

**GRIMALDI'S
FUNERAL ORATION,
JANUARY 19, 1550**

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Grimaldi's Funeral Oration, January 19, 1550 by Andrea Alciati

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ANDREA ALCIATI

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PREFACE.



IRTUES, in the fullest extent to which human effort can attain, never truly deserve those unmeasured praises which to the authors of Funeral Orations so often appear necessary, if not essential. Vitiated and faulty, offensive to good taste, and built up on unsound principles as are many of the panegyrics, the laudations, the *lodi*, which from Greek and Latin down

to Italian times have prevailed, and thence through Italy have spread among all the countries of the modern civilization; we should commit an injustice, were we to declare that flattery of an unscrupulous kind must always be interwoven with them, and summon exaggeration to its aid. This Funeral Oration for Alciati is, indeed, much overdrawn; there is some very vapid declamation in it, and where most it is successful, there is found a want of the natural flow of eloquence which makes an articulate-speaking man so powerful; yet there is in Grimaldi an honest heartiness which shows that the Orator himself, how much soever he may have failed in clearness of expression, thought what he uttered, and bestowed

much pains as well as feeling to make his thought understood and to pervade the minds of his hearers.

As stated elsewhere,—“ In translating this Oration, the Editor has derived much guidance, as to the general meaning and force, from a highly valued friend, who allowed him the use of his English version, and whose kindness is now acknowledged; but the Editor has thought it better, at some expense of elegance it may be, to follow rather closely the language and form of the original. The *Carmina* on Alciati's death and renown are no part of the Oration, and they are left in their original Latin.”

Those were indeed great funeral themes which engaged the genius of Pericles and Demosthenes; the *one*, when the Athenians publicly solemnized the memory of such as were first killed in the Peloponnesian war, B.C. 431; the *other*, when the same honour was decreed for those who fell in the fatal conflict of Chæroncia, B.C. 338; but a theme on a similar subject, though much inferior in importance, was, in October, 1571, assigned at Venice to Paolo Pavia, “ in laude de' morti,” in praise of the dead, “ at the victorious battle against the Turks fought at Cursolari.” With much joy the orator spoke of their valour, and esteemed theirs a most happy fate. “ But it is time,” he said, “ that I should cease praising with the tongue those whose praises in the memory of men will not have any bound, except with the world itself.”

About the time of Alciati's death, and down at least to the end of the last century, the practice was observed of pronouncing over men exalted for rank or character, a solemn laudatory speech. Of such speeches, a considerable number—*fifty*—were collected by William Roscoe, the historian of the Medici, and are preserved in the very excellent library of the Chetham College, Manchester.

Belonging to the sixteenth century, and beginning with Leonardo Salviati's *Orasione* on the death of the most illustrious Don Garzia de' Medici, in 1562, there are *thirteen* of these Funeral Orations. They are generally of a small quarto size, containing from 16 to 65 pages, and usually end with the words “ Io ho detto,” I have

said it. Many of them are translations from the original Latin into the tongue of Florence.

No less than five of these Orations celebrate the death and virtues of Cosimo de' Medici, who died in 1574, Grand-duke of Tuscany and Grand-master of the Cavaliers of S. Stephen. The Oration by Leonardo Salviati, in the church of the Order, has on its title the pretty device of a tortoise with hoisted sail, and the old motto, *FESTINALENTE*, *On-slow*, as one of our English nobles translates the Latin: another by Piero Vettori, in the church of S. Lorenzo, bears the device of a ship with full sails, and the motto *ET POTESSET VULT*, *It both can and will*: the third by Geo. Batista Adriani, in the public palace, presents a portrait of Cosimo and an inscription below it, declaring it to be the gift of Pius V., in testimony to Cosimo's "peculiar delight and zeal for the Catholic religion, and especial love of justice:" the fourth by Pietro Angelio da Burga, in the Duomo of Pisa, contains as well the ducal arms as Cosimo's portrait: and the fifth, by Benedetto Betti, publicly recited to the Society of S. John the Evangelist, contains an account of the funeral obsequies, and at the end the Lily, with the appropriate motto *NIL CANDIDIUS*, *Nothing fairer*.*

But, like prayer itself, these praises were not for princes alone. Witness, in 1564, Benedetto Varchi's *Orazione*

* Besides these Cosimo-Medicean orations, and probably several others, there were published on the same occasion *Cansone*, like the *Carmina* at the end of Grimaldi's work, *i. e.* Odes on the death of the most serene Cosimo Medici, first grand-duke of Tuscany. One set of these was by Giovanni Cervoni da Colle, who also composed *Cansone* on the death of Francesco Medici, in 1587; on the nuptials of Don Cesare d'Este to Donna Virginia Medici, also in 1587; and on the crowning of the Cardinal de' Medici as grand-duke of Tuscany, 1587.

We may note also, as belonging to the end of the same sixteenth century, and as contained in the Roscoe Collection, —1. The Cardinal Niceno's *Lettere & Orazioni* to the princes of Italy concerning the impending war against the Turk, 1594; and Scipione Ammirato's *Orazione* at the same time to the pope Sextus V., pertaining to the same subject. 2. Also in 1594, Scipione Ammirato addressed orations to Sextus V. on the preparations which had been made against the power of the Turk; and "to his Lord the most serene and most powerful Catholic king, Philip King of Spain, &c.," "on the pacification of Christendom, and on taking arms unitedly against the Infidels."

Funerale at the obsequies of Michelagnolo Buonarroti, in the church of San Lorenzo; and in 1585, Leonardo Salviati's *Orazione Funerale* "of the praises of Pier Vettori, Senator and Academician of Florence, by order of the Florentine Academy, in the church of Santo Spirito."

The Roscoe collection of *Lodi* possesses 12 similar Orationes delivered in the seventeenth century, between 1614 and 1664; and 26 Funeral Orationes of the eighteenth century, between 1709 and 1781. By any one disposed to the work, many curious extracts might be gathered from these memorials of the illustrious dead; but to make such a work complete, a very wide area would have to be examined. Augustus pronounced the Funeral Oration for the young Marcellus,—and Nero for his wife Poppæa. Over Christian martyrs the holy words of commendation were uttered; and in later times, at the burial hour of philosophers and poets, of statesmen, generals, and philanthropists, of mighty princes and of noble patriots, the tongue of the eloquent has spoken many a vain flattery and many a solemn truth. Laymen, no less than ecclesiastics, have joined in the practice; and the Academies of Italy and France have set the whole civilized world the example of rendering speech the vehicle of praise. "Of the dead nothing but good" has been too much their rule;—"nothing set down in malice" might be the better guide.

Of the two ornamental capitals employed, the V presents the Alc, or Elk, the badge of the family of the Alciati; the H, the Cornucopiæ and Mercury's wand, which Paolo Giovio and the medal in the Museum Mazzucchellianum have attributed to the Jurisconsult himself, Giovio adopting for motto, VIRTUTI, FORTVNA COMES, *Fortune the companion to virtue*, and Mazzuchelli, when corrected, ΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΟΥΚ ΑΠΟΛΑΪΤΑΙ, *The fruit of the just man perishes not*.

H. G.

HEATHFIELD, KNUTSFORD,
July 27th, 1871.



FUNERAL ORATION

*Delivered at Pavia, January 19th,
M.D.L.*

IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH,
AT THE FUNERAL
OF THE VERY FAMOUS JURISCONSULT
ANDREA ALCIATI,

BY
ALEXANDER GRIMALDI OF ANTIPOLIS.



OW GREAT,
alas! was the
wound which
lately the Com-
monwealth of
Christians re-
ceived by the
decease of An-
drea Alciati, a
man confessedly
the chief of all
ages and of all
memory in
learning and
virtue. The loss
not even he, on
whom nature

has bestowed the highest fulness and faculty of speaking,
could in any way, I say not, encompass by eloquence, but
even enumerate by narrating. For where in man has there

B

UofM