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The Multipolarity of Athenian Social Memory: Polis, Tribes and Demes as Interdependent Memory Communities

Summary

In their analysis of the Athenians' shared image of their past as an essential element of Athenian collective identity, scholars have largely focused on polis-wide commemorative activities such as the Athenian public funeral oration for the war dead. Taking the inherent multipolarity of social memory into account, this paper examines the collective memories of two types of Athenian sub-groups, namely demes and tribes, and explores how their shared memories and the 'official' Athenian polis tradition mutually influenced and sustained each other in 5th- and 4th-century Athenian public discourse.

Keywords: Social memory; collective memory; Classical Athens; collective identity; demes; tribes; polis tradition; funeral oration.

Im Zentrum der Analyse des Geschichtsbilds der Athener als integralem Element ihrer kollektiven Identität standen bisher vornehmlich die polisweiten Formen des öffentlichen Gedenkens, wie z. B. die öffentliche Leichenrede für die gefallenen Athener. Ausgehend von der dem kollektiven Gedächtnis inhärenten Multipolarität widmet sich dieser Beitrag den in den Demen und Phylen gepflegten Erinnerungen und untersucht, wie diese und die ‚offizielle‘ athenische Polistradition sich im öffentlichen Diskurs der Athener im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. gegenseitig beeinflussten und stützten.

Keywords: Soziales Gedächtnis; kollektives Gedächtnis; klassisches Athen; kollektive Identität; Demen; Phylen; Polistradition; Leichenrede.

The translations of Greek into English are my own but sometimes draw freely on standard published translations. In transliterating Greek names and places I have generally maintained Greek forms (Kleisthenes instead of Cleisthenes or Clisthenes), but for Greek authors, the more familiar Latinized forms have been retained (Aeschylus rather than Aischy-

Kerstin P. Hofmann, Reinhard Bernbeck and Ulrike Sommer (eds.) | Between Memory Sites and Memory Networks. New Archaeological and Historical Perspectives | Berlin Studies of the Ancient World 45 (ISBN 978-3-9816751-9-1; URN urn:nbn:de:kobv:188-fudocseries00000000759-7) | www.edition-topoi.org

los). For ancient authors and their works, I used the abbreviations recommended by *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*³ (Oxford 1996).

1 Athenian social memory

Those men [i.e. the Athenian ancestors] single-handedly twice repelled, on land and sea, the army advancing from all of Asia, and at their personal risks established themselves as the authors of the common salvation for all the Greeks.

— Demosthenes 60.10

With these words, the orator Demosthenes sums up the Athenians' accomplishments at the Battle of Marathon (490 BC) and during Xerxes' invasion of Greece (480–479 BC) in his public funeral speech for the fallen at Chaironeia in 338 BC. Modern readers familiar with the Greco-Persian Wars through Herodotus' historiographical account will readily point out gross historical distortions. Neither at Marathon nor at Salamis, Artemision and Plataiai did the Athenians fight "single-handedly" against the Persians: at Marathon they were aided by roughly one thousand loyal Plataians and during Xerxes' invasion the Athenians fought alongside thirty other Greek *poleis* in an alliance led by Sparta. In light of such passages, Classicists have long faulted Demosthenes and his fellow orators for their "truly astonishing ignorance [...] of the history of their city"¹ or for their deliberate historical falsification and manipulation of their audience.² Demosthenes' statement may be of little use to historians of the Persian Wars, but it is invaluable to scholars of Athenian social memory since it provides a glimpse into how Athenians saw themselves and the history of their city.

Social or collective memory – "the shared remembrances of group experience"³ – is a powerful force in every community. By offering people a shared image of their past, it creates feelings of identity and belonging, explains the present and provides a vision of the future.⁴ Social memory keeps alive defining moments of the past, victories and

1 Jacoby 1954, i.95.

2 Cf. Perlman 1961; Nouhaud 1982; Harding 1987; Worthington 1994. For a critique of various previous approaches to the Attic orators' use of the past, see Steinbock 2012, 38–43.

3 Alcock 2002, i. For a more detailed discussion of the concept of social memory, cf. Steinbock 2012, 7–19.

4 Maurice Halbwachs, a student of the French sociologist Émile Durkheim and murdered in Buchenwald 1945, was the first to establish memory as a social category. For his concept of 'collective memory'; see Halbwachs 1925; Halbwachs 1941; Halbwachs 1950 (posthumously published and first translated into

defeats, inner conflicts and outside aggression. These memories often cluster around heroic or traumatic events – like the Persian Wars – and have a profound impact on the group’s sense of itself and the world that surrounds it.⁵ Over time, the particular historical circumstances of such foundational events fade away and they become symbols of the collective character of the remembering communities. As a result, collective memories usually do not stand up to the scrutiny of professional historians, as we have seen in Demosthenes’ case. They are often simplistic, contain fictitious elements and show signs of distortions. But they are real to the remembering community, since they conform to the view the community has of itself.⁶ What people remember about the past shapes their collective identity and determines their friends and enemies.⁷ For these reasons, social memory is also known as ‘myth’, ‘meaningful history’, ‘usable past’, ‘imagined and remembered history’, ‘cultural memory’, ‘believed history’ or ‘intentionale Geschichte’.⁸

Following the rise of memory studies in other disciplines in the 1980s, Classicists too have begun to explore how the ancient Greeks remembered their past and what role this past played in their lives. Classical Athens – thanks to the relative wealth of sources and the enduring interest in the world’s first democracy – has stood at the heart of this endeavor. Drawing primarily on the Athenian funeral orations and other forms of polis-wide commemorative activities,⁹ Nicole Loraux, Rosalind Thomas and Hans-Joachim Gehrke were among the first to investigate the complex relationship between Athenian ideology and collective memory.¹⁰ They have shown convincingly that the Persian War experience fundamentally altered the Athenians’ view of themselves. After

English in 1980). To avoid suspicions of social determinism inherent in Halbwachs’ work, most scholars in the field today prefer the term ‘social memory’ to Halbwachs’ ‘collective memory’. While emphasizing the dynamic and communicative aspects of the concept, I will, for the sake of variation, use both terms interchangeably. By now, the body of scholarship on social memory has become enormous. For a concise introduction, see Alcock 2002, 1–35. Fentress and Wickham 1992, Misztal 2003 and Erll and Nünning 2008 offer comprehensive treatments of the concept.

5 Cf. the concept of the ‘imagined community’, pioneered by B. Anderson 1991.

6 Loraux 1986, 171; Thomas 1989, 206; Fentress and Wickham 1992, 25–26. For the relationship between history and memory, see A. Assmann 2001.

7 Prager 2001, 2223–2224.

8 Cf. A. Assmann 2001, 6824; Fentress and Wickham 1992, 25 define social memory as an “expression of collective experience: social memory identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its

aspiration for the future”. Similarly, Misztal 2003, 158. Gehrke 1994 introduced the term ‘intentionale Geschichte’ to describe this very phenomenon. According to Gehrke 2001, 286 it denotes “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”. Closely related are Jan Assmann’s ‘kulturelles Gedächtnis’ and Pierre Nora’s concept of *lieux de mémoire* as physical and symbolic places of memory. Cf. J. Assmann 1995; Nora 1996.

9 Cf. Gehrke 2001, 301–302.

10 Cf. Loraux 1986, 132–171; Thomas 1989, 196–237; Gehrke 1994; Gehrke 2001; Gehrke 2003. Following Ober 1989, 38 I use the term ‘ideology’ in its wider sense to denote a community’s mental framework, which is acquired by the members of a community through socialization and consists of “assumptions, opinions and principles which are common to the great majority of those members”.

their glorious victory at Marathon and their decisive contribution to the victories at Salamis and Plataiai ten years later, the Athenians began to see themselves as undisputed leaders of the Greeks, as champions of Greek liberty against both barbarian invaders and Greek oppressors.¹¹ This shared memory of the Persian Wars became a “cornerstone of their identity;” it justified Athens’ hegemony in Greece and had “prescriptive force for future conduct.”¹²

2 Multipolarity of social memory

Not everybody accepts the validity of the concept of social memory. Some critics even deny its existence. Concerned about the possibility that social memory could become a new form of the old essentialist categories (collective, people, *Volk*, etc.), they object that remembering is an individual mental act: “Just as a nation cannot eat or dance, it cannot speak or remember,”¹³ wrote Amos Funkenstein.

This is a legitimate criticism to which scholars of social memory must reply.¹⁴ One way of dissolving fears of social memory as a new essentialist category is to appreciate fully “the dialectical tensions between personal memory and the social construction of the past.”¹⁵ Since social memory is based on the multitude of people that do the remembering, scholars of social memory ought to take the results of cognitive psychology and neuroscientific research on individual memory into account.¹⁶ Remembering is always a personal act, in which memories are routed into consciousness and “organized into patterns so that they make some kind of continuing sense in an ever-changing present.”¹⁷ Since a group’s collective memory consists of the individual memory of its members, the dynamic and presentist nature of individual memory must apply to the group’s collective memories as well. Social memory is nevertheless different from the sum total of personal thoughts about the past.¹⁸ It does have a truly social dimension in that it only comes into existence when people *talk* about the memories they consider important enough to share with others. As a result, both *social relevance* and *communication* are crucial elements of this concept. Moreover, for a memory to be shared it first needs to

11 The symbolic meaning of Marathon, where they fought (almost) alone against the Persians on behalf of the other Greeks, was thereby extended to Xerxes’ invasion as well, as Dem. 60. 10 (cited above) shows. Cf. Thomas 1989, 224–226.

12 Gehrke 2001, 302.

13 Funkenstein 1993, 4.

14 For a more detailed discussion of this problem and possible solutions, see Funkenstein 1993, 4–10; Al-

cock 2002, 15–16; Misztal 2003, 7–15; Steinbock 2012, 8–13.

15 Misztal 2003, 54.

16 Thomas 1989, 11–13; Baddeley 1989; Fentress and Wickham 1992, 1–40; Misztal 2003, 9–12; Manier and Hirst 2008.

17 Young 1988, 97–98. Schacter 2001, 146 calls this phenomenon ‘hindsight’ bias: “we reconstruct the past to make it consistent with what we know in the present.”

18 Cf. Zerubavel 1997, 96.

be articulated and thus depends on the conventions of language and other common cultural forms.¹⁹

Another way of avoiding the danger of reifying a unified collective group mind – this is the path taken in this chapter – is to emphasize the persistence of numerous ‘memory communities’ which are at work at any given time.²⁰ Every social group derives its group identity – at least partially – from its traditions and is thus able to foster its own collective memory.²¹ Since large communities consist of numerous subgroups – for example, regional and local communities, socio-economic classes, ethnic and religious groups, etc. – there exist various concurrent and possibly competing memories at all times and individuals can partake in several of them simultaneously.²² In a free society, a broadly accepted image of the past needs to be negotiated carefully, lest competing social memories and group identities function as centrifugal forces and endanger the cohesion of the community as a whole.²³

Building on the seminal work of Loraux, Thomas and Gehrke, Classicists have made great strides over the last decade to immerse themselves in the interdisciplinary discourse of memory studies and to do full justice to the multipolar and dynamic nature of Athenian social memory.²⁴ The goal of this paper is to contribute to this enterprise by investigating the social memories of two types of subgroups in Classical Athens, the demes and tribes, and explore how their memories and the ‘official’ polis tradition²⁵ mutually influenced and sustained each other.²⁶ In this context, three questions in particular are worth asking: 1. Were there any distinct deme and tribal identities in Classical Athens? 2. Did these demes and tribes foster shared images of their own past, which were particularly meaningful to their own members? 3. If they did, how did these social memories relate to the collective memory of the Athenian polis as a whole?

19 Fentress and Wickham 1992, 47; A. Assmann 2001, 6822; Misztal 2003, 6, 11.

20 See Burke 1989, 107; Alcock 2002, 15. Some scholars prefer the alternative term ‘mnemonic community’; cf. Zerubavel 1996; Prager 2001, 2224; Misztal 2003, 15–19.

21 J. Assmann 1995, 127, 130. Wischermann 2002, 7 makes the excellent suggestion to divert scholarly attention from the “kulturellen Großgedächtnis” towards the great number of competing visions of the past in any given society.

22 The American Civil War offers a good example of competing ethnic and regional memory communities. Cf. Blight 2002.

23 For the necessity of such a “Minimalkonsens in Sachen der eigenen Geschichte” in a democracy, see Winkler 2004.

24 See, in particular, Alcock 2002, 36–98; Wolpert 2002; G. Anderson 2003, 121–218; Forsdyke 2005, 259–267; Jung 2006; Grethlein 2010; Foxhall, Gehrke, and Luraghi 2010; Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2010; Haake and Jung 2011; Marincola, Llewellyn-Jones, and Maciver 2012; Arrington 2010; Arrington 2011; Low 2010; Low 2012; Shear 2011; Shear 2013; Steinbock 2012; Osmers 2013.

25 Thomas 1989, 200, 208. For a discussion of this term, see below.

26 There were, of course, many more subgroups in Classical Athens (families, phratries, religious associations, sympotic groups, women, slaves, metics, etc.). I decided to focus on demes and tribes, since the shared memories of their (male) members are slightly better documented in the historic record than the rest.

3 Demes and tribes

After the ousting of the tyrant Hippias, two Athenian aristocrats, Isagoras and Kleisthenes, fought for political power in Athens in 508/507 BC. Kleisthenes won this struggle by partnering with the common people and instituting a series of socio-political reforms that would lay the foundation for Athenian democracy.²⁷ He radically reorganized the Athenian citizenry by creating ten new Athenian tribes (*phylai*) in place of the four old Ionian ones.²⁸ For the creation of these new tribes, Kleisthenes constituted 139 demes or local units, which were based on the old villages and neighborhoods, and divided each of the three regions of Attica (city, coast and hinterland) by demes into ten equal parts, called trittyes. Since the demes varied greatly in size, a trittys could comprise one single large deme or up to nine small demes.²⁹ To ensure that regional interests were equally represented in each tribe, three different trittyes were assigned to each tribe, one trittys from the city, one from the coast and one from the hinterland of Attica (Fig. 1).

These demes and tribes became the political and social infrastructure of Classical Athens.³⁰ The demes were self-governing local units and functioned as the “political substratum”³¹ of the Athenian polis. Each deme kept a register of their own membership (*lexiarchikon grammateion*), which served – in lieu of a central register of all Athenians – as proof of Athenian citizenship. Deme membership was hereditary once it had been established by registration in the deme of residence in 508/507 BC.

Despite their artificial composition, the ten tribes were immensely important social and political units, on an intermediate level between the deme and the polis. The tribes served as the basis for the political and military organization of the Athenian polis. Every year each tribe sent fifty representative to the Council of Five Hundred (*boule*), where each tribe’s council members served in turn as a steering committee for one tenth of the year.³² The Athenian army consisted of ten tribal regiments (*taxeis*), each under the command of a tribal officer (*taxiarch*).³³

27 For Kleisthenes’ reforms, cf. Hdt. 5. 66, 69; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21; Whitehead 1986, 3–38; Ostwald 1988; Bleicken 1994, 153–160, 447–450; Parker 1996, 102–104; G. Anderson 2003, 34–42; Ober 2008, 139–143.

28 Ostwald 1988, 310. The term ‘tribe’ (*phyle*) is here not used as sociopolitical type of non-state social organizations; cf. G. Anderson 2003, 124.

29 Cf. Whitehead 1986, 22.

30 There is very little evidence that the *trittyes* constituted independent social groups like the demes and tribes. They seem to have served predominantly as a mechanism for the socio-political reorganization of Attica. Cf. Bleicken 1994, 160; Parker 1996, 103.

31 Ostwald 1988, 310.

32 Parker 1996, 117. For the number of council members allotted to each deme, see Whitehead 1986, 266–270, 369–373.

33 Burckhardt 1996, 21–22.

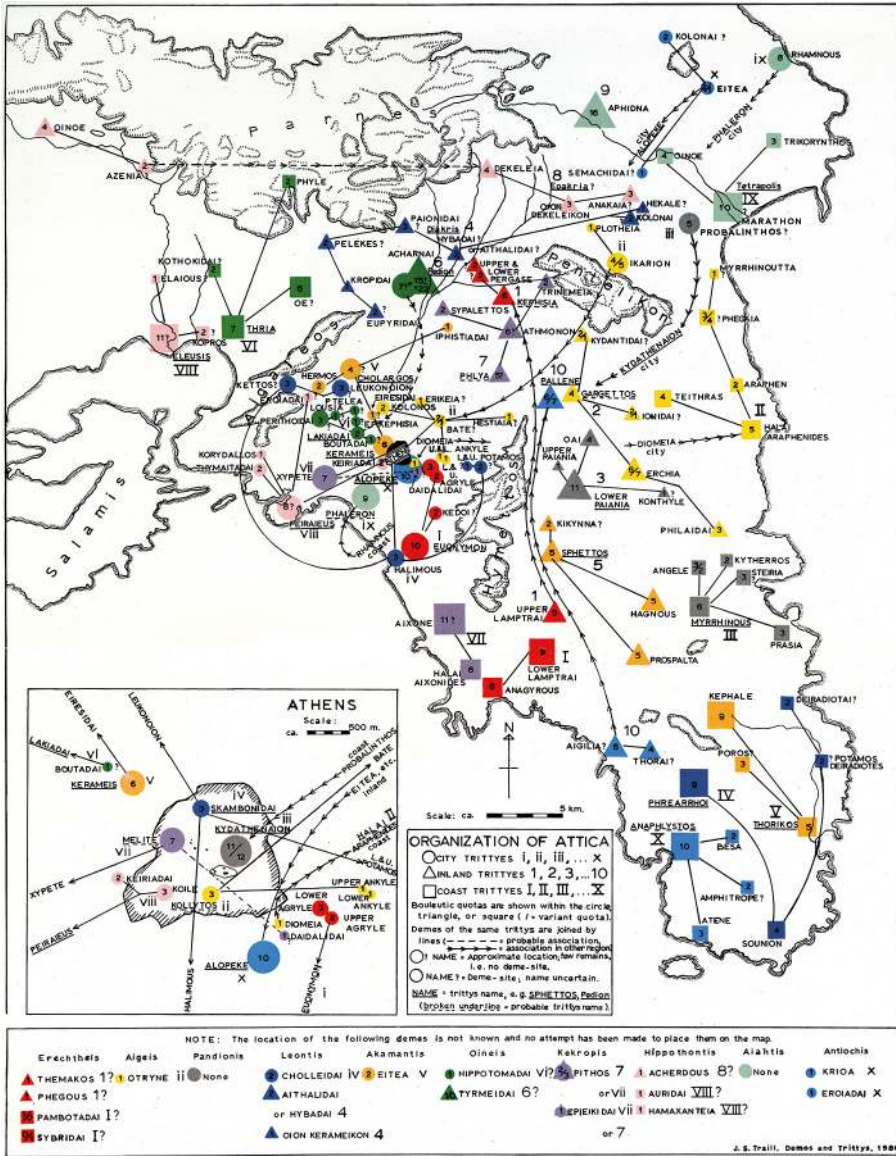


Fig. 1 The system of demes, trittyes and tribes after 508/507 BC.

4 Deme and tribal identity and collective memory

After Kleisthenes' reforms, each Athenian was simultaneously a member of the polis, his tribe and his deme.³⁴ But to what extent did Athenians in the 5th and 4th centuries develop a particular deme and tribal identity in addition to their collective identity as Athenians?³⁵ It will become apparent that the strong feelings of identity and belonging, which the demes and tribes fostered through numerous communal activities, stemmed largely from the members' shared sense of their deme and tribal history. This comprised not only the recent history, but also the distant past of their respective mythical ancestors.³⁶ For, Greeks considered stories which we would classify as myths (i.e., as unhistorical and fictitious) as integral elements of their own history. They aided them in understanding where they had come from and who they were, and thus fulfill the same social function as collective memories of more recent historical events.³⁷

Given their relatively small sizes, the demes represented face-to-face communities, in which individuals were all fairly well acquainted.³⁸ Although they did not exist as administrative units before Kleisthenes' reforms, many of them continued "most of the practices and narratives of the old village[s]".³⁹ Especially people in the rural demes tended to their local "shrines which had always been theirs, inherited from their fathers from the old political order".⁴⁰ The heroes and heroines worshiped at these ancient shrines generally had a story attached to them. As Emily Kearns has argued persuasively, the hero served "as focal point for a group consciousness [...], [and the] development of myth and saga, of narrative traditions concerning the hero, is intimately related to this

34 In addition, each male [!] Athenian also belonged to various other subgroups: his own family, his age-set, his phratry (another old fictive kinship group), possibly a *genos* (distinguished priestly family) or other voluntary organizations, such as a sympotic group or local and private religious associations. For the role of family memory, see Thomas 1989, 95–154 and Steinbock 2013. For *gene*, local and private religious associations, see Kearns 1989, 64–79 and Parker 1996, 284–342. For phratries, see Lambert 1993. For age-sets in Athens, see Steinbock 2011. For a brief survey of Athenian subgroups (including demes and tribes) and their collective memories, see Steinbock 2012, 70–84.

35 G. Anderson 2003 argues persuasively that regional identities were predominant in Attica up to the end of the 6th century and that Athenians developed a polis-wide identity as Athenians primarily as a *result* of Kleisthenes' reforms.

36 In predominantly oral societies, collective memories typically cluster around both the very distant

past and the last 100 years of living memory. For the resulting 'hourglass effect' and 'floating gap', see Vansina 1985 and Thomas 2001, 198–199.

37 In diplomatic discourse, for instance, arguments drawn from the mythical and the recent past were often used side by side; cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6. 3. 4–6; Aeschin. 2. 31–33; Arist. *Rh.* 1396a 12–14; Gehrke 2001, 286, 297–306; Grethlein 2007, 363; Harding 2008, 3; Steinbock 2012, 26–28.

38 The same cannot be said for Athens as a whole; cf. Thuc. 8. 66. 3 and Whitehead 1986, 69. Based on the estimated figure of 50 000 Athenian male citizens in 431 BC (cf. G. Anderson 2003, 2) and the fixed deme quotas for bouleutic representation, the largest deme Acharnai consisted of about 2200 men (Thuc. 2.20.4 speaks of 3000) and the smallest demes of about 100 men. cf. Whitehead 1986, 369–373, 397–399.

39 Kearns 1989, 92.

40 Thuc. 2. 16. 2; cf. the sacred calendar of the deme Thorikos (*SEG* 33. 147); Whitehead 1986, 194–199.

function”.⁴¹ There is no universal explanation for the origins of Greek hero cults, but scholars largely agree that the rise of Greek epic played an important role in their development.⁴² People in the Geometric period regarded the old, more magnificent Mycenaean tombs with awe and veneration and, inspired by the spread of epic, honored their inhabitants as people from another age. This could lead either to the identification of tombs and other places of worship with well-known epic heroes or to the association of minor local heroes with figures from the epic cycles, which further stimulated the development of local myths.⁴³ Some of the local heroes and heroines, worshiped in the Attic demes, such as Hekale, Aphidnos, Dekelos, Marathos and Phaleros, were connected to the great hero Theseus and thus belong to this category.⁴⁴ In light of the grandiose civic and religious buildings in the city center (i.e. in the Agora and on the Acropolis) it is easy to forget that the landmarks and shrines dedicated to these local heroes and heroines all around Attica functioned as small, local *lieux de mémoire* and thus were an integral element of the Athenians’ material framework, their *cadre matériel*, where their collective memories could dwell.⁴⁵

Many demes like Kephalos or Thorikos had an eponymous hero (ἥρωας ἐπώνυμος), whereas others, named after their localities like Ramnous, had a mythical founder-hero (ἥρωας ἀρχηγέτης).⁴⁶ Some of the demes boasted longstanding cults of these heroes. In other cases, an eponymous hero may have been created by mere conjecture.⁴⁷ Yet even in these later cases, once the eponymous hero was established, he assumed special significance, since he was “capable of answering for the deme the most fundamental question of all – How did the area come into being?”⁴⁸

The importance of deme identity is most obvious in the Athenians’ use of the *demotikon* (the deme name) rather than the *patronymikon* (the father’s name) in public life.⁴⁹ The orator Demosthenes, for instance, was known in the assembly as Δημοσθένης Παϊανεύς (Demosthenes the Paianier) and his opponent Aeschines from the deme

41 Kearns 1989, 103.

42 In some cases, cult worship clearly predates the spread of epic in the 8th century. For a lucid discussion of the various origins of Attic hero cults, see Kearns 1989, 103–110, 129–137.

43 Kearns 1989, 129–130; cf. Coldstream 1976.

44 Cf. Kearns 1989, 94–96, 121, 151, 154, 157–158, 183, 203. The local heroes Aphidnos, Dekelos and Marathos were connected with the unflattering account of Theseus’ rape of the maiden Helen, whereas Phaleros and Hekale aided him in his fight against the Amazons and the Marathonian bull respectively. Cf. Harding 2008, 56, 67–70.

45 The concept of the *cadre matériel* as physical setting for collective memories was first proposed by Halb-

wachs 1925; Halbwachs 1941; Halbwachs 1980 and further developed by Nora 1996 into the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, which includes both real and imagined places. Cf. Alcock 2002, 23–32; Jung 2006, 15.

46 Cf. Whitehead 1986, 208–211; Kearns 1989, 92–100; Parker 2005, 71.

47 Cults are attested for the eponymous heroes of Anagyrous, Diomeia, Hekale, Ikarion, Kerameis, Kolonos, Lakiadai, Marathon, Phaleron, Thorikos. The deme Ramnous sacrificed to a founder hero (*IG II² 2849*). For a list of all eponymous deme heroes mentioned in literary source, see Whitehead 1986, 210 n. 199, and Kearns 1989, 101–102.

48 Kearns 1989, 100.

49 Cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 20. 4–5; Whitehead 1986, 17.

Kothokidai as Αισχύλης Κοθωκίδος.⁵⁰ That the use of the *demotikon* was not merely a constitutional convention but an expression of the strong emotional bond a demesman felt with his relatives and neighbors is suggested by the numerous shared activities that forged the demes into close-knit communities. The demesmen (*demotai*) held regular assemblies to vote in new members, elect the deme's officials, debate about its finances or handle any other of its ordinary business.⁵¹ They also met regularly to sacrifice and hold communal meals at their local shrines.⁵² The sacred calendar of Thorikos,⁵³ for instance, prescribed that about sixty sacrifices per year be performed by this particular deme.⁵⁴ In light of the central role the deme and its numerous local cults played in an Athenian's life, it is not surprising that Thucydides remarked about the inhabitants of the rural demes, who were forced by the invading Peloponnesian army in 431 BC to leave their homes and shrines and move into the city, that it was "nothing less for each of them than abandoning his own polis."⁵⁵

Although the ten Kleisthenic tribes, consisting of a city, a coastal and an inland tritty (Fig. 1), were entirely artificial constructs, they resembled the demes in their association with eponymous heroes and were thus "deeply embedded in traditional religious assumptions."⁵⁶ Upon Kleisthenes' request, the oracle of Delphi chose ten heroes from a list of one hundred Attic heroes, who would give the tribes their names.⁵⁷ The ten successful candidates made a remarkably distinguished group of four Attic kings (Kekrops, Erechtheus, Pandion, Aigeus), a kinglike figure (Leos), a son of Theseus and Herakles respectively (Akamas and Antiochos), a culture hero (Oineus), one hero from Eleusis (Hippothon) and a famous Homeric hero from Salamis (Aias).⁵⁸ They were, for the most part, renowned figures of Attic lore and cult, who either symbolized links to Attica's border regions (Eleusis, Salamis) or were famous for their efforts to unify Attica in the mythical past. They were thus ideally suited to "lend an appealing glamor to the pan-Attic character" of the ten newly created tribes, which was of paramount importance since each tribe comprised Athenian citizens from three different regions of Attica (Fig. 1).⁵⁹ At the same time, these ten heroes, each with his own stories, were

50 See the snide remark in Dem. 18. 180 with Yunis 2001, 212. The use of the *demotikon* is also evident in Athenian inscriptions. See, e.g., Rhodes and Osborne 2003, 41–42 (= *JG II*² 1): "Resolved by the council and the people. Pandionis was the prytany; Agyrrhios of Kollytos (Αγύρριος Κ[ολλυτ]εύς) was secretary; Euklides was archon; Kallias of Oa (Καλλίας Ὀαθεν) was chairman. Kephisophon proposed." For the linguistic formation and the uses of the *demotikon*, see Whitehead 1986, 70–75.

51 Cf. Whitehead 1986, 86–130; Parker 1996, 114–116.

52 Parker 1996, 114–16.

53 *SEG* 33. 147.

54 Whitehead 1986, 194–199.

55 Thuc. 2. 16. 2. A similar sentiment is expressed by Dikaiopolis, the main character of Aristophanes' comedy *Acharnians*, who – being cooped up in the city of Athens in 425 BC – longs for his native rural deme Acharnai (*Ar. Ach.* 33). Cf. Hornblower 1991, 269; Osborne 1985, 19; Parker 1987, 137; Whitehead 2001, 605.

56 Parker 1996, 118.

57 Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21. 6.

58 Kron 1976, 29–32; Kearns 1989, 80–81; Parker 1996, 118; G. Anderson 2003, 127–128.

59 G. Anderson 2003, 129; cf. Kearns 1989, 87–90.

precisely what differentiated the artificially created tribes from one another and made it possible for the new tribesmen (*phyletai*) to develop a distinct tribal identity.⁶⁰

The creation of the ten new tribes and the selection of ten suitable eponymous heroes seem to be the result of the type of active memory politics, envisioned by the ‘invention of tradition’ approach.⁶¹ Yet how does one explain the apparently ready acceptance by the people of Attica of this type of massive social engineering? One reason might be that the newly created tribes held their gatherings not at new, purpose-built precincts, but “simply took over existing cults and shrines of the heroes concerned and reused them for their own purposes.”⁶² This hypothesis can also explain both the relatively uneven distribution of the ‘new’ tribal sanctuaries (some were even located in demes outside the tribal territory) and the surprising fact that, in some cases, the cult of the eponymous hero was left with the priestly family under whose charge it had traditionally been, even if they did not belong to the hero’s tribe.⁶³ These preexisting local shrines became the political and religious “centre for the whole tribe”⁶⁴ and played a vital role in the formation of tribal identity.

The tribal sanctuary was the site where the *phyletai* gathered to hold regular political meetings, honored deserving members, elected their own officials, sent their fifty representatives to the Council of Five Hundred and, most importantly, tended to the cult of their respective tribal hero.⁶⁵ Through participation in these religious ceremonies at the hero’s sacred site, the members of the tribe developed a particular attachment to their eponymous hero and learned about his mythology in prayers, rituals and hymns.⁶⁶ These ritual activities conveyed not only semantic knowledge about the hero’s deeds, but most likely also resulted in what Connerton termed ‘incorporated memories’ of great emotional intensity.⁶⁷ Moreover, the *phyletai* were reminded of the stories of their tribal

60 G. Anderson 2003, 127.

61 For the ‘invention of tradition’ approach, see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.

62 G. Anderson 2003, 130.

63 Parker 1996, 118–119. For the location of these pre-existing shrines, see G. Anderson 2003, 130–131 with n. 18.

64 Kearns 1989, 80.

65 For tribal sacrifice to Erechtheus, see *IG II²* 1165. 6; Parker 1996, 104. In addition, the eponymous hero probably received a special sacrifice by his tribe at larger state festivals with which he was connected, as is attested for Pandion at the polis-wide Pandia festival (*IG II²* 1140). Cf. Kearns 1989, 81; G. Anderson 2003, 130, 251 n. 15.

66 That prayers, rituals and hymns could convey a hero’s mythology is evident from Paus. 1. 3. 3 and

Pl. *Leg.* 887d; cf. Buxton 1994, 21–26, and Wiseman 2007, 71–73. Dithyrambic songs, which tribal choruses performed at various festivals, also conveyed heroic mythology, as Bacchylides’ ode 18 confirms. This dithyramb features an exchange between the chorus leader and King Aigeus about the heroic exploits of his yet unknown son Theseus; cf. Merklbach 1973.

67 The past is preserved, not only in semantic memory, but also through non-textual performances and commemorative rituals; cf. Steinbock 2012, 9 n. 30, 65. For such ‘incorporated memories’, which involve “performative ceremonies which generate bodily sensory and emotional experiences, resulting in habitual memory being sedimented in the body” (Hamilakis 1998, 117), see Connerton 1989; Alcock 2002, 28.

hero, not only in his own sanctuary, but also in the sanctuaries of those heroes and heroines closely connected to him.⁶⁸ A collective cult and statue group for the ten eponymous tribal heroes in the Agora as well as their possible depiction on the Parthenon frieze further perpetuated the memory of their heroic deeds.⁶⁹

Thanks to all these measures, the eponymous heroes became the focal points of tribal identity.⁷⁰ They were known as ἀρχηγέται, “a term of potent ambiguity that unites the idea of origin (*arche*) and leadership (*hegeomai*)”,⁷¹ and could thus readily be envisioned as mythical ancestors of the respective tribesmen. The members of the tribe Leontis could, for instance, be called Leontidai, that is, literally the descendants of Leos. The Athenians simply transferred the old paradigm of the four fictive kinship groups of the Ionian tribes to the new Kleisthenic ones.⁷² The *phyletai* were not only encouraged to regard their eponymous hero as mythical ancestor, but to view him as a role model and emulate his example. The foundation for this identification and emulation was already laid during the ephebate, the training period of young recruits, which began with a tour to the city’s shrines and likely included lessons about their eponyms’ mythology.⁷³ A passage in Demosthenes’ funeral oration for the Athenians slain in the battle of Chaironeia in 338 BC proves that the *phyletai*’s shared memories of the heroic deeds of their respective *archegetes* and his family members were a vital element of their distinct tribal identity and an inspiration for their own devotion to the city.⁷⁴ Demosthenes called these stories “the things which had prepared each of them, by tribes, to be valiant men.”⁷⁵ The members of the tribe Erechtheis, for instance, were willing to give their own lives for their country, knowing that their eponym Erechtheus, for the salvation of this land, had sacrificed his own daughters.⁷⁶ The Aigeidai wanted to rather die than lose

68 The cult for the Hyakinthidai, the daughters of Erechtheus, for instance, inevitably evoked the memory of both their self-sacrifice for the salvation of the city and their father’s war against the invader Eumolpos. For their cult and mythology, see Eur. fr. 370. 63–97; Kannicht 2004; Dem. 60. 27; Lycurg. 98–101; Kearns 1989, 59–63, 201–202; Steinbock 2011, 301–302.

69 The identification of the ten figures in the east frieze of the Parthenon on the Acropolis is still controversial, though; cf. Parker 1996, 120. The statue group of the ten eponymous tribal heroes in the center of the Agora was heavily frequented, since it featured notice boards with important announcements. For cult and statue group, see Jones 1999, 153–154; G. Anderson 2003, 251 n. 14.

70 Kearns 1989, 103.

71 Parker 1996, 120. Cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21. 6.

72 Cf. Dem. 58.18; Parker 1996, 120–121; G. Anderson 2003, 128.

73 For the tour of the shrines, see Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 42. 3; Mikalson 1995, 42; Parker 1996, 255. For the role of tribal and age-set heroes in the ideological instruction of Athenian ephebes, see Steinbock 2011. The ephebate as we know it from Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 42 and a series of ephebic inscriptions is beyond doubt a Lycurgan institution, but the ephebate existed in some form before the reform of 335 BC, as Reinmuth 1971, 23–38, and Burckhardt 1996, 29–33, have shown.

74 Dem. 60. 27–31; Kearns 1989, 86–87; Parker 1996, 251–252; G. Anderson 2003, 128.

75 Dem. 60. 27: ἃ δὲ κατὰ φυλάς παρεσκεύασ’ ἐκάστους εὐρώστους εἶναι, ταῦτ’ ἦδη λέξω.

76 Dem. 60. 27.

the equality (*isegoria*), which King Aigeus' son Theseus had first established.⁷⁷ The Akamantidai faced every danger to save their parents, recalling how Akamas had sailed to Troy to save his mother Aithra.⁷⁸ Demosthenes' assertion that the members of each tribe *knew, remembered, did not forget*, etc. the deeds of their eponymous hero and his family members suggests that these paradigmatic stories had been told often beforehand and played a vital role for the *phyletai*'s sense of their tribe's history.⁷⁹

The collective memories of demes and tribes encompassed not only the heroic deeds of their mythical heroes, but also shared memories of the more recent past. The tribes proudly remembered the victories their dithyrambic choruses and athletic teams had achieved at various festivals; they were memorialized through dedications and in the official victory list.⁸⁰ Distinct tribal memories also resulted from the military sphere, since the Athenian army was organized by tribes. At least by the age of Lycurgus, the ephebes of each tribe served together under their own tribal officer, called *sophonistes*. In recognition of their exemplary service or an athletic victory in one of the ephebic competitions, they and their officers were often honored by their tribe or the deme where they had been stationed.⁸¹ These honorary inscriptions served Athenians as material reminders of the experiences they had shared with their *phyletai* during their ephebate. Since the Athenian army consisted of ten tribal regiments, which made up the hoplite phalanx, battles could be experienced and remembered differently by soldiers of different tribes, as a passage from Mantitheus' scrutiny hearing from around 390 BC shows. This prospective councilor tried to convince the current councilors of the bravery he displayed in the battle of Corinth in 394 BC, when his "tribe suffered the heaviest losses."⁸² How many casualties each tribe suffered was indeed a matter of public record, since the Athenians memorialized each tribe's particular sacrifices. At the end of each campaigning season, the Athenians buried the fallen in the public cemetery (*demosion sema*) in the Kerameikos and erected casualty lists over their tombs. The names of the fallen were listed by tribe, and headings indicated where they had lost their lives.⁸³ These casualty lists could thus serve Athenians as permanent reminders of fellow tribesmen they had

77 Dem. 60. 28.

78 Dem. 60. 29.

79 Cf. Dem. 60. 27–31: ἦδεσαν πάντες Ἐρεχθεΐδαι [...] οὐκ ἠγνόουν Αἰγεΐδαι [...] παρελήφεσαν Πανδιονίδαι [...] ἠκηκόεσαν Λεωντίδαι [...] ἐμέμνηντ' Ἀκαμαντίδαι [...] οὐκ ἐλάυθανεν Οἰνεΐδας [...] ἦδεσαν Κεκροπίδαι [...] ἐμέμνηνθ' Ἴπποθωντίδαι [...] οὐκ ἐλάυθανεν Αἰαντίδας [...] οὐκ ἠμνημόρουν Ἀντιοχίδαι [...]; Steinbock 2011, 300–311; Shear 2013, 523.

80 Tribal competitions were held at the Greater and Lesser Panathenaia, the Hephaisteia, the Prometheia and the Theseia; cf. Parker 1996, 103 n. 5. For ded-

icatory inscriptions, set up by the victorious *choregoi* and commemorating the victory of their tribal chorus, see, e.g., *IG I³* 958, 961 and Wilson 2000, 214–216. For the official list of Dionysiac victories (including the tribal dithyrambic competitions), see *IG II²* 2318.

81 Cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 42; Reinmuth 1971 n. 2, 3, 9, 10; Burckhardt 1996, 63–71.

82 Lys. 16. 15. Cf. Pritchett 1985, 179.

83 For Athenian public funeral monuments and their significance, see Low 2010; Low 2012; Arrington 2010; Arrington 2011.

lost in a particular military campaign.⁸⁴ Wars could also be remembered differently by individual demes, especially when they involved the invasion of Attica. It is certainly no coincidence that Aristophanes featured *demotai* from Acharnai as the most fervent opponents of peace with Sparta in his comedy *Acharnians*. Unlike the city demes, this large rural deme had severely suffered under the Peloponnesian invasions during the early years of the Peloponnesian War. It had demanded most vigorously (though in vain) in 431 BC that the Athenian army march out and defend their homes against the attackers.⁸⁵ A few years later, Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, remembering how the Spartans had destroyed their vines,⁸⁶ showed the most intense hostility toward Sparta and the prospect of peace.⁸⁷

5 Deme and tribal memory and the 'official' Athenian polis tradition

Which role did these shared deme and tribal memories play in relation to the polis-wide version of the Athenian past found in the public funeral orations and other forms of polis-wide commemorations?⁸⁸ After a brief discussion of the role of the Athenian funeral orations in manifesting and transmitting an official polis tradition, I will analyze a few examples that illustrate the complex interdependence between this Athenian master narrative and deme and tribal memories.

The public funeral oration (*logos epitaphios*) for the Athenian war dead of each year was of paramount importance for the formation of the Athenians' view of themselves and of their city's past. Instituted soon after the Persian Wars, the epitaphios was infused with democratic and hegemonic ideology, which was projected back into the mythical past and colored the perception and memory of later events. Judging from the few extant examples,⁸⁹ these speeches were rather conventional and celebrated the manifestation of timeless Athenian excellence (*ἀρετή*) from the mythical origins of the city to

84 The casualties per tribe could vary, as *IG I³* 1162 (from the 440s BC) shows; during that year's campaigning season, the tribe Kekropis had suffered eleven casualties, Leontis, on the other hand, only four.

85 Cf. Thuc. 2. 19. 2–20. 5; 2. 21. 3; Hornblower 1991, 273–275.

86 Ar. *Ach.* 182–184, 229–233.

87 Sommerstein 1980, 33.

88 For this shared version of the Athenian past, see the brief sketch of Loraux' *Athènes imaginaire*, Thomas'

'official' polis tradition and Gehrke's 'intentionale Geschichte' at the beginning of this chapter.

89 The extant funeral speeches comprise Thucydides 2. 35–46 (Perikles for the dead of 431 BC); Lysias 2 (Corinthian War); Demosthenes 60 (Chaironeia; 338 BC); Hyperides' *Epitaphios* (Lamian War; 322 BC). The parodistic funeral speech in Plato's *Menexenus* 236d4–249c8 and Isocrates' *Panegyricus*, which employs many epitaphic themes, are also useful for the reconstruction of the genre. Cf. Shear 2013, 511–512.

the most recent campaign in which the heroes of the day had lost their lives.⁹⁰ These funeral speeches emphasized the Athenians' autochthonous origins, their innate sense of justice, their democratic constitution and their role as altruistic defenders of Greek liberty against both barbarian invaders and Greek oppressors.⁹¹

To us, this self-congratulatory version of Athenian history might seem chauvinistic and full of historical distortions.⁹² And yet, the same ideals, examples and justifications appear elsewhere in Athenian public discourse, which suggests that "most Athenians believed in them passionately."⁹³ The history, presented in the epitaphios, was "true for the Athenians, in that it conform[ed] to the idea that they wish[ed] to have of themselves."⁹⁴ To appreciate properly the powerful impact of the epitaphios on the formation of Athenian social memory, we have to consider the social and religious context of this speech.⁹⁵ It was delivered by a man "chosen by the city, of proven intelligence and high esteem"⁹⁶ as the culmination of the public funeral ceremony for the Athenian war dead in the state cemetery (*demiosion sema*).⁹⁷ Due to this solemn ritual context, this patriotic version of the past was highly emotionally charged and deeply affected the Athenian psyche, as an ironic remark by Plato's Sokrates about his elated feelings reveals.⁹⁸ Moreover, the funeral orations presented Athens' past regularly and in a coherent form in rough chronological order.⁹⁹ Its past and recent accomplishments were normative, and their praise fulfilled a didactic function.¹⁰⁰ For these reasons, Rosalind Thomas has called the epitaphic version of Athenian history the 'official' polis tradition,¹⁰¹ and others have used the term 'master narrative of Athenian history' for the depiction of the past found in the funeral orations and in other Athenian "forums for collective deliberation and self-representation (the assembly, courts, theater, civic rituals and festivals)."¹⁰²

90 For the retrojection of Athens' hegemonic ideology into the mythic past, see Gehrke 2001, 302; Gotte-land 2001, 129; Mills 1997, 58; Thomas 1989, 207–208; Harding 2008, 66. For the 'coloring' of later episodes, see, e.g., Lys. 2. 49–53 with Thomas 1989, 227–229; Todd 2007, 249–253.

91 For the Athenian funeral oration, see Walters 1980; Loraux 1986; Thomas 1989, 196–237; Parker 1996, 131–141; Mills 1997, 58–78; Clarke 2008, 309–313; Grethlein 2010, 105–125; Steinbock 2012, 49–58; Shear 2013.

92 For distortions, see for example the commentary by Todd 2007 on Lysias' epitaphios.

93 Thomas 1989, 206; cf. Strasburger 1958.

94 Loraux 1986, 171. See also Gehrke 2003, 22, and Thomas 1989, 237, who rightly emphasizes that these "'distortions' would be encouraged or reinforced by certain ideals, and [that] again the line be-

tween deliberately misleading propaganda and wishful thinking might be blurred". For the rejection of the anachronistic term 'propaganda,' see Thomas 1989, 206 n. 39, and Steinbock 2012, 40.

95 Steinbock 2012, 50–51.

96 Thuc. 2. 34. 6.

97 For the *demiosion sema*, see Arrington 2010.

98 For the funeral ceremony, see Thuc. 2. 34; Loraux 1986, 15–76; Low 2010, 341–350. For the psychological impact of this speech, see Pl. *Menex.* 234c–235c; Thomas 1989, 211; Parker 1996, 137; Wickkiser 1999.

99 Cf. Clarke 2008, 312.

100 Loraux 1986, 144; Clarke 2008, 308.

101 Thomas 1989, 200, 208.

102 Forsdyke 2005, 242. Similarly, Steinbock 2012, 20. 49.

In light of both the inherent multipolarity of social memory and the vigorous deme and tribal memories in Athens it is important to stress that the terms ‘official polis tradition’ and ‘Athenian master narrative’ do not denote a fixed, officially authorized narrative. Even in the epitaphios with its strong generic conventions, individual orators were still able to “select, omit, and add details to introduce a semblance of originality.”¹⁰³ But since all of the epitaphic accounts (as well as others drawing on this genre) are highly ideological narratives with much argumentative and emotional weight, they can indeed be regarded as prevalent versions of the past, which justifies the use of the terms ‘official polis tradition’ and ‘Athenian master narrative.’¹⁰⁴ These terms denote the sum of the converging, polis-wide narratives of the Athenian past that conveyed the Athenian self-image and were imbued with democratic and hegemonic ideology, derived from the Persian War experience.¹⁰⁵

Athenians encountered elements of this Athenian master narrative in many places: in the Panathenaia and other polis-wide religious festivals, in works of art and monumental buildings, on the tragic stage and in the assembly and law courts.¹⁰⁶ Yet the Athenian epitaphios was surely its purest expression, since its *raison d'être* was the celebration of the timeless Athenian ἀρετή from the city’s origins to the present. The episodes extolled in this *Tatenkatalog* typically also included four paradigmatic myths, which can be viewed as mythical prefiguration of Athens’ victory over the Persians and its current role as altruistic hegemon.¹⁰⁷ As champions of Greek liberty the Athenians repelled the barbarian invasions of the man-hating Amazons and of Eumolpos’ Thracian hordes and checked the hubris of the Thebans and Eurystheus by aiding the suppliant Adrastus and the Herakleidai, respectively.¹⁰⁸

We do not know who first introduced these mythical paradigms into the epitaphios (they are first attested in a diplomatic debate in Herodotus)¹⁰⁹, but it seems clear that they were not invented wholesale in the post Persian War period. In our sources, we can grasp traces of pre-existing local myths and cults in Attica, on which poets and orators could draw. They give us a glimpse of the dynamic interplay between local cults and

103 Thomas 1989, 200.

104 The analysis of the orators’ use of the past in assembly and law courts shows that it was much easier for an orator to draw effectively on the lessons of the Athenian funeral orations than to argue against them. See, for instance, Steinbock 2012, 149–154, on Dem. 14. 33–34 and Steinbock 2013, 81–98, on Aeschin. 2. 74–79.

105 While acknowledging the multiplicity of oral traditions in Athens, Thomas 1989, 197–200 similarly sees the underlying democratic and hegemonic ideals as constitutive elements of the ‘official’ polis tra-

dition: “the epitaphios forms a coherent expression of Athenian official ‘ideology’” (200).

106 Cf. Castriota 1992; Steinbock 2012, 58–69, 84–99.

107 Thomas 1989, 207–208; Gehrke 2001, 302; Steinbock 2012, 54–56.

108 For the Amazons, see Lys. 2. 4–6; Pl. *Menex.* 239b; Isoc. 4. 68–70; Dem. 60. 8. For Eumolpos’ Thracians, see Pl. *Menex.* 239b; Isoc. 4. 68–70; Dem. 60. 8. For Adrastus, see Lys. 2.7–10; Pl. *Menex.* 239b; Isoc. 4. 54–55, 58; Dem. 60. 8. For the Herakleidai, see Lys. 2.11–16; Pl. *Menex.* 239b; Isoc. 4. 54, 56–60; Dem. 60. 8.

109 Hdt. 9. 27.

traditions and the Athenian master narrative of the funeral orations and the tragic stage. I will focus here on the paradigmatic myth of the Athenian intervention for the fallen Argives, but the other three myths underwent similar transformations.¹¹⁰

According to the epitaphic version of this myth, the Thebans refused to grant burial to the fallen Argives who had attacked Thebes under Adrastus' command to oust Oidipous' son Eteokles and win the throne for his brother Polyneikes. Adrastus, the sole survivor of the Seven against Thebes, escaped to Athens and supplicated the Athenians to aid him in recovering the bodies of his dead comrades. To uphold the Greek norm of proper burial, the Athenians selflessly intervened, defeated the hubristic Thebans in battle and buried the dead Argives in Eleusis.¹¹¹ The Athenians thus acted, as always in the funeral orations, as just defenders of the oppressed and as altruistic hegemon.

Where did this story come from? The myth of the Seven against Thebes was already known to Homer and was treated in detail in the seventh-century epic *Thebaid*, but in these poems, there is no trace of any Athenian involvement.¹¹² The epic story of Adrastus' flight from the battlefield on his divine horse Areion¹¹³ provided the hook for various local communities in Attica and Boiotia to connect themselves to the epic world of heroes in the Archaic period.¹¹⁴ This gave rise to the creation of various cults and diverse and competing local traditions. In Eleusis, the discovery of awe-inspiring Bronze Age tombs led to the establishment of a heroön in the Geometric period, as Mylonas' excavation has shown.¹¹⁵ Possibly already at that time, their inhabitants were identified as the fallen leaders of the Seven and a local myth explained their burial in Eleusis:¹¹⁶ on his way back to Argos, it might be supposed, Adrastus naturally came by Eleusis, and a local hero may have aided him in recovering the bodies and buried them in Eleusis (Fig. 2).¹¹⁷

Eleutherai, a town situated on the road from Thebes to Eleusis and Argos, also displayed heroic tombs. By the end of the 5th century, these were identified as the graves of the ordinary soldiers of the seven contingents,¹¹⁸ but originally they probably constituted a true rival claim to Eleusis.¹¹⁹ The 1st-century BC geographer Strabo mentions

110 For a detailed analysis of the constitutive elements and formative influences of this myth, see Steinbock 2012, 155–196. For transformations of the Amazon myth, cf. Gotteland 2001, 131–161; Harding 2008, 64–67. For Eumolpos, see Parker 1987.

111 Cf. Lys. 2. 7–10; Pl. *Menex.* 239b; Isoc. 4. 54–55, 58; Dem. 60. 8.

112 For the Seven against Thebes in Homer, see Janko 1992, 163. For the *Thebaid*, see Huxley 1969, 41–49; Davies 1989, 22–23.

113 *Thebaid* fr. 6a, 6c Davies.

114 For Adrastus' story in local myths and cults, see Steinbock 2012, 159–169.

115 These Middle Helladic tombs were surrounded by a *peribolos* wall at the end of the 8th century, which indicates that from that time on, these graves were seen as belonging together; they were still known to the traveler Pausanias in the Roman period. Cf. Paus. 1.39.2; Mylonas 1975, ii. 153–154, 262–264, fig. 145; Kearns 1989, 130–131.

116 Cf. Janko 1992, 163.

117 Jacoby 1954, i. 444.

118 Eur. *Supp.* 754–759; Plut. *Theb.* 29. 4.

119 Jacoby 1954, i. 443; Mills 1997, 231.



Fig. 2 Map of Attica and environs.

that a Boiotian village near the Attic border was called Harma (Chariot), either after the chariot of Amphiaraios, the seer of the Seven, or after that of Adrastos.¹²⁰ According to the latter myth, Adrastos – after the crash of his chariot in Harma – “saved himself on Areion,”¹²¹ just as in the epic *Thebaid*.¹²² Strabo mentions another Harma across the border in the vicinity of the Attic deme of Phyle.¹²³ The people living near this chariot-shaped mountain top also sought a connection to Adrastos’ chariot, but, in their version, the horse Areion apparently played no role: “Adrastos was saved by the villagers,”¹²⁴ who might have escorted him to their king, as Jacoby suggests.¹²⁵ Another place in Attica, Kolonos Hippios (Horsehill),¹²⁶ located two kilometers north of Athens on the road to Thebes, was also connected to Adrastos’ flight. There was “an altar to Poseidon Hippios

120 Strab. 9. 2. 11.

121 Strab. 9. 2. 11.

122 *Thebaid* fr. 6a Davies.

123 Strab. 9. 2. 11.

124 Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 113. For this reference to the Attic Harma, see Jacoby 1954, i. 442–443, ii. 349–350; Harding 2008, 71.

125 Jacoby 1954, i. 443.

126 This is the place, where Oidipous requested asylum in Attica. Cf. Paus. 1. 10. 4 and Soph. *OC*.

and Athena Hippias and a heroön to Peirithoos and Theseus, Oidipous and Adrastos.”¹²⁷ According to an aetiological myth, Kolonos Hippios was the place where Adrastos, presumably still in possession of his chariot, “halted his horses at Kolonos and addressed them as Poseidon and Athena.”¹²⁸

These diverse stories of Adrastos’ flight became undoubtedly an important element of the collective memory and identity of Eleusis, Eleutherai, the Attic Harma and Kolonos, respectively. This is most evident in the case of the inhabitants of the Attic Harma. Their ancestors’ alleged help to Adrastos was, at least by the time of Philochorus, even officially recognized by Argos in form of a grant of equal rights of citizenship (*isopoliteia*) for all those villagers who wished to settle in Adrastos’ home city.¹²⁹

We have seen so far how the epic story of Adrastos’ escape from Thebes¹³⁰ led various communities in the Archaic period to ‘write’ themselves into the world of epic heroes.¹³¹ Our earliest testimony for the fully formed myth of an Athenian intervention for the fallen Argives is Aeschylus’ tragedy *Eleusinians* (c. 475–467 BC). Thanks to Plutarch,¹³² the outline of this lost tragedy can be reconstructed as follows:¹³³ Adrastos and the Athenian king Theseus were the main characters of the play, the chorus consisted of Eleusinian men (hence the title Ἐλευσίνιοι) and the *dramatis locus* was Eleusis. In the opening scene, Adrastos encounters the chorus of Eleusinian men, who send for Theseus, their king. Adrastos reports about the fate of the Seven and supplicates Theseus and the Eleusinians to aid him in the recovery of the fallen. The second part of the play likely contained a messenger report about Theseus’ successful negotiations with Thebes and the third part featured the burial of the Seven in Eleusis.

Aeschylus’ *Eleusinians* illustrates several important points concerning the dynamic relationship between local traditions and the polis-wide versions of this myth known from the tragic stage and the funeral orations. First, considering the fact that social memories (and in particular those about the mythical past) constantly change to accommodate and reflect recent experiences of the remembering communities, it is not surprising that the stories surrounding the burial of the Seven continuously developed further. By the time of the *Eleusinians*’ production (c. 475–467 BC), the Athenian king Theseus had become the main hero of this myth and Adrastos’ ritual supplication was

127 Paus. I. 30. 4.

128 *Etym. m. s.v.* Ἰνμῖα. Addressing Areion as Poseidon makes good sense considering that this divine horse had allegedly been fathered by Poseidon. For Areion’s pedigree, see Paus. 8.25.5–10. That Adrastos drove a two-horse chariot during this campaign is also mentioned by Antimachos of Kolophon, a contemporary of Plato, in his epic poem *Thebaid* (fr. 31 Matthews). The horses’ names in this *Thebaid* are Καίρως and Ἀπίου.

129 Philochorus *FGHist* 328 F 113; Harding 2008, 70–71.

130 *Thebaid* fr. 6a, 6c Davies.

131 It is impossible to determine when each of these local traditions originated; some may be as old as the initial Eleusinian story of the burial of the Seven, others may only have developed in response to the inclusion of this myth in the epitaphic tradition. Cf. Steinbock 2012, 163 n. 32.

132 Plut. *Thes.* 29. 4–5.

133 Jacoby 1954, i. 448; Mette 1963, 40–41.

an essential element of this story. It is unknown when Theseus became associated with the tombs of the Seven in Eleusis,¹³⁴ but several clues point to the last decade of the 6th century, when Theseus began to rival the Dorian Herakles as prototypical Athenian hero.¹³⁵ New mythical episodes depict him as a civilizing force and as true benefactor of Attica, whose territorial integrity he ensures and defends. Aeschylus' *Eleusinians* conveys both of these elements. Theseus obtained the bodies of the fallen Argives from the Thebans "through persuasion and by making a truce";¹³⁶ this truce was, according to Philochorus, "the first truce ever made for the recovery of corpses";¹³⁷ which makes Theseus the πρῶτος εὐρήτης, the first inventor, of this important cultural institution. Theseus' burial of the bodies in Eleusis shows unmistakably that this disputed border region is now firmly under the Athenian king's jurisdiction and thus an integral element of Attica. The central role Adrastus' supplication of Theseus played in this story might reflect the Athenians' historical experience of the Plataians' supplication of Athens for aid against their overbearing Theban neighbors 519 BC.¹³⁸

Second, unlike the extant funeral orations,¹³⁹ Aeschylus' *Eleusinians* features a peaceful resolution. In their attempt to reconstruct the chronological development of this myth, past scholars considered Aeschylus' *Eleusinians* as the *terminus post quem* for the introduction of the bellicose variant.¹⁴⁰ Today, scholars are more cautious and emphasize that the development of a myth is not a linear process. Especially in a predominantly oral society like 5th-century Athens different, even contradictory versions could be circulating simultaneously, particularly if they belong to different contexts.¹⁴¹ It is quite possible, therefore, that one of the local myths discussed above already contained the bellicose version, which an epitaphic orator used to express the Athenians' renewed hatred against Thebes, following their failed incursion into Boiotia in the early 450s.¹⁴²

Third, Aeschylus' *Eleusinians* illustrate how local traditions and the Athenian polis tradition mutually influenced and sustained each other. Local traditions were the underpinning of the versions familiar to us from the funeral orations and the tragic stage. Poets and orators generally did not create mythical stories *ex nibilo*; they often drew on local traditions familiar to them. This is evident in the case of the Eleusinian poet Aeschylus, who crafted the plot of his tragedy around the graves of the Seven in his

134 Considering the fact that Theseus was a minor figure in epic poetry and not native to Eleusis, it is doubtful, that he was from early on associated with the burial of the Seven. Cf. Jacoby 1954, i. 444.

135 For the transformation of Theseus from a swash-buckling hero, involved in brigandage and rape of women, to the archetypical Athenian national hero, see Harding 2008, 52–53, with further literature.

136 Plut. *Thes.* 29. 4–5.

137 Philochorus *FGHist* 328 F112.

138 Hdt. 6. 108. For a detailed discussion of Theseus and the supplication aspect of this myth, see Steinbock 2012, 169–186.

139 Cf. Lys. 2.8–10; Isoc. 4.58; Pl. *Menex.* 239b; Dem. 60. 8. Also many other oratorical allusions have the Athenians secure the burial of the Seven by defeating the Thebans in battle; cf. Hdt. 9. 27. 3; Xen. *Hell.* 6. 5. 47; Isoc. 14. 53; Isoc. 10. 31.

140 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1899, 196.

141 Thomas 1989, 250; Walters 1980, 12–13, with n. 26.

142 Cf. Loraux 1986, 67–69.

own home deme of Eleusis. By bringing his *Eleusinians* on the tragic stage, Aeschylus helped spreading a local tradition to the entire polis community.¹⁴³ By the time this myth was included in the epitaphios the story of the burial in Eleusis seems to have become the main version.¹⁴⁴ This ‘official’ story could, in turn, also affect and change local traditions. The tombs at Eleutherai, which were in all likelihood initially associated with the Seven themselves, were by the 420s connected to the common soldiers of the seven contingents.¹⁴⁵ This shows how these two competing local traditions were harmonized, once the Eleusinian version had become the predominant one thanks to Aeschylus’ *Eleusinians* and the Athenian funeral orations.¹⁴⁶

Fourth, Plutarch’s mentioning of the difference in Theseus’ method of recovery in Aeschylus’ *Eleusinians* and Euripides’ *Suppliants*¹⁴⁷ also highlights the great malleability of the Athenians’ memory of their mythical past. Since Athenians were used to the existence of countless local variants, the authors of the funeral orations, the poets and politicians could add, emphasize, downplay or suppress certain elements of the story, depending on needs and attitudes of the present. Euripides’ *Suppliants* dwelled heavily on Thebes’ shameful refusal to return the bodies for burial and thus reflected the Athenians’ recent experience with Thebes after the battle of Delion in 424 BC.¹⁴⁸ In 339 BC, on the other hand, we see how the orator Isocrates was very careful not to sabotage the recent Athenian-Theban rapprochement: he spared Thebes’ honor by alluding to Aeschylus’ version and featuring a diplomatic resolution in his latest retelling of this story.¹⁴⁹

Finally, the local cults and traditions also helped anchor the polis-wide tragic and epitaphic versions of this myth in the every-day experience of individual Athenians. The mention of Adrastus’ arrival in Athens and the burials in Eleusis and Eleutherai must have resonated particularly with those Athenians who cherished the stories connected to Eleusis, Eleutherai, Harma and Kolonos Hippios within their own local community.¹⁵⁰

143 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1899, 199. It is uncertain how familiar Athenians were with this myth before Aeschylus’ production of the *Eleusinians*. Theseus’ aid for Adrastus might already have been included in the late 6th century *Theseid*; cf. Mills 1997, 232. But Aeschylus’ tragedy certainly increased the Athenians’ familiarity with this story.

144 The burial in Eleusis is mentioned explicitly by Herodotus’ Athenians (Hdt. 9. 27. 3) and in Lysias’ epitaphios (Lys. 2. 10). In Euripides’ *Suppliants*, the ashes of the Seven were returned to Argos (Eur. *Supp.* 1185–1188). But Euripides carefully anchored this innovation within the well-known tradition: the heroön of the Seven in Eleusis now marked the place if not of their inhumation at least of their cremation (Eur. *Supp.* 1207–1212).

145 Eur. *Supp.* 754–759.

146 Cf. Steinbock 2012, 164.

147 Plut. *Thes.* 29. 4–5.

148 Bowie 1997, 51; Steinbock 2012, 191–193.

149 Isoc. 12.168–7; cf. Steinbock 2012, 201–210.

150 Steinbock 2012, 165. President Bill Clinton’s historical allusion to the Alamo at the dedication of the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania on September 10, 2011, constitutes a modern parallel: the heroic defense of the Alamo against a vastly superior Mexican army in 1836 is certainly widely known throughout the U.S., but it has a special resonance for Texans, who see in this battle the origin of their state. Cf. <http://www.clintonfoundation.org/main/clinton-foundation->

This, of course, applies to other collective deme and tribal memories as well. Aeschylus' younger competitor Sophocles set his last tragedy, the *Oedipus Coloneus*, in his own deme Kolonos. Whiteman is right to suggest that "a fleeting smile may have passed across the faces of some of the rural demesmen in the audience,"¹⁵¹ when they heard in the opening scene that the *demotai* of Kolonos would decide whether Oedipus may stay in the shrine of their eponymous hero.¹⁵² Similarly, the members of the tribe Erechtheis probably felt particularly proud of their *archegetes* Erechtheus and his daughters each time they heard in the funeral oration the paradigmatic myth of the repulsion of Eumolpos' invasion.¹⁵³

The same complex dynamic between group and polis memory was at play concerning the memory of more recent historical events. All 52 Athenian casualties in the decisive Persian War battle of Plataiai, for instance, belonged to the tribe Aiantis. The high death toll was attributed to the exceptional bravery of its soldiers.¹⁵⁴ The account by the 4th-century Attidographer Cleidemus indicates that more than three generations later, the Battle of Plataiai still played a crucial role in the collective memory of the members of this tribe: it was the privilege of the Aiantidai to provide the annual thank offering to the Sphragithic nymphs on behalf of the whole polis.¹⁵⁵ In doing so, the Aiantidai commemorated both the Athenian victory at Plataiai and their own tribal ancestors' extraordinary contribution to this glorious achievement. It is not farfetched to assume that they felt particularly proud each time the battle of Plataiai was mentioned in Athenian public discourse. Thanks to this annual sacrifice Athenians of the other nine tribes were, in turn, regularly reminded of Aiantis' particular role in this battle.

As one would expect, local and polis-wide collective memories did not always mutually influence and support each other; at times, they could also be in conflict. The demesmen of Dekeleia, for instance, remembered the aid which their eponymous hero Dekelos provided to the Dioskouroi at the time of Theseus' rape of Helen. Dekelos was angry about Theseus' hubris (ἀχθόμενον τῆ Ἰησέος ὕβρι) and revealed to the Dioskouroi their sister's whereabouts. As a result, the Spartans, grateful for Dekelos' aid to their two state gods, spared Dekeleia during their invasions of Attica in the Archidamian War.¹⁵⁶ This shows that a deme could cherish an identity distinct from (and in this case even somewhat in opposition to) the Athenian polis identity and that these deme memories could become highly politically relevant. That individual demes could draw on their collective memory to express their own identities and political concerns is also

blog.html/2012/09/11/remembering-9/11 (visited on 15/02/2017).

151 Whitehead 1986, 47.

152 Soph. *OC* 77–80.

153 This is true, even though Erechtheus (like Theseus) is usually not mentioned by name in the epitaphios due to generic conventions; but see Dem. 60. 27 and Shear 2013, 523.

154 Cleidemus *FGHist* 323 F 22 = Plut. *Arist.* 19.6.

155 Cf. Parker 1996, 103; Harding 2008, 105–106.

156 Hdt. 9. 73. Titakos, presumably the eponymous hero of the small hamlet of Titakidai also stood up to the national Athenian hero Theseus and betrayed the town Aphidna to the Dioskouroi (Hdt. 9. 73); cf. Kearns 1989, 118, 154, 200; Flower and Marincola 2002, 236–239.

evident in the case of Acharnai. The Acharnians, faced with the destruction of their property through the Spartan invasion in 431 BC, lobbied vigorously for active resistance against the attackers.¹⁵⁷ In Thucydides' account, the Acharnians are represented "as fully aware of their numerical and psychological influence in the polis."¹⁵⁸ They probably drew on their longstanding tradition of stern patriotism and belligerence, attested in our sources¹⁵⁹ to galvanize their political resolve against Perikles' strategy of deliberately ceding the Attic countryside to the Peloponnesian invaders.¹⁶⁰

In conclusion, drawing on polis-wide commemorative activities such as the Athenian funeral ceremonies, Classicists have made a strong case over the last three decades that the Athenians' shared image of their past was an essential element of their collective identity. Yet some critics, fearful of the return of old essentialist categories, are still skeptical about 'social memory' as a valid analytical concept. To dissipate fears of reifying a monolithic group mind, this contribution takes the inherent multipolarity of social memory into account and examines the dynamic relationship between the Athenian 'official' polis tradition and the shared memories of two types of Athenian subgroups, the demes and tribes.

Epigraphic, archaeological and literary evidence shows that Athenians in the 5th and 4th centuries developed particular deme and tribal identities in addition to their collective identity as Athenians. The local deme and tribal sanctuaries were thereby of particular importance. At these places, the demes and tribes fostered their identities as distinct memory communities through numerous communal activities. Their strong feelings of identity and belonging stemmed to a considerable extent from the members' shared sense of their deme and tribal history, which comprised not only the recent history, but also the distant past of their mythical ancestors.

The analysis of various local myths and cults related to the paradigmatic Athenian myth of the burial of the fallen Argives illustrates the dynamic relationship between local traditions and the polis-wide versions of myths known from the tragic stage and the funeral orations. The former were the underpinnings of the latter, contributed to the great malleability of Athenian social memory and grounded the 'official' polis tradition in the everyday experience of individual Athenians. The deme and tribal memories and the Athenian master narrative thus mutually influenced and sustained each other, but sometimes they could also be in conflict. That demes could cherish identities, distinct from and to some extent even in opposition to, the common polis identity is suggested by the examples of Dekeleia and Acharnai, whose group memories became politically relevant during the Peloponnesian War.

157 Thuc. 2. 21. 3.

158 Whitehead 1986, 399.

159 Pind. *Nem.* 2. 16–17; *Ar. Ach.* 178–185, 204–236, 280–365, 665–675.

160 Cf. Steinbock 2012, 71.

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