

While scholars have given considerable attention to the place of women in Athenian funerary rites, women's role as providers of food and drink offerings in post-funereal tomb cult has been comparatively underexplored. One recent trend in the study of women's participation in funerary ritual emphasizes the positive contribution women made to their family's well-being through the rituals (e.g. Goff 2004 and Stears 1998). For example, washing and dressing the corpse in preparation for burial was not just a source of ritual pollution but a way for women to show care for the deceased. Women not only expressed grief through their conspicuous actions of mourning and lament, but they also helped to shape how the dead were remembered. This paper extends this perspective to a consideration of the food and drink that women offered to the deceased in tomb cult during the third-day, ninth-day, thirtieth-day, and other rites. Such offerings continue a practice of sharing food and drink with the dead that began during the funeral. Archaeology provides evidence for the meal ritually destroyed at the graveside during the funeral. Although it is unclear whether or not the living partook of this food, they did eat a dinner at home after the burial (the *perideipnon*), which the deceased was thought to attend. I suggest that the use of food in funerary ritual created a commensality of sorts; interaction with the same food forged a relationship between living and dead. By means of the on-going offerings of food and drink to the deceased at the tomb, women tended to and maintained the links between themselves and the dead, a function that complements the ways in which women's other roles in funerary ritual served to define and foster relations with the deceased.

Goff, Barbara. 2004. *Citizen Bacchae. Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stears, Karen. 1998. "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual." In *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*. Sue Blundell and Margaret Williamson, eds. 89-100. London: Routledge.