century after this war—offers a glimpse into the lingering bitterness over his personal losses.

In 'Back to the Future: Temporal Adjustments in Isocrates' (189–204), Y. L. Too examines Isocrates' portrayals of institutions, leaders, and political and moral attitudes in the Athenian past as found in his *Areopagiticus*, *On the Peace*, *Antidosis*, *Panathenaicus*, and *Evagoras*. Two insights stand out. First, as an extremely conservative thinker, who views the Athens of his day as marred by chaos and moral and political degeneration, Isocrates presents the past as a pedagogical template for his fellow Athenians—a model to remedy present ills and guide the city towards a better future. Second, owing to this pedagogical impetus, Isocrates uses the supposedly fixed past 'as a creative canvas for his idea(l) of a contemporary society' (191), disregarding the historical development of the institutions he describes (for instance, of the Areopagus Council) and overlooking problematic aspects of the leaders he praises, as seen in his portrait of Timotheus in *Antidosis* 101–26. Her insightful chapter made me wonder if this high degree of malleability of the past also applies to speeches

instances, where Plato deliberately exaggerates typical features of the funeral oration to deconstruct them, as suggested by Thomas (1989) 211 and Shear (2013) 513.

delivered in the assembly or law courts; unfortunately Too does not address the issue of Isocrates' intended readership or potential differences between his written discourses and the speeches of other orators delivered before popular audiences.⁶⁶

7. Isaeus and Apollodorus

In one of the best chapters of the volume, S. Ferrucci offers a comprehensive survey (accompanied by a useful appendix) and a typological analysis of the treatment of the recent past in Isaeus' forensic speeches (205–24). These inheritance cases deal primarily with the private past of particular families, and the 'great events of a collective and shared memory [have] a very marginal role in Isaeus' argumentation' (205). Such events are mentioned only when the biographies of those involved intersect with major historical moments. Isaeus' forensic speeches thus offer a glimpse into the intersection of personal recollections and polis-wide collective memories. Whereas historical allusions in assembly and political trial speeches are often elaborate and serve a paradigmatic function,⁶⁷ Isaeus refers to events from the city's past only insofar as they contribute to 'building the characters in the case' (219). Ferrucci distinguishes three functions of these historical references: (1) as *enkōmion* or *psogos*, when historical events highlight his clients' exemplary or his opponents' blameworthy civic behaviour (e.g., Dicaeogenes II's triarchy and noble death in Isae. 5.6 versus Dicaeogenes III's shirking of military service in Isae. 5.46); (2) as *pistis* for proving an assertion, such as the joint participation in a mission to Sicily mentioned in Isae. 6.1 to demonstrate the speaker's close friendship with the plaintiff Chaerestratus; or (3) as part of the *diēgēsis*: the participation in Iphicrates' expedition to Thrace establishes the date of the speaker's adoption by Meneclēs in Isae. 2.6. Ferrucci does not, however, limit his investigation to the rhetorical function of these historical references but also addresses the historiographical difficulties they pose and considers their likely reception by the audience. Since battles, expeditions, and embassies 'are alluded to almost *en passant*' (209), it is often difficult for historians to identify them with known historical events, as the allusion to Meneclēs' participation in an expedition with Iphicrates to Thrace (Isae. 2.6) illustrates. As for the audience's expected reaction, Ferrucci notes that Isaeus never corroborates these allusions—as other orators do—by using the typical *topoi* 'as you certainly remember' or 'as the elders tell us'. This leads Ferrucci to the reasonable conclusion that either Isaeus 'took for granted the notoriety of the episodes' or—more likely in Ferrucci's view—'had no particular interest in providing the audience with

⁶⁶ On this difference, see, for instance, Hunt (2010) 70, 262–4.

⁶⁷ See, for instance, Dem. 6.10–12 and Dem. 14.29–30, 33–4.

details about the event or with clues for identification' (209). To gauge the jurors' likely familiarity with the historical events mentioned, scholars must, therefore, consult extra-textual evidence.

The audience's memory of past events is also central to the next chapter on [Dem.] 49, in which N. Siron examines Apollodorus' manipulation of the jurors' recollection of an *eisangelia* trial involving Timotheus in 373 BC, exploited eleven years later in his private lawsuit against this renowned general (225–40). Apollodorus won his case and recovered the loan his father, Pasion, had extended to Timotheus by—among other tactics—omitting mention of Timotheus' many achievements and focusing instead on his failure to relieve Corcyra in 373 BC, which led to both his removal from office by popular vote in the assembly (*apochheirotonia*) and the conviction (and resulting death) of his treasurer, Antimachus, via *eisangelia*. Siron makes the intriguing suggestion that—contrary to Apollodorus' insinuation—Timotheus himself had not been subject to an *eisangelia* charge on that occasion, as previous scholars had assumed, but that Apollodorus' clever rhetorical manipulation led the jurors to believe otherwise. By urging them to recall how they felt about Timotheus 'when you were hearing these things back then in the assembly' ([Dem.] 49.13), Apollodorus exploits their embarrassment about their putative ignorance to make them accept his false claim as fact.⁶⁸ In explaining this psychological mechanism, Siron goes beyond Canevaro by allowing for a heterogeneous reaction by the jurors and by drawing attention to the phenomenon of the *thorybos*—the noise made by approving jurors—which could cow sceptical members of the jury into submission.

8. Demosthenes (plus Aeschines and Hegesippus)

Five chapters illuminate how the prolific forensic orator and leading Athenian politician Demosthenes engaged with the recent past at various points in his long career and across different rhetorical genres (a sixth chapter on Demosthenes, by N. Crick, will be discussed later as one of several texts dealing with the battle of Chaeronea). In 'Family Portraits in Demosthenes' Inheritance Speeches' (241–56), B. L. Cook offers a close reading of Demosthenes' portrayal of his late father, mother, sister, the freed supervisor, and the enslaved household members in Dem. 27–31. By elucidating the specific rhetorical function of each of these 'slight glimpses that Demosthenes gives of his family' (253), Cook convincingly argues that the young orator's reticence about his family is owed to a deliberate strategy to keep the jurors' attention focused on the main villains of the case—his corrupt and greedy guardians who squandered his inheritance. Cook concludes his insightful

⁶⁸ Cf. Canevaro (2019) 151–7.

contribution by rightly cautioning modern historians to be aware of the rhetorical shaping of these brief family vignettes and to resist the temptation to fill the gaps Demosthenes left in his family history by ‘treating as historical evidence the slanderous attacks stirred up by Aeschines decades later’ (252).

G. Martin’s chapter ‘Reusing Invective: Demosthenes on Androtion’s Past’ (257–74) stands out for offering valuable insights into not just one but two areas pertinent to the topic under discussion. By uncovering Demosthenes’ rhetorical finesse in recycling and adapting a previously used personal attack to a new context, it affords us a rare glance into an orator’s workshop. In addition, the chapter illustrates the enormous latitude speakers in court had to distort their opponents’ past political activities and to ascribe to them ‘the most sinister motives possible’ (260). The passage in question is the invective against the prominent politician Androtion (Dem. 22.47–69), which Demosthenes initially wrote for Diodorus, the *synēgoros* in a *graphē paranomōn* against Androtion in 355/4 BC. Two years later, Demosthenes reused this passage—to a considerable extent verbatim—in a speech composed for the same Diodorus against Androtion’s associate Timocrates (Dem. 24.160–75). In a thorough analysis of all the changes (complemented by a useful table, 261–2), Martin demonstrates that Demosthenes excised the details of Androtion’s (alleged) transgressions in collecting the arrears of the property tax (cf. Dem. 22.53 and 24.165) and persuasively attributes these modifications to Demosthenes’ ‘concentration on more generalised thoughts’ and ‘more abstract considerations about guilt and punishment’ which were more ‘appropriate for a *γραφὴ νόμον μὴ ἐπιτήδειον θεῖναι* [i.e., the public action brought against Timocrates for proposing an “unsuitable law”]’ (265).

By describing Androtion’s past activities out of context, Demosthenes ‘scandalises normal actions’ and then throws a number of other accusations—such as prostitution in Androtion’s youth—‘into the mix’ (259). The invective thus illustrates—perhaps to the shock of modern readers—the ferocity with which opponents attacked each other in the political arena and the ‘precariousness of a politician’s reputation’ (272). It is difficult for us to know how this type of invective was perceived by the jurors. If today’s polarised public discourse is any indication, one might venture to guess that the jurors’ reactions presumably depended on their personal allegiances and might have ranged from outright dismissal to enjoyment of the invective as a form of entertainment to taking it at face value.

In ‘A Tale of Two Sea-battles’ (275–89), J. Trevett examines Demosthenes’ laudatory presentation of the career and death of the prominent Athenian general Chabrias in *Against Leptines* (Dem. 20.75–86), a public prosecution brought in 355/4 BC against Leptines’ inexpedient new law, which abolished the granting of honorific exemptions from festival liturgies to deserving individuals and their descendants—such as Chabrias’ son, Ctesippus, on whose behalf Demosthenes delivered this speech. In a close reading of

Demosthenes' portrayal of both Chabrias' earlier military accomplishments (his victories against the Spartans at Thebes and on Aegina, his service in Cyprus and Egypt, and his naval triumph at Naxos) and his recent heroic death in the (lost) naval battle of Chios, Trevett illuminates pertinent problems concerning the historical accuracy of these allusions and the audience's familiarity with them. He also provides a compelling explication of how Demosthenes deliberately selected (and omitted) particular details of Chabrias' long career and masterfully crafted an account that is 'eulogistic in tone and epideictic in style', full of 'pathos, hyperbole, antithesis, and superlatives and all-or-nothing language' (286). Trevett rightly notes that some of Demosthenes' hyperbolic assertions, for instance, that Chabrias was the only Athenian general, 'who did not lose a city, a fortress, a ship, or a soldier' (Dem. 20.78) 'are obviously not true' (287), but closely resemble eulogistic passages in Isocrates' *Antidosis* and Hyperides' *Epitaphios* and serve Demosthenes' rhetorical strategy to present Chabrias in the best possible light and deserving of the hereditary honours once granted him by the Athenians for his loyal services. This chapter thus provides an excellent illustration of how a crafty orator could get away with exaggerated claims about his client's family history by momentarily shifting his register from a sober court speech to a pathos-evoking epideictic eulogy.

In his essayistic chapter 'Demosthenes, between Fake News and Alternative Facts' (307–21), P. Brun seeks to illustrate how Demosthenes 'reinvented recent history in his favour' (307). After a brief sketch of Athens' military and diplomatic situation in the early 340s, Brun proceeds to evaluate the historical accuracy of the orator's representations of the Peace of Philocrates of 346 BC in the embassy trial of 343 BC and of the Athenian–Theban alliance of 339 BC in the famous crown trial of 330 BC. Demosthenes' version of events is contradicted by the accounts of Aeschines, Theopompus, and Diodorus Siculus, which leads Brun to the conclusion that for Demosthenes to distance himself from the hated Peace of Philocrates in 343 BC 'omissions and lies become necessary' (311). Similarly, Demosthenes' dramatic account of his decisive role in bringing about the Athenian–Theban alliance (Dem. 18.168–216), in which 'he acted out his own epiphany' (312) in the Athenian assembly and claimed the sole credit for swaying the Thebans through the power of his rhetoric, contains a highly compressed chronology and a gross simplification of events, as has now been shown by *Against Diondas*. This recently discovered fragment of a speech written by Demosthenes' fellow ambassador Hyperides presents—according to Brun—a fuller and thus more reliable account of the Athenian–Theban negotiations.⁶⁹ Considering the Athenians' attitude towards blatant lies, Brun muses whether the Athenians in 343 BC 'refused to condemn

⁶⁹ For this New Hyperides, see Carey et al. (2008) and Horváth (2014).

Aeschines because the vast majority of them had understood that Demosthenes was not telling the truth, [because] they had not forgotten the real situation of the year 346 BC, [or] only because they did not believe Aeschines guilty of treason as Demosthenes claimed' (312). Brun's view of fourth-century Athenian public discourse is indeed grim: 'lies were commonly spread on the Pnyx' (316) and 'lying is part of the rhetorical arsenal' (316). This view leads him to the controversial conclusion that the 'misuse of *parrhēsia* as a political tool' (318) by Demosthenes and other orators led to 'a general distrust towards speakers', which may have played a role 'in the disintegration of democracy' and be partially 'responsible for the final defeat' (318) by the Macedonians in 321 BC. The essayistic form of this chapter makes it difficult to grapple with this and other thought-provoking assertions, but in light of the rising populism in contemporary democracies, Brun's concerns about trust and truth in Athenian public discourse seem more pertinent than ever.

Demosthenes' and Aeschines' contradictory accounts of the events leading up to the Peace of Philocrates are also at the heart of P. A. O'Connell's 'Facts, Time, and Imagination in Demosthenes and Aeschines' (323–42). O'Connell is less concerned with separating fact from fiction or with contextualising the orators' rival representations within the Athenians' memories of this diplomatic failure but instead provides an insightful and exceptionally compelling analysis of the orators' rhetorical techniques—making this one of the best chapters devoted to this line of approach. One way in which Demosthenes seeks to make his version of the recent past 'seem factual' (324) is based on chronological manipulation: Demosthenes treats the second embassy to Philip, which happened less than four years before, as belonging to the distant past and thus encourages the jurors 'to doubt their own memories' (325) of this event and of the roles he and Aeschines played in it (cf. Dem. 19.3). Consequently, Demosthenes consistently presents himself as 'the provider of facts as a counterweight to their incorrect memories' (327). Demosthenes' second rhetorical technique for lending credibility to his representations of the recent past relies on the rhetorical concept of *enargeia* ('vividness'), as already noted by one scholiast in his comment on Demosthenes' vivid account of Aeschines' outrageous treatment of an enslaved Olynthian woman at a symposium in Pella (cf. Dem. 19.192–8).⁷⁰ Drawing on *enargeia* as a 'multisensory imaginative experience' (333) and employing Grethlein and Huitink's notion of the 'imageability' of a scene—which comes 'from the way the "enactive narration" appeals to the listeners' own embodied experience of the world' (335)⁷¹—O'Connell expertly leads the reader step by step through Demosthenes' 'enactive narration' of this gripping scene: the orator's 'account of Aeschines's

⁷⁰ Cf. Schol. 399 Dilts on Dem. 19.196.

⁷¹ See Grethlein and Huitink (2017) 75.

hybris gains plausibility' (333–4) by means of a sequence of physical movements and the use of direct speech at its climax, which 'encourages the judges to feel like witnesses experiencing it as it happens' (335) and to become enraged at the evil instigator, Aeschines. O'Connell does not attempt to determine the historicity of this episode—which I found immensely refreshing for a change—but instead addresses the burning question that arose for me while reading this chapter, i.e., how could Aeschines possibly refute his opponent's compelling account of this outrageous deed? In what O'Connell calls a risky strategy, Aeschines fights fire with fire. By exaggerating the charge and claiming that Demosthenes accused him of dragging the woman by the hair, grabbing a strap, and whipping her himself, he tries to conjure up similarly vivid (but implausible) images 'that will stick in the judges' minds and replace the ones generated by Demosthenes' (336). While we will never know the jurors' reasons for narrowly acquitting Aeschines, O'Connell brilliantly elucidates the likely cognitive and emotive effects that the two titans of Attic oratory exerted on them through their sophisticated rhetorical techniques in this famous embassy trial.

Towards the end of the volume, Z. Wang tackles Hegesippus' treatment of the recent past in the assembly speech *On Halonnesus*, preserved as Oration 7 in the Demosthenic corpus (413–30). Since this speech belongs to the diplomatic wrangling between the Athenians and Philip II of Macedon in the aftermath of the Peace of Philocrates, I prefer to discuss it in this context rather than according to the volume's chapter sequence. Wang regards the rhetoric of the staunch anti-Macedonian Hegesippus as representative of 'the radical style of some Athenian politicians, that is, with less attention to the logic and grace of persuasion, whose main purpose is to pander to and stir up the emotions of the Assembly' (419). Wang arrives at this conclusion after an analysis of the 'varying degrees of distortion' (420) and outright inventions he finds in this speech. His reading of *On Halonnesus* thus confirms the widely held view of the orators as shameless manipulators and propagandists, a view encapsulated in Worthington's much-cited verdict: 'the orators lie, distort, deliberately deceive, suppress the truth, and prevaricate as a matter of course'.⁷²

This is, however, not the only possible interpretation of this orator's *modus operandi*. Wang's decidedly negative view of Hegesippus correlates with a rather favourable view of Philip II of Macedon, who is frequently given the benefit of the doubt. Philip's offer to give Halonnesus to Athens, for instance, 'could be regarded as goodwill shown by Philip' (419), but Hegesippus 'judged the motive of Philip's offer as a malicious move' (420). Similarly, Wang considers Philip's promise—during his siege of Amphipolis in 356 BC—to return this city

⁷² Worthington (1994) 109, cited, e.g., by Trivigno (2009) 53 n. 50 and Steinbock (2012) 40 n. 190. Similarly, Harding (1987) 38.

to Athens ([Dem.] 7.27) as one of several ‘fabricated facts’ (422), since ‘given the strategic position of the city and its history over the past one hundred years, it would not have been sensible for [Philip] to admit that it belonged to Athens’ (422). Yet, this type of reasoning only carries us so far. Perhaps Philip, unsure of the military prospects of the siege, wanted to keep the Athenians on the sidelines by means of this insincere promise, as Phillips and MacDowell suggest—a scenario which seems to me at least equally, if not more, plausible.⁷³ In this case, Hegesippus’ characterisation of Philip as ‘dishonest, spiteful and even vicious’ (422) might be more rooted in the Athenians’ experience of the Macedonian king than Wang’s depiction of Hegesippus as an unscrupulous and mendacious political propagandist allows. Wang’s chapter thus illustrates in an exemplary way that our interpretations of the orators’ treatment of the past always depend, to some extent, on our own view of individual historical actors and the nature of political and diplomatic discourse in general.

9. Chaeronea in the Orators

The catastrophic loss to Philip II of Macedon at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC was a watershed moment for the Athenians, marking the dissolution of the Second Athenian League and the end of their hitherto autonomous foreign policy. As a result, the battle of Chaeronea and its immediate aftermath loom large in the Attic orators’ competing attempts to come to terms with this fateful event and to exploit it for diverse political purposes. It makes sense, therefore, to slightly diverge from the given arrangement and discuss the six chapters which focus on Chaeronea together in the order of the speeches’ original delivery.

In ‘The Rhetoric of Deflection: Demosthenes’s *Funeral Oration* as Propaganda’ (291–306), N. Crick examines the treatment of this crushing defeat in the *epitaphios logos* for the fallen Athenians found in the Demosthenic corpus. This epideictic speech (Dem. 60) was long seen as unworthy of the great orator and therefore considered spurious by some ancient and modern commentators.⁷⁴ Nicole Loraux’s seminal study demonstrated that the extant funeral orations were products of a long-stable oral genre and a vital Athenian cultural institution.⁷⁵ As a result, the socio-political function of these seemingly trite

⁷³ For this secret agreement between Philip and Athens, see also Dem. 2.6–7; 23.116; Theopompus *BNJ* 115 F 30a, F 30b. Phillips (2004) 69 considers Philip’s duplicitous promise a historical fact; similarly, MacDowell (2009) 210. For Worthington (2013) 63, on the other hand, this alleged ‘secret agreement’ was a rhetorical lie on Demosthenes’ part.

⁷⁴ For doubts regarding Demosthenes’ authorship, see, for instance, D.H. *Dem.* 44; Blass (1877) 356; Kennedy (1963) 164–5.

⁷⁵ Loraux (1986). For a recent re-evaluation and continuation of Loraux’s groundbreaking study, see Pritchard (2024).

orations has come into clearer focus, which also led to a renewed interest in this long-neglected speech.⁷⁶ Goldman has recently illustrated in a compelling analysis how Demosthenes, while following the conventions of the genre, managed to ‘reframe the defeat at Chaeronea as a species of victory’⁷⁷ and thus offers ‘precious insight into how a society and a political leader could deal with a decisive and devastating defeat’.⁷⁸ It is worth noting that, independently of Goldman, Burckhardt has arrived at very similar conclusions.⁷⁹

Crick explicitly builds on Goldman’s study but takes it a step further in two important aspects. First, he explains in detail the psychological mechanisms behind Demosthenes’ speech by drawing on Burke’s concept of the ‘rhetoric of deflection’ and Ellul’s notion of ‘sociological propaganda’.⁸⁰ At the centre of the ‘rhetoric of deflection’ is the ‘changing of the terms’ (297) in which the Battle of Chaeronea is considered. One strategy is ‘the use of wider terms’ (297): military success is not the appropriate criterion to judge the fallen Athenians, but rather their autochthonous noble origin and their ‘inborn quality’ (299). Another device of deflection is ‘spiritualization’, that is ‘the shuttling between two orders of terms, one “worldly”, one “spiritual”’⁸¹ (299), which—according to Crick—‘could have been written for Demosthenes’ (300). Paraphrasing the orator, Crick writes: ‘The soldiers did not die because (the gods forbid!) of an ill-planned venture against a stronger enemy; they died in defense of democratic freedom’ (300). In Demosthenes’ references to the inspiring examples of the respective tribal heroes (cf. Dem. 60.27–31), Crick sees the deflective ‘Spokesman’ device at work, which ‘is designed to induce in an audience an attitude which the audience is supposed to have already’⁸² (300). Crick’s analysis of the psychological mechanisms at work in Demosthenes’ *epitaphios* is insightful and largely compelling, but conveys at times a rather cynical view of the motivation of Athenian soldiers, as his verdict on Dem. 60.27–31 reveals: ‘Demosthenes imparts motives to each of the soldiers in each tribe under the flatly absurd notion that they went to their deaths inspired by heroic tales rather than the dictates of the state’ (301). Since, upon entering their ephebate, young Athenians went on a tour to the city’s shrines ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 42.3), where they were presumably also taught about the

⁷⁶ Most scholars today affirm the authenticity of Dem. 60; cf. Herrman (2008); Grethlein (2010) 107; Shear (2013) 512; Goldman (2018) 124; Burckhardt (2024) 142–3.

⁷⁷ Goldman (2018) 124.

⁷⁸ Goldman (2018) 141.

⁷⁹ Burckhardt (2024).

⁸⁰ Burke (2018) and Ellul (1965).

⁸¹ Burke (2018) 103.

⁸² Burke (2018) 77.

noble examples of their respective tribal heroes, Demosthenes' assertion might not have been as absurd as Crick claims.⁸³

The second innovative aspect of Crick's paper is its moral impetus, which shines through in the quotations provided above and which might give some readers pause. Crick concedes that 'when faced with suffering and death, people naturally wish to have their thoughts deflected toward sunnier conclusions' (302), but at the same time insists that this speech should be read 'as a warning against the temptation to mask painful reality with flattering delusion' (294). To this reviewer at least, Crick's judgment on Demosthenes' *epitaphios logos* seems overly harsh. I do agree that there is the risk that this oration 'eliminates the possibility for critical thought [...] pushes out the possibility for detachment, attention to individual facts, the weighing of alternatives, and prediction of consequences' (303), but drawing on Barbato's new institutionalist approach,⁸⁴ I would note that the point of the public funeral ceremony was indeed to both honour the fallen for their ultimate sacrifice and to console the survivors. It was simply not the proper venue for a critical assessment of the policies that led to this catastrophic defeat;⁸⁵ this reckoning happened elsewhere instead, namely in the assembly and the law courts, as our sources show.⁸⁶ My second reservation concerns Crick's rather dismissive view of Demosthenes' policy of standing up to Philip's expansionism. Political leaders should indeed calculate the chances of success before leading their people into war; and yet, should this calculation of the odds be the only factor in this decision? Should one take up arms in defence of one's homeland against an invader, even if the chances of success are slim at best? I am not going to answer these questions, which seem more appropriate for philosophers, ethicists, and international relations scholars to ponder, but as the present-day celebrations and worldwide admiration of the Ukrainians' sacrifices in their fight against an overpowering expansionist neighbour suggest, these are perennial questions that do not allow for easy answers.

⁸³ For the religious and ideological aspects of the training of Athenian ephebes, see Reinmuth (1971) 130 and Steinbock (2011) 294–306. The paradigmatic function of the tribal heroes was not restricted to Demosthenes' funeral oration but can also be found in contemporaneous court and assembly speeches; cf. Lycurg. fr. X–XI 10 Conomis and Diod. 17.15.2.

⁸⁴ Barbato (2017) and (2020).

⁸⁵ See Gish (2008) for a similar critique of the treatment of Dem. 60 in Worthington (2006).

⁸⁶ For contentious assembly debates about honours for leading Macedonians after Chaeronea, see Hyp. *Against Philippides*, and for the trials involving Demosthenes' policies, see, for instance, Aeschin. 3 and Dem. 18.

In ‘Remembering Chaeronea in Hyperides’ (377–95), C. Cooper examines how the staunch anti-Macedonian politician Hyperides recalled and rhetorically utilised the memory of Chaeronea to attack his opponents and aid his clients in several forensic speeches. A careful analysis of the sparse fragments and testimonia of Hyperides’ defence speech against Aristogeiton’s *graphē paranomōn* (fr. 27–39a) leads Cooper to the plausible conclusion that Hyperides defended the emergency measures he proposed after the battle of Chaeronea by evoking the frightening memories of the ‘looming prospect of a Macedonian invasion’ (380) and the resultant panic in the immediate aftermath of this lost battle. In the prosecution speech against Philippides for illegally commending the proponents of decrees honouring certain Macedonians, Hyperides criticised Philippides’ flattery of Philip and contrasted effectively the defendant’s latent hostility towards Athens with the noble attitude of those who fought at Chaeronea (*Against Philippides* 9). This powerful rhetorical use of Chaeronea was not restricted to political trials, however, as Cooper shows. In the prosecution speech against Athenogenes in a *dikē blabēs*, Hyperides equated Athenogenes’ decision to leave Athens and not fight side-by-side with the jurors at Chaeronea with passing a death sentence against the city (*Against Athenogenes* 29).

Chaeronea also loomed large in *Against Diondas*, the recently discovered speech in which Hyperides defended his proposal to have Demosthenes crowned for forging the Athenian-Theban alliance against the *graphē paranomōn* brought by Diondas. Whereas Diondas—like Philippides before him—presumably pointed to the critical situation (*kairos*) after the battle of Chaeronea to justify measures that gratified the Macedonians, Hyperides drew the opposite lesson from Chaeronea in defence of his honorific proposal. By comparing Athens’ sacrificial fight for Greek freedom at Chaeronea to the epic battles of Marathon and Salamis, Hyperides ‘immortalized those who died there and comforted the survivors among the jury’ (393).

This is one of those chapters in the volume where the focus on a particular speech (or set of speeches) by one particular orator also has some drawbacks. Cooper’s perceptive analysis undoubtedly demonstrates that, in his forensic speeches, Hyperides uses the memory of the critical moment of Chaeronea as the touchstone ‘against which one’s loyalty to Athens was measured’ (392). And yet, I would also like to know to what extent Hyperides was drawing on, modifying, or actively creating a widely shared memory of this fateful battle. His references to the Chaeronea fighters as ‘those who chose to save Greece’ (οὗτοι μὲν τὴν Ἑλλάδα σώζειν προελόμενοι, *Against Philippides* 9) and to their ‘choosing the noble cause and believing it necessary to risk danger to free the Greeks as in the past’ (*Against Diondas* 136v 32–137v 1–2 Carey et al.) suggest to me that Hyperides drew heavily on the idealised view of Chaeronea

promulgated in Demosthenes' *epitaphios logos*, delivered at the public funeral ceremony for the fallen a few months after the battle.⁸⁷

Hyperides' rhetorical treatment of the recent past is also at the centre of J. Kucharski's chapter on 'Hyperides, Diondas, and the First Ascendancy of Demades' (397–411). Whereas Cooper's contribution examines Hyperides' evocation of one particular event, namely the Battle of Chaeronea, across this orator's oeuvre, Kucharski zooms in on Hyperides' characterisation of the post-Chaeronea actions of his opponents Diondas and Demades in one particular passage of his defence speech *Against Diondas* (*Dion.* 22–25 Horváth). Kucharski's magisterial philological and historical analysis of this difficult section full of grammatical ambiguities reveals Hyperides' exceptional rhetorical skill in distorting the historical role Demades (and Diondas) played in steering the city through the tumultuous aftermath of Athens' defeat at Chaeronea. Kucharski makes a compelling case that especially in times of crisis the Attic orators would not refrain from using their rhetorical abilities to portray recent events shamelessly in highly partisan ways in order to justify their own actions and delegitimise those of their opponents, as seen in Hyperides' mischaracterisation (*Dion.* 22) of Demades' resolute intercession on behalf of Demosthenes, Lycurgus, and other Athenian leaders subject to Alexander's extradition order after the destruction of Thebes in 335 BC. Kucharski thus provides a sobering illustration of the fact that in Classical Athens not only the meaning of the past but even the events themselves were often fiercely contested by political actors in the public arena. As Hyperides' maligning of Demades and Diondas shows, 'treachery may be a label given to prudence, while rational appeasement of a much stronger enemy could be misconstrued as a case of debased fawning' (397). Since Demades did not publish his own speeches, it turned out that 'history was on the side of Hyperides, as it always is—on that whose voices are better heard' (409). This made me wonder how Matthias Erzberger, the German politician who signed the armistice of 11 November 1918 as instructed by the German High Command, might be remembered in Germany today, if we had only the speeches of the nationalist politicians who relentlessly defamed him for this act as *Novemberversbrecher* ('November criminal') and *Vaterlandsverräter* ('traitor').⁸⁸

J. Roisman's superb analysis of Lycurgus' rhetorical use of Chaeronea and its aftermath in the *eisangelia* trial of Leocrates (363–75) illustrates in an exemplary way how an Athenian orator created a partial (and thus slanted) historical representation of recent events that drew on and in turn could shape the Athenians' collective memories of them. As has been widely noticed, Lycurgus' aim in this speech was not merely to secure the conviction of

⁸⁷ Cf. Dem. 60.23.

⁸⁸ For this *Dolchstoß-Legende* ('myth of the stab-in-the-back'), the 'big lie' wielded against the nascent Weimar Republic, see Krumeich (2001).

Leocrates for deserting Athens after the devastating loss at Chaeronea, but also to uphold traditional values and to strengthen the Athenians' patriotism.⁸⁹ Before turning to a detailed analysis of Lycurgus' representation of Chaeronea, Roisman offers some keen observations about Lycurgus' use of the past in general. For Lycurgus, both the recent and more distant past was 'an important resource that he could use in the service of his legal and ideological agendas' (364). He mined both indiscriminately, for legal precedents and for historical circumstances that placed Leocrates in the wrong. To illustrate paradigmatic actions and attitudes, however, Lycurgus 'privileged ancient, including mythical, history over recent history' (365), since the former was more securely anchored in the collective memory of his listeners.

Concerning Lycurgus' treatment of the Battle of Chaeronea, which took place a mere seven years before this trial, Roisman argues persuasively that it is by and large affected by the orator's dual goal of securing the defendant's conviction and of strengthening the morale of his fellow citizens. Consequently, Lycurgus 'turned the battlefield into a display ground of civic ideals, which Leocrates betrayed and shamed, but that the Athenians, and especially their fallen, heroically followed' (367). For this purpose, Lycurgus found 'a ready-made model' (367) in the genre of the Athenian funeral oration. For, whenever the Athenians were defeated in battle, the epitaphic orator would articulate the 'collective wish to turn a loss into a moral victory' (367), as seen in Demosthenes' *epitaphios logos* for the fallen at Chaeronea, discussed above.⁹⁰ Roisman is certainly right in his assessment that there 'is little doubt that the jurors willingly shared Lycurgus' counter-factual, or paradoxical (his word), interpretation' (367) of this battle.

The most interesting part of this paper is Roisman's perceptive analysis of the orator's presentation of the immediate aftermath of the battle. Whereas Leocrates' departure from the city was in actuality rather inconsequential since Philip did not invade Attica, Lycurgus never mentioned the latter fact and instead painted such a vivid picture of the Athenians' fear and desperate actions in anticipation of a Macedonian invasion that half of the jurors bought into Lycurgus' 'invented piece of recent history' (373) and cast their vote to condemn Leocrates for desertion and treason.⁹¹ Roisman expertly traces the manifold ways in which Lycurgus exaggerated the Athenians' fear and desperation to magnify Leocrates' crime of abandoning Athens in this critical situation. In recounting Hyperides' emergency measures, for instance, Lycurgus described how the elderly defenders of the city somewhat pathetically readied themselves for battle (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 39–40). Roisman rightly notes that

⁸⁹ Cf. Allen (2000) and Steinbock (2011).

⁹⁰ For this meaning-making feature of the Athenian public funeral ceremony after the traumatic Sicilian Expedition, see Steinbock (2025).

⁹¹ According to Aeschin. 3.252, the jury was evenly split and Leocrates was acquitted.

the ‘description was factually correct but also misleading’ (370), since the defence of Athens was also entrusted to younger men, and instead of praising the elders’ determination and patriotism Lycurgus made them ‘illustrative of the city’s low point’ (370). In the same vein, Lycurgus presented the liberation and arming of slaves (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 41) as ‘a painful wound to Athens’ pride and its autochthonian identity’ (369), even though this was most likely not on the Athenians’ mind when they voted for Hyperides’ emergency measures. This example illustrates how orators through creative evocations of recent events had the power to endow them with new meaning in the collective memory of their audience. Consequently, Roisman’s conclusion seems right on point: Lycurgus’ account of the Athenian reactions to Chaeronea is in many respects ‘credible, but his selective and slanted presentation challenges [its] authenticity’ (367).

In ‘Peace and War with Philip: Aeschines’ *Against Ctesiphon* on the Recent Past’ (343–61), D. Bajnok analyses Aeschines’ portrayal of the Peace of Philocrates and the defeat at Chaeronea as part of his rhetorical strategy to denigrate Demosthenes in the crown trial of 330 BC. Drawing on well-known historical studies of this period,⁹² Bajnok first traces Aeschines’ evolving attitude towards Philip of Macedon. Initially portrayed as ‘an enemy to destroy’ (347), Philip becomes in Aeschines’ eyes ‘a noble friend of Athens’ (348) after their personal meeting in Pella; and even after Chaeronea, Aeschines considers him ‘a more humane and dignified [enemy of Athens] than Demosthenes’ (351). Bajnok convincingly shows that this positive depiction of Philip ultimately undermines Aeschines’ rhetorical use of Chaeronea by rendering it internally inconsistent. On the one hand, Aeschines portrays the battle as an unmitigated disaster for Athens, for which Demosthenes bears the sole responsibility. On the other, he argues that it could have been far worse, ‘but Philip and Alexander were fortunately not hostile to Athens’ (359). The strongest part of this paper is Bajnok’s insightful discussion of the use of *enargeia* (with a nod to O’Connell’s chapter) in 3.152–8, where Aeschines seeks to evoke the Athenians’ most painful memories of Chaeronea in order to stir up vengeful emotions against Demosthenes but fails in ‘offering any relief for the battle’ (358). Consequently (and unsurprisingly), the jurors found Demosthenes’ redemptive version more appealing.

In ‘Dinarchus, the “Recent” and the “Very Recent” Past: Lessons from Aeschines, Demosthenes and Lycurgus?’ (431–45), I. Worthington examines Dinarchus’ rhetorical strategy in the prosecution of Demosthenes for taking bribes from Alexander’s renegade treasurer Harpalus in 323 BC. Worthington ends his introductory discussion of the historical context (the Harpalus Affair and Alexander’s Exiles Decree) with the sobering conclusion that the enquiry

⁹² Cf. Harris (1995); Worthington (2013); Efstathiou (2004).

by the Areopagus found Demosthenes and others guilty of taking bribes, but cited ‘no actual evidence’ (433). As a result, Dinarchus had to fall back on emphasising the reliability of the Areopagus’ findings and ‘resort[ing] to standard rhetorical techniques of manipulation of the past and character denigration’ (434). Worthington’s thorough analysis of Dinarchus’ rhetorical treatment of the previous fifteen years—including references to Chaeronea, the destruction of Thebes, King Agis’ revolt, and the Harpalus Affair—leads him to two noteworthy conclusions. The first one consists of the (not entirely convincing) claim that Dinarchus distinguished in his rhetorical approach between the ‘recent’ and ‘the very recent’ past, the latter of which he treated ‘less cavalierly’ (430) since its events were ‘still very fresh in Athenian minds’ (439). Worthington cites as evidence, among other things, Dinarchus’ treatment of the very recent events concerning Harpalus, noting the lack of ‘rhetorical embellishment or indignation’ (439). But there are other possible explanations for Dinarchus’ rather factual treatment of these matters apart from his wariness of the jurors’ excellent memory—especially since the other orators do not seem to show such qualms. Perhaps Dinarchus thought the material unsuitable for rhetorical elaboration, or he was indeed ‘stylistically inferior’ (439) as Worthington himself briefly ponders.

The second conclusion, on the other hand, concerning Dinarchus’ treatment of Chaeronea, seems right on point. As a perceptive observer of Lycurgus’ failed prosecution of Leocrates and Aeschines’ career-ending loss in the crown trial in 331 and 330 BC respectively, Dinarchus had seen how these orators’ presentations of Chaeronea as a catastrophic defeat were resented by the Athenian jurors, who ‘still did not want to face the truth of the battle’ (437). Consequently, Dinarchus did not ‘manipulate that pivotal battle for rhetorical effect’ (443), as one might have expected, and only referred to it tangentially in his character attack on Demosthenes for his (alleged) desertion from the battlefield. Dinarchus was thus ‘careful not to defy the “new normal” of Chaeronea that Demosthenes had created’ (444) in the crown trial.⁹³

Taken together, the chapters by Crick, Cooper, Kucharski, Roisman, Bajnok, and Worthington illustrate in an exemplary way the orators’ competing attempts to create widely appealing (and self-serving) representations of the Battle of Chaeronea, whereby they both drew on and, in turn, shaped the Athenians’ shared memory of this crucial event. These chapters thus provide an excellent illustration of how at the public funeral ceremony for the war dead as well as in the competitive arenas of the law courts and the assembly the past

⁹³ In this context, Worthington seems to accidentally reverse the chronological order of Dem. 60 and Dem. 18 in the following statement: ‘That the jury was so swayed by Demosthenes’ presentation of the battle is evidenced, I suggest, by his being selected shortly after to give the *epitaphios* for those who fell at Chaeronea (Dem. 60)’ (437).

was constantly being ‘verhandelt’⁹⁴ (as Katharina Wojciech asserts) and how in these venues ‘remembered history’ (i.e., ‘communicative memory’) was transformed into ‘commemorated history’ (i.e., ‘cultural memory’), to use Jan and Aleida Assmann’s terms.⁹⁵

10. Timotheus and Samos

J. P. Nudell’s chapter ‘Remembering Injustice as the Perpetrator? Athenian Orators, Cultural Memory, and the Athenian Conquest of Samos’ (447–63) compares oratorical references to Timotheus’ ‘liberation’ of Samos in 366 BC to the hostile memory of Timotheus’ imperialist conquest and mass expulsion of Samians that was held outside of Athens and is favoured by many modern historians. This thought-provoking contribution stands out as the only chapter in the volume to approach oratorical references to the past explicitly from a social memory perspective—that is, by contextualising them within the complex Athenian memorial framework and by asking ‘which memory of the conquest of Samos is more accurate’ (448), the one reflected in the Attic orators or that of the wider Greek world. In light of the orators’ well-known rhetorical ‘manipulation of facts’ (447), Nudell is particularly interested in the question of whether they could ‘create a collective amnesia’ (447) about Timotheus’ conquest and the supposed mass expulsion or whether, on the contrary, these oratorical references may cast doubt ‘on the orthodox interpretation of this period’ (447) by modern historians.

After a brief methodological introduction of social memory as ‘a complex tangle of remembering, misremembering, and forgetting woven into the physical, monumental landscapes, with memories subject to continual restructuring in their transmission’ (449), Nudell offers a concise overview of the known facts about Timotheus’ operations against Tigranes, the Persian hyparch of Samos, and the subsequent establishment of Athenian cleruchies. In this critical account, he expresses scepticism about the scholarly *communis opinio*, which accepts the historicity of the alleged mass expulsion of Samians by Athenians, an action scholars typically interpret as ‘a grotesque violation of interstate norms’ (452).⁹⁶

Nudell’s magisterial analysis of the oratorical references to Timotheus’ conquest of Samos in Isocrates’ *Antidosis* (15.106–28), Demosthenes’ *On the*

⁹⁴ Wojciech (2022) 8.

⁹⁵ J. Assmann (1988), (1995) and A. Assmann (2001).

⁹⁶ For this orthodox view, see, for instance, Hornblower (1982) 199 and Shipley (1987) 141. Cargill (1983) 326–9 offers a minority perspective, proposing that only wealthy Samians went into exile in 366 BC and that the Athenian cleruchs taking over their farms were mostly descendants of the Samians who had received Athenian citizenship in 405/4 and 403/2 BC.

Freedom of the Rhodians (15.9), and Dinarchus' *Against Demosthenes* (1.14) and *Against Philocles* (3.17) forms the core of this excellent chapter. Almost as if following Blank's 'hermeneutical program' (29), Nudell carefully considers all relevant 'contexts of communication' (29) for analysing these historical allusions. First, the rhetorical purpose of each reference: Isocrates sought to exonerate his former student, the now disgraced Timotheus, by extolling his leadership abilities—superior even to those of Pericles—as evidenced by their respective conquests of Samos (Isoc. 15.111–14). Demosthenes used Timotheus' liberation of Samos from Persian control (Dem. 15.9) as a 'positive exemplum for Athenian intervention' (457), inserting it into the 'pre-existing narrative template' (457) of Athens' altruistic struggle for Greek freedom at Marathon. Dinarchus, writing the prosecution speeches against Demosthenes and Philocles after the Harpalus Affair, invoked Timotheus' memory to underscore that the Athenians convicted Timotheus for bribery 'despite his benefactions' (458) for Athens, including the capture of Samos (Din. 1.14, 3.17). Second, third, and fourth, Nudell considers the performance context, the particular audience, and the time that has elapsed: Isocrates' epideictic treatise of 354/3 BC was not delivered and thus most likely did not shape the Athenians' memory of the conquest of Samos, but as a 'nominal defence speech properly reflects Athenian memory' (456) a decade after the event. In his forensic speeches in 323 BC, Dinarchus' focus lay on Timotheus' conviction for bribery, whereas no details of his conquest of Samos were mentioned, presumably because 'the cultural memory surrounding the conquest had already been flattened' (459) over more than forty years. Demosthenes, speaking in 351 BC, employed Timotheus' liberation of Samos as a positive exemplum to promote Athenian interventionism in a deliberative speech in the Athenian assembly, but the speech failed, prompting Nudell's final (and most intriguing) question concerning deliberate omissions and erasures: did Demosthenes' argument fail because the Athenians' collective memory of the alleged mass expulsion caused his exemplum to be 'seen as hypocritical' (457)? Nudell sensibly answers 'no', observing that in such a case, 'one might expect Demosthenes to omit Samos' (458) altogether. Similarly, the 'unambiguously positive presentation' of Timotheus in the *Antidosis* implies 'that Isocrates did not see anything that needed to be hidden' (456). But if the egregious mass expulsion of Samians did in fact not happen, how do we explain its strong 'echo' in our historical and epigraphic sources? Drawing on the concept of social memory, Nudell offers a compelling answer: 'Exaggerating the collective trauma was a powerful political tool' (460) for Samian elites after their return in 323 BC. The narrative of Samian victimhood at Athenian hands 'helped create a unified identity in the previously fragmented polis' (460).

Nudell's chapter brilliantly illustrates how, by taking the workings of social memory into account, one can explain certain distortions in our sources and, in doing so, bring us closer to the historical reality. By providing criteria for

assessing the reliability of oratorical, historiographical, and epigraphical representations of the past, this approach allows for a more nuanced evaluation rather than reflexively privileging one type of source over another.

11. Inscriptions and the *Rhetoric to Alexander*

The next chapter, written by J. Sickinger, assesses the use the orators made of one particular material manifestation of the past, namely state inscriptions, particularly those predating the assembly or court speeches in which they are mentioned by one or two decades (465–80). Sickinger expertly examines oratorical references to, among other things, the treaty ending the Peloponnesian War (Andoc. 3.10–12), a naval inscription listing debtors ([Dem.] 47.22), the citizenship grant for a certain Thrasybulus for killing Phrynichus (Lys. 13.72), and various honorary decrees in Demosthenes' *Against Leptines* (Dem. 20.35–8, 59–69). Based on these analyses, Sickinger sees a remarkable difference in how these recently inscribed decrees and much older ones are employed. Whereas well-known fifth-century inscriptions—such as the decree of Demophantus (Lycurg. 1.124–6) and the citizenship grant for the Plataeans ([Dem.] 59.94–106)—are mentioned or quoted for their paradigmatic function (i.e., to contrast past virtue with present-day decline or to provide models for emulation), recent inscriptions are incorporated primarily for their documentary value, i.e., as ‘written evidence of a specific fact, detail, or piece of information’ (477). Sickinger thus adds an important practical dimension—namely the provision of publicly accessible reference points for their contents—to the better-known honorific and religious motives for inscribing state documents in Classical Athens. Yet, given the very small number of extant oratorical citations of inscriptions—which Sickinger himself acknowledges—I am not entirely convinced by his suggestion that the former function might have been prevalent ‘in the years immediately following the publication of state documents’, whereas the latter ‘only became more fully realized as inscriptions grew older’ (477). I do not see any reason why orators would not have also referred to inscribed *stelae* of political importance, such as peace treaties or the Prospectus of the Second Athenian League, for instance, for paradigmatic reasons shortly after their erection.

The focus of the final chapter of this edited volume, by P. Chiron, is not on the treatment of the recent past in the Attic orators *per se*, but on one of the earliest surviving rhetorical handbooks, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Rhetoric to Alexander* (481–92), which many scholars today—thanks to Quintilian's citation in *Inst.* 3.4.9—attribute to the fourth-century, pro-Macedonian historian and rhetorician Anaximenes of Lampsacus. Chiron, the editor of the well-received

2002 Budé edition of this treatise,⁹⁷ proceeds more cautiously, however. Pointing to a reference to the unexpected Corinthian victory over a Carthaginian fleet in c. 341 BC as the *terminus post quem* for dating the work, he provisionally concludes that ‘through its historical, geographical and political references, the *Rhetoric to Alexander* gives us a glimpse of the vague silhouette of Greek city-states probably before Chaeronea’ (489). In his discussion of various hypotheses for the treatise’s cautious impersonality and lack of references to contemporary contexts and events, Chiron offers several plausible explanations: Anaximenes’ self-censorship in a hostile Athenian environment (if he was indeed the author), the author’s wish to appeal to a Panhellenic audience, or his desire to ensure the work’s distribution in professional logographic circles ‘that were unwilling to show their inner workings other than in an impersonal way’ (491).

12. Conclusions

The volume is generally well produced, though marred by numerous typographical errors that, while distracting, rarely hinder comprehension.⁹⁸ Each chapter includes an abstract and its own bibliography, and the book as a whole features a brief General Index alongside a very useful Index of Passages. Despite frequent cross-references, substantive engagement between the individual chapters remains somewhat limited. The collection derives its coherence primarily from its tight thematic focus and the editor’s clear guidelines for the contributors. These minor shortcomings do not detract from the overall excellence of the volume.

In conclusion, this book is the result of a genuinely evidence-driven enterprise: the procedures of each Attic orator have been examined independently by twenty-eight leading experts in Greek oratory and fourth-century

⁹⁷ Chiron (2002).

⁹⁸ These minor errors include, for instance, typographical mistakes (270: for ‘such act activities’ read ‘such activities’; 245: for ‘these man have’ read ‘these men have’; 477: for ‘motives in in’ read ‘motives in them’); misspelling of names (83: for ‘Desmosthenes’ read ‘Demosthenes’; 205: for ‘Agelos Kapellos’ read ‘Aggelos Kapellos’; 128 n. 31 and 130: for ‘Assman’ read ‘Assmann’); erroneous punctuation (vii: for ‘[Lysias], 20’ read ‘[Lysias] 20’); faulty division between individual words (251: for ‘slavefor’ read ‘slave for’; 274: for ‘Timocrate morationibus’ read ‘Timocratem orationibus’; 73: for Φυλήτε κατελήφθη read Φυλή τε κατελήφθη; 263: for ‘τὸσῶμ’ read ‘τὸ σῶμ’; 264: for ὄντες ἀναιδεῖς read ὄντες ἀναιδεῖς’); as well as some inconsistencies in the formatting of bibliographies. Some errors are a bit more consequential, such as, for instance: 12 and 151: for ‘so they were unwilling’ read ‘though they were unwilling’; 196: for ‘he helped Greece’ read ‘he helped Athens’; 472: for ‘a court clear read out’ read ‘a court clerk read out’; 466 n. 6: for ‘against authenticity are advanced’ read ‘for authenticity are advanced’.

Athenian social, cultural, and political history—each with their own underlying assumptions and scholarly preferences. The outcome is not only a multifaceted, in-depth exploration of the Attic orators' treatment of the recent past, offering keen insights into their handling of specific events, but also an illustration of the wide range of fruitful approaches that can be brought to bear on the longstanding question of how best to understand the orators' historical allusions.

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