

## Tiberius in Mourning: Dealing with the Deaths of Drusus and Germanicus

This paper will analyze the deaths of Drusus and Germanicus, paying special attention to the depiction of the mourning of Tiberius. The historical and literary tradition behind Tiberius is complex. Although he is most infamous for his role as emperor, before he became *princeps*, he was known as a capable commander. Evidence shows that he was also a loving brother. Valerius Maximus in fact presents him as the prime example of brotherly love at 5.5.3. In this account Tiberius rides tirelessly from Ticinum to Germany to be at Drusus' bedside before his passing. In *Consolatio ad Polybium* 15.5 he displays tender feelings while present for his brother's last breath. According to *Periochae* book 142, *Consolatio ad Liviam* 171-76, Suetonius *Tib.* 7.3, and Dio 55.2, Tiberius then accompanies the body back to Rome and sees to it that Drusus receives full honors. These sources portray Tiberius as a faithful, affectionate brother, one who is dutiful towards his family.

Because Tiberius shows such great care for his brother, it is perhaps surprising that he shows such lack of tenderness for his brother's son several years later. The people of Rome are certainly surprised and talk about this striking incongruence at *Annals* 3.5. In order to silence their talk, Tiberius delivers a speech with all the markings of a proper *consolatio* and echoes themes from the *Consolatio ad Polybium* and *Consolatio ad Liviam*. This *consolatio*, however, is not genuine, but is just meant to appease the *populus* (*utque premeret vulgi sermones, Annals* 3.6). It is a fake *consolatio*. Tacitus insinuates several times in his text that Tiberius may have been involved in the downfall of Germanicus, so how could Tacitus depict Tiberius' mourning for his nephew as sincere? On the other hand, how could a man who supposedly mourned his brother so deeply behave so heartlessly towards his brother's son?

Interesting information is found in Suetonius. At *Tiberius* 50.1 Suetonius asserts that Tiberius showed hatred toward his brother and revealed evidence about Drusus' desire to restore the Republic. At *Claud.* 1.4-5 Suetonius again mentions Drusus' desire to restore the Republic and states that other authors consequently thought there was animosity between Drusus and the emperor. He also reports the rumor that Drusus was poisoned by Augustus when he did not return quickly from his province.

This information from Suetonius suggests that Tiberius may have participated in Drusus' downfall with Augustus just as, according to Tacitus, he may have plotted Germanicus' downfall in the *Annals*, all because of republican dispositions. Indeed, at *Annals* 2.82, the deaths of Germanicus and Drusus are linked through the statement that rulers dislike civil-minded sons. From this perspective, it seems Tiberius' affections for Drusus may not have been as exemplary as depicted by other authors, and that Tiberius' mourning for Drusus may have been insincere like his mourning for Germanicus. Through examination of the extant texts, we will see that perhaps the people's observation at *Annals* 3.5 concerning the dissimilar treatment of father and son is not entirely as accurate as it first appears.

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