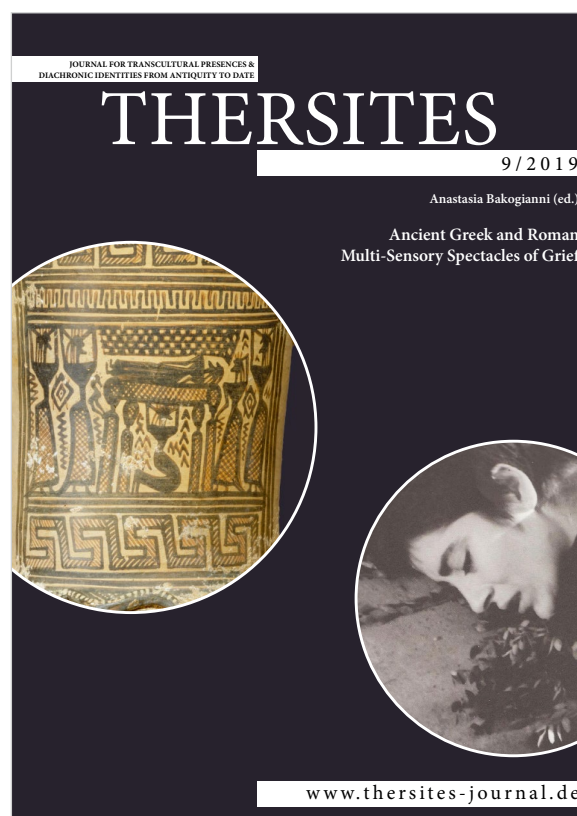


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An Emperor's Tears
The Significance of the Mourning of the
Julio-Claudian Emperors

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ABSTRACT

At the death of Germanicus in 19 CE, the behaviour of the emperor Tiberius came under scrutiny. How would he react to his nephew's death? According to Tacitus, the failure of Tiberius to make a public appearance was seen as telling, surely it indicated that Tiberius did not wish his lack of remorse and grief to be witnessed (Ann. 3.2-3). Tiberius' behaviour as a mourner needed to match his behaviour as emperor – secretive, untrusting, inappropriate and quintessentially bad. This paper explores how the Roman emperors from Augustus to Nero were presented as mourning for those that they had lost, highlighting the importance of mourning in the evaluation of character. How an emperor acted as a mourner, whether, for example, he wept openly or shunned the public, could be a considered act of self-presentation, which was open both to contemporary popular scrutiny and posthumous evaluation. The emotion of grief, and the genuineness of its expression, especially through the shedding of tears, became part of a public performance as emperors negotiated the machinations of dynastic succession. How an emperor wept, who for and for how long, could be both a significant measure of his character and of the perceived character, and or importance, of the deceased. An emperor's tears could come at a reputational price both for himself, and for others.

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An Emperor's Tears: The Significance of the Public Mourning of the Julio-Claudian Emperors

1. Introduction: An Emperor's Tears

AT the death of Germanicus in 19 CE, the behaviour of the emperor Tiberius came under scrutiny. How would Tiberius react to his nephew's death? According to Tacitus, the failure of Tiberius, and his mother, to make a public appearance was telling, since it revealed that Tiberius and Livia did not wish their lack of sorrow to be witnessed:

....all men knew that Tiberius was with difficulty dissembling his joy at the death of Germanicus. He and Augusta abstained from any appearance in public, either holding it below their majesty to sorrow in the sight of men, or apprehending that, if all eyes perused their looks, they might find hypocrisy legible.¹

All eyes wished to be upon the emperor, and thus Tiberius judged it best not to be seen at all. In Tacitus' account, Tiberius' behaviour as the lead mourner for Germanicus needed to match his behaviour as the leader of the Roman world; as both mourner and emperor, Tiberius was characteristically secretive, untrusting and in many respects quintessentially bad.

The intention here is to investigate how the Roman emperors from Augustus to Nero were presented as mourning for those that they had lost, placing a new emphasis on an often previously over-looked aspect in the evaluation of ancient character. The reputations of emperors were grounded in many things, but personal attributes and the balancing of the traditional qualities, such as *gravitas*, *dignitas*, *pietas* and *virtus* were central to the definition of what it was to be a good Roman, and a good Roman emperor.²

¹ Tacitus *Annals* 3.2-3. Translation by John Jackson (1931: Loeb Classical Library 249, 525).

² For virtues see, for example, Wallace-Hadrill (1981); Noreña (2001), Balmaceda (2017); for the importance of exemplarity and models of conduct and character in ancient history writing in particular see Roller (2009); Roller (2018); Balmaceda (2017).

One of the greatest challenges to such qualities, which interconnected the personal and the public, was the emotion of grief, its management and display.

2. Welling up – Displaying Grief

Reconstructing how emperors felt during bereavement, or the intensity of their grief, is not the objective (nor possible). Instead this is an investigation of how emperors were presented in the surviving textual sources as mourners, and the significance attached to their public mourning.³ How to define ‘the emotions’ – psychologically, physically, socially, linguistically, culturally and cross-culturally – is complex and challenging.⁴ A Roman experience of grief would not have been identical to the experience of grief in other times and places, and the understanding of what grief entailed differed. In the ancient world grief was not always identified as a separate emotion (or passion) and could be seen as a subcategory of pain.⁵ Aristotle did not include grief among the emotions in his *Rhetoric*, as Konstan has put it because it was ‘a component of emotions, rather than a fully-fledged emotion in its own right’.⁶ Equally Cicero, following Stoic arguments, classed grief under the passion of *aegritudo* (distress), which he described as the most challenging.⁷ Nevertheless, in the Roman world grief was viewed as entailing certain expected (if not always accepted) reactions, and grief, or at least the pain of loss, was also seen as natural and part of the human condition.⁸ Further, the rituals associated with the disposal of the dead had a public aspect, and mourners, whether experiencing grief or not, could be spectated and commented upon.⁹

³ The focus here is on literary texts rather than material culture. The latter (for example, funeral monuments, statues, relief sculptures, coins) also had the potential to represent emperors as mourners, though it rarely did so explicitly, instead more often commemorating the dead (and thus the connections of the living to the dead) rather than grief.

⁴ Cairns (2008); Cairns and Fulkerson (2015).

⁵ Erskine (1997) 41.

⁶ Arist. *Rh.* 2.1, 1378a 20-23; Konstan (2016) 17.

⁷ Cic. *Tusc.* 3.27.

⁸ See, for example, Cic. *Ad Brut.* 1.9.2; Sen. *ad Marc.* 7.1; Sen. *Ep.* 63.1; Sen *Ep.* 99.16; Plut. *Cons ux.* 4.

⁹ See also Bakogianni in this issue (45-46).

In ancient Rome, mourning, that is an expected and often scripted enactment of grief, was a public, ritualised, body-focused, sensory performance.¹⁰ In the days following a death and especially at the funeral, mourners were visible and audible, adapting bodies, faces, hair, clothing, gestures and sounds to mark the state of bereavement and their role in the essential death rites. The extent, and ways, in which these markers were used varied according to factors such as the gender, status and age of the individual mourner, and the closeness and nature of the relationship between the mourner and the deceased. Elite men, who suffered bereavements, were generally not tasked with the messiest, noisiest and most demonstrative ritual acts, which were performed by paid undertakers, hired mourners and the women of the household. At a family funeral, a man could help carry the bier, or follow it, deliver the eulogy and appear sorrowful; and up until nine days after the death, a man might don dark clothing, could elect not to shave or wash, and could give some visible and physical expression to suffering through countenance and tears.¹¹ Ideals existed, and to some extent were promoted via legislation, that male mourning was to be limited and controlled.¹² Not everyone, however, viewed grief as an emotion that had to be largely suppressed; poetic consolations, for example, could note and celebrate both male and female suffering, although still often counselling the bereaved to be strong, and accepting of their losses.¹³ These consolations may also reflect some changes to traditional mourning conduct which occurred as a result of the move from Republican government to rule by the emperors; elite men may have compensated for diminishing public roles by placing more emphasis on family, personal relationships and *pietas*, values

¹⁰ Here a broad distinction is maintained between grief (the emotional reaction to loss) and mourning (public processes and actions that express and accommodate loss), with the focus upon the latter. For overviews of the difficulties of distinguishing between grief and mourning, and also Latin terminology for grief and mourning, see Hope (2011) 92-95; (2017a) 40-44; (2017b) note 3. For the idea of cultural scripts and performative bodies, including in mourning see, Goffman (1959); Walter (1999); Waskul and Vannini (2013).

¹¹ For mourning behaviours and gender distinctions in mourning roles see Presendi (1995); Richlin (2001); Corbeill (2004); Mustakallio (2005); Šterbenc Erker (2009); Mustakallio (2014); Hope (2017b); Hope (2019).

¹² For legal rulings on mourning periods see Plut. *Num.* 12; Sen. *Ep.* 63.13; Paulus *Sent.* 1.21.2-5; *Dig.* (Paulus) 3.2.9.

¹³ See, for example, Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.

that were also central to the Imperial family.¹⁴ It was never the case, however, that men were expected to suffer no grief or no pain, just that open and extensive expression of loss could be seen as unmanly and incompatible with public office-holding. Men might grieve in their hearts, but for others to witness expressions of this grief, beyond certain scripted and codified mourning roles, was often problematic.

Mourning was then public, something to be seen and commented upon, but how it (and the grief that it tokened) was performed by men was limited by convention. Within these limits tears were important. The face was the most visible, most exposed part of the body of a mourner, and one of the standard emblems of bereavement was for the face to be marked by tear-filled eyes and tear-stained cheeks.¹⁵ The face, and eyes in particular, could be viewed by Roman writers as central to the expression of emotion and character, and for tears to fall as a result of grief was viewed as a natural, spontaneous, humane and simple reaction to the pain of loss, the shedding of which could also be cathartic for the bereaved.¹⁶ Weeping, including by men, was an accepted medium for the representation of sorrow, a way of expressing the suffering of the inner self.¹⁷ Crying could also be a communal act; to cry for and with the bereaved, as well as for the dead *per se*, was perceived as part of human character.¹⁸ Juvenal, for example, observed that Nature gave the human race the gift of tears as a sign of compassion for the afflicted, to express an understanding of distress, and to bind communities

¹⁴ Dixon (1991); Bodel (1999); Hope (2011); McCullough (2011); Hope (2019).

¹⁵ This is not to dispute that some mourners may have covered their heads, veiled their faces or kept their heads bowed, these gestures in themselves also symbolising grief, cf. Cairns (2009).

¹⁶ For the face and character: Cic. *Leg.* 1.9.27; Cic. *Orat.* 3.221-23; Plin. *HN* 11.143-46. For ancient physiognomy, see Rizzini (1998); Swain (2007) 180-86. For the naturalness of tears: Sen *Ep.* 99. 15; 99.18-19; Sen. *Thyestes* 950; Ov. *Tr.* 4.3, 37-8; Plut. *Mor. De cohib. ira* 455c.

¹⁷ Male tears could have symbolic significance, being a rare expression of genuine emotional disturbance, humanity and empathy, Rey (2015). For the power in tears more generally, including gendered aspects, see Hagen 2017.

¹⁸ Emotions, including physical reactions such as crying, may be shared due to empathy (consciously situating oneself in another's psychological state) and/or emotional contagion (the often involuntary 'catching' of the emotions of others which then become one's own) see for example, Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson (1994); Coplan (2011).

together.¹⁹ Tears were also owed to the dead as an act of religious and familial piety and thus it was the duty of the bereaved to supply them, even if some of the weeping was paid for, or forced.²⁰ The tears could be viewed as a gift to the spirits of the departed, a liquid offering to be set alongside other libations such as blood, milk and wine.²¹ The presence (or absence) of tears was then linked not just to grief, but also to piety, duty, honour, ritual and thus cultural as well as emotional expectations.²²

Tears, subtly and appropriately shed, could be an acceptable public symbol of loss.²³ For the emperors, their unique social and political position, and also that of the family members they mourned for, entailed both close public scrutiny of their mourning, and also some scope to adapt (or even ignore) traditional codes of behaviour. The emperor's mourning, especially at funerals, was a public event, an opportunity for the emperor to display authority, power and traditional virtues, and to communicate with his subjects. An emperor in his mourning had to mediate between, and appeal to, both an elite and non-elite audience, and thus traditional elite male mourning scripts needed to be balanced with wider expectations. How an emperor was seen to mourn, and in particular weep, could be part of his public self-fashioning, but also something that was recorded, interpreted and used to shape his lasting reputation. In a high mortality society, death was very much a part of life, and for the living their responses to and management of the

¹⁹ Juv. 15.132-58.

²⁰ For tears and piety see, for example, Ov. *Met.* 13. 621-22; Sen. *Oct.* 270; Stat. *Silv.* 3.3.7. For false, forced and performed tears see, for example, Cic. *Tusc.* 3.27.64; Hor. *Ars. P.* 431; Mart. 1.33; Juv. 13.133.

²¹ Tib. 2.4.44; Ov. *Pont.* 1.9.53-54; Sen. *Troades* 133; Stat. *Silv.* 3.3.213; Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.46. Despite some excavated glass vessels, including from graves, being labelled as lachrymatories there is no evidence that a mourner's tears were collected, bottled and then interred with the dead, cf. *Psalms* 56.8.

²² For the importance of situating tears, rather than judging them as real or false, and the ritual performative role of tears, see, for example, Ebersole (2000).

²³ This could be true in other contexts too; compare, for example, crying and mourning appearance (*squalor*) performed in the law courts and by orators, and as political protest in the late Republic see, for example, Hall (2014); Hagen (2017), 67-109. But how public tears were evaluated and judged, could be context specific, thus dramatic crying in court may have been more acceptable for an elite man than dramatic crying at a family funeral.

deaths of others, could become a powerful factor in framing their own character, and how it was in turn framed by others. For the Julio-Claudian emperors mourning was writ large on a very public stage.

3. Teary-eyed

As with so many aspects of his rule, Augustus provided the model as to how an emperor should take his losses. A long life meant that Augustus was well schooled in bereavement, and these bereavements were not just familial and personal tragedies, but also moments of public tension and thus potential instability for the state. The biographer Suetonius claimed that Augustus accepted the deaths of his loved-ones with resignation, in fact with greater resignation than when members of his family disgraced themselves, the implication being that death, unlike debauchery, was not a failing of character. Suetonius emphasised in particular that late in Augustus' life the death of his two young grandsons (and adopted sons) did not break his spirit.²⁴ Seneca the Younger also held up Augustus as a paradigm, since despite his repeated losses, Augustus was brave and did not rail against the gods.²⁵ Augustus, according to Seneca, won the battle with grief, 'Augustus rose victor, not only over foreign nations, but also over sorrows'.²⁶ Seneca places Augustus alongside other famous men, for example, Scipio Africanus, Sulla and Julius Caesar, who put duty to the state above personal loss.²⁷ Augustus could be a model for others who were facing grief because, despite enduring repeated bereavements, he placed his responsibilities before his own suffering and thus conformed to philosophically idealised views of how an educated, office-holding, elite Roman male should behave.²⁸

However, Augustus' characterisation as a successful public mourner, his control and acceptance, was tempered both by careful execution of his expected duties towards the dead and the belief that he did genuinely grieve. Seneca notes not only the extent of Augustus' losses – his sister, sons-in-law, children and grandchildren – but also that these were real 'sorrows'

²⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 65.2. For exemplarity in Suetonius' Life of Augustus see Gunderson (2014).

²⁵ Sen. *ad Marc.* 15.2-3. For an overview of Seneca's engagement with Augustan culture see Ker (2015).

²⁶ Sen. *Polyb.* 15.3

²⁷ Sen. *ad Marc.* 12.3-15; Sen. *ad Polyb.* 14.4-16.3

²⁸ Sen. *ad Marc.* 7.3; compare Sen. *Ep.* 63.13; [Plut.] *Cons. ad Apoll.* 22.

(*eius luctus*) that distressed him.²⁹ Public duty may have come first, but Augustus was thought to have experienced the pain of his bereavements, and moreover he shared this pain with, and was supported in it, by the Roman people. The bereavements of Augustus made him human, his sorrows were clear ‘evidence that he was a man’, a figure people could empathise with and from whom they in turn expected empathy.³⁰ Giving public expression to sorrow could be seen as an essential characteristic of good rule. Augustus’ losses were not just his own, and to deny them by showing no signs of grief, would have been just as foolhardy as to be overwhelmed by grief.

Augustus was artful in stage-managing his public grieving, presenting a suitable mixture of sorrow and strength. During his rule, Augustus escorted many family members to his large mausoleum, adapting and extending traditional funeral rites. These adaptations included: the lengthy and elaborate transportation to the city of the remains of his prospective male heirs (whose deaths all occurred away from Rome); the locating of the pre-funeral display of the body of the deceased in the Forum and/or the temple of Julius Caesar, rather than in the family home; and the delivery of two funeral eulogies, rather than the more usual one.³¹ In addition a *iustitium*, or formal suspension of public duties, legal and political life, could be decreed at the

²⁹ Sen. *ad Polyb.* 15.3; Sen. *ad Marc.* 15.2. See also Sen. *Ben.*32-2-4, for how Augustus struggled (if somewhat disingenuously) with the loss of his friends, Agrippa and Maecenas. For the sense of his repeated losses see Plin. *HN*7.150; for deliberate irony in Suetonius and Dio Cassius, especially about Augustus’ domestic affairs, see Kemezis (2007), Langlands (2014); and for Seneca’s subtle highlighting of imperfections in the imperial family see Gloyn (2017).

³⁰ Sen. *ad Polyb.* 15.3.

³¹ Marcellus and Agrippa died in Campania (Prop. 3.18; Dio Cass. 54.28.3); Elder Drusus on the German frontier (Suet. *Tib.* 7; Plin *HN*7.84; Dio Cass. 55.2.2), Lucius Caesar in Gaul, and Gaius Caesar in Lycia (Dio Cass. 55.12.1). Agrippa lay in state in the Forum, though exactly where in the Forum is not specified (Dio Cass. 54.28.3) and Octavia’s body was displayed in the temple of Julius Caesar (Dio Cass. 54.35.4). Double eulogies were delivered for the Elder Drusus (Dio Cass. 55.2.2) and for Octavia (Dio Cassius 54.35.5). For these eulogies, and the locations for their delivery, see Sumi (2011) 225-26; Marrone and Nicolini (2010). Other aspects of these funerals, such as the procession were also probably elaborated, see Dio Cass. 54.28.5.

death of a member of the Imperial household.³² The *iustitium* was a pragmatic approach to control behaviour and a symbol of the increasing legal authority of the emperor, but in effect it placed the whole city in mourning, and created a sense of expectation for the funeral. At these funerals Augustus fulfilled the usual duties, most notably delivering eulogies.³³ Texts of these speeches do not survive, except for a few lines of the eulogy Augustus delivered for Agrippa (12 BCE), which noted Agrippa's authority and powers.³⁴ The funeral speeches given by Augustus may have been more about lauding the achievements of the dead (and thus his own family) than marking grief, but the latter may have at least been acknowledged.³⁵ Funeral speeches, however, were more than just words, which would have been only audible by a few people (even if subsequently published), but a performance of emotions and gestures, with available props such as ancestor masks (*imagines*), delivered in evocative settings. The funeral, eulogy and all, was a multisensory event with a deliberate emotive pull, and Augustus, as the head mourner and orchestrator of events, had to represent (and lead the expression of) both personal and public loss, and mediate and control any

³² The deaths of Gaius and Lucius Caesar were each marked by a *iustitium* (*CIL* 6, 31195; *Insc. Ital.* 13.1.7), although it is unclear whether this was also the case for other deaths during Augustus' reign. For length of *iustitia* and the relationship to public mourning see Agamben 2005, 65-73; Kerkeslager 2006.

³³ Eulogies were traditionally delivered by a senior male relative, often the eldest son, Polyb. 6.53.2. In the case of a public funeral a senior officeholder might be chosen to make the speech. The double eulogy at Imperial funerals thus allowed for two speakers, both distinguished office holders, but often of different generations of the Imperial family. Augustus is said to have spoken at the funerals of Marcellus (Dio Cass. 53.30.5), Agrippa (Dio Cass. 54.28.3), Elder Drusus (*Cons. Livia* 29-16; *Livy Per.* 142; Dio Cass. 55.2.1-2) and Octavia (Dio Cass. 54.35.4). Whether he spoke at the funerals of his grandsons' is not known.

³⁴ *P. Köln* I 10.

³⁵ The double eulogy may have allowed for sentiment in at least one of the speeches. Dio Cassius notes that at the funeral of Augustus, Tiberius spoke a public eulogy, requested by the Senate, from the temple of Julius Caesar, while the Younger Drusus spoke from the rostra words of a more private nature (56. 34.4- 35.3). Compare also the fragmentary text of a speech delivered by Hadrian after the death of his mother-in-law (119 CE) which noted the emperor's personal sorrow; though the speech may have been delivered in support of Matidia's deification, Jones 2004.

negative implications and repercussions.³⁶ These Imperial funerals needed to be dignified, respectful and sorrowful, but also celebratory and in some respects positive and transformative.

The performance of grief needed to be visible, to be perceived as heartfelt and thus an emotion that united emperor and subjects. Augustus and everyone else needed to cry together. A decree issued and recorded in Pisa at the death of Gaius Caesar (4 CE), noted that the death, so soon after that of Lucius Caesar, had ‘renewed and multiplied the grief of everyone singly and collectively’, and that the people of Pisa would change their clothes, stop public business, shut temples, baths and shops until after the funeral.³⁷ In communicating their own grief (and public demonstrations of this), the people of Pisa were laying claim to a share of the mourning, and thus a connection to the Imperial family. This idea of the universality of the impact of these deaths was perhaps most forcefully communicated in poetry, especially that associated with the death of the emperor’s nephew, Marcellus (23 BCE). Book 6 of Virgil’s *Aeneid* elevated the demise of Marcellus to a national loss, while acknowledging real pain and sadness.³⁸ Furthermore, in poetry Augustus’ own tears, his personal grief, and its public expression could be celebrated, and thereby memorialised. A poetic consolation – ostensibly composed at the death of the Elder Drusus (9 BCE), but probably later in date – suggested that the emperor, when bereaved, frequently shed tears.³⁹ Noting how Augustus had mourned and buried Marcellus, Agrippa and Octavia, the poet states that Drusus’ death ‘is the fourth to draw tears from mighty Caesar’.⁴⁰ Later in the same poem it is emphasised that at the deaths of Marcellus and Octavia, the tears of Augustus were public and witnessed, ‘each in the sight of the people did Caesar weep’.⁴¹ The poet also

³⁶ For multi-sensory aspects of funerals see Potter (2016) 36-44; Hope (2017b); Beck (2018).

³⁷ *CIL* 11, 1421, 52-62. See Lott (2012) 73-74.

³⁸ Verg. *Aen.* 860-886. See also Prop. 3.18. For literary representations of Marcellus and the associated mourning see Harrison (2017) and Hope (forthcoming).

³⁹ The authorship and date of this work is uncertain, but it is possibly Tiberian. It toys with familial grief reactions which elevate the reputations of the deceased and the mourners. For discussion see Schrijvers (1988); Schoonhoven (1992); Jenkins (2009); Peirano (2012) 205-41; Ursini (2014).

⁴⁰ *Cons. Livia* 72.

⁴¹ *Cons. Livia* 442.

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suggests that Augustus delivered the funeral eulogy for Drusus using both voice and tears, with sorrow checking the flow of sad words.⁴² Propertius, in a poem that would have been published in Augustus' lifetime (the subject, Cornelia, died in 16 BCE) notes that Augustus even wept for his ex-stepdaughter, 'we saw a god's tears flow'.⁴³ There may have been some intended irony in references to Augustus' tears, that even the most powerful cannot cheat the suffering brought by death, but simultaneously the tears underlined the emperor's humanity, that he was thought to have suffered like others, and thus was connected to, not distant from, his subjects. In his public mourning Augustus was remembered as openly weeping at the deaths of Marcellus, Drusus, Octavia and Cornelia, with poets picturing Augustus revealing his sadness to the Roman people in an acceptable and dignified fashion.⁴⁴ These tears were an act of religious and familial piety, yet were also readily interpreted as a testament of genuine grief. Augustus' tears allowed him to communicate with his subjects (from a range of status groups), were a symbol of the emperor's strength rather than weakness, and created a bond of shared emotional experience between emperor and people. The tears were also a mark of esteem for those Augustus wept for – they were deserving of an emperor's tears, and this esteem could retain value long after Augustus' own death.

The reign of Augustus was in many ways marked by deaths and disappointments, and to a large degree his responses, and indeed those of the wider populace, were scripted and controlled acts of social obligation and duty. Everyone knew what they were expected to do, from the people of Pisa who had to enact mourning for a prince they had never met to Augustus himself in his prioritising of his public responsibilities while showing his common humanity. Augustus' losses were elevated, and the expression of sorrow justified, by being universally shared, yet these losses could not be allowed either to break him or the state. Grief needed to be both witnessed and then controlled. Solidarity, common cause and continuity were the

⁴² *Cons. Livia* 209-10.

⁴³ Prop. 4.11.60. For the complexities and ironies in the poem (especially in Cornelia's presentation as an idealised *matrona*) see, for example, Dufallo (2007) 84-88; Lowrie (2009) 349-59; Racette-Campbell (2016).

⁴⁴ Note Augustus, before becoming *princeps*, was also said to have wept at the deaths of Julius Caesar (Nic. Dam. 51) and Antony (Plut. *Ant.* 68).

characteristics of Augustan mourning.⁴⁵ How Augustus was subsequently presented as a mourner, reflected his own careful crafting of his mourning image, but also the usefulness of the first emperor as a model in all things, including idealised qualities centred on *pietas*, modesty, self-control and empathy. Augustus the mourner could be a philosophical paradigm (this is how one should take grief), a biographer's benchmark of character in the face of adversity (grief did not break him), a poet's symbol of the suffering inherent in the human condition (even an emperor must shed tears) or an esteem-marker for those mourned (reflecting well on their surviving relatives). Augustus as a mourner could not be separated from who he was, his wider reputation and his enduring usefulness as a model of what a (generally) good emperor should be.⁴⁶

4. Dry-eyed

The successors of Augustus rarely fared well in how their mourning behaviour was recorded and assessed. Some may have been less astute than Augustus in understanding the value of mourning, but the negative characterisations are also a legacy of the surviving texts, which are marked by an absence of sympathetic poetic stances, and the survival of the judgemental posthumous voices of history and biography. When evaluating an emperor's character mourning roles were grist for the mill. Augustus' balance of control and emotion was a hard act to follow, and commentators were quick to focus upon misjudged mourning as a benchmark of wider failings.

Tiberius was rarely dewy eyed, and this was rendered problematic by Tacitus in particular. The death of Germanicus was a key point in Tacitus' narrative of the reign. The young prince died away from Rome and under suspicious circumstances. The widowed Agrippina was bereft and the people of Rome were devastated, yet by contrast Tiberius (and his mother Livia) showed no emotion in public, their faces were not seen.⁴⁷ Tacitus draws

⁴⁵ Cf. Electra's mourning which threatens those in power. See Bakogianni in this issue (60 and 62).

⁴⁶ For exemplarity as used by and in the characterisation of emperors see, for example, Kraus (2005). For the use of tears in the characterisation of historical figures, see Hagen (2017) 272-335.

⁴⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 2. 69-83; 3.1-6. For the theme of Tiberius' concealment of character and emotion in Tacitus see O'Gorman (2000) 79-89.

unfavourable parallels with the events and ceremonies that surrounded the death of the Elder Drusus under Augustus; for Germanicus by contrast there were no 'tears and imitations (if no more) of sorrow'.⁴⁸ For Tacitus, Tiberius was too controlled, too focused on stabilising state business, and the absence of tears was a telling sign that the emperor felt no genuine grief or remorse, even if Tiberius was said to have promoted the line that 'princes are mortal, the state immortal'.⁴⁹ Tacitus also negatively characterises Tiberius' behaviour at the death of his own son, the Younger Drusus (CE 23). Tiberius continued to attend the Senate while his son was ill, and even did so following his death, in the days before the funeral.⁵⁰ Tiberius sought consolation by keeping busy, by putting state matters first.⁵¹ The funeral involved an impressive pageant of ancestral masks and included a eulogy delivered by the emperor-father, but for Tacitus the mourning display was clearly inadequate. Tiberius would further compound this lack of empathy, his inability to display common decency and humanity, by failing to attend his own mother's funeral and then denying the families of his victims the right to mourn.⁵² Tacitus' Tiberius shed no public tears for his family, and in a tyrannical act also denied the familial public tears of others.⁵³

Other surviving evidence does counter aspects of how Tacitus deployed and described Tiberius' mourning. The decree issued after the death of Germanicus and the trial of Piso, noted that the emperor had shown many proofs of his sorrow, a sorrow that should now end. The decree also praised other members of the Imperial family, including Agrippina, for the restraint and appropriate nature of their grief (*dolore moderatione*), at least in the context of the trial.⁵⁴ Tiberius and Livia are cited as positive examples that the younger generation (the sons of Germanicus) had followed, and in many

⁴⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 3.5.

⁴⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 3.6.

⁵⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 4.8. Presumably Tiberius did not touch or see the corpse of his son, and was thus still able to attend the Senate, see note 55. For discussion of Tacitus' representation of the funeral and mourning for Germanicus see O'Gorman (2000) 66-69; Hope (2011).

⁵¹ Tac. *Ann.* 4.8; 4.13. See also Suet. *Tib.* 52.1-2.

⁵² Tac. *Ann.* 5.2; 6.19.

⁵³ For tears and crying in Tacitus see de Libero (2009); Hagen (2017) 202-235.

⁵⁴ *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*, 445-69. See Eck, Caballos & Fernández (1996); Lott (2012) 153-55.

ways Tiberius was conforming to the expected traditional models for male mourning by prioritising duty to the state. Seneca the Younger also highlighted that Tiberius' mourning behaviour was respectful of tradition, and a paradigm of self-control, since Tiberius delivered the eulogy for his own son, while respecting the expectation that he, as priest, should not look upon the body, and 'Tiberius' countenance did not change while the Roman people wept'.⁵⁵ Josephus also offered a somewhat softer alternative perspective on Tiberius' paternal grief, though still one marked by the need for self-control, noting that Tiberius forbade the friends of Drusus to visit him because the sight of them grieved him by recalling the memory of his dead son.⁵⁶ Dio Cassius even defends Tiberius against criticism that he was unfeeling at his son's death by stating that this was how he always behaved at bereavements, and that he greatly loved his child.⁵⁷ Therein perhaps lay the problem, Tiberius may well have grieved deeply, but was not inclined to share this publicly; he was simply not a believer in or adept at displays (staged or not) of emotional public mourning. How Tiberius organised funerals may have followed traditional expectations, and the adaptations introduced by Augustus, but Tiberius lacked the public emotional literacy of Augustus, with his countenance (*vultus*) either being concealed or seemingly un-changed when confronted with loss. Tiberius did not share his grief

⁵⁵ Sen. *ad Marc.* 15.3. Note Seneca also alludes to Germanicus' death but does not consider Tiberius' reactions to it, see Gloyd (2017) 145-47. For Tiberius' reaction to his brother Drusus' death (pre-dating his reign) and again with a clear focus on self-control and the suppression of tears, see Sen. *ad Polyb.* 15.5. More generally for his devotion to his brother and grief at his loss, see Livy *Per.* 142; *Cons. Livia* 85-88 (and for the possible Tiberian date of the latter see note 35); Val Max. 5.5.3. For Tiberius' continuing use of his connection with Drusus see Champlin (2011).

⁵⁶ Joseph. *AJ* 18.146.

⁵⁷ Dio Cass. 57.22.3-4. Dio, as Seneca, notes the use of a curtain or screen at the funeral so that Tiberius could not see the body. Dio also notes the use of the same device by Augustus at the deaths of Agrippa (54.28.4) and Octavia (54.35.4-5). This may represent a particular fascination of Dio Cassius with ritual, but also reminds that for all the performative and emotive aspects of mourning, funerals had religious (and ritual pollution) elements and that emperors were present not just as family mourners, but also as holders of religious office. Note also that Augustus, just returned from campaign, was unable to attend the Forum for the Elder Drusus' funeral on religious grounds, so delivered his eulogy from the Circus Flaminius, Dio Cass. 55.2.2-3.

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with the Roman people, what they witnessed was the tears of others and not the tears of their emperor.

Other emperors could also be steely-faced. Claudius, who admittedly suffered no major bereavements during his reign (parents, siblings and two children – one exposed – had died prior to his time as emperor, and his remaining children outlived him) offered limited scope for ancient comment in his capacity as emperor-mourner. The biggest personal tragedy of Claudius' reign was the treachery and execution of his wife, Messalina, and his enigmatic reaction to this, including a potential lack of empathy with his now motherless children did draw brief comment, since according to Tacitus he showed no human emotion, whether hatred, joy, anger or sadness, including when he saw his children's distress.⁵⁸ A lack of emotion, even if one had ordered the death-penalty for one's nearest and (not so) dearest, was dehumanising. After the execution of Tiberius Gemellus (grandson of Tiberius) in 37 CE, the emperor Gaius made no mention, acknowledgement or justification of this in the Senate.⁵⁹ Gaius was also alleged to have shown a lack of respect for his grandmother, Antonia (in whose death he may have played a part), by voting her no posthumous honours, and watching her pyre burning from his dining room.⁶⁰ The apparent absence of grief could also be a sign of a guilty conscience. Nero's hurried night-time funeral for Britannicus (55 CE) aroused suspicions, that the emperor had played a hand in removing a rival, with a simple and quick funeral concealing the emperor's guilt and lack of remorse from the public gaze. Nero could cite tradition in his defence, that the funerals of the young were not supposed to

⁵⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 11.38. In the play *Octavia*, the death of Messalina is a cause of grief for her daughter Octavia, 'for whom I must always weep' (11-12). Note Seneca does give Claudius voice as an adviser to the bereaved Polybius, describing how he grieved for his own brother (Germanicus), 'I neither left anything undone that ought to have been required of a loving brother, nor did anything that a prince could have been censured for doing' (Sen. *ad Polyb.* 16.3). Thus Seneca, writing from exile, praises Claudius as one who can suitably balance emotion and self-control, as per the model of Augustus. Note also how both Tiberius and Claudius benefitted by being viewed as good mourners for their popular brothers, linking their on-going reputations to the reputations of the dead.

⁵⁹ Suet. *Calig.* 23.3; Dio Cass. 59.8.2. Tiberius Gemellus may, however, have been buried in the mausoleum, *CIL* VI, 892.

⁶⁰ Suet. *Calig.* 23.2; Dio Cass. 59.3.6.

be grand affairs.⁶¹ Whatever the reasons for limiting public mourning, and there may have been good or genuine reasons based on circumstance, precedent, religion or tradition, for future commentators such limits provided room for speculation about negative causation.

Not to show some aspect of the emotion of grief in public, especially to be dry-eyed, was highly problematic for an emperor. In how he managed the public mourning for his relatives, Tiberius may have followed Augustus' blueprint for disposal of the dead; processions, eulogies, burial in the mausoleum were all adhered to, and Tiberius also followed the accepted elite code that personal self-control and public duty should come first. It is possible that Tiberius' mourning behaviour was unproblematic in his own life time, with the negative characterisation of certain details being largely an invention of Tacitus.⁶² However, to over-play self-control was to risk a perceived compromise in the expected acts of piety, to suggest a lack of common humanity and above all it could indicate that the emperor did not acknowledge or share the sense of public loss, thereby highlighting potential social and political discord. Furthermore, there was an inherent value to an emperor's tears. The absence of tears denoted that either the deceased was unworthy or in some way guilty, or that the emperor was not experiencing grief, either through relief at the death or knowledge that he had caused the death, or both. The true reasons for an emperor's lack of tears, may have been complex and related to individual circumstance (for example, the age of the deceased, the cause of death, the place of death) as well as the innate personality of both the deceased and the emperor, but what remained apparent was that an emperor's public mourning behaviour was open to scrutiny and readily interpreted at the hands of subsequent commentators.

5. Weeping Profusely

Only once did the grief of Augustus border onto a bad thing, and this was not at a personal bereavement, but a military loss. After the crushing Varian

⁶¹ Tac. *Ann.* 13.17. Suetonius (*Ner.* 33.3) and Dio Cassius (61.7.4) assert that Nero did poison Britannicus, with Dio stating that signs of poison were seen on the body at the funeral.

⁶² For counter traditions of Tiberius as a good, wise, clever and pious ruler, see Champlin (2008).

Disaster (9 CE), Augustus grieved for a bit too long, and a bit too dramatically. Augustus was said to have torn his clothes, allowed his hair and beard to grow, beat his head and lamented, 'Varus, give me back my legions!'⁶³ Augustus exceeded the acceptable teary eye, by displaying distress and adopting stylised expressions of grief which entailed audible and visible adaptations to accepted body norms. An emperor in this condition, expressing too openly the vulnerability of his position, and/or his emotional state, was not good for the stability of the empire. Any loss needed to be acknowledged, with appropriate sorrow and regret expressed, before being rationalised and equilibrium restored. Failure in this, to be overcome by grief, was a weakness in character.

Worse than an emperor who cried too little was an emperor who cried too much. Nero's behaviour at the death of a baby daughter (63 CE) and then at that of his wife Poppaea (65 CE), whom he may have kicked to death, was exploited as a sign of the emotional incontinence of a weak and irrational ruler. For a child of four months Nero proposed extraordinary honours including deification, showing his sorrow to be as immoderate as his former joy at the birth; for Poppaea, Nero had her body embalmed, organised a lavish funeral and then sought out her likeness in others as if unable to let her go or his grief and longing diminish.⁶⁴ Nero's reactions to his mother's death (59 CE), murdered at his orders, were also characterised as both excessive, and guilt-ridden. On the one hand Nero shed the tears expected from a son for a parent, wishing these to be witnessed; on the other Nero was anxious, wracked with guilt, haunted by his deed and thus fled to Naples where his countenance could not be so readily seen.⁶⁵ This was not, could not be, a nuanced staging of mourning as per the model of Augustus, but, as with so much of Nero's reign, it came to be presented as the misjudged and confused actions of a bad performer.⁶⁶

Nero's behaviour at Agrippina's death demonstrated a lack of consistency, his indecision as to whether to grieve for his mother or not reflected that he did not have a firm grasp of the situation, a situation of his

⁶³ Suet. *Aug.* 23; Dio Cass. 56.23.1.

⁶⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 15.23; 16.6; Dio Cass. 62.9.5; 62. 28.3.

⁶⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 14.10; Suet. *Ner.* 34.4; Dio Cass. 62.14.4. See also Champlin 2003, 89-91; Hagen 2017, 196-197. For adeptness in how Agrippina's death may have actually been managed by the court see, Luke (2013).

⁶⁶ For Nero's role as artist and performer see Champlin (2003).

own creating. Such inconsistency – especially oscillation between self-control and highly emotional displays, even if one or other was feigned, was the ultimate mark of a flawed, unstable and dangerous character. It was most apparent in how Gaius was said to have behaved at the death of his sister. Drusilla died in 38 CE and Gaius honoured her greatly, declaring her divine, and at least initially ruthlessly enforcing a *iustitium*.⁶⁷ Gaius' behaviour seemed extreme and often confused. Dio Cassius, for example, noted that Gaius censured people if they did not grieve for Drusilla, while being equally critical of those who were sorrowful since they were not rejoicing at her becoming a god.⁶⁸ Suetonius noted that Gaius was so overcome that he left for Syracuse, but then equally hurriedly returned, unshaven and with unkempt hair.⁶⁹ It is Seneca the Younger who is the most condemning. In his consolation to Polybius on the death of the latter's brother, Seneca had written of individuals, including the emperor Augustus, and future emperors Tiberius and Claudius, who took the deaths of their siblings well. Gaius is held up as the antithesis of this, a character who did not know how to control his grief and give it proper public expression. Gaius did not attend Drusilla's funeral, he did not pay his sister due tributes and he sought solace in gambling. Above all Gaius failed to be consistent and show self-restraint, one minute allowing his hair and beard to grow long, at the next shaving them close, not knowing whether he wanted his sister to be lamented or worshipped and in his anger causing suffering to others.⁷⁰ Gaius' mourning behaviour matched (or was made to match) his character as an emperor who 'was the ruin and the shame of the human race, who utterly wasted and wrecked the empire'.⁷¹

To be too emotional or to mourn for too long and at the expense of stable government was a failing of character, especially if those being grieved for, such as a baby and a wife of suspect character, were un-worthy. But worse than this, a sign of madness even, was mourning behaviour that was indecisive and inconsistent, since this both dishonoured the dead and highlighted real character failings. For grief to be expressed through physical

⁶⁷ Suet. *Calig.* 24.2; Dio Cass. 59.12.1; Kerkeslager (2006) 380-89.

⁶⁸ Dio Cass. 59.11.5-6; Sen. *ad Polyb.* 17.5.

⁶⁹ Suet. *Calig.* 24.2-3.

⁷⁰ Sen. *ad Polyb.* 17.4-6.

⁷¹ Sen. *ad Polyb.* 17. 3. Note also, as above, Gaius' lack of mourning for Tiberius Gemellus and his grandmother.

behaviour or acts focused on the hair, clothing and voice were common motifs in descriptions of mourning, but in extremis these motifs tokened an unstable mental character, personal self-neglect and even madness. An emperor who wept in moderation was acceptable, even esteemed, but an emperor who was (or was rumoured to be) grief-stricken, unshaven, with untidy hair, wearing tattered clothing and uttering audible laments, was inconsistent with sound government.

6. Succession Tears

An emperor's greatest mourning role was often that of mourner to his predecessor. Those emperors who usurped their position might condemn, damn the memory of and even deny burial to their immediate forerunner; mourning as such was not required. Those who inherited their position, as was the case with all the Julio-Claudian emperors, had in some way to acknowledge the death of their predecessor, and with the exception of Claudius, drew their legitimacy as ruler by having been formally adopted as heir by the now dead emperor. The rituals surrounding the death, burial and commemoration of an emperor would, with time, become part of the succession process, and for the Julio-Claudian emperors were also an exercise in diplomacy, entailing maintaining stability while balancing the needs and reputations of the old regime with the intentions of the new.⁷² Whether he liked it or not, whether he had liked him or not, the new emperor was the lead mourner for the old.

Augustus had planned for his own demise extensively, including leaving detailed instructions for his funeral.⁷³ However, the ultimate control over the body, events and the commemoration of the new god, lay in Tiberius' hands. Decorum and control always marked Tiberius' character, including as a mourner (see above), and the rites for Augustus, the first transition of Imperial power into a successor's hands, needed to be carefully moderated, even policed.⁷⁴ The funeral was grand and opulent, and Tiberius played his part delivering one of two eulogies. Tiberius' eulogy, as penned by Dio Cassius, was a career summary, not a tear-jerker, and ended by noting that now

⁷² Price (1987); Arce (2010).

⁷³ Dio Cass. 56.33.1.

⁷⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 1.8

as a god Augustus should not be mourned for.⁷⁵ Tiberius was characteristically dry-eyed at Augustus' funeral, but he in no way dishonoured his predecessor. In the days between the death and the funeral Tiberius emphasised his role as dutiful son, more than successor.⁷⁶ He organised the slow progress of the corpse back to Rome, donned black clothing, stayed by the body and planned the funeral.⁷⁷ Tiberius fulfilled all the expected duties of the heir and chief male mourner. Suetonius even suggests emotion, since when the death was formally announced in the Senate, after reading a few words Tiberius 'groaned aloud, protesting that grief had robbed him of his voice'.⁷⁸ Dio Cassius and Tacitus make no mention of this tearful behaviour, Dio suggesting that Tiberius was dismissed from the Senate due to his contact with the corpse, not because he was upset.⁷⁹ In narratives of the first succession emphasis fell on Tiberius staging his reluctance to succeed, and his mourning, for an old man who was now supposedly becoming a god, was cynically viewed as just a means to an end.⁸⁰

At the death of Tiberius, Gaius played the dutiful son too, at least for a while. He donned mourning dress, escorted the body back to Rome, held a public funeral and, according to Suetonius at least, eulogised him with tears.⁸¹ Dio Cassius suggests the rites were more perfunctory, that the body was brought into the city at night, laid out in the morning, and that Gaius' eulogy contained little by way of praise.⁸² The mob had apparently wanted to throw the corpse into the Tiber, and few honours were subsequently

⁷⁵ Dio Cass. 56.35-41.

⁷⁶ Augustus died on August 19, 14 CE, but the funeral may not have happened until around September 08, Levick (2014), 239.

⁷⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 1.7; Dio Cass. 56.31.3.

⁷⁸ Suet. *Tib.* 23.

⁷⁹ Dio Cass. 56.31.3. For Dio's interest in the avoidance of direct contact between emperors and corpses, see note 55.

⁸⁰ Dio Cassius suggests that real grief only hit the populace when they realised how bad Tiberius was in comparison with Augustus, Dio Cass. 56.43-56-45. Tacitus also notes that, 'a mission was sent... to console Germanicus' sorrow at the death of Augustus' (*Ann* 1.16). Such a mission may have been expected, but it also suggests that Germanicus experienced genuine sorrow, that he needed to be consoled, a suggestion that Tacitus does not make for Tiberius.

⁸¹ Suet. *Calig.* 13; 15.1.

⁸² Dio Cass. 59. 3.7-8.

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voted to Tiberius and he was not deified.⁸³ Shortly after Tiberius' funeral, Gaius coordinated elaborate rites for his mother and brother, travelling to their graves, placing their remains in urns with his own hands, with the urns then ceremoniously returned to Rome, and interred in the mausoleum.⁸⁴ Gaius did due duty by Tiberius, and he may have wept the expected tears, but he then purposefully eclipsed Tiberius' funeral, and any mourning for him, by focusing attention on the earlier deaths of his own close family, victims of Tiberius, mourning for whom had previously been denied.

Gaius' assassination meant there was no public funeral and no mourning by his successor. Gaius was initially even denied full burial, and although Claudius did prevent the senate from further dishonouring his nephew, his images disappeared over night.⁸⁵ At Claudius' own death, despite rumours of murder, Nero as an adopted son, paid Claudius due respect at the funeral. Yet the eulogy Nero delivered was written by another; for Dio Cassius the grief displayed was a pretence and for Tacitus represented 'a mockery of sorrow'.⁸⁶ The skit about Claudius' deification, with a funeral procession of rejoicing rather than tears (except from some lawyers of dubious character) emphasised that Claudius' death, for all the associated pageantry, was not a genuine source of grief.⁸⁷

Tears can be natural and spontaneous, but tears can also be demanded, performed and false. Tiberius, Gaius and Nero were said by some (if not all) to have shed tears at their predecessors' deaths, to have provided an expression of sorrow. Such an expression was both expected and acceptable, an act of *pietas*, and a duty toward a deceased relative. An emperor's tears also had the power to elevate both the deceased and the mourner, and unite the community in a shared act, but this performative aspect could also place the authenticity of the tears in doubt. For an emperor to weep openly for his predecessor was interpreted either as an endorsement of the previous regime or as hypocrisy, rarely as a sign of genuine grief. The tears might be deemed insincere since the new emperor may have been glad (maybe even the cause) of the death; and if the dead emperor, popular or otherwise, was now a god were the tears of the new emperor appropriate at all? However,

⁸³ Suet. *Tib* 65.1; Dio Cass. 59.3.7.

⁸⁴ Suet. *Calig.* 15. 1-2; Dio Cass. 59.3.5-6.

⁸⁵ Dio Cass. 60.4.6.

⁸⁶ Dio Cass. 61.35.2; Tac. *Ann.* 13.4.

⁸⁷ Sen. *Apocol.* 12.

to shed no tears risked equally damning interpretations of a lack of humanity and empathy, or ingratitude towards the source of power or disrespect for a new god or a sign of a guilty conscience. Why (and indeed if) tears were shed, at such a crucial transition moment, was readily interpreted by later commentators and readily fitted to narratives of good and bad rule.

7. Conclusion – Crocodile Tears?

Death comes to all, and emperors and their family members, despite their associations with divinity, were no exception.⁸⁸ What was within an emperor's power was how he reacted publicly to his bereavements. Grief, or at least the pain brought by the death of others, was part of the human condition, and emperors, for all their prestige, could not escape this pain, but emperors could make decisions about how, when and if to give public expression to that pain. The public performance of grief, especially (although not exclusively) through expected mourning behaviours displayed at the funeral, made the emperor an actor and his subjects the audience. Thus, for an emperor to fail to attend a funeral (for example, Tiberius for Livia, Gaius for Drusilla, Nero for Britannicus) or for his performance not to be fully witnessed (for example, Tiberius for Germanicus) or for the emperor to leave Rome (for example Nero at Agrippina's death) was to subvert expectations. A funeral was an opportunity for the emperor both to be seen and to communicate.

Funerals of leading politicians in the Republican era had always played with public sentiment at the passing of popular and respected individuals, with these losses staged and displayed by families and lineages, often for political advantage.⁸⁹ Under the Julio-Claudian emperors, the potential for shared grief, due to the prominence of the Imperial family, gained momentum. All eyes were now upon the emperor and how his expression of sorrow, and solidarity with others in that sorrow, would be managed. The emperor had the power to set the tone for a mass-crowd event such as a funeral, providing visible, audible and physical cues for an audience who thus became participants, encouraged to empathise, identify with and even mimic the emotions of their leader, while also evaluating the emperor's emotional

⁸⁸ For the trope that emperors cannot escape death and mourning see, for example, Prop. 3.18; Sen. *ad Polyb.* 15.3; Sen *ad Marc.* 15.1; Mart. 5.64.

⁸⁹ Polyb. 6.53.

sincerity. The admiration in male elite circles for controlled behaviour persisted (if somewhat softened by an increased focus on family), and thus public mourning behaviour remained scripted, but the realities of popular reactions and the presence of communities united by grief influenced the performance of mourning.⁹⁰ If members of the Imperial family were promoted (or sought self-promotion) as, for example, popular heroes, military conquerors or maternal figures, people would be affected (or feel themselves affected) at their death and expect a similar or suitable response from their ruler. This may have been particularly the case at the death of young male prospective heirs. Tacitus observed that 'the loves of the Roman nation were fleeting and unlucky', the good were often perceived as dying young, with the tragedy of such deaths further cementing the popularity of these figures.⁹¹ Staging an appropriate public grief response especially, although not exclusively at the death of the young, increased in importance.⁹² An emperor may have been experiencing genuine grief (or not) at his familial bereavements, but these bereavements were not his alone, and he needed to judge, and could also exploit, public expectations for his mourning. The extent to which individual emperors styled themselves as in-tune with popular sentiment, and allowed this to influence their mourning behaviour did vary, and misjudging the value and impact of a suitable performance came at a reputational price for some. Further the public was not the only audience, since elite commentators, both contemporary and posthumous, judged, adapted or constructed the mourning behaviour of emperors to fit their authorial agendas.

Within the confines of mourning scripts emperors were limited in how they could give public expression to grief. The body was a canvas for mourning display with a range of possible signs and alterations to announce the state of bereavement, but for elite men the traditional focus fell mainly on visible cues – a change to dark dress, remaining unshaven, a sorrowful

⁹⁰ For 'emotional communities' and how these can define groups and/or signal conflict or consensus, see Rosenwein (2006); (2010).

⁹¹ Tac. *Ann.* 2.41, who is anticipating the death of Germanicus by noting the deaths of Marcellus and the Elder Drusus. Compare also Ovid *Fasti* 1.597-8.

⁹² Of Augustus' reaction to the Elder Drusus' death Champlin has observed 'Whatever affection he may have felt for his stepson in life, he made a great public show of that love when the man was dead' (2011) 80. Note also how Tiberius and Claudius used their connections with popular brothers who had died young, see notes 53 and 56.

facial expression, and tears. Other stylised aspects of mourning behaviour, sounds and gestures, such as tearing clothes, cheeks and hair, or beating the chest, or wailing and lamenting were more associated with women, especially professional mourners. If delivering the eulogy, a man would also use his voice and could be judged for how well and convincingly he employed the repertoire and combination of emotive cues and oratorical skills.⁹³ However, it was tears which had perhaps the greatest currency in symbolising grief, and tears could be central to the eulogy or be witnessed at other points in the funeral. In descriptions of emperors as mourners aspects such as the donning of black cloth or choosing not to shave were rarely noted except when the use of these symbols exceeded or broke with expected norms, or in some way became excessive or inconsistent.⁹⁴ It was tears (and or associated sorrowful countenance) which were commented on: the presence or absence of tears being seen as a reflection of the nature of an emperor's grief and an emblem of his relationship with the deceased, which was then related to the emperor's character and thus ability to rule. These interpretations of tears were not, however, simplistic or always consistent across genres or characters: an emperor who openly wept could receive a positive write up (for example, Propertius on Augustus) or a negative one (for example, Tacitus on Nero); an emperor who controlled his tears could be praised (for example, Seneca on Claudius) or condemned (for example, Tacitus on Tiberius); and an individual emperor could be criticised or congratulated for a range of grief responses (for example, Gaius shed false tears for Tiberius, no tears for Antonia, and then too many tears for Drusilla). Tears could be good or bad, absent or immoderate, but rarely anything in-between. Whether tears were shed or not, an emperor's mourning could be used by interpreters to reveal his true character, to evidence that he was a competent and caring statesman or a flawed and hypocritical autocrat.⁹⁵

The act of weeping was communal and empathetic, tears could be uniting and were a way for an emperor to communicate with his subjects, to

⁹³ See Cic. *De Orat.* 3.223, noting the importance of the eyes.

⁹⁴ Dio Cassius (56.31.3) notes that Tiberius and his son, Drusus, wore dark clothes, following Augustus' death, and Suetonius mentions the mourning dress of Gaius as he escorted Tiberius' body back to Rome (*Gaius* 13.1), but these are rare direct references to an emperor's mourning attire. References to clothes, hair and facial hair were more commonly associated with extreme behaviour, see above.

⁹⁵ Compare, 'Ritual tears – both shed and unshed – are telling', Ebersole 2000, 246.

share emotional ground and affirm, 'common values in situations of crisis'.⁹⁶ Tears could be spontaneous, heartfelt, voluntary, but also false, feigned, acted, demanded or manipulative. Tears might be natural but they could also be strategic, and powerful, and thus were never a neutral currency in evaluating character. In the context of a funeral an emperor's tears could be viewed as largely performative – something demanded and expected, a ritual act of mourning rather than grief – so what the tears (or lack of them) truly meant was always open to interpretation.

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⁹⁶ Krasser (2009) 258.

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