

**DEATH AND BURIAL IN  
ATTIC TRAGEDY: PART  
I. DEATH AND THE DEAD**

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Death and Burial in Attic Tragedy: Part I. Death and the Dead by Lucia Catherine Graeme Grieve

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**LUCIA CATHERINE GRAEME GRIEVE**

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*With this supplement of the*

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DEATH AND BURIAL IN ATTIC TRAGEDY

PART I  
DEATH AND THE DEAD

BY  
LUCIA CATHERINE GRAEME GRIEVE, A. M.

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To my Mother

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## INTRODUCTION

ANCIENT Greek life was divided into so many small separate streams, and developed so rapidly towards both its perfection and its decay, that very few statements can be true either of the whole people or of the whole period. While undoubtedly many customs survived through centuries, at the same time fashions changed from generation to generation in even the most important points; the contact with outside nations, the introduction of foreign religions, and the experience of new forms of government, radically and continually affected thought and life throughout the entire nation. Besides, though homogeneous in race, and to a certain extent in language, the Greeks were far from being so in any other respect. In the separate states, the development was remarkably uneven, individualism was the most striking characteristic, and every city and hamlet prided itself on legends and practices peculiarly its own.

The study of Greek life, to be properly understood, should be taken up country by country and period by period. Heretofore this has not been possible; now, with the multitudes of inscriptions of all sorts coming daily to the surface, with the works of long-lost authors, vases and gems, temples and palaces, perpetually unearthed, we may hope ultimately for a fairly intelligible reconstruction of the daily life and feeling of that great race to whom we owe the best of our culture and the greater part of our civilization.

In the following pages I have attempted to touch but one phase of that multitudinous life, the ideas regarding death, in but one city and age, the Vth century at Athens. Convinced that the later writers, like Lucian, were not to be depended

on, for the Greeks had no true archæological sense, I went to those confessed reflectors of daily life, the three great Tragedians. To be sure, but a small portion of their works remains to us, but from what is left, many stray facts can be gleaned, which, if placed together in the light we now have from archæological sources, give some idea of what was in the popular mind of that day.

Aristophanes also throws some light on these subjects, but his uncurbed love of burlesque makes him, in the present state of our knowledge, unsafe as a guide. Similarly Plato, because of his playful exaggeration when speaking of popular notions, and the large infusion of his own fancies into what he commends, is not generally to be trusted. Demosthenes and the other orators, living in the IVth century, under entirely different conditions, are of but little use for our present purpose. It is otherwise with Homer; though belonging to an age grown legendary, he remained a sort of standard to which many things were referred; aside from that, through the large familiarity with his works possessed by every educated man in Athens, his influence must have been very great in shaping and directing thought. To Pausanias also I have often referred; for he was by nature and affinity an antiquarian, and, unlike Lucian, sincere and earnest, preserving many valuable details, and if sometimes mistaken, not so through any fault of his own. Fragments of the Tragedians, being often but short quotations and frequently wholly detached from their context, I have in general avoided as untrustworthy to settle a disputed point, and have used only to express more tersely or in better language ideas found somewhere else; but where they falsify a universal negative, I have given them the benefit of the doubt in so far as to leave the point undecided.

The testimony of actual excavators is beyond question the best, and on that I have rested, wherever available, as an ultimate authority. The study of the vases I have found invaluable; that of the tombstone reliefs only less so; for in both,