

GSEM 619 Death and Beyond: Ancient Greece and China

Fall 2014

Tuesday 2-4, Carpenter 15

Professor Shiamin Kwa

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Office Hours:

Office Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00

or by appointment

or by appointment

Required Texts:

- Garland, Robert, *The Greek Way of Death*, Cornell University Press: New York, 1985.
- Grant, Beata and Wilt Idema, *Escape from Bloodpond Hell*. Seattle: Univ. Washington Press, 2011
- Olberding, Amy and Philip Ivanhoe, eds. *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*. Albany: SUNY, 2012.
- *The Peony Pavilion: Mudan ting*, Second Edition (ed. Cyril Birch and Catherine Swatek Intro.). Indianapolis: Indiana Univ., 2002.
- *Six Yuan Plays* (Penguin Classics). London: Penguin, 1972.
- van Gennep, Arnold, *Rites of Passage*, trans. M.B. Vizedom & G. L. Caffee, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1960.

Course Description:

The question of what happens after the moment of death has always fascinated humanity - at one moment there is a living person, the next only a corpse; where did the person go? Every culture struggles with these questions of death and afterlife - what does it mean to die and what happens after death? This seminar will examine a variety of types of evidence - archaeological, poetic, and philosophical - to uncover ideas of death and afterlife in some of the cultures of the ancient world, with particular attention to the similarities and differences between ideas of death and beyond in the cultures of Greece and China. Van Gennep's model of death as a *rite de passage* provides the basic structure for the class, which is divided into three s (t)-2 (h) dif6 peovi basond i-(a)6

the transition between the worlds; and

Afterlife and the community
Ancient Greece and China

Readings:

Van Gennep, Rites of Passage
Scheffler 2013, Death and Afterlife

Week 2. Sept. 9 – **Death in Greece:** Dying - Who Dies? When and How?

Topics:

- Mortals vs. Immortals
- Good Death and Bad Death
- Mechanics of Dying - departure of the psyche, dissolution of elements

Primary Readings:

Plato, Phaedo
Hesiod, Works and Days
Lyric Poets: Callinus, Tyrtaeus, Semonides, Mimnermus, and Solon
Homer, Iliad xvi, xxii
Herodotus I.30-33 (Solon)

Secondary Readings:

Garland, ch. 1-2
Johnston 1999, ch.1
Vermeule 1979, ch. 1 & 3
Sourvinou-Inwood 1981, To Die and Enter the House of Hades
Humphreys 1980, Death and Time

Special Topics:

- Mortals vs. Immortals
Vernant, Mortals and Immortals ch 1
Loraux 1995, Therefore Socrates is Immortal
- Good Death and Bad Death
Simonides on the Battle of Plataea
Vernant, A Beautiful Death ch 2
Vernant, Panta kala ch 4

- Mechanics of Dying

Bremmer 1983, The Early Greek Concept of the Soul

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Primary Readings:

The Injustice Done to Dou E and *The Orphan of Zhao* (Both in 6 Yuan plays)
Sima Qian, "Letter to Ren'an" "Biography of Boyi and Shuqi" "Biography of Nie Zheng"
Confucius, *Analects* Book 11

Secondary Readings:

Olberding. Chs. 4 "War, Death and Ancient Chinese Cosmology: Thinking Through the Thickness of Culture", 5 "Death and Dying in the Analects" and 6 "I Know not 'Seems': Grief for Parents in the *Analects*"

Special Topics:

- *Women and inheritance:*

Birge, *Women, Property and Confucian Reaction* Chs. 2 and 4 (connect on Tripod)

- *Chinese Knight Errants*

James Liu, "The Chinese Knight Errant" and "Yueh Fei and China's Heritage of Loyalty"

- *Womanly Virtue:*

Theiss, Ch. From *Disgraceful Matters*

Week 4. Sept. 23 Liminality for the Community in Greece: The Funeral Ritual and Mourning

Topics:

- Ritual for the community
- Miasma and Purification
- Funeral ritual in different periods
 - Funeral components - burial vs. cremation, offerings, lamentation
 - Funeral Legislation - community regulates its rituals, the role of women
- Parallels between funeral ritual and marriage ritual
 - Assimilation of the transitions in myth
 - the case of Persephone at Locri

Primary Readings:

Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers*
Sophocles, *Antigone*
Homeric Hymn to Demeter
Lucian On Mourning
Funeral legislation references: Demosthenes 43.57-66 & Plato, *Laws* 958d-960b;
Plutarch, *Life of Solon*; Cicero, *de legibus* 2.55-69

Secondary Readings

Garland, ch. 3; 4
Kurtz and Boardman 1971, ch. vii; xi
Alexiou 1974, *The Ritual Lament* ch. 1
Johnston 1999, ch. 2
Vermeule 1979, ch. 5

Special Topics:

- Miasma and Purification
 - Parker 1983, Miasma ch. 1-2, Cyrene Appendix
 - Lex Sacra from Selinous
- Funeral ritual in different periods
 - Sourvinou-Inwood 1983, A Trauma in Flux; Appendix to Reading Greek Death
 - Morris 1989, Attitudes toward Death in Archaic Greece
- Lamentation
 - Alexiou 1974, Ritual Lament ch. 7-9 (on reserve in Carpenter)
 - Hame 2008, Female Control
- Funeral Legislation
 - Garland 1989, The well-ordered corpse
 - Toher 1991, Greek funerary legislation and the two Spartan funerals
- Marriage and Death
 - Seaford 1987, The Tragic Wedding
 - Rehm 1994, Marriage to Death, ch 1-2
 - Sourvinou-

Topics:

- the journey - directions
- obstacles to the journey - need for burial, the water barrier, special knowledge
- Failed transitions - the fate of the unburied, unmarried, or untimely dead, Lamia and other female demons
- the use of ghosts - necromancy, defixiones

Primary Readings:

Odyssey 10-11, 24

Necromancy in Kestos of Julius Africanus & Aeschylus' Persians

Pausan

Poo, Intro and *Rethinking Ghosts* "Culture of Ghosts in the Six Dynasties Period"
Yu, Anthony, "Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit!"

Special Topics:

- *Theorizing the ghost in literary theory:*

Marge Garber's *Shakespeare's Ghosts* Intro, Ch. 1 and 7

- *Gendering the Ghost*

Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine* Intro and Chs. 1 "The Ghost's Body" and 3 "Ghosts and Historical Time" (connect via Tripod)

- *The Angry Ghost*

Feuchtwang, "The Avenging Ghost" in *Religion and Society: Anthropology of Religion, Charisma and Ghosts* (connect via Tripod)

Week 9.Oct. 28 **Beyond:** After Death in Greece - the community regroupes

Topics:

- secondary burial practices
- epitaphs and funeral orations
- visiting the tomb and hero cult

Primary Readings:

Homer, *Iliad* xxiii-xxiv

Thucydides 2.33-46, Pericles' Funeral Oration

Lysias Funeral Oration

Demosthenes Funeral Oration

Hyperides Funeral Oration

Plato, *Menexenus*

Secondary Readings

Kurtz and Boardman 1971 ch. xii; xiv

Garland, ch.7

Lattimore 1942, *Themes in Greek & Latin Epitaphs*

O.1(G)2(r)4(e(s)9(i)3(as)9(F)7(u)4(n)4(h3 -1.13 T&)-3(p)1(it)3.1(a)-3(T, Ait)3n1.12 Tdh3 -TTT0 1

Rohde 1925, Psyche ch.iv

Whitely 1995, Tomb and hero cult in Archaic Greece

- funeral games

Plato: myths from Phaedo (107c-115b) and Gorgias (523a-527e);
Pausanias X.28-31 on Polygnotos (cp. Frazer's commentary)
Lucian, Dialogues of the Dead
Plutarch de sera numinis vindicta

Secondary Readings

Garland, ch. 5, 6
Vermeule 1979, ch. 2

Special Topics:

- post-mortem punishment
 - Burkert 2009, Pleading for Hell
 - Saunders 1991, Anxieties and Surrogates
- Mystery Cults and Salvation
 - Burkert 1987, Mystery Cults
 - Redfield 1991, The Politics of Immortality
- Orphism
 - Parker 1995, Early Orphism
 - Edmonds 2008, Extra-ordinary People
- Philosophical Consolations
 - [Plato] Axiochus
 - Plutarch, Consolatio ad Apollonium
 - Boys-Stones 2013, The Consolatio ad Apollonium: Therapy for the Dead

Week 12. Nov. 18 **Beyond the** Afterlife: Reincarnation or Nothing in China

Topics:

- Memory and Identity
- Spirit and self
- Trials and justice

Primary Readings:

"Moonlight Monk" and "Mi Heng"
Lang Xian "Censor Xue Finds Immortality"

Secondary Readings:

Introduction from The Resurrected Skeleton: From Zhuangzi to Lu Xun
Bokenkamp, Ancestors and Anxiety pp.1-32, Chs. 4 and 5 (Connect on Tripod)

Special Topics:

- Purgatory in Medieval Buddhism
 - Teiser, Scripture of the Ten Kings pp. 1-31
- Memory and Rebirth
 - Mo Yan Life and Death are Wearing Me Out

Week 13. Nov. 25 **Beyond the** Afterlife: Reincarnation or Nothing in Greece

Topics:

- Alternatives to the Underworld
- Atomism and the afterlife
- Ethicization of reincarnation

Primary Readings:

Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Empedokles & Pythagoras
Plato on reincarnation: selections from Republic & Phaedrus
Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, book III
Aeneas of Gaza, Theophrastus

Secondary Readings:

Edmonds 2013, Life in the Afterlife
Henry, Epicurean Ideas of Death
Long 1948, A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis
Obeyesekere 2002, Eschatology In Greek And Rebirth Soteriology

Special Topics:

- *pre-ethicized reincarnation*

Obeyesekere, Imagining Karma (on reserve in Carpenter)

- *Epicurean philosophy and death*

Philodemus On Death (on reserve in Carpenter)

Epicurus, *Letter to Menoecius*

Warren, *Facing death: Epicurus and his critics* (on reserve in Carpenter)

- *Neoplatonic ideas of reincarnation*

Neoplatonists on Reincarnation: excerpts from Plotinus, Proclus, et al.

Baltzly, Patriarchy, Metempsychosis and Women in the Neoplatonic Commentary
Tradition

[Proclus, *in Remp.* XVI]

Week 14.Dec. 2 Student Reports

Week 15.Dec. 9 Conclusions