

A funeral eulogy for a roman wife

[Life](#), [Death](#)



The primary source is a funeral eulogy written in the 1st century B. C. by the husband of a woman who had just passed away. The eulogy is intended to praise the character and actions of the wife in front of those that had gathered at her funeral, who would most likely be people belonging to the same upper class of Roman society.

The eulogy both reveals the type of person Turia was when she was alive and provides insight into the standard behavior expected of women by men, particularly among men and women that were wealthy. Perhaps there existed different expectations of poor women since they did not perform the same duties. Though, there are certainly some basic standards that all women were held to as revealed by the primary source. While Turia's qualities certainly match those possessed by other women of that time, some of her actions break from tradition entirely.

Since the eulogy is written by the husband, someone who would have been one of the closest people to Turia, the document can certainly be believed, to an extent. There may have been some slight exaggerations seeing as how the woman had just passed away and the purpose of the eulogy was to highlight her admirable qualities.

Turia, the Roman wife, is described as possessing the virtues of "loyalty, obedience...reasonableness...religion without superstition...[and] modesty of appearance" (LT 30). The virtue "religion without superstition" in particular may perhaps be praising her knowledge and understanding since she is able to differentiate between what is real and what is not.

These virtues she possessed are a testament to her great character, however they are not unlike the virtues held by other women at the time. The husband states she shares many other similar commendable qualities " with all married women who care for their good name" (LT 34), thus implying that she is like any other wealthy Roman wife who cares a great deal about maintaining a good reputation and standing in society.

The husband twice states that Turia's sister is just as worthy of praise as she is and that they are " equal" (LT 43), which further emphasizes the point that the traits Turia possessed were not unique, but rather the standard among elite women. The husband does, however, state that she is different in that she has faced difficult and rare circumstances that have allowed her to showcase her praiseworthy qualities. Such circumstances include having to fight against those who claimed her father's will was invalid.

Turia had a " firm resolution" that aided her in ultimately resolving the issue in a way that favored her and thus allowing her to fulfill "[her] duty to [her] father, [her] devotion to [her] sister, and [her] faithfulness" towards her husband (LT 25-26). I believe this to be her most commendable quality.

Clearly, the woman cared a great deal about family. Turia did not leave her parents' murder " unavenged" and was determined to carry out her father's last wishes by upholding his will (LT 5).

She cared for her mother-in-law just as she would her own parents and also secured good marriages for her female relations through dowries in what her husband called " a spirit of generous family affection" (LT 42). Turia's devotion to family can be further shown by her distress at not being able to

give birth. She was even willing for her husband to marry another so that he could have a child. She was entirely selfless and dutiful all throughout her life and it is clearly shown by her actions.

The information revealed through the eulogy about Turia both coincides and differs from traditional views. Turia was devoted to protecting her family in any way she could, which concurs with the view of women being caretakers. However, Turia's way of taking care of her family breaks with the norm in that she did not simply stay at home and act after the damage had been done.

For example, when a man named Milo and his troops attempted to seize the home of Turia and her husband, she "beat them back successfully" (LT 11a). The fact that Turia was entirely willing to divorce her husband so that he could have an heir coincides with the traditional idea of marriage being for sole purpose of lineage.

However, both Turia and her husband break tradition by choosing to stay together despite the fact that they had no children. Their marriage, as stated by the husband, is also rare in that it lasted for 40 years and only ended because of death, not divorce (LT 27). Turia had a great character and that is undoubtedly shown by the deeds she performed and by the great amount of praise that her husband has towards her. She is both a leading example of an elite Roman woman and an exception to the norms of that time.