

# Tyrannicides (Antiquity)

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## 1. Introduction

Democratic and republican communities are rooted in the freedom of the individual as well as in the political participation of the many. To ensure that there is a fundamental consensus among their members as well as collective identification with the political system<sup>[1]</sup>, these communities require mythologised acts of foundation that are memorialised and regularly renewed through ritual. Often, such acts of foundation are portrayed as the **deeds** of admirable individuals who liberated their communities from an un-free order by killing an oppressor or tyrant. The adoration of tyrannicides can be viewed as a form of **heroization** that first occurred in the nascent republican and democratic communities of Greco-Roman antiquity.

## 2. The tyrannicides in ancient Athens

In the 5th century BC, the liberation of Athens by two of its citizens, the tyrant slayers Harmodios and Aristogeiton, was seen as the foundational event of the city's democracy.<sup>[2]</sup> During the festival procession of the Panathenaic Games in the year 514 BC, they assassinated the tyrant Hipparchus and lost their lives in the process. Harmodios, the younger of the two assassins, was killed immediately, while Aristogeiton was arrested, tortured and executed.<sup>[3]</sup> The murdered ruler's brother, Hippias, succeeded him as tyrant and was not driven out of the city until 510 BC by members of the aristocratic family of the Alcmaeonids with the help of Spartans. This was the prelude to the political reforms of Cleisthenes in 508/7 BC and led to a democracy in the years thereafter that would stabilise following

Athens' successes in the Persian Wars between 490/80 and 460 BC.

From as early as the late 6th century BC, we have so-called *skolia* that were recited at the regular social gatherings of male citizens (*symposia*) in Athens. They extol the assassination as the liberation of Athens and the foundation of so-called isonomy ('equal law for all citizens').<sup>[4]</sup> In the *Histories* of Herodotus from around 440–430 BC and Thucydides' *History* ca. 420–399 BC, our earliest surviving historiographical accounts, the homoerotic relationship between the elder and younger assassins plays a central role. According to these accounts, it was the Alcmaeonids who were the actual liberators of Athens. By murdering Hipparchus, Harmodios and Aristogeiton only had enraged the tyrants' family and in no way put an end to their rule. Thucydides offers a trenchant version of the assassination.<sup>[5]</sup> Hippias had been the tyrannical ruler, while the murdered Hipparchus was only his younger brother. Hipparchus had been passionately in love with the young Harmodios (homoerotic love was part of the habitus of aristocrats at the time), but Harmodios was in love with Aristogeiton. When Harmodios did not reciprocate Hipparchus's love, he humiliated his sister by deceit. Hipparchus was thus murdered out of jealousy and revenge, while the two lovers had not dared to murder Hippias, whose regime over Athens lasted another three years until he was expelled by the Alcmaeonids, then exiled, on the initiative of the Spartans. That tyranny in Athens continued for three more years after the death of Hipparchus is undisputed, but the memorialisation of the assassination as an extraordinary act of liberation started in the 6th century BC already. The motive behind the plot remains a mystery given the different accounts. All this makes clear that there were opposing voices as to whether or not to recognise the tyrant slayers as democratic founder heroes. In the late 5th century, however, when tyranny was regarded as the greatest threat to democracy, orators praised the two assassins as exemplary tyrannicides (Andocides, *On the Mysteries* 1.98). In the early 4th century BC, Plato was happy to link the assassins' homoerotic relationship with their service for democracy. In the *Symposium*, the pair stands for the power of homoerotic love (182 C).<sup>[6]</sup> Not even in the pseudo-Platonic *Hipparchus* (229 B-C) do the homoerotic and democratic motives of the tyrant slayers conflict with each other. In Aristotle's circles, moreover, there circulated several variations of Thucydides' story of love and jealousy.<sup>[7]</sup> By the latter half of the 4th century BC, any conflict between the motives of the tyrannicides seems to have disappeared. Also, cults of individuals had become more common so that in a speech before the assembly Demosthenes could describe Harmodios as one of several people who were worshiped as heroes and gods, and received statues, libations and hymns from the Athenians (Demosthenes, *Against Leptines* 20.280).

The discourse on the 'liberators' also took on a sacral-religious element. Pausanias in the 2nd century AD reports a grave or cenotaph to Harmodios and Aristogeiton near the state graves of fallen soldiers (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.29.15). We do not know when either of these monuments were built, nor when Athenians began offering sacrifices to the tyrannicides on this spot. A passage in Demosthenes suggests that this might have happened already during the 4th century BC, as by then sacrifices were offered to citizen-soldiers who had fallen in battle. As the Aristotelian *Constitutions of the Athenians* tells us, soldiers who had died for the polis were linked to the liberator heroes (Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians* 58.1).

Shortly after Hippias, the other tyrant, was expelled in 509 BC, Athenians began to memorialise the tyrannicides visually by erecting bronze statues of Harmodios and Aristogeiton in the agora, the

central place of the polis.[8] The exceptional symbolism of those effigies, made by Antenor, is evident from the fact that this was the first time that effigies of mortals were given a place in the political space of a polis. The Persians looted these statues when pillaging Athens in 480/79 BC, so unfortunately we do not know what this monument looked like. The fact that new bronze statues of the assassins were erected at the same location as early as 477/6 BC, even before the city of Athens had been rebuilt, shows the outstanding role the monument of the 'liberators' at the heart of the polis played for the Athenians at the time. Kritios and Nesiotes were their artists.[9] From later marble copies we know what these statues looked like (fig. 1). Slightly larger than life, the unbearded Harmodios and bearded Aristogeiton both stand naked and in the lunge before their beholders. The younger has raised his sword to strike. The elder gives him cover and brandishes his weapon to thrust. The monument is made purposefully exemplary: the nudity and well-trained bodies were reminiscent of images of athletes and ascribed to the two assassins aristocratic *kalokagathia* ("the beautiful and good"), which combined physical beauty with ethical value.[10] The obvious age difference pointed to their homoerotic relationship, but also invited identification for all age groups of the male citizenry: The younger functioned as the model of the courageous attacker, while the elder acted as the circumspect character. The companionship of two citizens was to be remembered, rather than the achievement of the individual. Moreover, the tyrant slain remained absent from the image. Rather, the beholder himself stood in the spot of the victim: Across time, the statue warned against any aspiration to tyranny.[11] Inscribed on the stone base beneath the statues, moreover, there was a hymn that praised the assassins as the beacons of their homeland.[12] The statues thus memorialised the heroes in a timeless praise, distanced them iconographically from the everyday habitus of the citizens, and associated the tyrant slayers – despite their democratic spirit – with aristocratic ideals. Above all, rather than rendering an historical account of the assassination, the statues served as a warning example: Those who aspire to tyranny will be killed. In a comedy at the end of the 5th century BC, a staunch democrat demonstrates his political stance by "doing heroism", that is, by posing like the young assassin next to the statue of Aristogeiton.[13] Even the pose of the assassins in the liberators' monument had become a generally recognisable symbol of democracy.

Fig. 1: Statues of Harmodios and Aristogeiton



### Statues of the tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton

Roman marble copy of the bronze statues by Kritios and Nesiotes in the agora of Athens, 477/6 BC. Naples, Museo Archeologico.

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Besides the visual memorialisation in the public space of the city, from the early 5th century BC onwards, the tyrannicides were also visually memorialised in the symposium, which the *skolia* linguistically attested to as early as the late 6th century BC. While “sing[ing] the ‘Harmodios’” became synonymous for a social gathering in the late 5th century (Aristophanes, *The Acharnians* 980), the symposia in Athens retained their aristocratic character: there, an elitist group of citizens secured their superiority and also claimed the tyrannicides for themselves in imagery.<sup>[14]</sup> The assassination was actually depicted on a stamnos from Athens, which was used at such a social gathering to mix wine and water, around 470/60 (fig. 2)<sup>[15]</sup>: the bearded Aristogeiton stabs Hipparchus while Harmodios raises his sword in preparation to strike. All three are identifiable as citizens by their cloaks; the tyrant is dressed only slightly more luxuriously. In the context of the symposium, this rather downplays the tyrannical character of the victim and emphasises the achievement of the elder, that is, adult assassin. Moreover, the fact that the scene was depicted on a stamnos is remarkable because the great deeds of mythical heroes were often memorialised in this way.

Fig. 2: Vase painting of Harmodios and Aristogeiton



### Harmodios and Aristogeiton murder the tyrant Hipparchus

Attic red-figure stamnos, ca. 470/60 BC, Würzburg, Martin-von-Wagner Museum, Inv.-No. 515.

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In Athens over the course of the 5th century BC, even the visual depictions of notable mythic heroes such as Heracles and Theseus were made to approximate the tyrannicides.[16] In 402 BC, it was not the assassination but the statues, as can be seen from the base beneath their feet, that were depicted as the shield insignia of the city goddess Athena on oil-filled amphorae that the victors at the Panathenaic Games received as prizes in Athens – precisely in the year following an anti-democratic coup attempt when democracy had been restored[17]: in that crisis situation, the statues of the tyrannicides became the signet of the democratic polis that protected the city goddess herself in battle. The statues were likewise portrayed on Attic cult vessels at festivals of Dionysius shortly after 400 BC. In 394, one family placed such a vessel at the cenotaph for their son Dexileos, who had fallen as a young horseman in battle for the polis – the same wealthy family that recorded meticulously in an inscription above the relief of their son’s grave when he was born in order to dispel any suspicion that he could have been involved in one of the coups of the oligarchs in 411 or 404/3. The statues of the heroes stood here for the preservation of democracy, and depicting them was an expression of commitment to democracy in a wealthy family that had lost their son for the polis.[18]

The subsequent history of the statues in the Athenian agora sheds light on [heroisms](#) and re-heroizations of the liberator heroes: on the one hand, starting in the 4th century BC, an area around the two statues was kept clear of other statues – above all, no other effigies that were erected for benefactors in the polis resembled them. Thus, through their positioning in the space they were given an extraordinary, downright sacrosanct character. Sometimes, however, those rules were broken in order to honour individuals who were also identified as liberators: the Hellenistic kings Antigonus and



Demetrius shortly after 307 BC, and even Caesar's assassins Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius shortly after 44 BC.[19] Being placed close to the monuments of the tyrannicides alone could serve to heroize others as 'liberators'. The area around them was a heroically charged city space.

The oldest freestanding marble copy of the statue of Aristogeiton known to us was erected in Rome in the temple of Fides (good faith) on the Capitoline Hill.[20] It cannot be determined precisely when the copy was erected, but it did occur in the 1st century BC, hence in a time of conflicts regarding the Republic and individual rule in Rome, including the Caesar assassination. That Pliny the Elder did not date Brutus's liberation of Rome from its final king to the same time as the end of tyranny in Athens, but to the time the statues for the tyrannicides were allegedly erected in 509 BC shows that the monument to the heroes Harmodios and Aristogeiton could even be understood in Rome as a prefiguration of that city's own liberation.[21]

Considering visual memorialisation and historiography together, it is conspicuous that while the monument to the tyrannicides in Athens functioned as a lasting exemplar for the liberation from an autocracy[22] and even became a symbol of the democratic constitution in Athens, that Harmodios and Aristogeiton were rather seldom instrumentalised as role models for democratic founding events, nor for political assassins either. This is due to the otherwise ambivalent reception of the liberator heroes and their homosexuality.[23] Their role as liberator heroes, democrats and tyrant slayers was tied to the social symbolism and practice of the time, which was subject to a constant and competitive shift in interpretation already in classical Athens, as well as new appropriations in every following century. Nevertheless, the honorific statues that had been erected for them in Athens retained a lasting significance as icons of the city and the political liberation.

### 3. Lucius Junius Brutus and Marcus Brutus in Rome

In imperial Rome, the remembrance of both the beginning and end of the Roman Republic centred on two exemplary acts of liberation each linked to the name Brutus: the expulsion of the last king by Lucius Junius Brutus (according to Roman tradition) around the year 509 BC and the slaying of Caesar on 15 March 44 BC, instigated by a group of conspirators led by Marcus Brutus (whose name at that point in time was actually Q. Caepio Brutus due to an adoption). Accounts of the expulsion of the last king according to Roman tradition, Tarquinius Superbus, are available in the modern era thanks to authors not writing until considerably later, and primarily in the form of the historiographies of Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus from the early imperial period.[24] The later record is certainly not historical in the narrow sense of the word. Modern research has come to very different conclusions about the Brutus-Tarquinius narrative, ranging from the assumption of a purely historical myth[25] to that of a distant echo of an event passed down orally and the details of which had been lost.[26] A careful analysis still arguably allows reflexes of early history to be made visible.[27] Nevertheless, the named individuals remained primarily literary figures. For an analysis of the heroization of Lucius Brutus recognisable in historical time, it is of secondary importance how authentic the accounts of his deeds are. What is immediately relevant, by contrast, is the impact of the *exemplum* ascribed to the Brutus figure. It seems that Roman authors did not cite exempla on account of their actual historical substance, regardless of what the scribes thought about them.[28]

We cannot with certainty determine the historicity of the king's overthrow in the eyes of the educated elite in the last generation of the Roman Republic. The connection between the first consul Brutus and the later liberator was debated and even questioned already in antiquity. Yet this was not so much out of any fundamental historical considerations, but because of the patrician status of the supposed founder of the Republic, which the later *gens Junia* did not have.[29] Nevertheless, the plebeian *gens Junia*, attested since the 4th century BC, might have added some colour to the emerging image of the tyrant expeller Brutus.

According to unanimous tradition, Lucius Junius was a nephew of the last king Tarquinius who became the quintessential "Superbus" (proud) through his unacceptable conduct. Because of the dangerous situation, Lucius is said to have behaved like a fool, and was therefore given the pejorative *cognomen* "Brutus" (brutal, raw). However, when a son of the king raped Lucretia, who was an aristocrat from the king's circle, Lucius Brutus is held to have led a collective action against the Tarquins that resulted in the founding of an aristocratically dominated republic. The tradition holds that Brutus then defended that republic with all his willpower, not even shying away from executing his sons who had allied with the Tarquins. In a fight against the same enemy, he died a "hero's death".[30]

Brutus stands as an example for Roman *virtus*, meaning in the contemporary perception, good manliness. He was held to have shown steadfastness and courage in particular. His transgressive behaviour (turning against his relatives in the royal family, killing his own children), agonality (fighting against the Tarquins until his death) and boundary work (establishing a new political community) also make him a typical hero. As an individual, however, he remains a shadowy figure – which was typical for Roman *exempla*. Both the vagueness regarding his history and the elevation motifs have persevered in later, primarily European literature.[31]

Authors as early as Plutarch associate Lucius Brutus with an image on the Capitol.[32] The connection between the two "liberators" named Brutus and an – at times – material culture of remembrance is typical for the Roman Empire.[33] As a prominent plebeian family, the Junii Bruti were politically conspicuous in the Middle and Late Republic, without attracting major attention, according to tradition. In the Late Republic, they were among the long-established families, but it was Caesar's assassin who was first able to achieve a lasting *memoria*. And even the tradition surrounding him intensifies only after the assassination.[34] Greek authors in particular therefore often began their search for traces of the *gens Junia* in the images of the liberators.

The adolescence of the younger, i.e. Marcus Brutus, was defined significantly by his father joining the group behind the consul Lepidus in 78, who opposed Sulla's restoration programme and whose death can be attributed to the most powerful politician and general of the time thereafter, the young Pompey.[35] Brutus was then raised by Cato the Younger. In the later primary sources, he is often idealised and presented as being Greek-educated and the incarnation of Roman *virtus* in equal measure.[36] This idealisation does not necessarily follow from his recounted actions, however. Cicero for instance deplores his aristocratic arrogance.[37] His financial transactions at 48% interest were not entirely unusual for Roman loans of the time, but were treated by Cicero as being hardly more acceptable. The same goes for his practice of procuring through his connections an officer's post on Cyprus for a finance agent and debt collector in order to recover debts even with violence.[38] Brutus swiftly abandoned the cause of the Republic after Caesar's victory against Pompey at Pharsalus in 48

BC. This could have certainly been a problematic decision if events had been reversed. Appian alleges that his arguably most important co-conspirator Gaius Cassius Longinus joined the plot against Caesar out of anger that Brutus had been assigned the more prestigious (urban) praetorship in 44 BC. For Brutus, only ambition is mentioned.[39] However, Appian does mention a typical subject of later works critical of Brutus: his ingratitude towards his benefactor and patron Caesar. Appian's writings also contain elements elevating this motif by insinuating a father-son conflict: Caesar was indeed implied to be the lover of Brutus' mother Servilia.

In retrospect, Brutus's political role under Caesar's rule can hardly be reconstructed. In his dialogues, Cicero portrays him as an earnest and educated *nobilis*, but does not heroize him.[40] The extent to which the supposed descent from the elder Brutus Marcus influenced his thinking, as later sources suggest, cannot be clarified.[41] That he is said to have been a descendant of another enemy to an early Roman tyrant – Servilius Ahala – via his mother might have amplified even more the influence that the tradition had.[42] Moreover, Servilius is said to have actually killed Spurius Maelius, and not just expelled him. In as early as 54 BC, Brutus put images of the two on coins, and as already mentioned, for political myths to have an impact, it is not their authenticity that is decisive, but that they are believed in.[43] Nevertheless, Brutus's thoughts remain hidden to us. Whether or not inscriptions urging him towards the act of liberation and employing such genealogies, for instance those on the statue of Lucius Brutus, are historical also remains unclear.[44]

The ten-year dictatorship, which Caesar began in 46 BC, was incompatible with republican political order. In early 44 BC, Caesar became *dictator perpetuus* and thus a de facto monarch.[45] A conspiracy of more than sixty members of high birth led by Brutus and Cassius killed the dictator shortly thereafter on 15 March. That deed changed the image given of Brutus by later authors, for better and worse. One of the reasons for the glorification of Brutus found in some writings was that the group of conspirators only removed Caesar and none of his prominent allies such as the consul Antony: branded by Cicero as naïve, this restraint was obviously borne by the belief that *nobiles* could come to an understanding among themselves.[46]

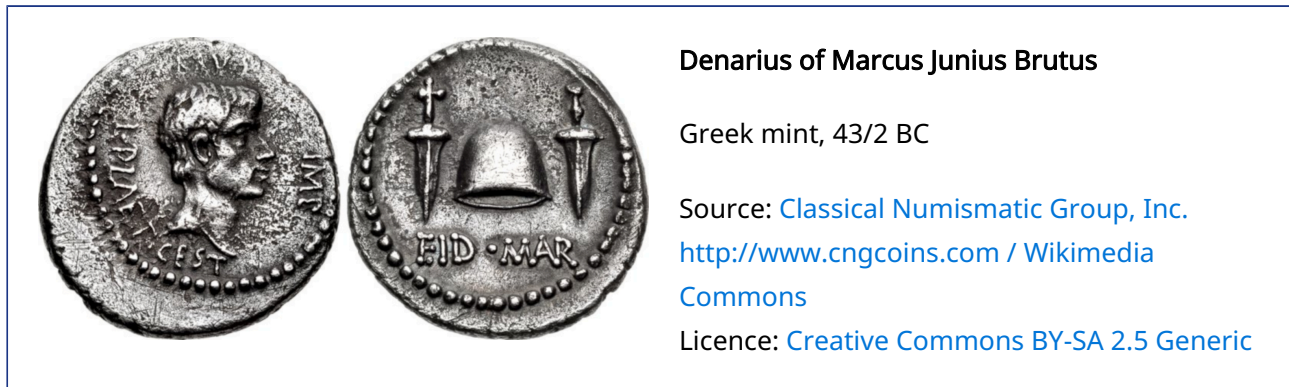
A recent popular science portrayal states that the deed turned Brutus into a “republican hero”.[47] While this is a modern attribution, the tributes made to the assassins justifies it to an extent. Shortly after the deed, Cicero labels Brutus and Cassius *heroes*. [48] Cassius Dio describes their reception in the Roman east (the provinces beyond the Adriatic) by referring to the Athenian decision to place their statues next to those of Harmodios and Aristogeiton.[49] As mentioned above, other authors from the imperial period also developed their narrative on Brutus's life taking their clues from well-known images. Plutarch refers to a bronze tribute from Milan that Augustus is to have spared; it likely originated from the same period.[50] Suetonius has the rhetor Gaius Albucius Silus extol Brutus as *legum ac libertatis auctor ac vindex* upon viewing his statue.[51] Unfortunately, this statue cannot be dated.

Brutus and Cassius were honoured between 44 and 42 as liberators and obviously wanted to be seen as such themselves. This is particularly evident from gold and silver coins that were struck in Brutus's name as imperator in 43/2 BC (fig. 3)[52] and show his portrait – Brutus thus adapted an entirely autocratic practice of Caesar's to have himself depicted on coins while he was still alive. Brutus has a beard, however, and in that characteristic is similar to the coin portraits of Lucius Brutus that he, not



without political intention, had had struck on coins in Rome in the 50s BC. This stands in contrast to coin portraits of contemporary politicians, which were usually unbearded. On the reverse of the 43/2 coins, which primarily served to pay soldiers, there is a *pileus*, as was worn by a slave upon his manumission. This 'cap of liberty' is accompanied by the inscription EID MAR (*Eidibus Martii* = "on the ides of March") as a reference to Caesar's assassination, the collectivity of which is indicated by two daggers to the left and right of the cap: this was not to be seen as an act of liberation performed by any one individual! The fact that the head of *Libertas* also appears in the same series of coins underlines Brutus's self-stylisation as a hero of liberty.[53]

**Fig. 3: Denarius of Marcus Junius Brutus**



After the assassination, however, the two assassins lived for only a short period of time. This left only limited room for heroizations to unfold. After the defeat at Philippi and the suicides of the two most important protagonists of the cause of the *res publica*, admirers and audiences as well as the ways of showing respect changed. At the same time, however, criticism of Caesar's assassins started to emerge. Caesar's ambivalence from a Roman perspective caused a similar ambivalence of his opponents.

In one of the two traditions, the more recent Brutus also became an exemplar of *virtus*, which manifested itself and downright discharged its potential in the deed. This new, rather stereotyped elevation found early expression in Horace's line that *virtus* had been broken with the death of Brutus.[54] That Brutus was the only "liberator" to whom Antony and then Octavian/Augustus showed a certain level of respect certainly helped this form of memorialisation.[55] Not just Juvenal, but also Pliny later expressed himself similarly to Horace.[56] Praising tyrannicides in Roman rhetoric exercises certainly invoked the memory of Brutus.[57] The conspirators against Nero led by Piso obviously wanted to re-enact the assassination of Caesar.[58]

The establishment of the monarchy, however, made Brutus appear to be an advocate of a wrong cause. It was Greek-speaking authors in particular who presented this version of history, including Cassius Dio and Appian, but also Seneca.[59] Ostentatious declarations of adoration for the assassins could entail capital punishment. The historian Cremutius Cordus was executed for glorifying Brutus and Cassius, and his books were burned.[60] By making the comment cited above, Albius Tibullus is said to have also put himself in danger. Eliminating any mention of the assassins must have appeared safer. At the funeral of Junia Tertia in 22 AD, "Cassius and Brutus outshone [the busts of illustrious families], from the very fact that their likenesses were not to be seen".[61]

The rejection of regicide was adopted from ancient sources in the literature of the Western Middle Ages. This kind of criticism found its most well-known expression late in Dante's *Inferno* when he groups Brutus and Cassius together with Judas Iscariot.[62] Only later was Brutus modelled again into a complex and ambiguous figure, primarily through a more intensive reception of Plutarch with his intuitive moral schematisations. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, featuring a torn Brutus who has nearly moved into a protagonist's role, was widely read and thus had a lasting influence on subsequent portrayals of Caesar's assassin.[63] In the 18th century, Brutus could become a hero again, or even for the first time at all, partially through increasingly bourgeois interpretations that sought to co-opt the republican champion for itself. Voltaire, Rousseau, and even Herder and Schiller contributed to this development.[64] In the French Revolution, Brutus became a **prefiguration** that was widely used.[65]

By contrast, in the 19th century, the continuing Brutus appropriations multiplied under the banner of psychologisation and philosophical interpretations.[66] In the 20th century, Brutus largely lost his attractive power. This is true particularly for film and television. In various areas of classical scholarship, however, old heroization schemes have endured.[67]

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- 28 Cf. Levene, David S.: Livy on the Hannibalic War. Oxford 2010: Oxford University Press; Roller, Matthew: Models from the Past in Roman Culture. A World of Exempla. Cambridge 2018: Cambridge University Press.
- 29 Posidonius fragment 256; Edelstein, Ludwig / Kidd, Ian G. (Eds.): Posidonius 1. Cambridge 1972: Cambridge University Press, 228-229; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 5, 18; Cassius Dio 44, 12.
- 30 Livius 2, 3-5; 8, 34, 3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 5, 2, 8-12; Florus 1, 3, 5; Valerius Maximus 5, 8, 1; Ampelius 18, 1; Propertius 4, 1, 45; Silius Italicus 13, 721. "Hero's death": Livius 2, 6, 8, and regarding the cited text: Werner Schur: "Iunius Brutus 46a". In: Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Suppl. 5. Stuttgart 1931: J. B. Metzler, 356-369, 360.
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- 32 Plutarch: Brutus 1. – On the Capitoline Hill, there also stood a marble copy of the statues of the Athenian tyrannicides starting in the 1st century BC. For more details, see above.
- 33 Cf. footnote 20.
- 34 Rawson, Elizabeth: Cassius and Brutus. The Memory of the Liberators. In: Moxon, I. S. (Ed.): Past Perspectives. Studies in Greek and Roman Writing. Cambridge 1986: Cambridge University Press, 101-120.
- 35 Livius, Epitome (excerpt) 90; Orosius 5, 22, 17; Plutarch Brutus 4, 1-2; Pompeius 16, 1; 64, 3; Sallust Historien 1, 79 (Maurenbrecher); Zonaras 10, 2; Appian, The Civil Wars 2, 111, 464 (Viereck 2, p. 248); Valerius Maximus 6, 2, 6; Cicero, Letters to Atticus 9, 14, 2.
- 36 Plutarch: Brutus 2; 52; Velleius Paterculus 2, 36, 2; [Aurelius Victor]: De viris illustribus 82; cf. Quintilian 10, 123; Pliny: Natural History 34, 82.
- 37 Cicero: Letters to Atticus 6, 1, 7; 3, 7.

- 38 Regarding the entire affair with its complex implications, cf. *Tempest*, Kathryn: *Brutus. The Noble Conspirator*, New Haven et al. 2017: Yale University Press, 47-49 and Schulz, Raimund: *Herrschaft und Regierung. Roms Regiment in den Provinzen in der Zeit der Republik*. Paderborn et al. 1997: Schöningh, 195-196, regarding a Cappadocian parallel.
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- 40 Cicero: *Ad familiares* 9, 14, 5; Cicero: *Brutus* 23; 120; 149; 281; 309; 332; Cicero: *De oratore* 105; Civero: *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3, 3, 6; 5, 8; Cicero: *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5, 21, 39.
- 41 Cornelius Nepos: *Atticus* 18, 3; Cicero: *Letters to Atticus* 13, 40, 1; Cicero: *Brutus* 331; Cicero: : *Tusculanae Disputationes* 1, 89; 4, 50; Cicero: *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 12; Cicero: *Philippicae* 1, 13; 4, 7; 5, 26; 10, 14; Plutarch: *Brutus* 1; Plutarch: *Caesar* 62; Appian: *The Civil Wars* 2, 112, 469 (Viereck, p. 249); but cf. Cassius Dio 44, 12.
- 42 Regarding Servilius Ahala, who only reinforces the tradition of a familial enmity towards autocracy aspirations in Rome and therefore does not receive his own lemma, MacMullen, Ramsay: *Enemies of the Roman Order. Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire*. Cambridge 1967: Harvard University Press, 8-9.
- 43 Tudor, Henry: *Political Myth*. London 1972: Macmillan, 17; 133. Regarding the coins, see footnotes 52–53 below. It cannot be proven to any degree of certainty that the plebeian *gens* Bruti were tracing their heritage back to the alleged founder of the Republic already in the 2nd century BC, as was often claimed due to the surviving messages regarding Accius's *Brutus* drama (cf., for instance, Münzer, Friedrich: *Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart 1963: Metzler, 336 footnote 1). However, cf. Cicero: *De oratore* 2, 242 and Polybius 6, 54, 5. Regarding the surviving messages about Brutus's ancestry and a realistic perspective, cf. Zmeskal, Klaus: *Adfinitas* 1. Passau 2009: Stutz, 152-153; regarding Brutus as a stage figure, cf. Erasmo, Mario: "Staging Brutus". In: Tylawski, Elizabeth I. / Weiss, Charles (Eds.): *Essays in Honor of Gordon Williams. Twenty-Five Years at Yale*. New Haven 2001: Schwab, 101-114.
- 44 Suetonius: *Caesar* 80, 3; Plutarch: *Caesar* 61; Cassius Dio 44, 11, 4; 12; Appian: *The Civil Wars* 2, 112, 469 (Viereck, p. 249).
- 45 For a concise overview of this viewpoint, see Jehne, Martin: *Caesar*. 3rd ed. Munich 2004: C.H. Beck, 114.
- 46 Cf. Gelzer, Matthias: "Junius 53". In: *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 10, 1. Stuttgart 1918: Druckenmüller, 978-1020, 995; Cicero: *Letters to Atticus* 14, 21, 3; 15, 4, 2.
- 47 Corrigan, Kirsty: *Brutus. Caesar's Assassin*. Barnsley 2015: Pen & Sword Military, 210.
- 48 Cicero: *An Atticus* 14, 4, 2. For the extremely rich record of primary sources from these years, see *Tempest: Brutus*, 2017, 105-172.
- 49 Cassius Dio 47, 20, 4; see also footnote 19.
- 50 Plutarch: *Dion and Brutus* 5; Cassius Dio 43, 45, 5f. Typical: Eich, Peter: *Gottesbild und Wahrnehmung. Studien zu Ambivalenzen früher griechischer Götterdarstellungen (ca. 800–400 v. Chr.)*. Stuttgart 2011: F. Steiner, 322-370.
- 51 Suetonius: *Rhetoren* 6.
- 52 Head of M. Iunius Brutus: Crawford, Michael H.: *Roman Republican Coinage*. London 1974:



Cambridge University Press, Nr. 508/3 (s. CRRO, online at:

<http://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-508.3>). – Head of L. Iunius Brutus: ibid. no. 433/2 (s. CRRO, online at: <http://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-433.2>).

- 53 Crawford: Roman Republican Coinage, 1974, No. 501/1; 505/4; 506/3; 508/2. Even before the assassination, Brutus had had *Libertas* – together with the likenesses of Lucius Brutus, see above – depicted on coins: Crawford: Roman Republican Coinage, 1974, No. 433/1 (s. CRRO, online at: <http://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-433.1>).
- 54 Horaz: Carmina 2, 7, 11.
- 55 Cassius Dio 53, 32, 4; Appian: The Civil Wars 4, 51, 223 (Viereck 2, p. 437); Plutarch: Dion and Brutus 5.
- 56 Juvenal: Satires 14, 40; Pliny: Letters 1, 17, 3.
- 57 Seneca: Controversiae 1, 7; 2, 5; 3, 6; 4, 7; 5, 8; 7, 1, 1; 4, 9, 6; 9, 2, 9; 4, 6; 10, 4, 2.
- 58 Tacitus: Annales 15, 53, 2.
- 59 Seneca: De clementia 2, 20, 2.
- 60 Tacitus: Annales 4, 34, with the discussion of the legal context in Eich, Armin: Politische Literatur in der römischen Gesellschaft. Studien zum Verhältnis von politischer und literarischer Öffentlichkeit in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit. Cologne et al. 2000: Böhlau, 301.
- 61 Tacitus: Annales 3, 76, translation taken from Complete Works of Tacitus. Ed. by Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb and Sara Bryant. New York 1942: Random House, online at: <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:latinLit:phi1351.phi005.perseus-eng1:3.76> (accessed 2023-02-09).
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- 64 Osterkamp, Ernst: "Die Götter – die Menschen. Friedrich Schillers lyrische Antike". In: Chiarini, Paolo / Hinderer, Walter (Eds.): Schiller und die Antike. Würzburg 2008: Königshausen & Neumann, 239-256, 245; Herbert, Robert L.: David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution. An Essay in Art and Politics. London 1972: A. Lane; Sauder, Gerhard: Herder's Poetic Works. Translations and Views on Poetry. In: Adler, Hans / Koepke, Wulf (Eds.): A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder. Rochester 2009: Camden House, 305-330, 317.
- 65 Gotter, Ulrich: Der Diktator ist tot! Politik in Rom zwischen den Iden des März und der Begründung des Zweiten Triumvirats. Stuttgart 1996: F. Steiner, 207. – Regarding the visual appropriation of the subject of Brutus since the 16th century, cf. Bredekamp, Horst: "Brutus". In: Fleckner, Uwe et al. (Eds.): Handbuch der politischen Ikonographie 1. Munich 2011: C.H. Beck, 186-192.
- 66 Simonis, Linda: "Brutus (Marcus)". In: Der Neue Pauly. Suppl. 8: Historische Gestalten der Antike. Rezeption in Literatur, Kunst und Musik. Darmstadt 2013: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 193-206. Giacomo Leopardi's interpretation needs to be emphasised in particular: Spinelli, Alice: "Inquiete larve. Performative Inszenierung der Ent-Täuschung in den Selbstmord – Kanzenon Leopardis". In: Klettke, Cornelia / Neumeister, Sebastian (Eds.): Dichtung als inszenierte Selbsttäuschung in der Krise des Bewusstseins. Berlin 2017: Frank & Timme, 101-164, 106.
- 67 Cf. any of the RE articles cited above from Matthias Gelzer: "Junius 53", 1918 to the recent monography by Corrigan: Brutus, 2015.

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## 6. List of images

- 1 Statues of the tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton , Roman marble copy of the bronze statues by Kritios and Nesiotes in the agora of Athens, 477/6 BC. Naples, Museo Archeologico.  
Source: [User:Daderot / Wikimedia Commons](#)  
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- 2 Harmodios and Aristogeiton murder the tyrant Hipparchus, Attic red-figure stamnos, ca. 470/60 BC, Würzburg, Martin-von-Wagner Museum, Inv.-No. 515.  
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- 3 Denarius of Marcus Junius Brutus , Greek mint, 43/2 BC  
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