

## How to kill an Epicurean: Valerius Maximus on Cassius

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**Val. Max. 1.4.7:** (Par.) M. Brutus cum reliquias exercitus sui adversus Caesarem et Antonium eduxisset, duae aquilae ex diversis castris advolaverunt, et, edita inter se pugna, ea quae a parte Bruti fuerat, male mulcata fugit. (Nepot.) M. Brutus, collega Cassii, de exitu belli est civilis admonitus. nam duae aquilae, advolantes super eum campum in quo pugnavit ex diversis castris convenere <et> inter se conflixerunt. victrix profecta ad Caesarem est Augustum, fugata illa quae ex Bruti advolaverat parte.

*Paris.* When M. Brutus led out the remnants of his army against Caesar and Antony, two eagles flew up from the two camps and put on a fight. The eagle from Brutus' side was badly worsted and fled. *Nepotianus.* M. Brutus, colleague of Cassius, was warned about the outcome of the civil war. For two eagles flying above the field on which he fought came together from the two camps and clashed with each other. The winner went off to Caesar Augustus, whereas the one which had flown up from Brutus' side was put to flight.

**Val. Max. 1.5.7:** M. etiam Bruti dignus admissio parricidio eventus omine designatus est, si quidem post illud nefarium opus natalem suum celebrans, cum Graecum versum expromere vellet, ad illud potissimum Homericum referendum animo tetendit:

ἀλλά με Μοῖρ' ὀλοή καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός.

qui deus, Philippensi acie a Caesare et Antonio signo datus, in eum tela convertit.

An outcome worthy of the parricide committed by M. Brutus was designated by an omen. As he was celebrating his birthday after that evil work, he wanted to speak a line of Greek and his mind turned to recall this of Homer: "But baneful Fate and Leto's son have slain me." That god, given as a password by Caesar and Antony at the battle of Philippi, turned his darts against Brutus.

**Val. Max. 1.5.8:** Consentaneo vocis iactu C. Cassii aurem Fortuna pervellit, quem orantibus Rhodiis ne ab eo cunctis deorum simulacris spoliarentur Solem a se relinquere respondere voluit, ut rapacissimi victoris insolentiam dicti tumore protraheret, abiectumque Macedonica pugna non effigiem Solis, quam tantummodo supplicibus cesserat, sed ipsum solem re vera relinquere cogeret.

By a similar utterance Fortune pinched the ear of C. Cassius. When the Rhodians begged him not to despoil them of all their statues of the gods, she made him reply that he was leaving the Sun, compounding the insolence of a rapacious conqueror by the arrogance of the speech. Cast down by the battle in Macedonia, she obliged him to leave, not the effigy of the Sun, which was all he had granted to the suppliants, but the sun itself in very deed.

**Val. Max. 1.8.8:** Facta mentione urbis e qua primordia civitas nostra traxit, divus Iulius, fausta proles eius, se nobis offert. quem C. Cassius, numquam sine praefatione publici parricidii nominandus, cum <in> acie Philippensi ardentissimo animo perstaret, vidit humano habitu augustiorem, purpureo paludamento amictum, minaci vultu et concitato equo in se impetum facientem. quo aspectu perterritus tergum hosti dedit, voce illa prius emissa: 'quid enim amplius agas, si occidisse parum est?' non occideras tu quidem, Cassi, Caesarem, neque enim ulla exstingui divinitas potest, sed mortali adhuc corpore utentem violando meruisti ut tam infestum haberes deum.

After mention of the city from which our community drew its origin, her auspicious offspring the divine Julius presents himself before us. C. Cassius, never to be named without prefix of public parricide, was standing firm and full of ardour at the battle of Philippi when he saw Caesar, majestic beyond human aspect,

robed in a purple commander's cloak, charging at him with threatening countenance and horse at the gallop. Terrified at the apparition, Cassius turned in flight from his enemy, first uttering these words: "What more is a man to do if killing be not enough?" No, Cassius, you had not killed Caesar, for no divinity can be extinguished; but by violating him while he was still in his mortal body you deserved to have the god thus hostile.

**Val. Max. 3.1.3:** Cuius filium Faustum C. Cassius, condiscipulum suum, in schola proscriptionem paternam laudantem, ipsumque, cum per aetatem potuisset, idem facturum minitantem, colapho percussit. dignam manum quae publico parricidio se non contaminaret!

Sulla's son Faustus at school was lauding his father's proscription and threatening to do the same himself when he was old enough, at which a schoolfellow, C. Cassius, boxed his ears. Such a hand ought never to have defiled itself with a public parricide.

**Val. Max. 6.8.4:** Alia nobilitas, alius furor, sed fidei par exemplum. Pindarus <C.> Cassium Philippensi proelio victum, nuper ab eo manumissus, iussu ipsius obruncatum insultationi hostium subtraxit, seque e conspectu hominum voluntaria morte abstulit, ita ut ne corpus quidem eius absumpti inveniretur. quis deorum, gravissimi sceleris ultor, illam dexteram, <quae> in necem patriae parentis exarserat, tanto torpore illigavit ut se tremibunda Pindari genibus summitteret, ne publici parricidii quas merebatur poenas arbitrio piae victoriae exsolveret? tu profecto tunc, dive Iuli, caelestibus tuis vulneribus debitam exegisti vindictam, perfidum erga te caput sordidi auxilii supplex fieri cogendo, eo animi aestu compulsus ut neque retinere vitam vellet neque finire sua manu auderet.

A different noble family, different frenzy, but an equal example of fidelity. When C. Cassius was defeated at the battle of Philippi, Pindarus, whom he had recently freed, killed him at his own orders and rescued him from the insults of his enemies. He then withdrew himself from the sight of men by voluntary death, so that even Cassius' body was not found after he was gone. Which of the gods avenging a most heinous crime tied that hand, which had flared up to kill the father of his country, with a numbness such that it lowered itself in trembling to the knees of Pindarus, lest at the arbitrament of pious victory it pay the penalty for public parricide as it deserved? Surely, divine Julius, you then wreaked the vengeance due to your celestial wounds, forcing your betrayer to go suppliant for ignominious aid, driven by such agitation of mind that he neither wished to retain his life nor dared to end it with his own hand.

**Val. Max. 9.9.2:** Nam C. Cassium error a semet ipso poenas exigere coegit: inter illum enim pugnae quattuor exercituum apud Philippos varium ipsisque ducibus ignotum eventum missus ab eo Titinius centurio nocturno tempore, ut specularetur quonam in statu res M. Bruti essent, dum crebros excessus viae petit, quia tenebrarum obscuritas hostesne an commilitones occurrerent dinoscere non sinebat, tardius ad Cassium rediit. quem is exceptum ab hostibus omniaque in eorum potestatem recidisse existimans, finire vitam properavit, cum et castra hostium invicem capta et Bruti copiae magna ex parte incolumes essent. Titinii vero non oblitteranda silentio virtus, qui oculis paulisper haesit inopinato iacentis ducis spectaculo attonitus, deinde profusus in lacrimas 'etsi imprudens' inquit, 'imperator, causa tibi mortis fui, tamen, ne id ipsum impunitum sit, accipe me fati tui comitem,' superque exanime corpus eius iugulo suo gladium capulo tenus demisit, ac permixto utriusque sanguine duplex victima iacuit, pietatis haec, erroris illa.

As for C. Cassius, error made him exact his own punishment. In the battle of the four armies at Philippi, of outcome various and unknown to the generals themselves, he sent Titinius, a Centurion, at night to find out how it was with M. Brutus. Titinius made frequent detours because the darkness did not allow him to tell friend from foe in his path, so he was rather slow in returning to Cassius; who for his part, thinking Titinius had been taken by the enemy and that everything had fallen into their hands, hastened to end his life, although the enemy camp had been captured in turn and Brutus' forces were largely intact. But Titinius's noble conduct should not be effaced by silence. For a short while he stood gazing, amazed at the unexpected sight of his commander lying dead, then, bursting into tears, "General," he said, "though I caused your death unwittingly, even that must not go unpunished, so receive me as the companion of your

fate,” and above Cassius’ lifeless body plunged his sword to the hilt in his own throat. There they lay in the mingled blood of both, two victims, one of loyalty, the other of error.

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