

Ancestral masks of the princeps as one of the instruments of imperial propaganda in the period of Julio-Claudian dynasty

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Ancestral masks (imagines maiorum) played an important role in the public representation of the Roman aristocracy in the Republican epoch, but remained relevant also in the time of Principate. The paper presents an attempt to trace the role of ancestral masks demonstration on the funeral ceremonies of princeps and their relatives basing on the written evidences of ancient authors (mainly, Tacitus, Svetonius and Cassius Dio). The first part of the paper deals with the use of ancestral masks in the funerals of Augustus' family members. The thesis that Augustus changed the old tradition adding images of legendary and real prominent Romans to the masks of his ancestors on the funerals of his heirs (Marcellus, Agrippa, Drusus the Elder) is grounded by the author. The comparison between the choice of personalities of the heroes for the funeral images and the statues on the Forum of Augustus allows to infer in both cases that it was about the same propagandistic concept. In the second part of the article the application of the ancestral images by the Augustus' successors is analysed. Basing on the Tacitus' evidence about the funeral of Germanicus as well as the epigraphic monuments, which allow judging the posthumous honours intended for him (Tabula Hebana, Tabula Siarensis), the hypothesis is expressed that all of them were a response to the political crisis, which Tiberius met as a result of his refusal to give him the ceremonial burial in Rome. In the end of the paper the author comes to a conclusion that the use of such propagandistic instrument as ancestral masks by the princeps for squaring account with each other led to its gradual devaluation. As a result it was sidelined with coming of the new dynasty of Flavians, who had no family aristocratic tradition.



Key words: [masks](#), [images](#), [ancestors](#), [princeps](#), [propaganda](#)

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