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***LIBERALIA TU ACCUSAS !***  
**RESTITUTING THE ANCIENT DATE OF CAESAR'S *FUNUS*\***

Francesco CAROTTA\*\*, Arne EICKENBERG\*\*\*

**Résumé.** – Du récit unanime des anciens historiographes il ressort que le *funus* de Jules César eut lieu le 17 mars 44 av. J.-C. Or la communauté académique moderne prétend presque aussi unanimement que cette date est erronée, sans s'accorder cependant sur une alternative. Dans la littérature scientifique on donne des dates entre le 18 et le 23, et plus précisément le 20 mars, en s'appuyant sur la chronologie avancée par Drumann et Groebe. L'analyse des sources historiques et des événements qui suivirent l'assassinat de César jusqu'à ses funérailles, prouve que les auteurs anciens ne s'étaient pas trompés, et que Groebe avait reconnu la méprise de Drumann mais avait évité de l'amender. La correction de cette erreur invétérée va permettre de mieux examiner le contexte politique et religieux des funérailles de César.

**Abstract.** – 17 March 44 BCE results from the reports by the ancient historiographers as to the date of Julius Caesar's *funus*. However, today's academic community has consistently claimed that they were all mistaken, however, an alternative has not been agreed on. Dates between 18 and 23 March have been suggested in scientific literature—mostly 20 March, which is the date based on the chronology supplied by Drumann and Groebe. The analysis of the historical sources and of the events following Caesar's murder until his funeral proves that the ancient writers were right, and that Groebe had recognized Drumann's false dating, but avoided to adjust it. By correcting this inveterate error, it will now be possible to examine more accurately the political and religious context of Caesar's funeral

**Mots-clés.** – Jules César, funérailles, *Liberalia*, Dionysos, apothéose, religion romaine, histoire romaine, chronologie.

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It is undisputed that 17 March 44 BCE results unanimously from the ancient reports by Nicolaus of Damascus, Suetonius, Plutarch, Appian and Cassius Dio as the historical date of Julius Caesar's funeral ceremony. Still, modern scholars claim to know that they were all at fault :

As is generally known, the ancient historiographers (Appian, Dio, Plutarch) make the mistake of congesting the events of 15, 16 and 17 March into two days<sup>1</sup>.

*As is generally known* : this means that the mistake is supposedly evident enough not to feel obligated anymore to mention the reasons why the entire ancient historiography is being disputed.

Hence a later dating of Caesar's funeral has been assumed almost unanimously, mostly 20 March—with specific reference and tacit consent to Drumann and his editor Groebe respectively<sup>2</sup>. Drumann and Groebe seem to be the main source for the received chronology of these days and for the late dating of the funeral—albeit moderate ones, because other authors have alleged an even longer period of time between the assassination and the ceremony.

On the oft-quoted page 417 Groebe supplemented :

According to Ruete, *Korresp. Cic. 44/3 p. 16 f.*, the funeral for the murdered Caesar proceeded between 20 and 23 March. As a festive day (*Quinquatrus* CIL I<sup>2</sup> p. 298) 19 March was ruled out ; likewise 17 and 18 March, because the Senate sessions occurred on these two days.

1. H. BOTERMANN, *Die Soldaten und die römische Politik in der Zeit von Caesars Tod bis zur Begründung des Zweiten Triumvirats*, Munich 1968, p. 8, n. 1. For a collation of the sources in support of the 17 March cf. E. GRESWELL, *Origines Kalendariae Italicae*, 4, Oxford 1854, p. 287-90 with notes. Sequence : Senate session before dawn on the second day (16 March, day after the Ides ; App., *BC*, 2, 125, 524 ; 2, 126, 525 ; Plut., *Brut.*, 19, 1, *Caes.*, 67, 7 f. ; Dio. Cass. XLIV, 22, 2 f.), followed by an intermission and the resumption in the early morning of the third day (17 March ; App., *BC*, 2, 136 ; Plut., *Brut.*, 19, 1 f., 19, 4) ; on the same day at dawn : assembly of the people (App., *BC*, 2, 142, 593 ; Dio. Cass. XLIV, 35, 2) and reading of the testament, followed by the funeral (App. *BC* 2.143 ff. ; Plut., *Brut.*, 20, 1, 4 ; Dio. Cass. XLIV, 35, 3 f.).

2. [D-G<sup>2</sup>] W. DRUMANN, P. GROEBE, *Geschichte Roms in seinem Übergange von der republikanischen zur monarchischen Verfassung oder Pompeius, Caesar, Cicero und ihre Zeitgenossen nach Geschlechtern und mit genealogischen Tabellen*, Berlin-Leipzig 1899-1922<sup>2</sup>, vol. 1, p. 417. Almost everyone followed their chronology, e.g. R. SYME, *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford 1939, p. 98 ; S. WEINSTOCK, *Divus Julius*, Oxford 1971, p. 450. But it did not convince everyone : Malcovati left the exact date open (E. MALCOVATI, *Oratorum Romanorum fragmenta liberae rei publicae*, Turin 1955, p. 450), and Alföldi, after assuming the 20<sup>th</sup> at first (A. ALFÖLDI, *Studien über Caesars Monarchie*, Lund 1955, p. 63), later opted for the traditional 17<sup>th</sup> (*Id.*, « Die Denartypen des C. Cossutius Maridianus und die letzte Denaremission des P. Sepullius Macer. Beiträge XVII-XXII », *SNR* 47, 1968, p. 85 f. ; *Id.*, « La divinisation de César dans la politique d'Antoine et d'Octavien entre 44 et 40 avant J.-C. », *RN* 15, 1973, p. 101, 114). However, this remained an exception to the rule, and the 20<sup>th</sup> has been circulated to this day : cf. P. GRATAROLA, *I Cesariani dalle idi di marzo alla costituzione del secondo triumvirato*, Turin 1990, p. 21, n. 93 ; U. GOTTER, *Der Diktator ist tot ! Politik in Rom zwischen den Iden des März und der Begründung des Zweiten Triumvirats*, Stuttgart 1996, p. 22, n. 70, p. 39 ; R. CRISTOFOLI, *Dopo Cesare : la scena politica romana all'indomani del cesaricidio*, Naples-Perugia 2002, p. 8, p. 124 ; G.S. SUMI, *Ceremony and Power. Performing Politics in Rome between Republic and Empire*, Ann Arbor 2005, p. 100 ; L. CANFORA, *Giulio Cesare, il dittatore democratico*, Bari 2006<sup>2</sup>, p. 373 ; J.T. RAMSEY, « Debate at a distance : a unique strategy in Cicero's Thirteenth Philippic » in D.H. BERRY, A. ERSKINE eds., *Form and Function in Roman Oratory*, Cambridge 2010, p. 162, n. 19.

One would hardly be able to go beyond 20 March, since a longer exhibition of the corpse is nowhere mentioned. Thereto cp. Marquardt-Mau *Privatleben d. Römer* 347, 9. Ihne RG VII 269 assumes a later date<sup>3</sup>.

This is hardly a stable position, which nevertheless caught on and rose to academic truth. But is it also the simple truth ?

It is already possible to have a different position on the *Quinquatrus* as a festival, because one year later the Senate convened on that day<sup>4</sup>. With regard to the argument that it was not allowed to bury a deceased *feriis publicis*, on a festive day, we need to ask ourselves if this also applied for a *funus publicum*<sup>5</sup>, and if a solemn funeral had been impossible specifically on festive days<sup>6</sup>—even more so after an event as shattering as the murder of the *dictator perpetuo* and *pontifex maximus*, which provoked national mourning and caused a state of emergency<sup>7</sup>.

From the accounts of the ancient historiographers 16 and 17 March result as the dates of the aforementioned Senate sessions, not 17 and 18 March. Plutarch for example wrote in his biography of Brutus that « on the following day the senate met in the temple of Tellus »<sup>8</sup>. Therefore the first Senate assembled on the next day, the day after the Ides, on 16 March. However, this did not interest Groebe because he believed that Plutarch contradicted himself on occasion :

[In Plutarch] Ant. 14 the Senate session in the temple of Tellus follows the entertaining of the conspirators in the homes of Antony and Lepidus, while in *Brut.* 19 [Plutarch] retains the chronological order of events and mentions the Senate sessions first, then the entertainment. Plutarch only writes from a standpoint of biography, but not of chronology. Thus, it is not permitted to gather anything from him with regard to the chronological order [of events]<sup>9</sup>.

3. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 417, funeral ceremony [73, 14]. E. RUETE, *Die Correspondenz Ciceros in den Jahren 44 und 43*, Marburg 1883, p. 16 f. ; cf. *RE* 1.2.2599 s.v. « Antonius [30] » ; *infra* for the computations by Ruete and Mau, n. 62.

4. Cic., *Fam.*, 12, 25, 1.

5. App., *BC*, 2, 136, 569 : καὶ θάπτειν τὸν ἄνδρα δημοσίᾳ ; cf. 3, 34, 136.

6. Colum., *de re rust.*, 2, 21, 4 : *Feriis publicis hominem mortuum sepelire non licet*. The Ciceronian passage often specified in conjunction (*de leg.*, 2, 22, 55) does not mention a funeral prohibition on festive days, but on the day of the *feriae denicales*, the family's festival of purification following the death of a relative, i.e. on the ninth day ; cf. Fest. s.v. *denicales feriae* : *colebantur cum hominis mortui causa familia purgabatur*. According to Cicero the ancestors had followed this tradition to ensure that the deceased would be counted among the gods : *nisi maiores eos qui ex hac vita migrassent in deorum numero esse voluissent*. This reason is rather an argument for a burial permission that included festive days, especially for the *pontifex maximus* Julius Caesar, whose deification had been designated in his lifetime, and *a fortiori* for a burial permission on the *Liberalia*, the festival of Dionysus, who himself had ascended into the divine sphere.

7. On the *iustitium* in the empire effected by the death of an imperial family member cf. Tac., *Ann.*, 1, 16, 2 ; Ammian. XIX, 1, 10.

8. Plut. *Brut.* 19, 1 : Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ τῆς βουλῆς συνελθοῦσης εἰς τὸ τῆς Γῆς ἱερόν [...].

9. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 415.

Here Groebe made two momentous observational errors. Firstly, in Plutarch's *Ant.* 14 the Senate session does not necessarily follow the entertaining of the conspirators<sup>10</sup>. Secondly, in *Brut.* 19 Plutarch does not mention the entertaining as occurring *after* the Senate sessions, but *in-between*. Plutarch's alleged inconsistency is easily explained by the occurrence of two Senate meetings, which Drumann and Groebe themselves assumed. Since the entertaining of the assassins by Mark Antony and Lepidus fell in-between, it is all the same to say « before » or « after » the Senate session because it depends on whether the first or the second one is meant—and of course it also depends on the biographical standpoint. Plutarch need not necessarily be unfit for a chronological assessment, particularly because the same time frame was also specified by other authors, for example for the first Senate, which according to Appian had been summoned by Antony already during the night between the Ides and 16 March :

Τῆς δ' αὐτῆς νυκτὸς καὶ τὰ χρήματα τοῦ Καίσαρος καὶ τὰ ὑπομνήματα τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐς τὸν Ἀντώνιον μετεκομίζετο [...] Γιγνομένων δὲ τούτων διάγραμμα νυκτὸς ἀνεγινώσκετο Ἀντωνίων τὴν βουλὴν συγκαλοῦντος ἔτι πρὸ ἡμέρας ἐς τὸ τῆς Γῆς ἱερόν, ἀγχοτάτω μάλιστα ὄν τῆς οἰκίας Ἀντωνίου<sup>11</sup>.

When Antony had temporarily left the Senate with Lepidus, the latter went to the Forum and spoke to the people : « yesterday I stood with Caesar here »<sup>12</sup>, which is only possible if the first Senate session was on 16 March.

Drumann had considered Appian generally credible<sup>13</sup>, so these passages could be considered as valid. But not in the opinion of Groebe who disagreed with Drumann's « favorable judgment of Appian ». Groebe argued that Appian would add his own ingredients to matters of fact, that he displayed a superior talent for combination, but would not observe the temporal priority of events<sup>14</sup>. This however means that Groebe accepted of Appian only what fitted an ulterior, still-to-be-determined chronology. This is a risky undertaking because it depends on one's own talent for combination and on the subjective validation of source reliability.

But Groebe had to admit that the meanwhile deceased Drumann (1786-1861) had determined his chronology without any knowledge of the *Bios Kaisaros* by Nicolaus of Damascus<sup>15</sup>. This bore consequences even in his view because « this report, which is very detailed in its minutiae, is of high value as the only contemporary one »<sup>16</sup>. Nicolaus, born

10. This is only the case if the δὲ in συναγαγὼν δὲ βουλὴν (Plut., *Ant.*, 14, 3) is translated as « then », and not as « for », forming a temporal « then he called the Senate together » instead of a copulative-explicative « for he called the Senate together ». Within the event summary in *Ant.*, 14 this passage does not mean a chronological account, but an explanation of the previously mentioned incident—which is confirmed by the comparison with *Brut.*, 19.

11. App., *BC*, 2, 125, 524-126, 525.

12. App., *BC*, 2, 131, 548 : ἐνταῦθα χθὲς μετὰ Καίσαρος ἰστάμην.

13. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 59.

14. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 407 [59, 1].

15. In 1848 the excerpts *De insidiis* (chapters 16-31 of Nicolaus' *Bios Kaisaros*) were discovered in a codex in the Escorial and published together with *De virtutibus* (C. MÜLLER ed., *FHG* 3.427-56, Paris 1849).

16. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 407.

around 64 BCE, had been twenty years of age at the time of Caesar's assassination. He could not be simply ignored like the other ancient historiographers who all wrote later, in the first, second or third century CE. Groebe outright indicated the difficulty :

Thus, the events Drumann had allocated to 15 and 16 March congest on 15 March, if we believe the testimony of Nicolaus<sup>17</sup>.

Unfortunately this remained mere lip service, and he saw no reason to abandon the now void 16 March because he carelessly dated a newly surfaced letter by Decimus Iunius Brutus, the composition of which Ruete had estimated between 23 and 25 March, to 16 March<sup>18</sup> (*infra*), and utilized it as a makeshift to fill the newly developed chronological gap. This is apparent from his list of events, which we will reproduce fully translated for better orientation. Groebe :

The sequence of events on 15 and 16 March 44 is therefore as follows :

#### 15 March.

1. Caesar is assassinated. The senators escape.
2. M. Brutus delivers a speech on the Forum. The people do not approve of the action [of the murder].
3. The assassins flee to the Capitolium. Caesar's body is taken to his home. Calpurnia. Preparation for the funeral.
4. Appearance of praetor Cinna. Dolabella claims the consulate.
5. The assassins reattempt to win over the people. Congregation of the people in the Forum under the protection of D. Brutus' gladiators. A member of the neutral faction speaks first, then M. Brutus. The people remain silent. The assassins return to the Capitolium.
6. Antony begins to act and first comes to an agreement with Lepidus.
7. In the evening Cicero and other men of the aristocratic party appear on the Capitolium. Consultation.
8. Embassy to Antony and Lepidus. A response is promised for the following day.
9. Hirtius visits D. Brutus at his home after a discussion with Antony. [Brutus] deems the conspirators' cause lost.

#### Night of 15/16 March.

10. Antony takes possession of the state treasure and Caesar's documents.

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17. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 409.

18. Cic., *Fam.*, 11, 1. E. RUETE, *op. cit.*, p. 1, 16 f. ; *supra*, D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 409.

11. Lepidus occupies the Forum (according to Nic. Dam. 27 on the day following the arrival of the embassy).

16 March.

13. [sic !<sup>19</sup>] Antony appears under arms. Express messengers travel to Caesar's friends and followers in the province to summon them to a demonstration. Veterans assemble in the city.

14. The Caesarians deliberate. Hirtius is for, Lepidus against peace. In favor of peace Antony decides to protect the assassins. D. Brutus desperately writes to M. Brutus and Cassius on the Capitolium. ad fam. XI 1.1-4.

before 9 a.m.

15. Hirtius personally delivers the message of the recent change to D. Brutus. The latter adds a postscript to his letter. ad fam. XI 1.5.

16. Antony seizes government power and negotiates with the conspirators on the Capitolium. Result : the Senate shall decide. Peace and order [are] established in the city. The more rational followers of the constitutional party already realize that it was inexpedient to kill only Caesar. Nic. Dam. 27.

Night of 16/17 March.

17. The city is illuminated. The magistrates perform their offices by turns. Antony publishes a written order for the Senate to convene before daybreak. App. II. 126<sup>20</sup>.

At first glance everything appears to be in best order. But which events are said to have occurred on 16 March ? None in particular, it seems.

13. *Antony appears under arms.*

This is correct, but he showed himself under arms during an intermission of the Senate meeting<sup>21</sup>, together with Lepidus who said that he had stood with Caesar on the Forum the day before (*supra*). For these reasons alone the first Senate should be dated to 16 March.

*Express messengers travel to Caesar's friends and followers in the province to summon them to a demonstration.*

This did not occur in Rome, but in the provinces, and both parties had already begun to dispatch their messengers the night before<sup>22</sup>.

*Veterans assemble in the city.*

19. §12 is missing in the original.

20. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 414-5.

21. App., BC, 2, 130, 542-3.

22. App., BC, 2, 125, 523.



This occurred precisely at the time of the Senate session because the veterans threw stones at the traitors when they entered the Senate<sup>23</sup>.

14. *The Caesarians deliberate. Hirtius is for, Lepidus against peace. In favor of peace Antony decides to protect the assassins.*

This must describe the previous evening, since that was the time when the assassins' embassy mentioned under §8 arrived at Antony's and Lepidus'. At that time Antony and Lepidus had already met, as Groebe affirms himself<sup>24</sup>. The answer came soon<sup>25</sup>, and even if it had only been promised, as it is claimed under §8, it would be improbable that the already convened Caesarians would have waited until the next day to debate such an important issue, the more so as they acted immediately afterward, still during the same night (cf. §§9-11), which requires that they had already come to an agreement. Or are we to assume that everyone acted independently and without prior accord ?

*D. Brutus desperately writes to M. Brutus and Cassius on the Capitolium. ad fam. XI 1.1-4.*

Why this late ? It was already the previous evening that Decimus Brutus had deemed the conspirators' cause lost (cf. §9). Furthermore, research since Groebe's time has commonly dated this letter by Brutus a few days later<sup>26</sup>. But even if it had been written on 16 March, it is illogical to assume that the whole city would have waited for Brutus to write his letter.

15. *Hirtius personally delivers the message of the recent change to D. Brutus. The latter adds a postscript to his letter. ad fam. XI 1.5.*

It was obviously insufficient to turn the writing of a letter into an additional incident, so the delivery of the letter and the adding of a postscript then had to help out in order to simulate a real event. (One can speculate why §12 is missing from Groebe's list. Did §12 perhaps mention that Decimus Brutus contemplated writing a letter ?)

16. *Antony seizes government power [...].*

Antony had already seized power, when he had taken possession of the state treasure and of Caesar's documents (§10 : 15/16 March).

*[...] and negotiates with the conspirators on the Capitolium. Result : the Senate shall decide.*

This had already begun the evening before (cf. §8), and shortly afterwards Antony's answer was issued to the envoys<sup>27</sup>.

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23. App., BC, 2, 126, 526.

24. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.409.

25. App., BC, 2, 125, 521.

26. Cf. H. FRISCH with N. HAISLUND, *Cicero's Fight for the Republic. The Historical Background of Cicero's Philippics*, Copenhagen 1946, p. 45, where the letter was dated 20 March ; cf. U. GOTTER, *op. cit.*, p. 269 : « shortly after the funeral ».

27. App., BC, 2, 125, 521.

*Peace and order is established in the city.*

This already happened the night before<sup>28</sup>. Or are we to believe that Antony ordered the state treasure and Caesar's documents to be retrieved and brought to his house (§10) without previously providing for peace and order ?

*The more rational followers of the constitutional party already realize that it was inexpedient to kill only Caesar. Nic. Dam. 27.*

So a realization, a train of thought, usually a sudden inspiration, was now supposed to be an event that prevented every other involved person in the city from doing something else—for instance holding a Senate conference ?

*Conclusion* : Despite all his (at times even creative) effort, Groebe was unable to conceal that the inevitable consequence of the newly found source by Nicolaus that namely « the events Drumann had allocated to 15 and 16 March congest on 15 March », itself entailed that 16 March had to remain uneventful. It is surprising how long his attempt at obfuscation, based on an equivocal letter by Decimus Brutus, has been misleading the academic community. It is even more surprising that Erich Becht retained 16 March<sup>29</sup> : apart from Brutus' letter at issue, Becht only noted the deliberation of the Caesarians who allegedly needed a full twenty-four hour debate to decide what they should do next<sup>30</sup>. In the meantime everyone else was supposed to have dutifully kept still : assassins, veterans and the *plebs urbana*—a miracle !

Therefore it is impossible to rationally explain the persistent adherence to 17 March as the date of the first Senate session, which according to all ancient testimonies evidently occurred on 16 March.

Shuckburgh at least showed that it is possible to merge both Senate sessions into one day—in her case of course still on 17 March, which means that 16 March remained uneventful regardless—, which led to an occasional dating of the funeral ceremony to 18 March<sup>31</sup>. Taking into account the above criticism of Groebe's chronology, Shuckburgh's approach would then lead to both Senate sessions occurring on 16 March, a day that would otherwise remain empty. But if we retain the common notion that the Senate sessions were held separately on two

28. App., *BC*, 2, 126, 525-6.

29. E. BECHT, *Regeste über die Zeit von Cäsars Ermordung bis zum Umschwung in der Politik des Antonius*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1911, p. 18-20.

30. Of all people this absurdly long hesitation in the most dramatic of all situations, which demanded quick decisions, has been imputed to the commanders trained by Caesar, by a strategist, for whom speed had been the highest imperative (Caes., *BG*, 7, 26 : *res posita in celeritate videbatur* ; *BC*, 1, 70 : *erat in celeritate omne positum certamen*). Therefore the oft-quoted *diu deliberatum est* by Orosius (*Hist.*, 6, 17, 2 ; e.g. in E. BECHT, *op. cit.*) should be regarded relatively. Anyhow, it refers to the 15<sup>th</sup>, when the assassins, still holding their daggers, fled onto the Capitolium, and the Caesarians considered burning them together with the hill itself : *duo Bruti et C. Cassius aliique socii strictis pugionibus in Capitolium secesserunt. diu deliberatum est, utrum Capitolium cum auctoribus caedis oporteret incendi.*

31. E.S. SHUCKBURGH, *Cicero. The Letters of Cicero ; the whole extant correspondence in chronological order, in four volumes*, London 1900-08, vol. 4, p. 17, n. 1 on Cic., *Att.*, 14, 10.

consecutive days, it is logical to assume that the second Senate proceeded in the morning hours of the same day that would also see Julius Caesar's pivotal funeral in the afternoon. Clear evidence of this chronology is found in the writings of Cicero, the chief witness for Drumann-Groebe. In his *Philippics* Cicero referred to his arrival at the Senate on the day of the *Liberalia* :

*Qui tibi dies ille, Antoni, fuit ? Quamquam mihi inimicus subito exstitisti, tamen me tui miseret quod tibi invideris. Qui tu vir, di immortales, et quantus fuisses, si illius diei mentem servare potuisses ! Pacem haberemus, quae erat facta per obsidem puerum [...] Etsi [...] funeri tyranni [...] sceleratissime praefuisti*<sup>32</sup>.

Antony's sudden about-face in the course of a single day clearly indicates that the Senate Cicero attended was followed by Caesar's funeral on the same day. It is then all the same to connect Cicero's famous words in the letter to his friend Atticus—*Liberalia tu accusas*, « you put the blame on the *Liberalia* »—with the funeral or with the Senate that had resolved the execution of the funeral. Shuckburgh indeed noted on this sentence that it refers to what was « done in the senate on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March », but she added :

It was the funeral and the recitation of the will to which Atticus (as did Cicero, *Phil.*, 2, 89) attributed the revulsion of public feeling and the mischief which followed.

The same conclusion also results from a later passage in the same letter, where the Senate resolution and the funeral are mentioned in the same breath :

*Liberalia tu accusas. quid fieri tum potuit ? iam pridem perieramus. meministine te clamare causam perisse si funere elatus esset ? at ille etiam in foro combustus laudatusque miserabiliter servique et egentes in tecta nostra cum facibus immissi*<sup>33</sup>.

Accordingly, this must mean that Atticus could hardly have laid the blame on the *Liberalia*, if the funeral had not proceeded on the same day. Cicero's *Liberalia tu accusas* is far removed from being proof of a funeral on 18 March or later, but is rather evidence that the ceremony indeed occurred on the day of the *Liberalia*.

Cicero's letter was sent from Cumae, a stronghold of the cult of Ceres, on 19 April, the day of the *Cerialia*, and since Ceres was the cultic companion of Liber and Libera, the *Cerialia* were linked with the *Liberalia*<sup>34</sup>—and therefore a predestined day for Cicero's contemplation. Here Cicero regarded and used the term *Liberalia* not to refer to it as a simple date, but as a day of an event, just as he spoke of the « Ides of March » when referring to Caesar's murder<sup>35</sup>. Accordingly, he meant Caesar's funeral ceremony when he noted *Liberalia* because the funeral had been the actual event of that day, while the Senate session had only been a preparatory incident.

32. Cic., *Phil.*, 2, 90.

33. Cic., *Att.*, 14, 10.

34. Ov., *Fast.*, 785 f.

35. Cic., *Att.*, 15, 4, 2 : *itaque stulta iam Iduum Martiarum est consolatio* ; 15, 4, 3 : *me Idus Martiae non delectant*.

The main testimony from which the modern presumption of the « generally known mistake » originated is apparently *Phil.* 2, 89, a source mentioned by both Drumann<sup>36</sup> and Shuckburgh (*supra*). Therein Cicero addresses Antony :

[...] *neque te illo die neque postero vidi [...]. Post diem tertium veni in aedem Telluris*<sup>37</sup>.

It is therefore definite that Cicero did not attend the Senate before 17 March. Without doubt Drumann inferred from Cicero's remark that the first Senate session could then only have occurred on the *Liberalia*—and that consequently all ancient historiographers had erred. Cicero had been an eyewitness, whereas the historiographers all came later and wrote from hearsay or merely as copyists, except for Nicolaus of Damascus, whose work was however unknown to Drumann—and also except for Appian and Plutarch, whose writings depend on the contemporary witness Asinius Pollio, a fact that at least Groebe should have known<sup>38</sup>.

It did not cross Drumann's mind that the first Senate session could have proceeded without Cicero. In fact Cicero himself stated that he had attempted to have a Senate meeting summoned on the Capitolium where the assassins had retreated<sup>39</sup>. He furthermore stated that he had remained on the Capitolium, although the « *Liberatores* » had wanted to send him to Antony ; that he had still remained there, even when others had already gone ; that « only reluctantly » (*et quidem invitus*) he had appeared at the Senate session summoned by Antony, at a time when nobody could afford to decline anymore—on 17 March :

[...] *nam Liberalibus quis potuit in senatum non venire* ?<sup>40</sup>

In this context Cicero indeed mentions Caesar's documents, which had been the subject of altercation during the first Senate session :

[...] *cui servire ipsi non potuimus, eius libellis paremus*<sup>41</sup>.

But from this remark we cannot infer that the *acta Caesaris* were not discussed and affirmed until the Senate on the *Liberalia*, because Cicero criticizes the resolution and does not only mention the *Liberalia*, but also *illam sessionem Capitulinam*. It had been summoned by the *Bruti*, but had failed because of the *bruti*, « those other dull brutes, who think themselves cautious and wise, who thought it enough in some cases to rejoice, in others to congratulate, in

36. D-G<sup>2</sup> 1, 65, n. 7 f.

37. Cic., *Phil.*, 2, 89.

38. A book on the subject had already been published : P.J.H. BAILLEU, *Quomodo Appianus in bellorum civilium libris II-V usus sit Asinii Pollionis historiis*, Göttingen 1874 ; cf. F. FRÖHLICH, *De rebus inde a Caesare occiso usque ad senatum Liberalibus habitum gestis*, Berlin 1892, p. 2.

39. Cic., *Att.*, 14, 10 : *meministine me clamare illo ipso primo Capitolino die senatum in Capitolium a praetoribus vocandum* ? This in itself is reason enough to assume that Antony immediately convened the Senate. Otherwise the senators would have gathered on the Capitolium. Most senators then came to the session convened by Antony already for formal reasons, because as consul he held a higher office than the praetors Brutus and Cassius.

40. Cic., *Att.*, 14, 14, 2. Conversely, Cicero's remark means that before the *Liberalia* he (like others) still had the alternative to refuse to attend a session of the Senate. So he had obviously decided to stay away from the first session, which can therefore only have taken place on the previous day.

41. Cic., *Att.*, 14, 14, 2.

none to persevere. » This indicates that the « brutes » had defected, namely to the first Senate convening on Antony's orders, and their action had created the quorum necessary to affirm Caesar's *acta*, by which they were permitted to retain their political offices—and this is what they cared about most.

So 16 March saw a duality of political power, a divided Senate—on the Capitolium and in the temple of Tellus. Therefore it can be deduced from Cicero's remarks that before his arrival one Senate session had already taken place in the temple of Tellus without him, a Senate in which the assassins were granted amnesty, and that Antony may already have sent his two-year-old son to the Capitolium as a hostage for peace<sup>42</sup>. This move encouraged even Cicero, who at first had not believed in a pact (*foedere ullo*), and he then repaired to the second Senate session. The tense chosen by Cicero in his writing does not contradict this analysis : *erat facta per obsidem* indicates that the hostage had already been sent when he came to the temple of Tellus. In *Brut.*, 19 Plutarch states explicitly that Antony's child was delivered as a hostage between the two Senate sessions, and *Ant.*, 14 is not in conflict (*supra*). Cicero and other friends of Marcus Brutus probably descended from the Capitolium after the hostage had arrived there (*ibid.*<sup>43</sup>). Cicero does not contradict this because he reported that the children of Antony and Lepidus were transferred after Antony's speech, not after his own<sup>44</sup>. An application of Appian<sup>45</sup> and Cassius Dio<sup>46</sup> against Cicero, Plutarch and Velleius in order to postdate the transfer of Antony's and Lepidus' sons as hostages to a time after the second session and Cicero's speech, is complicated by Dio himself, who reported that Brutus went to Lepidus' and Cassius to Antony's to have a meal with their respective host<sup>47</sup>, which fits better with the *cena* in the evening of 16 March after the first Senate than to the *prandium* at noon of 17 March after the second Senate. In any event, Antony would have hardly dared to instigate the funeral crowd against the assassins, if the children had still been their hostages<sup>48</sup>. So it is reasonable that Appian and Cassius Dio—or their copyists—confused the return of the hostages with their initial transfer, and an alternate date for their return is not established in the sources. In addition, it is hardly conceivable that children were made hostages on the *Liberalia* of all days, the festival when the

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42. Cic., *Phil.*, 2, 89 : *pacem [...] quae erat facta per obsidem puerum nobilem* ; 1, 31 : *cum [...] tuus parvus filius in Capitolium a te missus pacis obses fuit !*

43. Cf. also Vell. II, 58, 3, where Cicero's speech praising the amnesty follows the hostage transfer. The testimony of Velleius Paterculus is relevant because he glorified Cicero (2, 66) ; cf. also Liv., *per.*, 116.

44. Cic., *Phil.*, 1, 2 ; 1, 31.

45. App., *BC*, 2, 142, 594.

46. Dio. Cass. XLIV, 34, 6.

47. Dio. Cass. XLIV, 34, 7 ; cf. Plut., *Brut.*, 19, 3 ; *Ant.*, 14, 1.

48. That Antony would not have dared to devise Caesar's funeral eulogy in such a manner, if Fulvia's child had still been a hostage at that point, seems to be suggested by Cicero's lament (*Phil.*, 2, 90) : *Pacem haberemus, quae erat facta per obsidem puerum nobilem, M. Bambalionis nepotem. Quamquam bonum te timor faciebat, non diuturnus magister officii, improbum fecit ea quae, dum timor abest, a te non discedit, audacia*. Accordingly, the subsequent *optimum te putabant me quidem dissentiente* can be interpreted that Cicero had advised against a return of the hostages before the funeral because he had foreseen Antony's about-face, which could be indicated by the previous passage (2, 89) : *O mea frustra semper verissima auguria rerum futurarum !*

*liberi* became *liberi*—when freeborn children became free citizens. Conversely, it was the best date to release the hostages, especially because it would have underscored Brutus' self-image as the « *liberator* » who wanted to harm no one except the « tyrant »<sup>49</sup>.

The pieces of information given by historiographers on the right chronology of these incidents sometimes diverge, and it remains a subjective decision, which minute chain of events to settle for : Who is credible ? And when ? Which passages by which authors are not credible ? At any rate, it was a bizarre move to take the discrepancies between the different historiographical accounts as a reason to misuse a single and interpretationally unstable passage by Cicero to displace the pivot of events itself, although all ancient authors accord : Caesar's funeral on the third day. This dating should have rather been left untouched, because the new method prevented any consensus on an alternate date of the funeral : 18 March ? 20 ? 21 ? Or 23 ? Who offers more ?

Moreover, historians have in fact missed that Caesar's funeral can be precisely dated on the basis of an internal and unquestionable testimony, namely to 17 March, which means that all previous events must be integrated until noon of that day<sup>50</sup>. Irrespective of the delicate counting of the days from the first Senate session, the report by Suetonius provides crucial evidence that Caesar's funeral and cremation occurred on 17 March, the day of the *Liberalia* : many women threw their children's golden amulets and purple-gilded togas onto the pyre, together with the jewels that they were themselves wearing<sup>51</sup>. This was a specific ritual of the *Liberalia* : on this festival the matured child took off his *bulla* and *toga praetexta*, which he had worn during adolescence, and donned the adult's apparel. A boy would don a man's toga, also called *toga libera*<sup>52</sup>, and all *bullae* and *praetextae* were sacrificed to the gods. The fact that mothers offered up their children's amulets and togas to Caesar's pyre shows that it happened at the *Liberalia* festival—at any rate not afterward, because otherwise they would not have possessed these specific sacrificial offerings anymore.

For the funeral Caesar's bloodstained garment had been suspended from a *tropaeum*, which was positioned at the head of the bier where his corpse was laid out. According to Quintilian's choice of words Caesar's *vestis* was still *cruenta* and *sanguine madens* which indicates a temporal proximity to the assassination<sup>53</sup>.

During Antony's funeral oration Caesar's dead body could not be seen by the crowd in the Forum because it was laid out flat on the Rostra. Therefore a wax figure of the deceased, which realistically displayed all dagger wounds on its corpus, was lifted above the bier. By

49. Plut., *Brut.*, 18, 3-6, *Ant.*, 13, 1-3 ; App., *BC*, 2, 114, 478 ; Vell. II, 58, 2.

50. For an attempt in this vein cf. T. HENDRIKS, *Rouw en razernij om Caesar*, Soesterberg 2008, p. 139-50, where however the hostages were supposedly transferred after the second Senate session.

51. Suet., *Jul.*, 84 : *iniecere flammae [...] matronae etiam pleraeque ornamenta sua, quae gerebant, et liberorum bullas atque praetextas.*

52. Cic., *Att.*, 6, 1, 12 ; five different reasons are covered in detail in Ov., *Fast.*, 3, 771-90 : *Restat ut inveniam quare toga libera detur Lucifero pueris, candide Bacche, tuo [...].*

53. Suet., *Jul.*, 84 ; Quintil., *Instit.*, *Orat.*, 6, 1, 25-31.

means of a mechanism it was rotated for everyone to see. The people could not bear the sight, became furious and hunted the assassins, who had however taken flight, and in their rage and pain caught Caesar's friend Cinna instead (*infra*)<sup>54</sup>.



Figure 1 : Ladling of wine in front of an erected Dionysus idol in the *Lenaion* with dancing women<sup>55</sup>.

At Dionysian festivals it was customary to erect an idol of the god, not only whose form corresponded to the Roman tropaeum, but also the manner in which it was carried and raised. This is exemplified by the scenes from the Attic *Anthesteria* in the Dionysian month<sup>56</sup>. We can see from the vertical pole visible at the bottom that the Dionysus idol consisted of a dressed-up tropaeum with a mask (fig. 1). The pole stabilized the tropaeum either in the ground or inside a round base (fig. 2) which then also allowed for a possible rotation.



Figure 2 : Erecting of a Dionysus idol or of its herm<sup>57</sup>.

54. App., *BC*, 2, 147, 612.

55. Attic *stamnos*. Naples : Museo Archeologico Nazionale. Drawing by Reichhold. In : K. KERÉNYI, *Dionysos. Urbild des unzerstörbaren Lebens*, Munich 1976, p. 226, fig. 85.

56. Cf. CH. DAREMBERG, EDM. SAGLIO, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*. II., « Dionysia » p. 236.

57. Detail. Roman sarcophagus (based on a lost Hellenistic archetype). Princeton : The Art Museum (Princeton University). In : KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 300 f., fig. 140. Cf. also E. SIMON, « Dionysischer Sarkophag in Princeton », *MDAI(R)* 69, 1962, p. 143. For the influence of the Greek Dionysian cult on the Roman world



Figure 3 : Dionysian rituals at the *Choëis* (day of libations) : bare *tropaeum* on *ferculum* (left) and seated Dionysus idol in carriage (right)<sup>58</sup>.

bloodstained toga and the dagger wounds covering the whole wax effigy, the people frantically hunted the assassins' sympathizers and dismembered everyone they could find, even Caesar's close friend and ally Helvius Cinna who had the fatal misfortune of bearing the same name as another Cinna who had made a speech against the deceased :

[...] οὐκ ἀνασχόμενοι τε περὶ τῆς ὁμωνυμίας οὐδ' ἀκοῦσαι, διέσπασαν θηριωδῶς, καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ μέρος ἐς ταφὴν εὗρέθη<sup>59</sup>.

Appian's choice of words—διέσπασαν θηριωδῶς (« they tore him to pieces like wild beasts »)—, which corresponds to the parallel tradition by Plutarch—διεσπάρθη (« he was torn in pieces »)—, as well as the result (« no part of him was ever found for burial ») leaves no doubt that the people indulged in the infamous διασπαραγμός, the laceration of the sacrificial

cf. A. BRUHL, *Liber Pater. Origine et expansion du culte dionysiaque à Rome et dans le monde romain*, Paris 1953, p. 124 ff. and *passim* ; Cic., *Verr.* 5,187 ; archaic parallel juxtaposition in Verg., *Georg.*, 2, 380-9. *Infra* for the burial of Caesar as Daphnis, n. 86 ff.

58. Attic Choëis pot. New York : Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fletcher Fund, 1924). In : KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 241, fig. 93.

59. App., *BC*, 2, 147 ; cf. Plut., *Brut.*, 20, 8-21, 1.



animal as ritualistic *omophagia*, the orgiastic devouring of raw flesh in the cult of Dionysus<sup>60</sup>. It is hardly presumable that such an archaic and violent, but still typically Dionysian rite, committed in Dionysian fury and delusion, would *not* have occurred at the *Liberalia*, the festival of Dionysus. It was only on this day that the people were mentally prepared and religiously legitimized to commit such a fundamental infringement of social taboos—and above all accept it<sup>61</sup>.

Incidentally, an early funeral ceremony was consistent with the archaic custom that had been formed in the Mediterranean climate. Drawing on several Virgilian passages, Horace's commentator Cruquianus wrote :

*Apud antiquos moris fuit, ut triduo corpus defuncti iaceret domi [...] et post triduum in rogam ponebatur. [...] item post triduum cinis in urnam condebatur et tumulo mandabatur*<sup>62</sup>.

According to tradition Caesar's funeral would therefore have happened on the third day. A longer public viewing of the corpse is nowhere mentioned, as Groebe himself admitted (*supra*). On the contrary : Nicolaus' *Bios Kaisaros* rather insinuates urgency or haste — « these

60. The same fate probably befell the other Cinna, because he was eventually captured too ; cf. Suet., *Jul.*, 85 ; Val. Max. IX, 9, 1. For the Dionysian context cp. the death of Pentheus in Eur., *Bacch.*, 1120 : διασπαρακτόν. For cases of omophagic rituals in a state of trance which have been preserved until today, in the religious brotherhood of the Aissawa in Morocco, cf. H. JEANMAIRE, *Dionysos. Histoire du culte de Bacchus*, Paris 1951, p. 259-61, following R. BRUNEL, *Essai sur la confrérie religieuse des Aissâoua au Maroc*, Paris 1926.

61. It is conspicuous that the Senate left those unpunished who had dismembered Cinna, but tried to arrest those who had attacked the conspirators' houses (Plut., *Brut.*, 21, 2). Not even Cicero condemned the people's omophagia or mentioned Cinna's death anywhere, despite his otherwise common habit of decrying the crowd active during Caesar's *funus* and later at the *bustum* ; cf. *Phil.*, 2, 89 (*servi, egentes*), 1, 5 (*perditi homines, scelerati, nefarii*).

62. Cruq. on Hor., *epod.*, 17, 47. Mau in Marquart-Mommsen was referenced by Groebe (as « Marquart-Mau », *supra*, n. 3 ; A. MAU, « Privatleben der Römer » in J. MARQUART, T. MOMMSEN, *Handbuch der römischen Alterthümer*, Leipzig 1876-86<sup>2</sup>, 7.1.2). Mau had assumed a general public viewing period of seven days, and to this end he had quoted Serv., *ad Aen.*, 5, 64 : *et sciendum quia apud maiores ubiubi quis fuisset extinctus, ad domum suam referebatur [...] et illic septem erat diebus, octavo incendebatur, nono sepeliebatur* (similar : Ammian. IX, 1, 10 ; Herod. IV, 2, 4). Following this source E. RUETE (*op. cit.*, 16 f.) assumed a seven-day public viewing of Caesar's body, as it is documented for the emperor Septimius Severus. Based on this assertion, Caesar's funeral ceremony would need to be dated 22 or 23 March (cf. *Der kleine Pauly* 1.411 s.v. « Antonius [9] »), which Groebe however did not accept (*supra*). Why the traditional dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> was nevertheless to be discarded in order to prefer some unproven interim date, remains his secret. At any rate, Blümner had already noted that the links in Servius' computation (7+1+1=9) are not to be taken at face value because the only thing important to Servius in this passage was the etymological explanation of the *cena novemdialis*, i.e. the number 9 at the end (H. BLÜMNER, *Die römischen Privataltertümer*, Munich 1911, p. 487, n. 2), whereas grave inscriptions (*CIL* X, 01935, 06, 13782) and other sources (Var., *RR*, 1, 69, 2 ; Xenoph., *Eph.*, 3, 7, 4 ; Cic., *Clu.*, 9, 27) result in a shorter period of time from a person's death to his funeral, viz. less than three days—or even a funeral on the following (i.e. second) day ; cf. S. SCHRUMPF, *Bestattung und Bestattungswesen im Römischen Reich*, Bonn 2006, p. 33 f., n. 81 f., p. 97, n. 269. *Infra* for Publius Clodius whose funeral was held on the day after his murder. Ruete's comparison with the case of Severus is anachronistic because Caesar's funeral cannot have followed the examples of later emperors. Vice versa it was also only partially the case, as we can observe for the funeral of Augustus, where the people were urged not to demonstrate the same fervor (*nimiis studiis*) as during the *funus Divi Iulii* (Tac., *Ann.*, 1, 8).

were now preparing for his burial »<sup>63</sup>—, which was of the essence, especially because the assassins had threatened to throw Caesar's body into the Tiber<sup>64</sup>. In the same source Nicolaus reports that his body was « newly slain »<sup>65</sup>, and that his cremation was forced by the people, so that Octavian's mother Atia, who had been put in charge of the funeral by Caesar's will, was prevented from fulfilling her duties<sup>66</sup>, which also indicates a temporal proximity.

Cicero's words *insepulta sepultura* and *semustilatus* also confirm the hurry<sup>67</sup>. Eight years before Cicero had used the same term *sem[i]ustilatus* to describe the hastily cremated body of Publius Clodius Pulcher, Caesar's ally who had also been tragically stabbed to death<sup>68</sup>. It is conspicuous that Caesar's funeral became a reiteration of Clodius Pulcher's<sup>69</sup>. Fulvia, who at that time had been the wife of Clodius, had presented her husband's pierced and blood-covered body to the people and provoked an insurrection—in fact right on the next day : *postera die*<sup>70</sup>. Later she had married Antony who held the oration at Caesar's ceremony, an event also characterized by the public presentation of a body, pierced by daggers and covered with blood, and even if the body was only an *effigies*, it likewise drove the people to insurrection. Commentators have therefore assumed that Fulvia was once again involved<sup>71</sup>. In any case, the ancient authors would have hardly drawn a parallel between both funerals if Caesar's had contrasted Clodius' by occurring much later : in order to show the wounds of a slain and thereby create attention, one has to act straightaway.

63. Nic. Dam. XXVIa, §98 (FGrH 90, F130) : οἱ μὲν αὐτῷ τάφον ἠτύρητον.

64. Suet., *Jul.*, 82.

65. Nic. Dam. XVII, §50 : τὸ σῶμα νεοσφαγῆς ἐκκομιζόμενον εἰς ταφὴν.

66. Nic. Dam. XVII, §48 : ἐπισκήψε δὲ καὶ Ἀτία τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ παιδὸς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ταφῆς ἐπιμεληθῆναι, ὅπως τε ὁ ὄχλος βιασάμενος ἐν μέσῃ ἀγορᾷ αὐτὸν καύσειε τε καὶ θάψειεν ; cf. Oros., *Hist.*, 6,17, 3 : *corpus eius raptum populus dolore instimulatus in foro fragmentis tribunalium ac subselliorum cremauit*.

67. Cic., *Phil.*, 1, 5 ; 2, 91.

68. Cic., *Mil.*, 33.

69. Plut., *Brut.*, 20, 5, 2 : [...] ὥσπερ ἐπὶ Κλωδίου τοῦ δημαγωγοῦ πρότερον [...].

70. App., *BC*, 2, 21 ; Asc., *Mil.*, 28, 19 ; 35, 21.

71. On Fulvia's role at Caesar's funeral cf. C.L. BABCOCK, « The early career of Fulvia », *AJP* 86, 1965, p. 21, n. 34. It is not surprising that Nicolaus, the court historian of Augustus, did not mention her, and only vaguely referred to « others » who had prepared the funeral (*supra*), because Fulvia had been blamed for the *bellum Perusinum*, in which she had fought against Octavian. From then on the public memory of her was represented only negatively (App., *BC*, 5, 6, 59 ; Plut., *Ant.*, 30, 5 f. ; Dio. Cass. XLIV, 48, 28, 3). The difference between Clodius Pulcher, whose violated body Fulvia had presented, and Julius Caesar, of whom a wax effigy with reproduced wounds was shown instead of his actual corpse, can be explained by the fact that following the death of Clodius, Fulvia had also lost her next husband Curio in the African War (Cic., *Phil.*, 2, 11 ; Caes., *BC*, 2, 23-44). At Rome she had then only been able to stage a customary *funus imaginarium*, and merely a full-size *imago* could be shown instead of the missing body. For the *funus imaginarium* of Drusus cf. Tac., *Ann.*, 3, 5, of Pertinax cf. Dio. Cass. XLIV, 75, 4, 3, and of Septimius Severus cf. Herod. IV, 2. Caesar's *funus* on the other hand was a combination of both previous rituals, of Clodius' and Curio's ; cf. J. ARCE, *Funus Imperatorum*, Madrid 1988, p. 51.

Furthermore, there is a *terminus ante quem* for Julius Caesar's funeral. The mobilization for the Parthian campaign had been determined for 18 March<sup>72</sup>. This date had not been set randomly because five years earlier the eventually defeated Pompey had left the city on the day of the *Liberalia* to enter the Civil War<sup>73</sup>, and on the same day in 45 BCE Caesar had won his final victory over Pompey's sons at Munda<sup>74</sup>. In 44 BCE he decided not to leave Rome on the same day as once Pompey and would thus have been able to celebrate both his victory and the resulting unity of state at the *Liberalia*, on the day before the planned departure, as a favorable omen for a successful campaign. For this occasion two main groups of veterans had gathered at Rome. The older ones whom Caesar had already settled, especially those from Campania, had come to the city to escort him during his departure for the war against the Parthians<sup>75</sup>. The new veterans had flocked to Rome *en masse* and were also pressing for the approval of their allotments<sup>76</sup>, which they accomplished despite Caesar's assassination : the approval was eventually granted by the second Senate<sup>77</sup>. Due to the general insecurity resulting from the assassination, the veterans were in a hurry to return to their towns, lands and farms, which they were ready to defend against Caesar's murderers and their partisans. Therefore they would have enforced Caesar's funeral on 17 March, particularly because it was not only a festival of Dionysus that had been close and important to Julius Caesar, reinstated together with the cult of Liber Pater, whose proscription Caesar had annulled following the *Bacchanalia* ban (*infra*), but especially because it was the date of their victory at Munda<sup>78</sup>. Nobody would have forgone the opportunity of this twofold important day, neither the veterans keen on celebrating the anniversary, nor another group of protagonists, the τεχνίται of Dionysus, who

72. App., *BC*, 2, 111, 462.

73. Plut., *Caes.*, 56, 5 : ταύτην τὴν μάχην ἐνίκησε τῇ τῶν Διονυσίων ἑορτῇ καθ' ἣν λέγεται καὶ Πομπήϊος Μᾶγνος ἐπὶ τὸν πόλεμον ἐξελεθεῖν· διὰ μέσου δὲ χρόνος ἐνιαυτῶν τεσσάρων διήλθε. Oros., *Hist.*, 6, 16, 8 : *equidem eo die hoc bellum actum est, quo Pompeius pater ab urbe bellum gesturus aufugerat, quattuorque annis hoc bellum ciuile indesinenter toto orbe tonuit.*

74. *B. Hisp.*, 31, 8 : *ipsis Liberalibus fusi fugatique.* The wording *ipsis Liberalibus* shows how important and highly symbolic the date was to Caesar's people. That it was also a matter of deciding who the true liberator was, who defended the real *libertas*, is indicated by Caesar's programmatic words at the outset of the Civil War (*BC*, 1, 22, 6) : *et se et populum Romanum factione paucorum oppressum in libertatem vindicaret.* After his victory at Munda the Senate consequently bestowed the title *Liberator* on him and decreed the construction of a temple of the goddess *Libertas* (Dio. Cass. XLIV, 43, 44, 1). *Feriae* commemorating Caesar's victory at Munda on the day of the *Liberalia* are noted in the *Fasti Caeretani* and *Farnesiani* ; cf. A. DEGRASSI, *Inscriptiones Italiae* 13, 2, Rome 1963, p. 66.

75. App., *BC*, 2, 119, 501 ; Nic. Dam. XVII, §49.

76. App., *BC*, 2, 125, 523 ; 2, 133, 557.

77. App., *BC*, 2, 135, 565.

78. For the veterans then, whose commander Caesar had almost lost his life at Munda, it would have been specifically this day, on which they developed the ambition to put Caesar's enemies to rout again. They were successful and thus prohibited Caesar's murderers from presenting themselves as *liberatores* on the *Liberalia*. Tacitus indicates a dispute about liberty on Caesar's funeral day (*Ann.*, 1, 8, 5) : [...] *populumque [...] ut quondam nimis studiis funus divi Iulii turbassent [...] diem illum crudi adhuc servitii et libertatis inprospere repetitae, cum occisus dictator Caesar aliis pessimum aliis pulcherrimum facinus videretur [...].*

had been preparing Caesar's departure for the Parthian campaign as the prelude of a Dionysian procession. Not by chance both groups were present at the site of Caesar's cremation, together with the *matronae* and their children (*supra*)<sup>79</sup>.



Figure 4 : Fulvia of Eumenia<sup>80</sup>.

Mark Antony, the bacchantic reveler, lover of a mime actress and the veterans' advocate, held Caesar's funeral eulogy and later allowed himself to be glorified as Dionysus in Greece and Asia, with incense and solemn chants, but also with lamentation<sup>81</sup>. Following the *Dionysia* a festival was celebrated in his honor on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Anthesterion*, the *Antōnieia*<sup>82</sup>. Coins of his wife Fulvia, the possible director of Caesar's ceremony, have been preserved, which show her as a winged Nike with Dionysian motifs like ivy (fig. 4). They were minted by the Phrygian city of *Eumenia*, which was renamed *Fulvia* in her honor and was the twin city of *Dionysopolis*. The city had already minted coins of Dionysus in the past, and also its name was well suited, for *Eumenides* (« The Merciful ») was the alternate name for the Erinyes, the Furies and goddesses of vengeance—bloodthirsty and maternal at the same time.

79. Suet., *Jul.*, 84. At the end of his eastern campaign Alexander the Great had emulated the Indian triumph of the god Dionysus during his countermarch through Carmania ; cf. Arr., *Anab.*, 6, 28 ; Plut., *Alex.*, 67. Caesar too had enjoyed a Dionysian reception already at his return from Gaul ; cf. Hirt., *Gal.*, 8, 50 f. Surely the veterans had arranged his departure for the war against the Parthians in a similar fashion, as the presence of the *tibicines* and the *scaenici artifices* (Gr. τεχνίται) with *triumphorum instrumento* at the *funus* substantiates. On the *funus triumpho simillimum* cf. Sen., *Dial.*, 6, 3, 1 ; cf. J. ARCE, *op. cit.*, 35-7.

80. RPC 3140 : Fulvia AE17 of Eumenia (as *Fulvia*), Phrygia, ca. 41-40 BCE. Obv. : draped bust of Fulvia as a winged Nike. Rev. : ΦΟΥΛΟΥΙ | ΑΝΩΝ | ΖΜΕΡΤΟΡΙ, three lines of inscription within a wreath of ivy (leaves and berries). SNGvA 8367. Cf. W. H. WADDINGTON, *Voyage numismatique en Asie Mineure*, Paris 1853, p. 149 with pl. 9, n. 5. Photo : Classical Numismatic Group.

81. Plut., *Ant.* 24, with a quote from Soph., *Oed. R.*, 4 f. Cf. *Ant.*, 26, where Antonius Dionysus meets Cleopatra Aphrodite. (Cleopatra had been in the city of Rome at the time of Caesar's funeral.)

82. *IG* II, III<sup>2</sup> 1043, 1, 22 f. ; cf. CH. DAREMBERG, EDM. SAGLIO, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*. II., « Dionysia », p. 246.



Figure 5 : Silver cistophorus of Mark Antony<sup>83</sup>.

The same ivy motif—or Dionysus himself—figures prominently on contemporary coins of Antony (fig. 5), a motif that he retained even after Fulvia's death and his marriage with Octavia. It is reasonable to ask if the adoption of the Eumenian minting tradition and this strikingly concerted veneration of the « twice-born » Dionysus in conjunction with both fertility and a cult of the dead<sup>84</sup>, and with the *Antônieia* festival on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Anthesterion*, had been possible without Antony and Fulvia commemorating a great day of Dionysus and at the same time their mutual triumph over death—which indeed can only have been Caesar's funeral at the *Liberalia*, 17 March 44 BCE. Conversely, if they had only debated on this festive day of Liber and not grasped the opportunity, what would have been their justification to act as the advocates of Dionysus<sup>85</sup> and let themselves be celebrated as victors at the same date ?

The poet Virgil bears witness too. The information that Caesar had reinstated the cult of Liber Pater at the *Liberalia* after the *Bacchanalia* ban is found in Servius' commentary on the *Fifth Eclogue*, where Virgil had written :

*Daphnis et Armenias curru subiungere tigris / instituit, Daphnis thiasos inducere Bacchi [...]*<sup>86</sup>.

Servius commented :

*Hoc aperte ad Caesarem pertinet, quem constat primum sacra Liberi patris transtulisse Romam. curru pro curru. thiasos saltationes, choreas Liberi, id est Liberalia [...]*<sup>87</sup>.

83. RPC 2201 ; Syd 1197. Obv. : head of Antony wearing a wreath of ivy ; *lituus* beneath, inserted into the circular inscription M·ANTONIUS·IMP·COS·DESIG·ITER·ET·TERT ; wreath of ivy along the edge. Rev. : draped bust of Octavia above *cista*, flanked by two writhing serpents ; III·VIR (left) ; R·P·C (right). Photo : British Museum. Variant : RPC 2202 ; Syd 1198. Obv. : Antony and Octavia. Rev. : Dionysus with *kantharos* and *thyrsos* above the *cista mystica*.

84. Cf. also Plut., *Ant.*, 71, 4, 2-4 (societies of the Ἀμμητροβίων, those « inimitable in their life », and of the Συναποθανουμένων, « companions in death »), 75 (Dionysian *thiasos* leaving Antony at the end of his life).

85. This is peculiar insofar as Antony had prided himself on his descent from Heracles until then (Plut., *Ant.*, 4).

86. Verg., *Buc.*, 5, 29 f. On Daphnis in fig. 2 cf. E. SIMON, *art. cit.*, p. 149.

87. Serv., *Ecl.*, 5, 29 f. Cf. E. SIMON, *Die Götter der Römer*, Munich 1990, p. 128 ; on the identification of Daphnis with Caesar cf. D.L. DREW, « Virgil's fifth Eclogue : A defense of the Julius Caesar-Daphnis Theory », *CQ* 16, 1922, p. 57-64 ; P. GRIMAL, « La 'V' Églogue' et le culte de César » in *Mélanges Picard*, Paris 1949, vol. 1, p. 406 ff.

Virgil had written earlier :

*Exstinctum Nymphae crudeli funere Daphnin / flebant [...] cum complexa sui corpus miserabile nati / atque deos atque astra uocat crudelia mater*<sup>88</sup>.

Verse 20 literally mentions the nymphs who « wept for the slain Daphnis at the cruel funeral ». Accordingly, Servius also presented the following interpretation :

*[...] alii dicunt significari per allegoriam C. Iulium Caesarem, qui in senatu a Cassio et Bruto viginti tribus vulneribus interemptus est : unde et « crudeli funere » volunt dictum [...] si de Gaio Caesare dictum est, multi per matrem Venerem accipiunt*<sup>89</sup>.

Regardless of the *vexata quaestio*, whether Virgil identified Caesar with Daphnis, Servius' comments establish a definite connection between Caesar's funeral and the *Liberalia*, which also sheds new light on the shared *vota* to the gods Caesar, Bacchus and Ceres<sup>90</sup>, and the relation between the *Caesareum numen* and the *numen* of Bacchus conveyed by Ovid in his plea to Augustus on the *Liberalia*<sup>91</sup>.

Our criticism of the late dating of Julius Caesar's funeral, which has been propagated only by modern scholars, shows that the ancient historiographers were correct. In any case, it would be astonishing if they all had been at fault : Nicolaus, Suetonius, Plutarch, Appian, Cassius Dio, Antonians and Augustans—everyone relying on different sources, but still producing the same chronological error. And what would have been their motives for concentrating the events into three days, if they had indeed happened over the course of four or six days ?

When we ask ourselves how some of our greatest scholars could yield to such selective blindness, we find the answer in Fröhlich's dissertation : they were of the opinion that Appian had sided with the Caesarians too eagerly, which is why Cicero's assertions were to be preferred over Appian's account<sup>92</sup>. As a consequence Cicero was turned into the *actor* of the amnesty<sup>93</sup>, and not only into the author of its title. Cicero surely regarded the Senate session with his own participation as the only true one (*unum illum diem*)<sup>94</sup>, but he never claimed to have been the first who ensured peace—he had to grant Antony this honor<sup>95</sup>—, and admitted for all his pride that he had only contributed little : *quantum in me fuit*<sup>96</sup>. Yet Cicero's role was later overrated, and this entailed that the Senate on 17 March, which he finally attended, was declared the first session.

88. Verg., *Buc.*, 5, 20-3.

89. Serv., *Ecl.*, 5, 20-3.

90. Verg., *Buc.*, 5, 79 f.

91. Ov., *Trist.*, 5, 3, 1 f., 5, 3, 45 f.

92. F. FRÖHLICH, *op. cit.*, p. 1 : « cum aliquo studio partes Caesarianas amplexum esse ».

93. F. FRÖHLICH, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

94. Cic., *Phil.*, 1, 31.

95. Cic., *Phil.*, 1, 2 ; 1, 31.

96. Cic., *Phil.*, 1, 1.

Thus, immense damage has been done. By removing the historical date from Caesar's funeral without being able to determine another, Julius Caesar—in a manner of speaking—was left historically uninterred, and so our scholars managed to fulfill the wishes of Cicero—the *insepulta sepultura* of a *mortuus*—and of Octavian who had aimed at obliterating the memory of the *Liberalia*<sup>97</sup>. But at the same time modern historical science deprived itself of any possibility of understanding the explosive sociopolitical and sacral context in which this epochal event occurred that decisively codetermined the ultimate form of Caesar's apotheosis<sup>98</sup>.

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97. Augustus had rebuilt all the temples burnt down in 31 BCE except the Aventine temple of Liber, Libera and Ceres, which was only completed under Tiberius ; cf. Aug., *Res Gest.*, 20, 4 ; Tac., *Ann.*, 2, 49, 1. The ancient historiographers with an Augustan tendency do not mention the *Liberalia*—thus Nicolaus of Damascus, at least in the received fragments, thus also Velleius, who ignored the *funus Caesaris* altogether : the great day of Antony and Fulvia.

98. For an insight into the consequences of a correct dating cf. F. CAROTTA, A. EICKENBERG, « Orfeo Báquico : la cruz desaparecida », *Isidorianum* 35, 2009, p. 179-217.

## LIBERALIA TU ACCUSAS !

De l'expertise :

*« L'avis sur l'article abordant la question de la chronologie des funérailles de César est finalement positif. Il peut paraître peut-être futile, voire « old fashioned », de consacrer une vingtaine de pages à une simple question de chronologie. Mais cet événement fut capital et apparaît comme un repère chronologique autour duquel s'organisent les événements de mi-mars 44. Dans la mesure où il s'agit d'une période-charnière qui détermina la crise dans laquelle fut plongée Rome pendant une quinzaine d'années et qui ouvrit une période de concurrence effrénée et mortifère, il est fondamental de savoir quand les faits se déroulèrent. L'histoire est fondée sur une connaissance aussi précise que possible de l'enchaînement des événements. L'idée de l'auteur, à savoir que les funérailles eurent lieu le 17 mars et qu'il faut resserrer la chronologie pour insérer deux séances du Sénat les 16 et 17 mars, emporte la conviction, car la démonstration est bien menée. Il y a des explications lumineuses, par exemple sur le caractère « dionysiaque » ou « bacchique » des événements liés aux funérailles de César, par exemple le démembrement (par erreur) par le peuple Romain d'un Cinna confondu avec un assassin de César, ce qui conduit à retenir la date des liberalia fixée au 17 mars. Je ne sais pas si cette idée s'imposera, car la question est très complexe et les sources elliptiques, mais cet article propose une solution qui se tient. »*

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