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

Francesco CAROTTA, Arne EICKENBERG

*Abstract.* — 17 March 44 BCE results from the reports by the ancient historiographers as the date of Julius Caesar's *funus*. However, modern scholars have claimed that they were all at fault, but an alternative has not been agreed on. Dates between 18 and 23 March are given in the scientific literature—mostly 20 March, 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 not mistaken, 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 better examine the political and religious context of Caesar's funeral.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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>2</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.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sequence: Senate session beginning 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 sq.; Nic. Dam. 27 §§103-5 [*FGrH* 90, F130]; Dio 44.22.2 sq.), 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 sq., 19.4); on the same day at dawn: assembly of the people (App. *BC* 2.142.593; Dio 44.35.2) and reading of the testament, followed by the funeral (App. *BC* 2.143 sqq.; Plut. *Brut.* 20.1.4; Suet. *Jul.* 83 sq.; Dio 44.35.3 sq.). For a collation of sources in support of 17 March cf. E. GRESWELL, *Origines Kalendariae Italicae*, Vol. 4, Oxford 1854, pp. 287-90, with notes.

<sup>2</sup> 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: "Die antiken Historiographen (Appian, Dio, Plutarch) machen bekanntlich den Fehler, die Ereignisse des 15., 16. und 17. März auf zwei Tage zusammenzudrängen."

<sup>3</sup> We will see that the reason for assuming a chronological error was Cicero's statement that he had not appeared in the Senate until the third day (Cic. *Phil.* 2.89)—with the result that the first Senate session was dated to 17 March, under the supposition that Cicero had attended both Senate sessions from the beginning.

## I. — DRUMANN AND GROEBE: THE CORRECTIONS

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>4</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 sq., 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. 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>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [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, i.a. R. SYME, *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford 1939, p. 98; S. WEINSTOCK, *Divus Julius*, Oxford 1971, p. 450. But apparently it did not convince all historians: Malcovati left the exact date open (E. MALCOVATI, *Oratorum Romanorum fragmenta liberae rei publicae*, Turin 1955, p. 470), 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 sq.; *id.*, “La divinisation de César dans la politique d’Antoine et d’Octavien entre 44 et 40 avant J.-C.”, *RN*, vol. 6, no. 15, 1973, pp. 101, 114). However, Alföldi remained an exception to the rule, and the 20<sup>th</sup> has been circulated to this day: cf. P. GRATTAROLA, *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, pp. 8, 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 (edd.), *Form and Function in Roman Oratory*, Cambridge 2010, p. 162, n. 19.

<sup>5</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.417, funeral ceremony [73.14]: “Die Leichenfeier für den ermordeten Caesar fand nach Ruete, *Korresp. Cic. 44/3* p. 16 f., zwischen dem 20. und 23. März statt. Der 19. März war als Feiertag (*Quinquatrus* CIL I<sup>2</sup>, p. 298) ausgeschlossen; ebenso der 17. und 18., weil an diesen beiden Tagen die bekannten Senatssitzungen stattfanden. Über den 20. März wird man aber kaum hinausgehen können, da von einer längeren Ausstellung der Leiche nirgends die Rede ist. Vgl. darüber Marquardt-Mau *Privatleben d. Römer* 347, 9. Ihne *RG VII* 269. nimmt einen späteren Termin an.” E. RUETE, *Die Correspondenz Ciceros in den Jahren 44 und 43*, Marburg 1883, p. 16 sq.; cf. *RE* 1.2.2599 s.v. “Antonius [30]”, with the second Senate session on 18 March; *infra* for the computations by Ruete and Mau, n. 77.

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>6</sup> With regard to the argument that it was not allowed to bury a deceased *feriis publicis*, on a festive day,<sup>7</sup> we need to ask ourselves if this also applied for a *funus publicum*,<sup>8</sup> and if a solemn funeral had been impossible specifically on festive days—even more so after an event as shattering as the murder of the *dictator perpetuo* and *pontifex maximus*,<sup>9</sup> which provoked national mourning and caused a state of emergency.<sup>10</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>11</sup> Therefore the first Senate assembled on the next day, the day after the Ides, on 16 March.<sup>12</sup> 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,

<sup>6</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 12.25.1; *infra*, n. 102.

<sup>7</sup> Colum. *de re rust.* 2.21.4: *Feriis publicis hominem mortuum sepelire non licet.*

<sup>8</sup> App. *BC* 2.136.569: καὶ θάπτειν τὸν ἄνδρα δημοσίᾳ; cf. 3.34.136.

<sup>9</sup> The Ciceronian passage (*de leg.* 2.22.55) often specified in conjunction with Columella (*supra*) 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.

<sup>10</sup> On the *iustitium* in the empire effected by the death of an imperial family member cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.16.2; Ammian. 19.1.10.

<sup>11</sup> Plut. *Brut.* 19.1: Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τῆ ὑστεραία τῆς βουλῆς συνελθούσης εἰς τὸ τῆς Γῆς ἱερόν [...].

<sup>12</sup> This was even admitted by those who otherwise chose not to follow the ancient historiographers; cf. R. MÜLLER, *De rebus inde a Caesaris nece usque ad funus Romae gestis*, Münster 1884, p. 9: “Quamquam enim Appianus [2.125 sq.], Plutarchus in vita Bruti [19], Dio [44.22] senatum ante diem septimum decimum Cal. Apr. fuisse persuasum habent, tamen Ciceronem [*Phil.* 2.25; *Att.* 14.10, 14.14], cui concinit Plutarchus in vita Caesaris [67], sequimur quia in illius scriptis tam accurate statutum est, quando senatum convenerit, ut dubitare noniam liceat.”

but not of chronology. Thus, it is not permitted to gather anything from him with regard to the chronological order [of events].<sup>13</sup>

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>14</sup> Secondly, in *Brut.* 19 Plutarch does not mention the entertaining as occurring *after* the Senate sessions, but *inbetween*. 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 inbetween, 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 Ἀντωνίων μετεχομίζετο [...] 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>15</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>16</sup> which is only possible if the first Senate session was on 16 March.

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<sup>13</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.415: “[...] lässt er [in] *Ant.* 14 die Senatssitzung im Tellustempel der Bewirtung der Verschworenen im Hause des Antonius und Lepidus folgen, während er [in] *Brut.* 19 die zeitliche Ordnung der Begebenheiten innehält und erst die Senatssitzungen, dann die Bewirtung bringt. Plutarch schreibt eben vom Standpunkte der Biographie, aber nicht von dem der Chronologie. Daher darf man auch über die Zeitfolge nichts aus ihm schliessen [schließen].” [*Nota bene*: The literal translation of *Bewirtung* is “the serving of meals for a guest”.]

<sup>14</sup> 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”. However, it cannot be ruled out that the following sentence explains how Antony managed to persuade Marcus Brutus and Cassius Longinus to come down from the Capitolium and accept the entertainments, namely owing to the amnesty granted by the Senate based on his proposal. 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.

<sup>15</sup> App. *BC* 2.125.524-126.525: “That same night [i.e. the night concluding the Ides, between 15 and 16 March, which Drumann-Groebe and all other commentators agree on] Caesar’s money and his official papers were transferred to Antony’s house [...]. While these things were taking place Antony, by means of a notice sent round by night, called the Senate to meet before daybreak at the temple of Tellus, which was very near his own house [...].” *Idem* Dio 44.22.3.

<sup>16</sup> App. *BC* 2.131.548: ἐνταῦθα χθὲς μετὰ Καίσαρος ἱστάμην; cp. Nic. Dam. 27 §103, with Lepidus’ presence on the Forum on 16 March.

Drumann had considered Appian generally credible,<sup>17</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>18</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>19</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>20</sup> Nicolaus, born 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>21</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>22</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 wrote:

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.

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<sup>17</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.59.

<sup>18</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.407 [59.1].

<sup>19</sup> 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*, and including a Latin translation (C. MÜLLER [ed.], *FHG* 3.427-56, Paris 1849).

<sup>20</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.407: "Dieser in seinen Einzelheiten sehr ausführliche Bericht ist als der einzige zeitgenössische von hohem Werte."

<sup>21</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.409: "Es drängen sich sonach die Ereignisse, welche Drumann auf den 15. und 16. März verteilt hatte, auf den 15. März zusammen, wenn wir dem Zeugnis des Nicolaus Glauben schenken."

<sup>22</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 11.1. E. RUETE, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 16 sq.; *supra*, D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.409.

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

16 March.

13. [sic!<sup>23</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]

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<sup>23</sup> §12 is missing in the original.

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>24</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>25</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.

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<sup>24</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.414 sq.: “Die Reihenfolge der Begebenheiten am 15. und 16. März 44 ist demnach folgende: 15. März. 1. Caesars Ermordung. Flucht der Senatoren. 2. Ansprache des M. Brutus auf dem Forum. Das Volk billigt die That [Tat] nicht. 3. Flucht der Mörder auf das Capitol. Caesars Leiche wird in sein Haus gebracht. Calpurnia. Zurüstung zum Begräbnis. 4. Auftreten des Praetors Cinna. Dolabella masst [maßt] sich das Consulat an. 5. Erneuter Versuch der Mörder das Volk zu gewinnen. Volksversammlung auf dem Forum unter dem Schutze der Gladiatoren des D. Brutus. Es spricht zunächst ein Anhänger der Mittelpartei, darauf M. Brutus. Das Volk bleibt stumm. Rückkehr der Mörder auf das Capitol. 6. Antonius beginnt zu handeln und einigt sich zunächst mit Lepidus. 7. Cicero und andere Männer der aristokratischen Partei erscheinen am Abend auf dem Capitol. Beratung. 8. Gesandtschaft an Antonius und Lepidus. Antwort wird auf den folgenden Tag versprochen. 9. Hirtius besucht nach einer Unterredung mit Antonius D. Brutus in seiner Wohnung. Dieser giebt [gibt] die Sache der Verschworenen verloren. Nacht vom 15./16. März. 10. Antonius bemächtigt sich des Staatsschatzes und der Papiere Caesars. 11. Lepidus besetzt das Forum (nach Nic. Dam. 27. an dem auf das Eintreffen der Gesandtschaft folgenden Tage). 16. März. 13. [sic!] Antonius erscheint in Waffen. Eilboten gehen in die Provinz an Caesars Freunde und Anhänger, um dieselben zu einer Kundgebung aufzufordern. Ansammlung von Veteranen in der Stadt. 14. Beratung der Caesarianer. Hirtius für, Lepidus gegen den Frieden. Antonius entscheidet zu Gunsten des Friedens für Schonung der Mörder. D. Brutus schreibt verzweiflungsvoll an M. Brutus und Cassius auf dem Capitol. ad fam. XI 1, 1-4. vor 9 Uhr: vormittags. 15. Hirtius überbringt D. Brutus persönlich die Botschaft von dem eingetretenen Umschwunge. Dieser fügt zu seinem Briefe ein Postscriptum hinzu. ad fam. XI 1, 5. 16. Antonius übernimmt die Regierung und verhandelt mit den Verschworenen auf dem Capitol. Ergebnis: der Senat soll entscheiden. In der Stadt wird Ruhe und Ordnung hergestellt. Die Verständigeren unter den Anhängern der Verfassungspartei kommen bereits zu der Einsicht, dass es unzweckmässig war nur Caesar allein zu töten. Nic. Dam. 27. Nacht vom 16./17. März. 17. Die Stadt erleuchtet. Die Beamten versehen abwechselnd ihre Ämter. Schriftliche Aufforderung des Antonius zum Zusammentreten des Senats noch vor Tagesanbruch. App. II. 126.”

<sup>25</sup> App. BC 2.130.542 sq.; Nic. Dam. 27 §103: “on the next day”.

*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>26</sup>

*Veterans assemble in the city.*

This occurred precisely at the time of the Senate session because the veterans threw stones at the traitors when they entered the Senate.<sup>27</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>28</sup> The answer came soon,<sup>29</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>30</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

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<sup>26</sup> App. BC 2.125.523.

<sup>27</sup> App. BC 2.126.526.

<sup>28</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.409.

<sup>29</sup> App. BC 2.125.521.

<sup>30</sup> 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".

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>31</sup>

*Peace and order is established in the city.*

This already happened the night before.<sup>32</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>33</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>34</sup> In the meantime everyone else was supposed to have dutifully kept still: assassins, veterans and the *plebs urbana*—a miracle!

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<sup>31</sup> App. BC 2.125.521.

<sup>32</sup> App. BC 2.126.525 sq.

<sup>33</sup> E. BECHT, *Regeste über die Zeit von Cäsars Ermordung bis zum Umschwung in der Politik des Antonius*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1911, pp. 18-20.

<sup>34</sup> This absurdly long indecision in a most dramatic situation that demanded prudence, but precluded hesitation (App. BC 3.34.133: οὐκ ἦν γνῶμης παράδοξον οὐδὲ ἀπορῆσαι), is imputed (of all men) to the commanders trained by Caesar, 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 Orosius' oft-quoted *diu deliberatum est* (*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

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.

## II. — CICERO: THE TWO SENATES

Shuckburgh at least tried to deliver an alternate approach, and merged both Senate sessions into one day—in her case of course still on 17 March, which means that 16 March remained uneventful regardless—and it led to an occasional dating of the funeral ceremony to 18 March.<sup>35</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 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>36</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

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daggers, fled onto the Capitolium, and the Caesarians considered burning them together with the hill itself: *duo Bruti et C. Cassius alique socii strictis pugionibus in Capitolium secesserunt. diu deliberatum est, utrum Capitolium cum auctoribus caedis oporteret incendi.*

<sup>35</sup> 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. Cf. A. GOLDSWORTHY, *Caesar. Life of a Colossus*, New Haven 2006, p. 509.

<sup>36</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 2.90: “What a day was that for you, O Marcus Antonius! Although you showed yourself all on a sudden an enemy to me, I still pity you for having envied yourself. What a man, O ye immortal gods! And how great a man might you have been, if you had been able to preserve the inclination you displayed that day—we should still have peace which was made then by the pledge of a hostage, a boy [...] although [...] you behaved with the greatest wickedness while presiding at the funeral of the tyrant [...].” We should not be confused by some of the corrupting translations, e.g. by H. KASTEN (Berlin 1969) who renders *subito* as “all on a sudden [...] now”, or *si illius diei mentem servare potuisses* as “to preserve the inclination you displayed at that time”. Where did he gather his “now” and “at that time” from? These are obviously projections that are to perpetuate a certain reading.

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>37</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 17<sup>th</sup>.

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>38</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>39</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.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cic. *Att.* 14.10: “You put the blame on the Liberalia. What was possible at the time? Our case had long been hopeless. Do you remember that you explained that it was all over with us, if he were allowed a funeral? But he was even burnt in the forum, and a funeral oration was pronounced over him in moving terms, and a number of slaves and starvelings instigated to attack our houses with firebrands.”

<sup>38</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 3.785 sq.; *infra*, n. 110; Cic. *Verr.* 5.36: *Num sum designatus aedilis [...] mihi ludos sanctissimos maxima cum cura et caerimonia Cereri Libero Liberaeque faciundos*; Serv. *Georg.* 1.7: *simul Liberum et Cererem posuit quia et templa eis simul posita sunt et ludi simul eduntur.*

<sup>39</sup> Cic. *Att.* 14.14.3: *contenti Idibus Martiis simus* (“let us be content with the Ides of March”); 15.4.2: *itaque stulta iam Iduum Martiarum est consolatio* (“so now I see it was folly to be consoled by the Ides of March”); 15.4.3: *me Idus Martiae non delectant* (“I can take no pleasure in the Ides of March”).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. also Plut. *Brut.* 20.1 sq., where the “fatal error”, which Atticus and Cicero blamed for the downfall of the conspirators’ cause, is explicitly ascribed to “allowing Caesar’s funeral rites to be conducted as Antony demanded”: καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ταφὴν ὃν ὁ Ἀντώνιος ἤξιον τρόπον ἐάσας γενέσθαι τοῦ παντὸς σφαλῆναι.

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>41</sup> and Shuckburgh (*supra*). Therein Cicero addresses Antony:

[...] *neque te illo die neque postero vidi [...]. Post diem tertium veni in aedem Telluris.*<sup>42</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, however, was 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>43</sup>

It did not cross Drumann’s mind that the first Senate session could have proceeded without Cicero.<sup>44</sup> In fact Cicero himself stated that he had attempted to have a Senate meeting summoned on the Capitolium where the assassins had retreated.<sup>45</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>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> D-G<sup>2</sup> 1.65, n. 7 sq.

<sup>42</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 2.89: “[...] nor did I see you at all that day [on the Ides of March] or the next [...]. The third day [inclusive counting: 17 March] I came into the temple of Tellus [...].”

<sup>43</sup> *Viz.* a book on the Asinian dependency 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.

<sup>44</sup> After denying Plutarch all chronological reliability (*supra*, n. 13), Groebe could hardly have relied on *Brut.* 19.1, where Cicero is named as one of the advocates of amnesty and concord together with Antony and Plancus in the first Senate. In this instance Groebe’s categorical rejection seems to be justified, because in the same highly condensed passage Plutarch also anticipates the later Senate resolution on the assignment of political offices. Cf. in contrast the even further condensed account in Plut. *Cic.* 42.3, without a distinction of the Senate sessions, while maintaining the correct sequence: first Antony with concord, then Cicero following with a request for amnesty and the assignment of provinces to Cassius and Brutus.

<sup>45</sup> 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.

<sup>46</sup> Cic. *Att.* 14.14.2: “As to the senate of the Liberalia—who was strong enough to refuse to attend?” Conversely, Cicero’s remark means that before the Liberalia he (like others) still had the alternative to

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>47</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 Capitolinam*, "that Capitoline session". 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 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>48</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>49</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>50</sup> An application of Appian<sup>51</sup> and Cassius Dio<sup>52</sup> against

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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.

<sup>47</sup> Cic. *Att.* 14.14.2: "We could not endure being his slaves; we are the humble servants of his memorandum books."

<sup>48</sup> 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!* It was Cicero's habitus to enter a precarious situation only in the end, when a peace agreement had already been sealed, thus documented by his behavior toward Octavian, when the latter marched into the city of Rome in 43 BCE and enforced his election as consul. Octavian ridiculed Cicero that τῶν φίλων αὐτῷ τελευταῖος ἐντυγχάνοι (App. *BC* 3.92.382: "[...] he seemed to be the last of his friends to greet him.").

<sup>49</sup> Cf. also Vell. 2.58.3, where Cicero's speech proposing the *oblivio* follows the hostage transfer. The testimony of Velleius Paterculus is relevant because he glorified Cicero (cf. 2.66); cf. also Liv. *per.* 116.

<sup>50</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 1.2, 1.31.

<sup>51</sup> App. *BC* 2.142.594.

<sup>52</sup> Dio 44.34.6.

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 Marcus Brutus went to Lepidus' and Cassius Longinus to Antony's to have a meal with their respective host,<sup>53</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>54</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 *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>55</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? But 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?

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<sup>53</sup> Dio 44.34.7; cf. Plut. *Brut.* 19.3; *Ant.* 14.1.

<sup>54</sup> 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.* (“[...] we should still have peace which was made then by the pledge of a hostage, a boy of noble birth, the grandson of Marcus Bambalio [Fulvia's father]. Although it was fear that was then making you [Antony] a good citizen, which is never a lasting teacher of duty; your own audacity, which never departs from you as long as you are free from fear, has made you a worthless one.”) Accordingly, the subsequent *optimum te putabant me quidem dissentiente* (“they thought you were the best; but I was of a different opinion”) 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!* (“O how vain have at all times been my too true predictions of the future!”)

<sup>55</sup> Plut. *Brut.* 18.3-6, *Ant.* 13.1-3; App. *BC* 2.114.478; Vell. 2.58.2.

III. — SÜETONIUS: OF *BULLAE* AND *PRAETEXTAE*

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>56</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>57</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>58</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.<sup>59</sup>

## IV. — A DIONYSIAN DAY FOR CAESAR

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.

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<sup>56</sup> For an attempt in this vein cf. T. HENDRIKS, *Roww en razernij om Caesar. De wraak van het volk voor een politieke moord zonder weerga*, Soesterberg 2008, pp. 139-50. However, according to Hendriks the hostages were supposedly transferred after the second Senate session. If instead we choose to follow BECHT (*op. cit.*), his chronological sequence can be maintained by stripping it of the days that have been artificially stocked with pseudo-events, namely 16 March (deliberation of the Caesarians) and 19 March (reading of Caesar's testament), so that the funeral ceremony does not remain displaced to 20 March and can now be reintegrated in the afternoon of 17 March in accordance with the sources.

<sup>57</sup> Suet. *Jul.* 84: *iniecere flammae [...] matronae etiam pleraeque ornamenta sua, quae gerebant, et liberorum bullas atque praetextas.*

<sup>58</sup> Cic. *Att.* 6.1.12; five different reasons are covered in detail in Ov. *Fast.* 3.771-90: *Restat ut inveniã quare toga libera detur Lucifero pueris, candide Bacche, tuo [...]*. ("It remains for me to ascertain why the toga of manhood is given to boys on your day, white-dressed, candid Bacchus [...]"). For the Romans the essential reason would have been the similarity of the term *liberi* for children, as the freeborn (*liberi*), with the name *Liber Pater* for Dionysus-Bacchus, as the god who warranted the *libertas*, the liberty of the people (3.777): *sive, quod es Liber, vestis quoque libera per te sumitur et vitae liberioris iter* ("or—since you are Liber—the garment of liberty and the path of a freer life are obtained through you").

<sup>59</sup> None of the sources suggests a potential postponement of the Liberalia's *sacra* due to the state of emergency, and it was impossible anyway; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 8.172 sq.: *sacra [...] annua, quae differre nefas*; Serv. *Aen.* 8.172 sq.: *anniversaria sacrificia, id est sollemnia, ideo non differuntur, quia nec iterari possunt.*

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>60</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 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>61</sup>



Fig. 1: Ladling of wine in front of an erected Dionysus idol in the *Lenaion* with dancing women.<sup>62</sup>

Fig. 2: Erecting of a Dionysus idol or of its herm.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Suet. *Jul.* 84: *intraque lectus eburneus auro ac purpura stratus et ad caput tropaeum cum veste, in qua fuerat occisus.* Quintil. *Instit. Orat.* 6.1.25-31: *ut populum Romanum egit in furorem praetexta C. Caesaris praelata in funere cruenta. Sciebatur interfectum eum, corpus denique ipsum impositum lecto erat, [at] vestis tamen illa sanguine madens ita repraesentavit imaginem sceleris ut non occisus esse Caesar sed tum maxime occidi videretur.*

<sup>61</sup> App. *BC* 2.147.612: ὦνδε δὲ αὐτοῖς ἔχουσιν ἤδη καὶ χειρῶν ἐγγύς οὖσιν ἀνέσχε τις ὑπὲρ τὸ λέχος ἀνδρείκελον αὐτοῦ Καίσαρος ἐκ κηροῦ πεποιημένον· τὸ μὲν γὰρ σῶμα, ὡς ὑπτιον ἐπὶ λέχους, οὐχ ἔωρατο. τὸ δὲ ἀνδρείκελον ἐκ μηχανῆς ἐπεστρέφετο πάντη, καὶ σφαγαὶ τρεῖς καὶ εἴκοσιν ὄφθησαν ἀνά τε τὸ σῶμα πᾶν καὶ ἀνά τὸ πρόσωπον θηριωδῶς ἐς αὐτὸν γενόμεναι. τήνδε οὖν τὴν ὄψιν ὁ δῆμος οἰκτιρῆσθαι σφίσι φανεῖσαν οὐκέτι ἐνεγκῶν ἀνώμωζάν τε καὶ διαζωσάμενοι τὸ βουλευτήριον, ἔνθα ὁ Καῖσαρ ἀνήρητο, κατέφλεξαν καὶ τοὺς ἀνδροφόνους ἐκφυγόντας πρὸ πολλοῦ περιθέοντες ἐζήτουν, οὕτω δὲ μανιωδῶς ὑπὸ ὀργῆς τε καὶ λύπης, ὥστε τὸν δημαρχοῦντα Κίνναν ἐξ ὁμωνυμίας τοῦ στρατηγοῦ Κίννα, τοῦ δημηγορήσαντος ἐπὶ τῷ Καίσαρι, οὐκ ἀνασχόμενοι τε περὶ τῆς ὁμωνυμίας οὐδ' ἀκοῦσαι, διέσπασαν θηριωδῶς, καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ μέρος ἐς ταφήν εὑρέθη.

<sup>62</sup> Attic *stamnos*. Naples: Museo Archeologico Nazionale. Drawing by Reichhold. In: K. KERÉNYI, *Dionysos. Urbild des unzerstörbaren Lebens*, Munich 1976, p. 226, fig. 85.

<sup>63</sup> Detail. Roman sarcophagus (based on a lost Hellenistic archetype). Princeton: The Art Museum (Princeton University). In: KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 300 sq., 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 cf. A. BRUHL, *Liber Pater. Origine et expansion du culte dionysiaque à Rome et dans le monde romain*, Paris 1953, p. 124 sqq. and *passim*; archaic parallel juxtaposition in Verg. *Georg.* 2.380-9; Cic. *Verr.* 5.187: *Ceres et Libera, quarum sacra [...] populus Romanus a Graecis adscita et accepta.* *Infra* for the burial of Caesar as Daphnis, n. 104 sqq.

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>64</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.

But the tropaeum was also ‘stripped’, which means that the idol was removed and applied elsewhere according to the ritual procedures (fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Dionysian rituals at the *Choëis* (day of libations): bare tropaeum on *ferculum* (left) and seated Dionysus idol in carriage (right).<sup>65</sup>

Three young men continue to carry the *ferculum* sustaining the tropaeum, but now sans idol, which has been seated in the carriage and is already carted to the next station of the rite. This clarifies that the props used at Caesar’s funeral—especially the tropaeum with his garment—were typical of a Dionysian festival and therefore of the Liberalia. It is obvious that they were adopted precisely at this festival, and applied for Caesar who as a new Dionysus thereby embodied the old myth anew: the wax effigy of his martyred body expressed the tragedy of the “twice-born” god<sup>66</sup> who himself had also been killed by the Titans.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *DS* 2.1, s.v. “Dionysia” with p. 236. For the equation of the Greek month Anthesterion and the Roman March cf. App. *BC* 2.149.619. For a direct equation of the Greek Dionysia and the Roman Liberalia cf. Paul. *Fest.* p. 116 M., s.v. “Liberalia”: *Liberi festa, quae apud Graecos dicuntur Διονύσια*; cf. also Tert. *de spect.* 10.7: *nam et alios ludos scaenicos Liberalia proprie vocabant, praeterquam Libero devotos, quae sunt Dionysia penes Graecos, etiam a Libero institutos.*

<sup>65</sup> Attic Choëis pot. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fletcher Fund, 1924). In: KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 241, fig. 93.

<sup>66</sup> Hyg. *Fab.* 167 (Liber): *Liber Iovis et Proserpinae filius a Titanis est distractus, cuius cor contritum Iovis Semele dedit in potionem. ex eo praegnans cum esset facta [...] ex cuius utero Liberum exiit et Nyso dedit nutriendum, unde Dionysus est appellatus et Bimater est dictus.* (“Liber, son of

There was another act during the funeral that is only conceivable in the context of a Dionysian festival: upon seeing Caesar's bloodstained toga and the dagger wounds covering the whole wax effigy, the people frantically hunted the assassins' sympathizers. In their rage and pain they acted in such fury that they even dismembered Caesar's close friend and ally Helvius Cinna. He had the fatal misfortune of bearing the same cognomen as Cornelius Cinna who had made a speech against the deceased:

[...] οὐκ ἀνασχόμενοι τε περὶ τῆς ὁμωνυμίας οὐδ' ἀκοῦσαι, διέσπασαν  
θηριωδῶς, καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ μέρος ἐς ταφήν εὐρέθη.<sup>68</sup>

Appian's choice of words clearly connotes a Dionysian act: *μανιωδῶς* ("raging mad"), *ὀργῆς* ("wrath"), *λύπης* ("pain", "grief"), and *διέσπασαν θηριωδῶς* ("they tore him to pieces like wild beasts"), which corresponds to the parallel tradition by Plutarch (*διεσπάσθη*, "he was torn in pieces"). This and the result ("no part of him was ever found for burial") leave no doubt that the people indulged in the infamous maenadic *διασπαραγμός*,<sup>69</sup> the laceration of the sacrificial animal as ritualistic omophagia, the orgiastic devouring of raw flesh in the cult of Dionysus.<sup>70</sup> Even the

Jove and Proserpine, was dismembered by the Titans, and Jove gave his heart, torn to bits, to Semele in a drink. When she was made pregnant by this, [...] he took Liber from her womb, and gave him to Nysus to be cared for, which is why he is called 'Dionysus', and also 'Bimater'.") Cf. e.g. Diod. 4.4.5.1 sq.: *διμήτωρ* and *μητέρων δὲ δυοῖν* ("of two mothers").

<sup>67</sup> This savage death of Dionysus, who was also connected to the Orphic Mysteries (cp. Cic. *de nat. deor.* 3.58: *Dionysos multos habemus [...] quartum Iove et Luna [natum], cui sacra Orphica putantur confici*), especially as *Zagreus*, was a familiar legend in Antiquity; cf. Nonn. *Dionys.* 6.169-75; Procl. *Hymn.* 7.11-15; Hyg. *Fab.* 155, 167; Arnob. *adv. nat.* 1.41.1, 5.19.4; Macr. *Comm. somn.* 1.12.12; Tzetz. *Schol.* 208 (MÜLLER 1811, Vol. 1, p. 479). Cf. also Orig. *Cels.* 4.17.2-6, who includes the resurrection and ascension of Dionysus: [...] *σεμνότερα φανεῖται Διονύσου ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων ἀπατωμένου καὶ ἐκπίπτοντος ἀπὸ τοῦ Διὸς θρόνου καὶ σπαρασσομένου ὑπ' αὐτῶν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα πάλιν συντιθεμένου καὶ οἰνοῖ ἀναβιώσκοντος καὶ ἀναβαίνοντος εἰς οὐρανόν*; cf. Just. *Dial.* 69.2.1-5: *ὅταν γὰρ Διόνυσον μὲν υἱὸν τοῦ Διὸς ἐκ μίξεως ἦν μεμίχθαι αὐτὸν τῇ Σεμέλῃ, γεγενῆσθαι λέγῃσι, καὶ τοῦτον εὐρετὴν ἀμπέλου γενόμενον, καὶ διασπαραχθέντα καὶ ἀποθανόντα ἀναστῆναι, εἰς οὐρανόν τε ἀνεληλυθέναι ἱστορῶσι [...]*.

<sup>68</sup> App. *BC* 2.147: "[...] not waiting to hear any explanation about the similarity of name, they tore him to pieces like wild beasts so that no part of him was ever found for burial"; *supra*, n. 61; cf. Plut. *Brut.* 20.8-21.1; Suet. *Jul.* 85; Val. Max. 9.9.1.

<sup>69</sup> For the original Dionysian context cf. the death of Pentheus in Eur. *Bacch.* 1134 sq.: *γυμνοῦντο δὲ πλευραὶ σπαραγμοῖς*, while his body parts were not easy to find (1139): *οὐ ῥάδιον ζήτημα*; cp. *διασπαρακτὸν* (1220) and *βακχῶν σπαραγμόν* (735). Cf. *σπαραγμός* in Aeschylus' Dionysiac play *Xantriai*, which may have described the death of Pentheus (frg. 34.C.368.8-10 [METTE, ed.]); cf. Diod. 3.62.7 sq.; Macr. *Comm. somn.* 1.12.12; *Myth. Vat.* 1.12.5-8, 14 sq.

<sup>70</sup> For the specific ritual reenactment of Dionysus' suffering (including dismemberment and omophagia) in the Dionysian rites, e.g. on Crete, cf. Firm. *de err. prof. rel.* 6.5: [*Cretenses*] *festos funeris dies statuunt, et annum sacrum trieterica consecratione conponunt, omnia per ordinem facientes quae puer moriens aut fecit aut passus est. Vivum laniant dentibus taurum, crudeles epulas annuis commemorationibus excitantes [...]*. ("[The Cretans] established the anniversary of [Dionysus'] death as a holyday, and arranged recurring sacred rites celebrated every two years, wherein they rehearse seriatim all that the boy did or suffered at his death. They tear a live bull with their teeth, representing the cruel banquet with this regular commemoration [...]"). For Bacchanalian omophagic

following act—Cinna’s torn-off head was paraded around on a spear—indicates that the frenzied masses followed the canvas of a Dionysian tragedy: Agave had done the same with the head of her dismembered son Pentheus in Euripides’ *Bacchae*.<sup>71</sup> It is hardly presumable that such archaic and violent, but still typically Dionysian rituals, 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 fundamental infringements of social taboos—and above all accept them.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, the liturgical proceedings during Caesar’s funeral are highly reminiscent of the Greek ur-tragedy that had originally developed from the Dionysian

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rituals cf. also Arnob. *adv. nat.* 5.19.1; Clem. *Protr.* 2 (§12). For cases of omophagic rituals in a state of trance which have been preserved until today, e.g. in the religious brotherhood of the Aissawa in Morocco, cf. H. JEANMAIRE, *Dionysos. Histoire du culte de Bacchus*, Paris 1951, pp. 259-61, following R. BRUNEL (1926), *Essai sur la confrérie religieuse des Aissâoua au Maroc*, Paris 1926. The Caesar sources on Cinna’s death only speak of his dismemberment (Val. Max. 9.9.1: *manibus discerptus est*), and with regard to Pentheus et al. Euripides’ *Bacchae* do not always describe omophagic practices explicitly. But when reading Euripides’ text, it is apparent that he merely conceals the unbearable: at the outset he specifically says that the Maenads drank the blood of the hunted buck, and fed on its raw flesh (Eur. *Bacch.* 138 sq.: ἀγρεύων αἷμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν). At 730 sqq. he only describes a dismemberment, when Agave and the Maenads attempt to kill Pentheus’ herdsmen, who manage to escape, followed by a substitute killing of their bulls: the associated omophagia is only hinted at, when the Maenads wash off the blood from their cheeks, which their serpents, worn as girdles, have also been licking (767 sq.: νίψαντο δ’ αἷμα, σταγόνα δ’ ἐκ παρηγίδων γλώσσηι δράκοντες). When Pentheus is dismembered later in the text, the omophagia is completely concealed, but still given away: when Agave grasps her son’s head and carries it around on her thyrsus, the tragedian adds “like that of a mountain lion” (1141 sq.: ὡς ὄρεστέρου φέρει λέοντος; cf. 1283: μῶν σοι λέοντι φαίνεται προσεικέναι, with 1278 reading λέοντος). However, it is paradoxical to compare the dismembered Pentheus to a lion, and we would rather expect to read: “like that of someone torn apart by a mountain lion”. But as a matter of fact the mother herself is called a hunting lioness (987-90: τίς ἄρα νιν ἔτεκεν; οὐ γὰρ ἐξ αἵματος γυναικῶν ἔφυ, λεαινας δέ τινος; 1278: αἰ θηρώμεναι), who then invites to a feast (1184: μέτεχέ νυν θοίνας)—as if the omophagia of human flesh had to be concealed, because it was unutterable. Along these lines the same can also be assumed for the death of Cinna: the only evidence for an undisclosed omophagia is the fact that no part of the body could be found for his burial, which goes further than the death of Pentheus, because Cadmus was still able to collect his scattered remains, even if they were hard to find (1216 sqq.). The apparent contradiction becomes explicable, if we take into account that omophagia begins with the devouring of the entrails, as observed of wild animals, and as it is practiced by human hunters to this day (cf. also 1134 sq.: γυμνοῦντο δὲ πλευραὶ σπαραγμοῖς).

<sup>71</sup> Suet. *Jul.* 85.1.5 sq.: *caputque eius praefixum hastae circumtulit*; Val. Max. 9.9.1: *ut caput Helvi perinde atque Corneli circa rogam Caesaris fixum iaculo ferret*; cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 1139-42: κρᾶτα δ’ ἄθλιον, ὅπερ λαβοῦσα τυγχάνει μήτηρ χεροῖν, πῆξασ’ ἐπ’ ἄκρον θύρσον ὡς ὄρεστέρου φέρει λέοντος διὰ Κιθαίρωνος μέσου.

<sup>72</sup> It is conspicuous that the Senate left those unpunished who had dismembered Cinna, but tried to arrest those who had attacked the conspirators’ houses (cf. 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 (*supra*, n. 37: *servi, egentis*), 1.5 (*perditi homines, scelerati, nefarii*).

Mysteries.<sup>73</sup> Antony, divinely inspired and inebriated, gave his eulogy from the Rostra like an actor on a stage, praised his friend Caesar like a celestial god, and wept over his bitter and unjust suffering. Accompanied by funerary music including *tibicines*, the people mourned with him in the most sorrowful manner like a chorus in a tragedy. The ensemble was completed by a mime who portrayed the deceased exclaiming from the realm of the dead in disbelief and amazement: *Men servasse, ut essent qui me perderent?*<sup>74</sup> This effective staging, coupled with the most dramatic presentation of Caesar's wax figure and his blood-stained robe, drove the people from grief to wrathful excitement and violence, until the assassins had been expelled from the city, and even Caesar's close friend Cinna had been dismembered (*supra*).<sup>75</sup> Such a public tragedy was easy to improvise, because all protagonists knew the dramatic requirements from the Dionysian rites: at the festival of Dionysus all mourners became his mysts who—as if “divinely inspired”—were able to act with instinctive assurance on the stage of history.

## V. — THE ANCIENT CUSTOM

Incidentally, an early funeral ceremony was consistent with the archaic custom that had been formed in the Mediterranean climate.<sup>76</sup> 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>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Earliest reference in Archil. frg. 77D; Arist. *Poet.* 4.1449a.9-11, 20. Even some of the pre-dramatic Dionysian choruses of the seventh century before Caesar had already been dedicated to ancient heroes who had suffered like Dionysus, placing emphasis on their personal τραγωδία; cf. Hdt. 5.67.5: ἀ τε δὴ ἄλλα οἱ Σικυώνιοι ἐτίμων τὸν Ἄδρηστον καὶ δὴ πρὸς τὰ πάθεα αὐτοῦ τραγικοῖσι χοροῖσι ἐγέραιρον, τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον οὐ τιμῶντες, τὸν δὲ Ἄδρηστον. Κλεισθένης δὲ χοροὺς μὲν τῷ Διονύσῳ ἀπέδωκε [...]. (“The Sikyonians then not only gave other honors to Adrestus, but also with reference to his sufferings they specially honored him with tragic choruses, not paying the honor to Dionysus but to Adrestus. Cleisthenes however gave back the choruses to Dionysus [...].”)

<sup>74</sup> Suet. *Jul.* 84.2: “Did I save these men that they might murder me?” Cf. App. *BC* 2.146.611: ἐμὲ δὲ καὶ τούσδε περισῶσαι τοὺς κτενοῦντάς με. This tragic solo *canticum* from the *Armorum iudicium* by Pacuvius was answered by the people with verses from Atilius' *Electra*. Especially the antiphon was also typical of the Dionysian liturgy (Enn. *scen.* [VAHLEN, ed.] 125: *tum pariter euhan euhoe euhoe euhim*), often with melodic accompaniment from the Phrygian *tibiae*; cf. G. WILLE, *Musica Romana*, Amsterdam 1967, pp. 53-6, 166 sq.; cp. W. KIERDORF, *Laudatio Funerbris. Interpretationen und Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung der römischen Leichenrede*, Meisenheim am Glan 1980, p. 97: *Doppelchor* (“double choir”) during Caesar's funeral, but without seeing the Dionysian conjunction.

<sup>75</sup> App. *BC* 2.146.607-148.616; cf. Suet. *Jul.* 84 sq.; Plut. *Caes.* 68; *Ant.* 13.3 sq.; *Brut.* 20.4-11; Dio 44.35.4-50.4.

<sup>76</sup> For a funeral on the third day in Greek culture cf. Patroclus in the *Iliad*, his ψυχή appearing to Achilles already on the second day, and asking for prompt funeral rites (Hom. *Il.* 23.71); Solon *ap.* Dem. 43.62; Plat. *Leg.* 959a.3 sq.; Thuc. *Hist.* 2.34.2; Thespesius in Plut. *de ser. num. vind.* 563d.4-6; for the Thracians cf. Hdt. 5.8.1-7.

According to tradition Caesar's funeral would therefore have happened on the third day, counting from the day of his death. 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 were now preparing for his burial"<sup>78</sup>—, which was of the essence, especially because the assassins had threatened to throw Caesar's body into the Tiber.<sup>79</sup> In the same source Nicolaus reports that his body was "newly slain",<sup>80</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>81</sup> which also indicates a temporal proximity.

Cicero's words *insepulta sepultura* and *semustilatus* also confirm the hurry.<sup>82</sup> Eight years before Cicero had used the same term *sem[i]ustilatus* to describe the hastily cremated body of Caesar's ally Publius Clodius Pulcher, who had also been

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<sup>77</sup> Cruq. on Hor. *epod.* 17.47: "It has been custom among the ancients that the corpse of the deceased lied at home for three days [...] and was laid onto the pyre on the third day; [...] after further three days the ashes were preserved in an urn and buried in a tomb." Mau in Marquart-Mommsen was referenced by Groebe (as "Marquart-Mau", *supra*, n. 5; 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. 19.1.10; Hdn. 4.2.4). Following this source RUETE (*op. cit.*, 16 sq.) 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, because "a long period of public viewing is nowhere mentioned" (*supra*, n. 5). 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, 1935; VI, 13782) and other sources (Varr. *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 sq., n. 81 sq., 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).

<sup>78</sup> Nic. Dam. 26a §98: οἱ μὲν αὐτῷ τάφον ἠϋτρέπιζον.

<sup>79</sup> Suet. *Jul.* 82.

<sup>80</sup> Nic. Dam. 17 §50: τὸ σῶμα νεοσφαγὲς ἐκκομιζόμενον εἰς ταφὴν.

<sup>81</sup> Nic. Dam. 17 §48: ἐπισκήψειε δὲ καὶ Ἀτία τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ παιδὸς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ταφῆς ἐπιμεληθῆναι, ὅπως τε ὁ ὄχλος βιασάμενος ἐν μέσῃ ἀγορᾷ αὐτὸν καύσειέ τε καὶ θάψειεν; cf. Oros. *Hist.* 6.17.3: *corpus eius raptum populus dolore instimulatus in foro fragmentis tribunalium ac subselliorum cremavit.*

<sup>82</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 1.5, 2.91.

tragically stabbed to death.<sup>83</sup> It is conspicuous that Caesar’s funeral became a reiteration of Clodius Pulcher’s.<sup>84</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>85</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>86</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.

## VI. — THE VETERANS’ DAY

Furthermore, there is a *terminus ante quem* for Julius Caesar’s funeral. The mobilization for the Parthian campaign had been determined for 18 March:

Ἐξιέναι δ' αὐτὸν μέλλοντα πρὸ τετάρτης ἡμέρας οἱ ἐχθροὶ κατέκτανον ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Cic. *Mil.* 33.

<sup>84</sup> Plut. *Brut.* 20.5.2: [...] ὥσπερ ἐπὶ Κλωδίου τοῦ δημαγωγοῦ πρότερον [...].

<sup>85</sup> App. *BC* 2.21; Asc. *Mil.* 28.19, 35.21: *Perlatum est corpus Clodi ante primam noctis horam, infimaeque plebis et servorum maxima multitudo magno luctu corpus in atrio domus positum circumstetit. Augebat autem facti invidiam uxor Clodi Fulvia quae cum effusa lamentatione vulnera eius ostendebat. Maior postera die luce prima multitudo eiusdem generis confluit, compluresque noti homines visi sunt. [...] tribuni plebis accurrerunt: eisque hortantibus vulgus imperitum corpus nudum ac calcatum, sicut in lecto erat positum, ut vulnera videri possent in forum detulit et in rostris posuit. Populus [...] corpus P. Clodi in curiam intulit cremavitque subselliis et tribunalibus et mensis et codicibus librariorum; quo igne et ipsa quoque curia flagravit, et item Porcia basilica quae erat ei iuncta ambusta est.*

<sup>86</sup> 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 sq.; Dio 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), for whom she would only have been able to stage a *funus imaginarium* at Rome, where in practice only 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 75.4.3, and of Septimius Severus cf. Hdn. 4.2. Caesar’s *funus* on the other hand seems to be a combination of both previous rituals, of Clodius’ and Curio’s; cf. J. ARCE, *Funus Imperatorum*, Madrid 1988, p. 51.

<sup>87</sup> App. *BC* 2.111.462: “Four days before his intended departure he was slain by his enemies in the senate-house.” [Inclusive counting of 15 March as the first day.]

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>88</sup> and on the same day in 45 BCE Caesar had won his final victory over Pompey's sons at Munda.<sup>89</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>90</sup> The new veterans had flocked to Rome *en masse* and were also pressing for the approval of their allotments,<sup>91</sup> which they accomplished despite Caesar's assassination: the approval was eventually granted by the second Senate.<sup>92</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>93</sup> Nobody would have forgone the opportunity of this

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<sup>88</sup> Plut. *Caes.* 56.5: ταύτην τὴν μάχην ἐνίκησε τῆ τῶν Διονυσίων ἑορτῇ, καθ' ἣν λέγεται καὶ Πομπήϊος Μᾶγνος ἐπὶ τὸν πόλεμον ἐξελθεῖν· διὰ μέσου δὲ χρόνου ἐνιαυτῶν τεσσάρων διῆλθε. According to Orosius, Pompey had fled the city to wage war (*Hist.* 6.16.8): *equidem eo die hoc bellum actum est, quo Pompeius pater ab urbe bellum gesturus aufugerat, quattuorque annis hoc bellum civile indesinenter toto orbe tonuit.*

<sup>89</sup> *B. Hisp.* 31.8: *ipsis Liberalibus fusi fugatique.* The wording *ipsis Liberalibus*—"on the Liberalia themselves", which in this context sounds more like "on the day of liberty itself"—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 43.44.1). *Feriae* commemorating Caesar's victory at Munda on the day of the Liberalia are noted in the *Fasti Farnesiani* and *Caeretani*: LIB(eralia), AG(onalia), NP LIBERO, LIB(erae) | FER(iae) QVOD E(o) D(ie) C CAES(ar) VIC(it) IN HISP(ania) VLT(eriore); cf. A. DEGRASSI, *Inscriptiones Italiae* 13.2, Rome 1963, p. 66.

<sup>90</sup> App. *BC* 2.119.501; Nic. Dam. 17 §49.

<sup>91</sup> App. *BC* 2.125.523; 2.133.557.

<sup>92</sup> App. *BC* 2.135.565.

<sup>93</sup> 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. The converse idea that the conflict between Caesar's veterans and the conspirators is not supposed to have occurred on the Liberalia—which would be implied by a later dating of the funeral—is hardly credible, all the less because it was also the day of the *agonium Martiale* (Macr. *Sat.* 1.4.15; Varr. *LL* 6.14). Accordingly, Tacitus indicates a dispute about liberty on

twofold important day, neither the veterans keen on celebrating the anniversary, nor another group of protagonists, the τεχνίται of Dionysus, who 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>94</sup>

## VII. — EASTERN PROMISES

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>95</sup> Following the *Dionysia* a festival was celebrated in his honor on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Anthesterion*, the *Antōnieia*.<sup>96</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

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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 [...]* (“[...] the people [...] which in excessive partisan zeal had once marred the funeral of Divus Julius [...] that famous day when the service was still fresh, and liberty was resought in unfortunate ways, when the occurred slaying of the Dictator Caesar seemed to some the vilest, to others the most glorious of deeds. [...]”). On the assassins' inability to bring their liberty upon Rome on the Ides of March, i.a. due to Caesar's *funus*, cf. *Cic. Att.* 14.14.3: [...] *contenti Idibus Martiis simus; quae quidem nostris amicis divinis viris aditum ad caelum dederunt, libertatem populo Romano non dederunt. recordare tua. nonne meministi clamare te omnia perisse si ille funere elatus esset? sapienter id quidem. itaque ex eo quae manarint vides.*

<sup>94</sup> *Suet. Jul.* 84: [...] *confestimque circumstantium turba virgulta arida et cum subsellis tribunalia, quicquid praeterea ad donum aderat, congescit. deinde tibicines et scaenici artifices vestem, quam ex triumphorum instrumento ad praesentem usum induerant, detractam sibi atque discissam iniecere flammae et veteranorum militum legionarii arma sua, quibus exculti funus celebrabant; matronae etiam pleraeque ornamenta sua, quae gerebant, et liberorum bullas atque praetextas.* 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 sq.: *Exceptus est Caesaris adventus ab omnibus municipiis et coloniis incredibili honore atque amore. tum primum enim veniebat ab illo universae Galliae bello. nihil relinquebatur, quod ad ornatum portarum, itinerum, locorum omnium, qua Caesar iturus erat, excogitari poterat. cum liberis omnis multitudo obviam procedebat, hostiae omnibus locis immolabantur, tricliniis stratis fora templaque occupabantur, ut vel spectatissimi triumpho laetitia praecipere posset. tanta erat magnificentia apud opulentiores, cupiditas apud humiliores.* 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.

<sup>95</sup> *Plut. Ant.* 24, with a quote from *Soph. Oed. R.* 4 sq.: ὁμοῦ μὲν θυμιαμάτων γέμει, ὁμοῦ δὲ παίωνων τε καὶ στεναγμάτων. Cf. *Ant.* 26, where Antonius Dionysus meets Cleopatra Aphrodite, who had been in the city of Rome at the time of Caesar's funeral.

<sup>96</sup> *IG II/III<sup>2</sup>*, 1043, l. 22 sq.; cf. *DS* 2.1, s.v. “Dionysia” with p. 246.

*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.



Figs. 4a, b: Fulvia of Eumenia.<sup>97</sup>

The same ivy motif—or Dionysus himself—figures prominently on contemporary coins of Antony, a motif that he retained even after Fulvia’s death and his marriage with Octavia (figs. 5, 6).



Figs. 5, 6: Silver *cistophori* of Mark Antony and Octavia.<sup>98</sup>

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>99</sup> and with the *Antōnieia* 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

<sup>97</sup> RPC 3140: Fulvia AE17 of Eumenia (as *Fulvia*), Phrygia, ca. 41–40 BCE. Obv.: draped bust of Fulvia as a winged Nike. Rev.: ΦΟΥΛΟΥΤΙ | ΑΝΩΝ | ΖΜΕΡΤΟΠΙ, 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.

<sup>98</sup> RPC 2201; Syd 1197. Obv.: head of Antony wearing a wreath of ivy; *lituus* beneath, inserted into the circular inscription M·ANTONIVS·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*. Photo: Coin Circuit.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. also Plut. *Ant.* 71.4.2–4 (societies of the Ἀμιμητοβίων, those “inimitable in their life”, and of the Συναποθανουμένων, “companions in death”), 75 (Dionysian *thiasos* leaving Antony at the end of his life).

opportunity, what would have been their justification to act as the advocates of Dionysus,<sup>100</sup> and let themselves be celebrated as victors at the same date?

### VIII. — QUINQUATRUS REDUX

Returning to Cicero we have seen above that the Senate session he attended occurred on the day of the Liberalia:

*nam Liberalibus quis potuit in senatum non venire?*<sup>101</sup>

One year later he wrote to Cornificius from Rome:

*Liberalibus litteras accepi tuas [...]. eo die non fuit senatus neque postero. Quinquatribus frequenti senatu causam tuam egi [...].*<sup>102</sup>

This shows that unlike the previous year the Senate did not convene on the Liberalia in 43 BCE. Was it just coincidence, or had a religious restriction been issued? Was it connected to Caesar's funeral? Had the following day become unsuitable also because the people had mourned at the site of Caesar's cremation for an extended period of time until his remains had been collected and interred?<sup>103</sup> Did this affect the Quinquatrus, and was it therefore qualified for Senate meetings?

### IX. — IN OTHER WORDS: THE POETS

The ancient poets bear witness too, first and foremost Virgil. 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>104</sup>

Servius commented:

*hoc aperte ad Caesarem pertinet, quem constat primum sacra Liberi patris transtulisse Romam. curru pro currui. thiasos saltationes, choreas Liberi, id est Liberalia [...].*<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> This is peculiar insofar as Antony had prided himself on his descent from Heracles until then (Plut. *Ant.* 4).

<sup>101</sup> Cic. *Att.* 14.14.2: "As to the senate of the Liberalia—who was strong enough to refuse to attend?"

<sup>102</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 12.25.1: "On the Liberalia I received your letter [...]. Neither on that nor the following day was there any meeting of the senate. On the Quinquatrus before a full house I pleaded your cause."

<sup>103</sup> Suet. *Jul.* 84.5: extended mourning at the *bustum*; Dio 44.51.1 sq.: *ossilegium*.

<sup>104</sup> Verg. *Buc.* 5.29 sq.: "Daphnis also decided to subject the Armenian tigers to the chariot, [and] Daphnis [decided] to introduce the orgiastic dances of Bacchus". On Daphnis in fig. 2 cf. E. SIMON, *art. cit.*, p. 149.

In an earlier verse Virgil had written:

*Exstinctum Nymphae crudeli funere Daphnin  
flebant [...],  
cum complexa sui corpus miserabile nati  
atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater.*<sup>106</sup>

Verse 20 literally mentions the nymphs who “wept for the slain Daphnis at the cruel funeral”, which is the preferable reading because Daphnis is depicted as already *exstinctus* (“killed”). 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>107</sup>

Regardless of the *vexata quaestio*, whether Virgil himself 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, and the relation between the *Caesareum numen* and the *numen* of Bacchus conveyed by Ovid in his plea to Augustus on the Liberalia.

In the same eclogue Virgil later writes:

*ut Baccho Cererique, tibi sic vota quotannis  
agricolae facient: damnabis tu quoque votis.*<sup>108</sup>

The *vota* to Bacchus and Ceres could be made at the Cerialia, the festival of Ceres, Libera and Liber,<sup>109</sup> but also in reverse order at the Liberalia, because Ceres was generally the cultic companion of Liber.<sup>110</sup> There is consensus that the addressee

<sup>105</sup> Serv. *Ecl.* 5.29 sq.: “This refers unambiguously to Caesar who, as is well-known, was the first to bring the cult of Liber Pater to Rome; *curru* stands for *curruis*; *thiasos* for dances, the round dances of Liber, which means the Liberalia.” Cf. E. SIMON, *Die Götter der Römer*, Munich 1990, p. 128; on the identification of Daphnis with Caesar cf. e.g. D.L. DREW, “Virgil’s fifth Eclogue: A defense of the Julius Caesar-Daphnis Theory”, *CQ* 16, 1922, pp. 57-64; P. GRIMAL, “La ‘Ve Églogue’ et le culte de César”, *Mélanges Picard*, Paris 1949, vol. 1, p. 406 sqq.

<sup>106</sup> Verg. *Buc.* 5.20-3: “The Nymphs wept for the slain Daphnis at his cruel death, [and] while embracing the pitiable body of her son, the mother called upon the gods and the unmerciful stars.”

<sup>107</sup> Serv. *Ecl.* 5.20-3: “Others say that C. Iulius Caesar is allegorically indicated here, who was extinguished in the Senate by Cassius and Brutus with twenty-three stab wounds: Thence they wish that ‘cruel funeral’ be asserted [...] if it is said of Gaius Caesar, many accept it because of the mother Venus.”

<sup>108</sup> Verg. *Buc.* 5.79 sqq.: “Even as to Bacchus and to Ceres, thus to you every year the peasants shall make their vows: and thereof you, like them, shall claim quittance.”

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *Fasti Antiates Maiores*: CERIA-NP CERERI-LIB-LIB; 19 April: *natalis* of the temple of Ceres.

<sup>110</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 3.785 sq.: *luce sua ludos uvae commentor habebat, quos cum taedifera nunc habet ille dea* (“This day held the games of the grape’s discoverer [Liber], which he now shares with the torch-bearing goddess [Ceres]”). Among many other epithets Ceres was called “torch-bearer”, because she had once lit two pieces of kindling on Mount Etna to search the whole world for her daughter, who had been abducted into the Hades. The torches then became a part of her rites and iconography (e.g. Ov.

of Virgil's *tibi* is the deified Julius Caesar: this eclogue is said to have been written to celebrate Caesar's apotheosis.<sup>111</sup>

What does *tibi sic [...] quotannis*, "thus to you every year", mean? How can it be understood? Does the *sic* indicate that year after year a ritual was also conducted for the divinized Caesar, but on a different date than the festival of Bacchus and Ceres? Or does it mean that they were all worshipped together on the same festive day? The latter is indicated by *tu quoque* standing beside *votis*, which iterates *vota* in the previous verse. But this in turn would mean that the peasants knew that the Liberalia were no longer exclusively dedicated to Liber and Libera, the *liberi* of Ceres, but also to the deified Caesar, buried as a man and resurrected as a god on that day. This would come as no surprise if the peasants were settled veterans of Caesar's campaigns.

Further evidence is found in Ovid's *Tristia*:

*Illa dies haec est, qua te celebrare poetae  
si modo non fallunt tempora, Bacche, solent [...].*<sup>112</sup>

All commentators agree that Ovid is referring to the day of the Liberalia here. He prays to the god Bacchus, as whose "worshipper" he asks him to "influence" another "god", with whom Bacchus has a "relation", in order to alleviate his fate and obtain amnesty.<sup>113</sup> Of course he meant to influence Caesar Augustus, who had exiled him from Rome. Ovid regarded the conjunction of the *Caesareum numen* and the *numen* of Bacchus on the Liberalia as self-evident, and chose precisely this day to ask for imperial clemency via his poets society, the *cultores Liberi*. Ovid's advance is better understood, if we consider that on the Liberalia 44 BCE Julius Caesar had become a *numen* like Bacchus, with whom he was then associated. Otherwise Ovid would have been a fool to choose Bacchus of all gods as mediator, the god of Mark Antony, and should have written a *carmen* dedicated to the Augustan Apollo instead, as some of his friends were already doing.<sup>114</sup> Ovid himself indicated in the second verse that Bacchus could only be a weak mentor for him—*si modo non fallunt tempora*, "if only we do not mistake the date". So he knew that Augustus did not look favorably upon the Liberalia, because it had been the great day of Antony, who

*Fast.* 4.491-4; Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.109.9-12; Diod. 5.4.3; cp. Stat. *Theb.* 12.270). During Caesar's funeral his bier was ignited by *duo quidam*, two unknown figures with burning torches (Suet. *Jul.* 84.3), who could have been δαδούχοι of the Ceres-Demeter cult.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Verg. *Buc.* 5.64: *deus, deus ille, Menalca!* Cf. Servius' comment on the consecutive verse (*Ecl.* 5.65): *si Caesarem, bene ait 'tuis'*; cf. also the above-mentioned comments by Servius.

<sup>112</sup> Ov. *Trist.* 5.3.1 sq.: "This is the day, when the poets are accustomed to celebrate you, Bacchus, if only we do not mistake the date."

<sup>113</sup> Ov. *Trist.* 5.3.45 sq.: *sunt dis inter se commercia: flectere tempta / Caesareum numen numine, Bacche, tuo.*

<sup>114</sup> Cf. the end of his elegy (Ov. *Trist.* 5.3.57): *Sic igitur dextro faciatis Apolline carmen.*

described as “New Dionysus” thereafter.<sup>115</sup> That Ovid nevertheless prayed to Bacchus, was arguably because the date was obligatory. This can only signify that the Liberalia were not only connected to the *numen* of Bacchus, but also to that of Caesar, which is why Ovid hoped to be allowed to implore the son on the father’s numinous day—in spite of everything.

A possible piece of evidence is also found in Ovid’s *Fasti*:

*luce sua ludos uvae commentor habebat  
quos cum taedifera nunc habet ille dea [...].*<sup>116</sup>

This passage on the Liberalia is commonly interpreted that the ancestral *ludi*, which the god of wine Liber had on his own festive day (*habebat*), were now (*nunc*) performed together with those of the torchbearing goddess Ceres (*habet*).<sup>117</sup> Until today no explanation has been given for the games’ assumed displacement from 17 March to 19 April under Augustus. It is considered an “obscure question”,<sup>118</sup> particularly because Ovid does not include Liber, when he writes about the Cerialia later on.<sup>119</sup> From our vantage point the solution could be that the traditionally high-spirited and sometimes obscene games of Liber<sup>120</sup> were regarded as an inappropriate element alongside the ritual gravitas observed during the annual commemoration of Caesar’s *funus*.<sup>121</sup>

## X. — THE JEWS OF THE PYRE

Thus far on the Romans. But at the time of Caesar’s funeral there were also foreigners at Rome, whose mourning was specifically emphasized:

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<sup>115</sup> 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. They followed the example of Augustus who 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 Augustan approach of omission prevails to this day, i.e. Caesar’s funeral is ignored by many historians, including biographers.

<sup>116</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 3.785 sq.; *supra*, n. 110.

<sup>117</sup> Liber’s *ludi* on 17 March are only attested again in much later calendars by Philocalus (354 CE: F D XVI LIBERALICI C(ircenses); A. DEGRASSI, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-62) and Polemius Silvius (448/49 CE: XVI CIRCENSES; *id.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-76); cf. *CIL* I<sup>2</sup>, pp. 260 sq., 312. Was this reintegration of the games possible, because meanwhile Caesar’s annual funeral commemoration had itself been repositioned within the calendar? Cf. n. 121: birthday festival.

<sup>118</sup> H. LE BONNIEC, *Le Culte de Cérès à Rome. Des origines à la fin de la République*, Paris 1958, p. 325.

<sup>119</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 4.679-712.

<sup>120</sup> Varr. ap. Augustin. *CD* 7.21; Arnob. *adv. nat.* 4.35.4.

<sup>121</sup> For a similar reorganization cf. Caesar’s birth, which was celebrated one day early on 12 July, so as not to coincide with the principal day of the *ludi Apollinares* (13 July; Dio 47.18.6).

*In summo publico luctu exterarum gentium multitudo circulatim suo quaeque more lamentata est praecipueque Iudaei, qui etiam noctibus continuis bustum frequentarunt.*<sup>122</sup>

Here the conspicuous behavior of the Jews is not ascribed to a specific eagerness—this was exhibited by all foreign attendants—, but to their customs: *suo quaeque more*. The Jewish custom differed in that they were celebrating their Passover at this time. The festival took place in the month of Nisan, which in practice they substituted for the corresponding month of the civil calendar of their respective regions of domicile, for example the Macedonian *Xanthikos* or the Egyptian *Pharmouthi*.<sup>123</sup> The only appropriate month to adopt at Rome was March, and at least those mourning at Caesar’s *bustum* will have conformed to his Julian calendar, with the Passover meal on the eve of the Ides.<sup>124</sup> The Jewish *Mazzoth*, the Festival of the Unleavened Bread, follows from 15 to 21 Nisan.<sup>125</sup> In the case of Caesar’s funeral on 17 March the Jews would at this point in time still have had four festive days left until the end of the *Mazzoth* week, and even after the entombment at least two. However, had the funeral taken place as late as the 20th, they only would have had the final night of the *Mazzoth* at their disposal before the *ossilegium*, which traditionally proceeded on the third day after the *crematio*,<sup>126</sup> but by no means *noctibus continuis*—let alone if the funeral had taken place at an even later date. Under the assumption that the conspicuously long attendance of the Jews at Caesar’s pyre did not only stem from their particular devotion, but also from their tradition that gave them more leisure *suo more* during the *Mazzoth*, then *noctibus continuis* also supports an early date of the cremation.

<sup>122</sup> Suet. *Jul.* 84.5: “At the height of the public grief a multitude of foreign peoples went about lamenting in a circle, each according to their custom, above all the Jews who even flocked to the funeral pyre for several successive nights.”

<sup>123</sup> Cf. G. GENTZ, *RE* 18.2 s.v. “Ostern”, 1647 sq. Jos. *AJ* 2.311 sq.: Ὁ δὲ θεὸς δηλώσας ἔτι μᾶλλον πληγῆ τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους καταναγκάσειν ἀπολῦσαι τοὺς Ἑβραίους ἐκέλευε Μωυσῆν παραγγεῖλαι τῷ λαῷ θυσίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἔχειν παρασκευασμένους τῇ δεκάτῃ τοῦ Ξανθικοῦ μηνὸς εἰς τὴν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην, ὃς παρὰ μὲν Αἰγυπτίους Φαρμουθὶ καλεῖται, Νισάν δὲ παρ’ Ἑβραίοις, Μακεδόνας δ’ αὐτὸν Ξανθικὸν προσαγορεύουσιν, ἀπάγειν τε τοὺς Ἑβραίους πάντα ἐπικομιζομένους; *similar.* 3.248, 11.109; *BJ* 6.290.

<sup>124</sup> The shift to the Julian solar calendar was easy, because there had been a full moon on the Ides of March 45 BCE, the first year of the new Julian calendar (cf. F.K. GINZEL, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie. Das Zeitrechnungswesen der Völker*, Leipzig 1911, Vol. 2, p. 571, pl. 4: “[Vollmond] 45: III 14.81”), as it had always been in the archaic Roman lunar calendar (cf. *Fast. Silv.* ad d. 13 Ian.; Macrobian *Saturn.* 1.15.14). It was therefore the ideal date for Passover. Of course this changed in the next year due to the difference between solar and lunar years of eleven to twelve days, but in 44 BCE the Jewish Caesarians and the Caesarian Jews respectively would also have celebrated their Passover at the established date, on the day of the Roman Ides, which were not accompanied by a full moon anymore, but still fell in the middle of the month, and were characterized by a ritual lamb sacrifice to Jupiter, the *ovis Idulis* (cf. A. DEGRASSI, *op. cit.*, p. 328 sqq.).

<sup>125</sup> Lev. 23:6: καὶ ἐν τῇ πεντεκαίδεκάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ μηνὸς τούτου ἑορτὴ τῶν ἄζυμων τῷ κυρίῳ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας ἄζυμα ἔδεσθε.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Cruquianus, *supra*, n. 77.

## XI. — CONCLUSIONS

Thus, our criticism of the late dating of Julius Caesar's funeral, which has been propagated only by modern scholars like Drumann-Groebe, 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?

We have been able to find direct proof for the restituted chronology: on the one hand Lepidus, who said during the Senate session, that he and Caesar had stood on the Forum the day before, which asserts that the first Senate convened on the day after the assassination, and that the whole revisionist construct was *a priori* inadmissible; on the other hand the matrons, who cast their children's *togae praetextae* onto Caesar's pyre, and the dismemberment of Cinna, which both reveal that the *crematio* happened on the day of the Liberalia. Furthermore there is ample circumstantial evidence, for instance the consistency with the old Roman burial tradition, which intended for a cremation on the third day, moreover the parallel to the funeral of Clodius, the hurriedness, especially that of the veterans, the predetermination of the Liberalia as Caesar's last day at Rome, as well as Antony's later self-portrayal as a new Dionysus with *Antônia* on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Anthesterion*. As an external indication our chronological adjustment is flanked by the possible calendrical concurrence with the Jewish Passover ritual. Last but not least, diverse authors such as Cicero, Suetonius, Virgil or Ovid all mention the Liberalia—either directly or indirectly, but in all cases strikingly associated with Caesar's funeral. Therefore we hereby conclude with certainty that Julius Caesar's funeral ceremony proceeded on the day of the Liberalia, 17 March 44 BCE.<sup>127</sup>

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>128</sup> As a consequence Cicero was turned into the *auctor* of the amnesty<sup>129</sup> instead of merely the author of its title, and

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<sup>127</sup> In order to uphold the modern revisionist chronology, one would need to prove that the funeral cannot have occurred on 17 March under any circumstances.

<sup>128</sup> F. FRÖHLICH, *op. cit.*, p. 1: "cum aliquo studio partes Caesarianas amplexum esse" on Carolus Peter who had collated Appian's account with Cicero's testimonies (C. PETER, "Appian und seine darstellung der ereignisse nach Caesars tode bis zum ende des mutinensischen krieges", *Philologus* 8, 1853, pp. 429-38).

<sup>129</sup> F. FRÖHLICH, *op. cit.*, p. 3: "[...] senatumque Cicerone auctore decrevisse, ut omnis memoria discordiarum praeteritarum oblivione sempiterna deleteretur [...]".

important records were disregarded.<sup>130</sup> Cicero himself never claimed more than what was due, and admitted for all his pride that he had only contributed little: *quantum in me fuit*.<sup>131</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. Thereby our scholars have revealed themselves to be more Ciceronian than Cicero, because although he otherwise argued with Antony about everything else, he never claimed to have been the first who had ensured peace—he had to grant Antony this honor  *nolens volens*.<sup>132</sup> He surely regarded the Senate session with his own participation as the only true one (*unum illum diem*),<sup>133</sup> but he certainly never questioned the chronology of those days, least of all the date of Caesar's funeral, which was evident and well-known to everyone.<sup>134</sup>

Therefore modern scholars obviously did not discard the Liberalia as the date of Caesar's funeral objectively, but polemically and under *a priori* exclusion of the Caesarian sources, which they declared to be suspect *ipso facto*, not only because of their political bias, but even with regard to the chronology of events. 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 Cicero's wish, the *insepulta sepultura* of a *mortuus*, and the intent of Octavian, who had aimed at obliterating the memory of the Liberalia. But at the same time modern historical science deprived itself of any possibility of understanding the explosive sociopolitical

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<sup>130</sup> A remark by Lucius Calpurnius Piso against Cicero points to Antony's authorship of the amnesty (App. *BC* 3.57.234 sq.): Τίνα ἔκτεινεν ὡς τύραννος ἄκριτον ὁ [Ἀντωνίος] [...]; πότε, ὦ Κικέρων; ὅτε τὴν ἀμνηστίαν ἐκύρου τῶν γεγονότων [...] (“Whom has [Antony] put to death in a tyrannical manner without trial? [...] When, dear Cicero? Was it when he enforced amnesty for the past?”). Cf. also App. *BC* 3.62.256, where Antony says about Cicero: καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἀνδροφόνους ἀμνηστίαν ἔδωκεν, ἧ καὶ γὰρ συνέθεμην [...] (“Furthermore he acknowledged the amnesty to the murderers, to which I too had consented [...]).

<sup>131</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 1.1: *ex eo die quo in aedem Telluris convocati sumus. In quo templo, quantum in me fuit, ieci fundamenta pacis Atheniensiumque renovavi vetus exemplum; Graecum etiam verbum usurpavi quo tum in sedandis discordiis usa erat civitas illa, atque omnem memoriam discordiarum oblivione sempiterna delendam censeo*. Cf. K. BRINGMANN, *Untersuchungen zum späten Cicero, Hypomnemata* 29, Göttingen 1971, p. 183.

<sup>132</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 1.2: *Praeclara tum oratio M. Antoni, egregia etiam voluntas; pax denique per eum et per liberos eius [...] confirmata est*; 1.31: *Tu autem, M. Antoni [...] quae fuit oratio de concordia! quanto metu <senatus>, quanta sollicitudine civitas tum a te liberata est [...]*.

<sup>133</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 1.31: *[...] unum illum diem quo in aede Telluris senatus fuit [...]* (“[...] that one day, on which the Senate met in the temple of Tellus [...]).

<sup>134</sup> The fact that the date of Caesar's funeral is not explicitly mentioned in the sources is probably evidence that it was generally known. Since only the Liberalia are as familiar as the Ides in this calendrical context, the implicitness can therefore only concern 17 March.

and sacral context in which this epochal event occurred that decisively codetermined the ultimate form of Caesar's apotheosis.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> For an insight into the consequences of a correct dating of the funeral cf. F. CAROTTA, A. EICKENBERG, "Orfeo Báquico: la cruz desaparecida", *Isidorianum* 35, 2009, pp. 179-217, including Julius Caesar as a Bacchic Orpheus (*supra*, n. 67) and the possible importance of the *Iobakchoi* in his later cult.

**From the peer review:** 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.