

Xenophon's Funeral Oration

Mitchell H. Parks, Knox College, mhparcs@knox.edu
Virtual CAMWS, 26 May 2020

1. Plato *Menexenus* 235C–D

MEN. νῦν μέντοι οἶμαι ἐγὼ τὸν αἰρεθέντα οὐ πάνυ εὐπορήσειν· ἐξ ὑπογύου γὰρ παντάπασιν ἡ αἴρεσις γέγονεν, ὥστε ἴσως ἀναγκασθήσεται ὁ λέγων ὡσπερ αὐτοσχεδιάζειν.

ΣΩΚ. πόθεν, ὦγαθέ; εἰσὶν ἐκάστοις τούτων λόγοι παρεσκευασμένοι, καὶ ἅμα οὐδὲ αὐτοσχεδιάζειν τά γε τοιαῦτα χαλεπὸν.

MEN. Now, however, I am concerned that the one who gets selected will not exactly have an easy time, because the selection has happened totally at the last minute, so that the speaker will probably end up having to more or less improvise.

SOC. How come, my good man? Each of them have speeches ready to go, and at the same time it's not even difficult to improvise *that* sort of thing.

2. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.5.1

Περικλεῖ δέ ποτε τῷ πάνυ Περικλέους υἱῷ διαλεγόμενος ...

And in a conversation at one point with Pericles, the son of the famous Pericles ...

3. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.5.22

καὶ πολλὰ μὲν οἶμαί σε τῶν πατρῶων στρατηγημάτων παρεληφότα διασώζειν ...

And I believe that you have inherited many of your father's elements of strategy and hold on to them still.

4. Plato *Menexenus* 236B

ἔπειτα τὰ μὲν ἐκ τοῦ παραχρημά μοι διήει, οἷα δέοι λέγειν, τὰ δὲ πρότερον ἔσκεμμένη, ὅτε μοι δοκεῖ συντίθει τὸν ἐπιτάφιον λόγον ὃν Περικλῆς εἶπεν, περιλείμματ' ἄττα ἐξ ἐκείνου συγκολλῶσα.

Some of the speech she was completing for me on the spot, using the sort of things one has to say, but the rest she had sketched out earlier, gluing together some things that were left over from when, I think, she was composing the *epitaphios logos* that Pericles delivered.

5. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.5.7

πῶς ἂν αὐτοὺς προτρεψαίμεθα πάλιν ἀνερασθῆναι τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀρετῆς τε καὶ εὐκλείας καὶ εὐδαιμονίας;

How should we encourage them to fall back in love again with the ancient virtue and glory and prosperity [of Athens]?

6. Thucydides 2.43.1

... ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς ...

... by becoming lovers of [Athens] ...

7. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.5.9

... εἰ τοὺς γε παλαιστάτους ὧν ἀκούομεν προγόνους αὐτῶν ἀναμνησκόμεν αὐτοὺς ἀκηκόοντας ἀρίστους γεγρονέναι.

... if we should remind [the Athenians] that they themselves have already heard about how their very earliest ancestors of whom we hear tell proved their excellence.

8. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.5.21

... τῶν δὲ στρατηγῶν οἱ πλεῖστοι αὐτοσχεδιάζουσιν.

... but most of the generals just improvise.

9. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.5.28

ὅ τι μὲν γὰρ ἂν τούτων καταπράξης, καὶ σοὶ καλὸν ἔσται καὶ τῇ πόλει ἀγαθόν, ἔαν δέ τι αὐτῶν ἀδυνατῆς, οὔτε τὴν πόλιν βλάψεις οὔτε σαυτὸν καταίσχυνεῖς.

Whatever of these things you accomplish, it will be both a fine thing for you and a good thing for the city. But if you cannot manage some element of them, you will neither harm the city nor bring shame on yourself.

Select Bibliography

- Bandini, Michele, and Louis-André Dorion. 2011. *Xénophon, Mémoires*, t. II/1: *Livres II–III*. Paris.
- Danzig, Gabriel. 2014. “Alcibiades Versus Pericles: Apologetic Strategies in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*.” *G&R* 61(1): 7–28.
- Dorion, Louis-André. 2014. “Le statut et la fonction de la rhétorique dans les écrits socratiques de Xénophon.” In *Xénophon et la rhétorique*, edited by Pierre Pontier, 17–40. Paris.
- Gray, Vivienne J. 1998. *The Framing of Socrates: The Literary Interpretation of Xenophon’s Memorabilia*. Stuttgart.
- Gray, Vivienne J. 2004. “Le Socrate de Xénophon et la démocratie.” *Les Études philosophiques* 2: 141–176.
- Hanink, Johanna. 2013. “*Epitaphioi Mythoi* and Tragedy as Encomium of Athens.” *TC* 5(2): 289–317.
- Henry, Madeleine M. 1995. *Prisoner of History: Aspasia of Miletus and Her Biographical Tradition*. Oxford.
- Hesk, Jon. 2013. “Leadership and Individuality in the Athenian Funeral Orations.” *BICS* 56(1): 49–65.
- Jeirani, Yashar. 2020. “The Politics of Benefit: On the Identity of Household Management and Politics in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*.” *GRBS* 60: 36–60.
- Loraux, Nicole. 2006 [1981]. *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York.
- McNamara, Carol. 2009. “Socratic Politics in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*.” *Polis* 26(2): 223–245.
- Monson, S. Sara. 1994. “Citizen as *Erastes*: Erotic Imagery and the Idea of Reciprocity in the Periclean Funeral Oration.” *Political Theory* 22(2): 253–276.
- Pappas, Nickolas. 2018. “Improvisatory Rhetoric in the *Menexenus*.” In *Speeches for the Dead: Essays on Plato’s Menexenus*, edited by Harold Parker and Jan Maximilian Robitzsch, 71–89. Berlin.
- Robitzsch, Jan Maximilian. 2017. “On Aspasia in Plato’s *Menexenus*.” *Phoenix* 71(3/4): 288–300.
- Strauss, Leo. 1972. *Xenophon’s Socrates*. Ithaca, NY.
- Zelcer, Mark. 2018. “Reading the *Menexenus* Intertextually.” In *Speeches for the Dead: Essays on Plato’s Menexenus*, edited by Harold Parker and Jan Maximilian Robitzsch, 29–49. Berlin.