

ager, nor does it make a difference to anyone whether you delight more in exalting the Punic or Roman lines; but many who during Tiberius' rule suffered punishment or infamy have descendants remaining, and, even if the actual families have now been extinguished, you will discover persons who, owing to a similarity of behavior, think that the misdeeds of others are being imputed to themselves. Even glory and courage receive a ferocious response, as being critical of their opposites from too close at hand. But I return to my undertaking.)

* * *

A.D. 25

34 With Cornelius Cossus and Asinius Agrippa as consuls,⁶⁰ Cremutius Cordus was arraigned on a charge which was new and heard only then for the first time—that, having published annals and praised M. Brutus, he had spoken of C. Cassius as the last of the Romans. The prosecutors were Satrius Secundus and Pinarius Natta, clients of Sejanus. That was ruinous for the accused, as was the callous look with which Caesar received his defense, on which Cremutius, fixed upon leaving life, embarked in this fashion:

“It is my words, conscript fathers, that are criticized, so completely am I innocent of deeds; but not even *they* were directed at the princeps or the princeps' parent, whom the law of treason embraces. I am said to have praised Brutus and Cassius, whose achievements, though many have compiled them, no one has recalled without honor.

“Titus Livius, quite brilliant as he is for eloquence and credibility,⁶¹ first of all elevated Cn. Pompeius with such praises that Augustus called him ‘a Pompeian’; and that was no obstacle to their friendship. Scipio, Afranius, this very Cassius himself, this very Brutus—nowhere did he name them as ‘bandits’ and ‘parricides’ (the designations which are now imposed) but often as distinguished men. Asinius Pollio's writings transmit an exceptional memorial of the same individuals; Messalla Corvinus used to proclaim Cassius his ‘commander’; and each continued to thrive in wealth and honors. To the book of Marcus Cicero in which Cato was exalted to the sky, how else did the dictator Caesar reply than with a responding speech as if before a jury?

“Antonius' letters, Brutus' public addresses contain abuse against Augustus which is admittedly false but of much acerbity; the poems of Bibaculus and Catullus, packed with insults of the Caesars, can still be read; but Divine Julius himself, Divine Augustus himself bore and ignored them all—whether with more restraint or wisdom, I could not easily say: what is spurned tends to abate; but, if

60. The father of Cossus Cornelius Lentulus was consul in 1 B.C., his brother in A.D. 26 (4.46.1); M. Asinius Agrippa was grandson of Asinius Pollio (1.12.4n.) and brother of the consul of 23 (4.1.1n.).

61. The reference is to the historian Livy (for whom see pp. xix–xx).

you become angry, you appear to have made an admission. (I do not touch on the Greeks, among whom not just liberty but license too went unpunished; or, if anyone took notice, he avenged words with words.)

“What was particularly exempt, and had no one to disparage it, was to publish about those whom death had removed from hatred or favor. For surely it is not the case that, by my having Cassius and Brutus armed and holding the plains of Philippi,⁶² I am inflaming the people in public addresses with civil war as my motive? Is it not rather the case that, slain as they were seventy years ago, they for their part not only come to be known by their images—which not even the victor abolished—but retain some part of their memory among writers in exactly the same way? Posterity pays to every man his due repute; and, if condemnation is closing in on me, there will be no lack of those who remember not merely Cassius and Brutus but also myself.” Then, leaving the senate, he ended his life by fasting.

The cremation of his books by the aediles was proposed by the fathers; but they survived, having been concealed and published. Wherefore it is pleasant to deride all the more the insensibility of those who, by virtue of their present powerfulness, believe that the memory even of a subsequent age too can be extinguished. On the contrary, the influence of punished talents swells, nor have foreign kings, or those who have resorted to the same savagery, accomplished anything except disrepute for themselves and for their victims' glory.

Yet in the arraignment of defendants the year was so constant that, on the days of the Latin Festival, Drusus as prefect of the City,⁶³ having mounted the tribunal for taking the auspices, was approached by Calpurnius Salvianus with a charge against Sextus Marius. That was openly berated by Caesar and was the reason for Salvianus' exile. Against the Cyziceni was publicly cast the imputation of an indifference to the ceremonial offices of Divine Augustus, with additional charges of violence toward Roman citizens; and they lost the freedom which they had earned in the war with Mithridates, when, despite their being invested, the king was beaten off as much by their own steadfastness as by the garrison of Lucullus.⁶⁴ Fonteius Capito, however, whose concern as proconsul had been Asia,⁶⁵ was acquitted, it being discovered that the charges against him had been fabricated by Vibius Serenus. Yet that did *not* harm to Serenus, whom public hatred made increasingly more secure. Each accuser, the more exposed he was, was as if

62. Cordus means “by the simple fact that I have written a history which describes Cassius and Brutus and the Battle of Philippi.” For the battle see 1.2.1n.

63. Not the permanent prefecture of the City, whose history is given below at 6.11 (q.v.), but a temporary appointment held by an upper-class young man (like Germanicus' son here) while the regular magistrates were attending the Latin Festival on the Alban Mount outside Rome (*OCD* 1239 s.v. *praefectus urbi*). The Latin Festival was a movable festival held on several consecutive days in the second quarter of each year.

64. The Third Mithridatic War, c. 74–72 B.C.

65. C. Fonteius Capito, consul in A.D. 12, was proconsul of Asia in (probably) 23/24.