

Public Spectacle and Memory in the *Annals* of Tacitus

1) Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 56.34

κλίνη ἦν ἔκ τε ἐλέφαντος καὶ χρυσοῦ πεποιημένη καὶ στρώμασιν ἀλουργοῖς διαχρύσοις κεκοσμημένη: καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ μὲν σῶμα κάτω που ἐν θήκῃ συνεκέκρυπτο, εἰκὼν δὲ δὴ τις αὐτοῦ κηρίνη ἐν ἐπινικίῳ στολῇ ἐξεφαίνετο. καὶ αὕτη μὲν ἐκ τοῦ παλατίου πρὸς τῶν ἐς νέωτα ἀρχόντων, ἑτέρα δὲ ἐκ τοῦ βουλευτηρίου χρυσῆ, καὶ ἑτέρα αὖ ἐφ' ἄρματος πομπικῆ ἤγετο. καὶ μετὰ ταύτας αἱ τε τῶν προπατόρων αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τῶν ἄλλων συγγενῶν τῶν τεθνηκότων, πλὴν τῆς τοῦ Καίσαρος ὅτι ἐς τοὺς ἥρωας ἐσεγγράπτο, αἱ τε τῶν ἄλλων Ῥωμαίων τῶν καὶ καθ' ὅτιοῦν πρωτευσάντων, ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Ῥωμύλου ἀρξάμεναι, ἐφέροντο. καὶ τις καὶ τοῦ Πομπηίου τοῦ μεγάλου εἰκὼν ὤφθη, **τά τε ἔθνη πάνθ' ὅσα προσεκτῆσατο, ἐπιχωρίως σφίσιν ὡς ἕκαστα ἀπηκασμένα ἐπέμφθη.** καὶ τούτου καὶ τὰ ἄλλα αὐτοῖς, ὅσα ἐν τοῖς ἄνω λόγοις εἴρηται, ἐφέσπετο. προτεθείσης δὲ τῆς κλίνης ἐπὶ τοῦ δημηγορικῆ βήματος, ἀπὸ μὲν ἐκείνου ὁ Δροῦσός τι ἀνέγνω, ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἑτέρων ἐμβόλων τῶν Ἰουλείων ὁ Τιβέριος δημόσιον δὴ τινα κατὰ δόγμα λόγον ἐπ' αὐτῷ τοιόνδε ἐπελέξατο.

There was a couch made of ivory and gold and adorned with coverings of purple and gold: in it the body had been concealed, in a coffin down below, **but a wax image of him in triumphal robes was visible. This image was carried from the palace by officials elected for the following year. Another image of gold was carried from the senate-house, while yet another was carried upon a triumphal chariot. Behind these followed images of his ancestors and his other deceased relatives - except that of Caesar because he had been enrolled among the *divi* - and those of other Romans who had excellent in some way, beginning with **Romulus.** An image of **Pompey the Great** was seen as well, **and all the nations he had acquired, each represented by a native likeness, appeared in the procession.** Next after these came the other nations whose annexation has been recounted above. **When the couch had been displayed on the speaker's platform, Drusus read something from there; and from the other *rostra*, the Julian one, Tiberius gave, as decreed, a public oration in Augustus' honor of the following sort.****

2) Tacitus, *Annales* 1.8.1-2

... *tertio gradu primores ciuitatis scripserat, plerosque inuisos sibi sed iactantia gloriaque ad posteros. legata non ultra ciuilem modum, nisi quod populo et plebi quadringenties tricis quinquies, praetoriarum cohortium militibus singula nummum milia, legionariis aut cohortibus ciuium Romanorum trecenos nummos uiritim dedit. tum consultatum de honoribus; ex quis qui maxime insignes uisi, ut porta triumphali duceretur funus Gallus Asinius, ut legum latarum tituli, uictarum ab eo gentium uocabula anteferrentur L. Arruntius censuere...*

... in the third place he had listed Rome's leading men, many of whom he hated - **a form of boasting and a way to gain credit with posterity.** His legacies were not beyond a private citizen's measure, **except that he gave 43,500,000 sesterces to the people and plebs, 1,000 coins to each soldier of the praetorian guards, and 300 per man to the legionaries and cohorts made up of Roman citizens.** Next followed a debate about his honors. These were the most conspicuous: that the procession was to pass through the triumphal gate (proposed by Gallus Asinius), that the titles of laws he passed and the names of peoples he had conquered were to lead the way (proposed by Lucius Arruntius)...

3) Tacitus, *Annales* 1.8.5-6

... populumque edicto monuit ne, ut quondam nimiis studiis funus diui Iulii turbassent, ita Augustum in foro potius quam in campo Martis, sede destinata, cremari uellent. die funeris milites uelut praesidio stetero, multum inridentibus qui ipsi uiderant quique a parentibus acceperant diem illum crudi adhuc seruitii et libertatis inprospere repetitae, cum occisus dictator Caesar aliis pessimum aliis pulcherrimum facinus uideretur: nunc senem principem, longa potentia, prouisis etiam heredum in rem publicam opibus, auxilio scilicet militari tuendum, ut sepultura eius quieta foret.

... he had warned the people by edict that, whereas they had once disrupted the funeral of the Divine Julius by their excessive enthusiasm, they should not wish Augustus to be cremated in the Forum rather than the Campus Martius, his appointed resting-place. On the day of the funeral soldiers stood by as a guard, causing much ridicule among those who themselves had seen and those who had heard from their parents about that day, when, with slavery still something fresh and liberty reclaimed in vain, the assassination of the dictator Caesar was seen by some as the worst, by others as the finest deed: now an aged *princeps*, who had long ruled, and had even provided his heir with means to coerce the state, needed military protection for his funeral to proceed peacefully.

4) Tacitus, *Annales* 1.9.3-5

at apud prudentis uita eius uarie extollebatur arguebaturue. hi pietate erga parentem et necessitudine rei publicae, in qua nullus tunc legibus locus, ad arma ciuilia actum quae neque parari possent neque haberi per bonas artis. multa Antonio, dum interfectores patris ulcisceretur, multa Lepido concessisse. postquam hic socordia senuerit, ille per libidines pessum datus sit, non aliud discordantis patriae remedium fuisse quam ut ab uno regeretur. non regno tamen neque dictatura sed principis nomine constitutam rem publicam; mari Oceano aut omnibus longinquis saeptum imperium; legiones, prouincias, classis, cuncta inter se conexa; ius apud ciuis, modestiam apud socios; urbem ipsam magnifico ornatu; pauca admodum ui tractata quo ceteris quies esset.

Among the insightful, however, his life was variously extolled or criticized. The former said **that duty towards his parent and the needs of the state (where, at the time, laws had no place) had forced him into a civil war**, one that could not be planned for or executed by honorable means. He had made many concessions to Antony while exacting revenge from his father's assassins, and many to Lepidus. After the latter had grown old in idleness and the former had been ruined by his lusts, no other remedy remained for the divided country than that it be ruled by one man. **However, our state is not based on kingship or dictatorship but on the name of "princeps"**: the Ocean and far-away rivers formed the empire's boundaries; legions, provinces, fleets, everything was interconnected; there was justice amongst the citizens and restraint amongst our allies; the city itself had been marvelously embellished; **very few things had been handled by force to give the remainder peace**.

5) Tacitus, *Annales* 1.10.1-4

Dicebatur contra: pietatem erga parentem et tempora rei publicae obtentui sumpta: ceterum cupidine dominandi concitos per largitionem ueteranos, paratum ab adulescente priuato exercitum, corruptas consulis legiones, simulatam Pompeianarum gratiam partium; mox ubi decreto patrum fascis et ius praetoris inuaserit, caesis Hirtio et Pansa, siue hostis illos, seu Pansam uenenum uulneri adfusum, sui milites Hirtium et machinator doli Caesar abstulerat, utriusque copias occupauisse; extortum inuito senatu consulatum, armaque quae in Antonium acceperit contra rem publicam uersa; proscriptionem ciuium, diuisiones agrorum ne ipsi quidem qui fecere laudatas. sane Cassii et Brutorum exitus paternis inimicitiis datos, quamquam fas sit priuata odia publicis utilitatibus remittere: sed Pompeium imagine pacis, sed Lepidum specie amicitiae deceptos; post Antonium, Tarentino Brundisinoque foedere et nuptiis sororis inlectum, subdolae adfinitatis poenas morte exsoluisse. pacem sine dubio post haec, uerum cruentam: Lollianas Uarianasque cladis, interfectos Romae Uarrones, Egnatios, Iullos.

On the other hand it was said that **devotion to his parent and the state's circumstances had been used as a screen: in fact it had been out of lust for supreme power** that he had mobilized the legions through largesse, had, as a young civilian, acquired an army, had bribed consular legions, and had feigned support for the Pompeian cause. Subsequently, when by a decree of the fathers he had appropriated the insignia and authority of a praetor, after Hirtius and Pansa were slain (either the enemy had killed them or Pansa had perished through poison applied to a wound and Hirtius by his own men in a plot of Octavian's devising), he took over both men's forces. He had extorted a consulate from an unwilling senate and had turned the weapons he had received to fight Antony against the state; the proscription of citizens and distributions of lands had not been praised even by those who had carried them out. It is true that the demise of the Cassii and Brutii had been a concession to an inherited feud (though private animosities should be surrendered to the good of the state). But Sextus Pompey had been deceived by a phantom peace, Lediplus by a show of friendship. Next Antony, enticed by the Tarentine and Brundisian treaties and by a marriage to Octavian's sister, had paid with his life for a treacherous alliance. **No doubt there was peace after this, but a peace stained with blood:** there had been the Lollian and Varian disasters and the killing at Rome of Varrones, Egnatii, and Iulli.

6) *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* (ILS 244, lines 1-2)

... *foedusue cum quibus uolet facere liceat ita, uti licuit diuo Aug., |*
Ti. Iulio Caesari Aug., Tiberioque Claudio Caesari Aug. Germanico |

... or it shall be lawful for him to make a treaty with whomever he wishes, just as it was lawful for the deified Augustus, for Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus, and for Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus.

(cf. same sequence of names in lines 5-6, 20-21, 23-25)

7) *Tabula Siarensis*, lines 160-168 (transcription and translation: Lott 2012, 94-95)

160 (11) [XXXV tribuum; item placere uti car]men, quid Ti(berius) Caesar Aug(ustus) in
 eo ordine a(nte) d(iem) XVII k(alendas) Ian(uarias)
 [de laudando Germanico filio]suo proposuisset, in aere incisum figeretur loco
 publico
 [--- quocumque ipsi] placeret; idque eo iustius futurum arbitrari senatum, **quod**
[animum Ti(beri)] Caesaris Aug(usti) intumus et Germanici Caesaris f(ili) eius non
magis laudatio-
nem quam uitae totius ordinem et uirtut^{is} eius uerum testimonium contineret,

165 (16) aeternae tradi memoriae, et ipse se uelle non dissimulare eodem libello testatus
 esset, **et esse utile iuuentuti liberorum posterorumque nostrorum iudicaret;**
item quo testatior esset Drusi Caesaris pietas, placere uti libellus, quem is proxi-
 mo senatu recitasset, incideretur eoque loco figeretur quo patri eius ipsique
 placuisset;

160 (11) of the thirty five tribes; and likewise the senate directed that the verse praising his son Germanicus, which Tiberius Caesar Augustus had read aloud in a senate meeting on December 16, should be inscribed in bronze and erected in whatever public place he wished; and the senate judged this would be all the more appropriate **because the deepest feelings of Tiberius Caesar Augustus indeed contain not so much a eulogy for his son Germanicus Caesar as a history of his whole life and a true testament of his**

165 (16) **merit, which ought to be passed down in eternal memory,** and because he himself had declared that he had not wished to exaggerate anything in this same document, **and because he judges it to be useful to the youth of the future; likewise, so that the devotion of Drusus Caesar might be better attested,** the senate directed that the book which he had read aloud in the most recent meeting of the senate should be inscribed in bronze and erected in a place that his father and he himself determined;

8) Tacitus, *Annales* 3.5

Fuere qui publici funeris pompam requirerent compararentque quae in Drusum patrem Germanici honora et magnifica Augustus fecisset. ipsum quippe asperrimo hiemis Ticinum usque progressum neque abscedentem a corpore simul urbem intrauisse; circumfusas lecto Claudiorum Iuliorumque imagines; defletum in foro, laudatum pro rostris, cuncta a maioribus reperta aut quae posterius inuenerint cumulata: at Germanico ne solitos quidem et cuiusque nobili debitos honores contigisse. sane corpus ob longinquitatem itinerum externis terris quoquo modo crematum: sed tanto plura decora mox tribui par fuisse quanto prima fors negauisset. non fratrem nisi unius diei uia, non patruum saltem porta tenus obuium. ubi illa ueterum instituta, propositam toro effigiem, meditata ad memoriam uirtutis carmina et laudationes et lacrimas uel doloris imitamenta?

There were those who missed the procession of a state-funeral and compared the magnificent honors that Augustus had paid to Germanicus' father Drusus. "Then the emperor himself," they said, "in the extreme harshness of winter **went as far as Ticinum** and staying close by the corpse entered the City with it. Images of the Claudii and Iulii had been spread around the couch. He had been lamented in the Forum, eulogized before the *rostra*. Everything devised by their ancestors or which their descendants invented was piled high. **But to Germanicus had fallen not even the customary honors and those owed to any noble. Of course the corpse, due to the length of the various journeys, had been cremated in foreign lands in whatever manner: but it would have been fair to grant him all the more honors afterwards since at first chance had denied them. His brother had gone but one day's journey to meet him; his uncle, not even to the city gate.** Where were those established practices of our ancients, the image at the head of the bier, the poems performed for the commemoration of virtue, and the praises and tears or at least the semblance of grief?"

9) Other imperial funerals in Tacitus' *Annales*

The younger Drusus: *Ann.* 4.7-12

Claudius: *Ann.* 13.2-3

Britannicus: *Ann.* 13.17-18

The younger Agrippina: *Ann.* 14.9-13

Poppaea Sabina: *Ann.* 16.6-7

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