

## Roman Funerals, Excessive Public Grief, and Memorials for the Dead

On the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Germanicus, we consider normal and abnormal expressions of grief at funerals, for the hysteria that followed the news of the death of Germanicus, the joy at a false report of his survival, and the renewed frenzy upon his verified death cast all normal standards into the wayside (Stern). With this in mind, one prudently considers what was the normal for a Roman funeral before we can identify the abnormalities seen in AD 19 all over the Empire.

The first presenter examines the hysteria that followed the news of the death of Germanicus, the joy at a false report of his survival, and the renewed frenzy upon his verified death cast aside all normal standards of Roman stoicism in the face of hardship. Tiberius attempted to display a stoic response (Tacitus says to conceal his joy) and lead by example, but other Romans, wholly ignoring his role model behaved as if the death of Germanicus equated the downfall of the state. People did not behave this way at the deaths of other beloved statesmen – not even Augustus in AD 14. In our lifetimes the parallels are strongest to RFK (both 1968). As the Romans lacked an apocalyptic belief that their world would end, the all-consuming grief at the death of Germanicus more a literary device presaging the worsening of times than a genuine depiction of how people reacted.

The second presenter considers the normal and abnormal behavior of women at funerals in Livy. Women were expected to mourn the dead publicly, and any deviation from this standard raises comment. Examined are three episodes in Livy where the normal funeral practice could not apply, namely the intervention of the women in war between the Romans and the Sabines (750 BC), Horatia's grief after the duel between the Horatii and Curiatii, and the difficulties performing funerals during the Hannibalic War (218-02), all of which resonated highly with Livy's contemporary audience in the aftermath of the civil wars. Although the state regulated women's grief, the constraints were forced to change and evolve due to intensity of losses and duration of the Second Punic War. Funerals thus played a role in the expansion and evolution of women's status in Roman society.

The third presenter examines the question of what was normal at a Roman funeral and challenged some accepted standards, whose authenticity is uncertain. In almost every modern reconstruction of Roman funerals, scholars assert that there was a standard nine-day funeral period and then a secondary rite that took place at the grave nine days after the burial. Recent scholarship has tended to increase the complexity of this “ninth-day rite” with increasingly elaborate

conjectures. It is argued that there is actually no ancient evidence for the regular practice of any ritual on the ninth day after burial, and that texts that scholars have cited to that effect cannot bear weight put upon them.

The last presenter takes a voyage across the Adriatic Sea where an examination of Myrina Kalaitzi's (2016) catalog of Macedonian tombstones will explore depictions of women in the classical period. Except from Elizabeth Carney, Macedonian women have received little attention and an evaluation of images on tombstones is completely absent. Leader (1997) investigated gender relationships on Athenian tombstones, concluding women's images were specifically linked to the *oikos* while men were usually seen in context of the *polis*. Although evidence is minimal, Carney (2010) believes Macedonian women would have participated outside the home more and may have had greater freedoms than other Greek women. A basic question is whether images of Macedonian women on funeral *stelae* also are limited to the *oikos* or if civic roles are also present.