












In this topic you will learn about Greek and Roman practices and beliefs surrounding the death and burial process including the preparation, funeral procession, and burial of the body. Remembrance of the dead was also an important part of the family life and you will study some of the festivals of remembrance that the Greeks and Romans held.








## Ancient Greece: Death and Burial

1	Death and Burial	Death was an important issue to the Greeks. It was incredibly important that the dead were treated with respect and that everybody, no matter their social status or wealth, received a proper burial.	
<b>Preparation of the Body</b>			
2	Closure of Eyes	Once the person had died, their eyes and mouths were closed.	
3	Body Washed	The body would be washed, perfumed, and wrapped in a long white shroud.	
4	Payment for Charon	When this process was complete a coin would be placed on the deceased's mouth. This was payment for Charon, the boatman who ferried the dead from the land of the living to the underworld.	
5	Prothesis	After the body was prepared, the prothesis, or laying out, took place. This means that the body would be laid out for two days to receive mourners.	
6	Example of Prothesis		
7	Pollution	As a death automatically polluted the house, a bowl of water was placed outside for people to wash themselves as they left.	
8	Lament	Once respects had been paid, the women of the family would start their lament. To do this, they would cut their hair, dress in shabby black clothing, and wail beside the deceased, beating their chests and flailing their arms.	

## Funeral Procession

9	Ephora	Before dawn on the third day, the ephora took place. This was the funeral procession from the house of the deceased to the burial ground.	
10	Example of Ephora		
11	Travel to the Burial Ground	Depending on the wealth of the family and distance they travelled, the deceased would either be carried by wagon or carried by pallbearers.	
12	Participants	The procession included women, children and men from the family. It would also include musicians, particularly an aulos player.	

## Burial of the Body

13	Outside of City	The final resting place of the body was always outside the city to remove the chance of religious pollution. It also limited the spread of disease.	
14	Kerameikos, Athens	The main burial ground in Athens was in Kerameikos, an area just outside the northwest walls of the city.	
15	Funeral Pyre	The body would either be buried or cremated. In a cremation, a pyre would be built and the deceased laid on top. It would then be lit. After the body has been burnt, the ash would be collected in an urn and given to the family. This would then be placed in a shrine or grave.	
16	Journey to the Underworld	To assist the deceased in their journey to the underworld, the family would add burial gifts to the grave. This may be an item that was important to the deceased in life, or even food for the journey.	
17	Stele	Depending on the wealth of the family, a stele may be set up for the deceased so that they are remembered. This was a stone slab, similar to a grave stone, with patterns or images carved on them.	
18	Sacrifice	Once the deceased had been buried or cremated a sacrifice would take place. This differed from a normal sacrifice, as the blood of the victim was released on the earth as an offering to Hades and Persephone.	
19	Period of Mourning	Then began a 30-day period of mourning. There were three days the family were expected to visit the deceased: the third, the ninth, and the thirteenth. After this the family visited the grave annually.	

## Ancient Greek Festivals for the Dead

20	Communal Festivals	As well as private funerals, Athenians took part in other festivals to the dead, as it was vital their memory be maintained. There were two main festivals: Anthesteria and Genesia.
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## Ancient Greek Festivals: Anthesteria

21	The Festival of Anthesteria	The festival of Anthesteria took place in late January and lasted three days. The festival celebrated the maturing of wine and was held in honour of Dionysus.
22		The first day was believed to be a day the dead rose from the underworld and roamed the earth. During this day the wine from the previous year was opened and libations were poured for Dionysus.
23		On the second day, groups would gather for drinking contests and families would pour libations on the graves of their ancestors.
24		The final day was dedicated to the dead. Families of the dead would make offerings to the god Hermes, as he was the only god, along with Dionysus, who could travel in both the world of the living and the world of the dead. Unlike normal offerings, none of the family were allowed to eat the food.

## Ancient Greek Festivals: Genesia

25	The Festival of Genesia	The Genesia took place in late September. During this single day, Athenians would decorate the graves of the deceased with ribbons and offer food and blood sacrifice in honour of all their dead ancestors.
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