

Cassius Longinus' Letters to and From Cicero

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Cicero: Letters to and from Cassius

Although these letters are full of interest, as primary evidence for the character and motives of [C.Cassius](#), the leader of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar, they can be hard to find, because they have been preserved in various different places in the large collection of Cicero's letters. Therefore they have been brought together here, together with a section from Cicero's "Second [Philippic](#)", which refers to a previous attempt by Cassius to kill Caesar, and a few excerpts from Cicero's letters to Atticus.

The translations of letters to Atticus are based on the version by E.O.Winstedt; the other letters are based on the version by W.G.Williams. See [key to translations](#) for an explanation of the format.

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Cassius' political and military career began in 53 B.C., when he served as [quaestor](#) under M.Crassus, who was leading an army against the [Parthians](#). After Crassus' defeat and death at [Carrhae](#), Cassius led the remnants of the Roman army back to Syria, and in 51 B.C. he succeeded in defeating a Parthian invasion of Syria.

Cicero was 20 years older than Cassius, and by the time this correspondence starts, he was already a prominent statesman. Rather reluctantly, he had gone out to be governor of the neighbouring province of Cilicia.

[15.14] **Cicero to Caius Cassius, [proquaestor of Syria](#)**

[Cilicia, late October, 51 B.C.]

L By your recommendation you present M. [Fadius](#) to me as a friend; well, I gain nothing by that. As a matter of fact he has been for many years entirely at my disposal, and I have liked him for his extreme kindness and the respect he shows me. But for all that the discovery that you are extraordinarily fond of him has made me much more of a friend to him. And so, although your letter has had its effect, yet what recommends him a great deal more is that I have come fully to see and understand his kindly feelings for yourself.

2 But in the matter of Fadius I will do what you ask with hearty goodwill; as for yourself, I only wish for many reasons that you had been able to meet me, in the first place so that I might see you after so long an interval - you whom I have for long past valued so highly; secondly, that I might congratulate you in person as I have done by letter; furthermore, that we might share our views about whatever matters we wished, you about your affairs, I about mine; and lastly, that our friendship which has been fostered on either side by the most notable good services, but has had its continuity broken by long periods of separation, might be more effectually strengthened.

3 Since that has not come to pass, we will avail ourselves of the boon of letters, and so secure almost the same objects in our separation as if we were together. That one pre-eminent satisfaction, doubtless, which consists in seeing you, cannot be enjoyed by letter; the other, which consists in congratulating you, is less satisfying, it is true, than if I were to do so with my eyes upon your face; still I have done so before, and I do so now, and congratulate you not only on the magnificence of your achievements, but also on their timeliness, since on your departure from your province you were honourably accompanied by its praise, which was as unqualified as its gratitude.

4 There is a third point - to carry out by correspondence the consultations we should have held on our respective affairs if we had met. For every other reason also I am emphatically of opinion that you should hasten to Rome. For the situation I left behind me was one of complete calm as regards yourself, and thanks to your recent victory (and a glorious one it was), I can see that your arrival will be a memorable event. But supposing your relatives have any burdens to bear, if they are only such as you can shoulder, hurry home; it will be the most splendid and glorious thing you can do. But if those burdens are too heavy for you, pause to think, lest your arrival may happen at a most unfavourable moment. On this point the whole decision lies with you, for you alone know what your shoulders can bear. If you have the strength, it is a praiseworthy and popular thing to do; if you absolutely lack that strength, you will find it easier to stand people's gossip if you stay away.

5 Now as to myself, I make the same request of you in this letter as I did in a previous one - that you should strain every nerve to prevent any prolongation of my term of office as governor of the province - a term which both the Senate and the people decreed should be for one year only. I urge this upon you so strongly that I feel all my prospects depend upon it. You have our friend [Paullus](#) on your side, a warm friend of mine, and there is [Curio](#), and Furnius too. I pray you to make every effort just as though all I have were staked upon it.

6 My last point bears upon what I have already put before you; it is the strengthening of our friendship, as to which there is no need of further words. You, when a boy, sought me out, while I felt that you would always be a source of distinction to me. You were also a protection to me in the days of my deepest gloom. There came too, after your departure, my friendship with your relative Brutus, and it was of the closest. It is therefore in the ability and energy of you two that I have a rich prospect of delight and distinction. I ask you in all earnestness to confirm that impression by your devotion to me, and to send me a letter not only immediately, but, on your arrival at Rome, as often as possible.

In 49 B.C. Cassius, as [tribune of the plebs](#), supported [Pompeius](#) against [Caesar](#). The following extracts from letters to Atticus show Cicero and Cassius awaiting the outcome of Caesar's invasion of Italy.

[7.21] [Cicero to Atticus](#), greeting.

[Cales, February 8th, 49 B.C.]

L . . . As for Pompeius, what an inconceivable plight he is in, and how utterly he has broken down! He has neither spirit nor plan, nor forces, nor energy. I say nothing of his most disgraceful flight from the city, his timorous speeches in the towns, his ignorance not only of the strength of his opponent but of his own forces : but what of this? 2 On the 7th of February C. Cassius the tribune came to Capua, and brought an order to the consuls to come to Rome, carry off the money from the reserve treasury and leave at once. On quitting the city they are to return - but they have no escort; then there is the getting out of the city - who is going to give them leave ? Lentulus replied that Pompeius must first come to Picenum. No one except myself knows it; but Dolabella has written to me that that district is totally lost. I have no doubt but that Caesar is on the point of entering Apulia and that Pompeius is on board ship . . .

[7.23] **Cicero to Atticus, greeting.**

[Formiae, February 10th, 49 B.C.]

L On the evening of the 9th of February, I got a letter from Philotimus, declaring that Domitius has a reliable force, the cohorts from Picenum under the command of Lentulus and Thermus have joined his army, Caesar can be cut off and fears the contingency, and the hopes of loyalists at Rome have been restored, and those of the other party dashed. I am afraid this may be a dream ; but still the news revived M'.Lepidus, L.Torquatus and C.Cassius the tribune of the plebs - for they are with me, that is at Formiae. I fear the truer version may be that we are now all practically prisoners, that Pompeius is leaving Italy, pursued it is said by Caesar. What a bitter thought! Caesar pursue Pompeius! What, to slay him? Woe is me! And we do not all throw our bodies in the way! You too are sorry about it. But what can we do? We are beaten, ruined and utterly captive . . .

[7.24] **Cicero to Atticus, greeting.**

[Formiae, February 11th, 49 B.C.]

L Philotimus' letter gave little pleasure to me, but much to the others who are here. Well, on the very next day, a letter of Cassius from his friend Lucretius at Capua announced that Nigidius, an emissary of Domitius, had reached Capua, bringing news that Vibullius with a few soldiers was hurrying away from Picenum to Pompeius' camp, that Caesar was pursuing rapidly and that Domitius had less than 6000 men. The letter stated that the consuls had left Capua. I am sure Pompeius must be fleeing: I only hope he may escape. I accept your advice and have no intention of flight myself.

During the course of the civil war between Caesar and Pompeius, Cassius acted as commander of part of Pompeius' fleet. But after Pompeius was defeated at Pharsalus in August 48 B.C., both Cicero and Cassius decided that it was futile to continue fighting against Caesar.

[15.15] **M.Cicero to C.Cassius**

[Brundisium, latter half of August, 47 B.C.]

L Although both of us in our hope of peace and loathing for civil bloodshed wished to have nothing to do with obstinate persistence in war, still, since I seem to have taken the lead in that policy, I am perhaps more bound to justify it to you, than to expect such justification from you. And yet, as I frequently remind myself, my observations to you and yours to me in our friendly talks led us both to this conclusion - we thought it right and proper that, if not the whole quarrel, at any rate our judgment of it, should be determined by the issue of a single battle. And not a soul has ever rightly found fault with this opinion of ours, except those who think it better that the commonwealth should be utterly destroyed than survive in an impaired and enfeebled condition. I, on the contrary, pictured to myself no hope of course in its destruction, much in any remnants that were left.

2 But the events which followed were such that it is more of a surprise that they could have happened at all, than that we should not have seen them coming and have failed, being but human, to foretell them. For my part I confess that what I expected was this - I thought that after the great battle, fraught as it were with the issues of fate, had been fought, the victors would desire measures to be taken in the interests of the community, and the vanquished in their own; but I held that both the former and the latter depended upon the speed with which the victor acted. Had he shown that speed, [Africa](#) would have experienced the same leniency as was witnessed by Asia, yes, and by Achaea too, with you yourself, as I take it, being their ambassador and intercessor. But those days of vital importance, especially in civil wars, having been wasted, the year that intervened tempted some to hope for victory, others to think lightly of defeat itself. And the blame for all these evils is on the shoulders of fortune. For who would imagine that the war would be protracted or cause so long a delay as that caused by the [Alexandrian](#) war, or that this [Pharnaces](#), whoever he may be, would intimidate Asia?

3 You and I, however, though our policy was identical, have found a difference in our fortunes; for while you took a line which enabled you to share his counsels, and so be able to foresee (and that is a potent alleviation of anxiety) what was going to happen, I hastened to meet Caesar in Italy (for that is what I supposed) and "to spur the willing horse," as the adage has it, when, after sparing so many of our most distinguished men, he was actually returning to the ways of peace. But on the contrary, I have been kept utterly apart from him. I spend my life, moreover, amid the groans of Italy, and the piteous lamentations of the city; and we might perhaps have done something to alleviate them, I in my way, you in yours, everybody in his own, if only the man in authority had been there.

4 I should like you, therefore, consistently with your unflinching kindness to me, to write and tell me what your impressions and your feelings are, what you think we should wait for, and what you think we should do. I shall greatly value a letter from you; and how I wish I had followed the advice contained in that first letter you sent me from [Luceria](#)! I should then have retained my position without any unpleasantness at all. Farewell.

Late in 46 B.C. Caesar went off to Spain, where he fought the last campaign of the civil war, against the sons of Pompeius.

[15.18] **M.Cicero to C.Cassius**

[Rome, December 46 B.C.]

L My letter would have been longer had not I been asked for it at the very moment when a post to you was starting; longer too, had it contained some amount of persiflage; as for speaking seriously, we can hardly do so without risk. "Well then," you say, "we can have a laugh." No, I positively assure you, not very easily. And yet, that is the one and only thing we have to distract us from our troubles. "How about our philosophy then?" you will say. Well, yours is one of pleasure, but mine troubles me, because I am ashamed of being a slave. So I pretend to busy myself with other things, to prevent [Plato](#)'s emphatic reproach from ringing in my ears.

2 There is nothing certain so far about Spain, indeed no news at all. Your absence troubles me for my own sake, but I am very glad of it for yours. But there goes your importunate letter-carrier. Fare you well then, and continue to love me as you have from a boy.

[15.17] **M.Cicero to C.Cassius**

[Rome, early in January, 45 B.C.]

L The letter-carriers you employ are behaving preposterously - not that they are lacking in civility to me, but, all the same, when they leave me they demand a letter from me, but when they come to me they bring no letter with them. And even so they would cause me less inconvenience if they would only allow me some reasonable time for writing; but they come ready dressed for travelling, and tell me that their mates are waiting for them at the gate. You will therefore forgive me; this is now the second short note you will have, but you may live in hopes of full amends. And yet why am I excusing myself to you, when your men come to me empty-handed, and return to you with letters ?

2 Here (I'll send you something of a letter after all) we have on our hands the death of P. [Sulla](#) senior; some say it was brigands, others indigestion. The people don't care a straw, since there is no doubt as to his cremation. You, with your usual philosophy, will bear this with resignation. And yet we have lost a figure-head in the city. People think that Caesar will be annoyed because he is afraid of a slump in his sales. Mindius Marcellus and Attius the perfumer are highly delighted at having lost a rival bidder.

3 There is no news about Spain, but it is very eagerly awaited. There are rather depressing rumours, but they are unauthenticated. Our friend [Pansa](#) set out in military uniform on December the 30th, so that even the man in the street might grasp the fact which you had lately begun to question - that "the good must be chosen for its own sake." For because he relieved many of their afflictions, and because he proved his humanity amid all these disasters, he was escorted on his way by a marvellous display of kindly feeling on the part of honest men.

4 As to your having stayed at [Brundisium](#) until now, I strongly approve of it and am glad of it; and upon my word, I think you will act wisely if you "shun vain pursuits." Certainly to me who

love you, it will be a pleasure, and for the future when you send home a bundle of letters, remember me, and I'll bless you. For my own part I shall never allow anybody, if I know it, to go to you without a letter from me.

Cassius had recently become a follower of the [Epicurean](#) school of philosophy.

[15.16] Cicero to Cassius

[Rome, January, 45 B.C.]

L I expect you must be just a little ashamed of yourself now that this is the third letter that has caught you before you have sent me a single leaf or even a line. But I am not pressing you, for I shall look forward to, or rather insist upon, a longer letter. As for myself, if I always had somebody to trust with them, I should send you as many as three an hour. For it somehow happens, that whenever I write anything to you, you seem to be at my very elbow; and that, not by way of visions of images, as your new friends term them, who believe that even mental visions are conjured up by what [Caius](#) calls spectres (for let me remind you that Caius the [Insubrian](#), an [Epicurean](#), who died lately, gives the name of spectres to what the famous [Gargettian](#) [Epicurus], and long before that [Democritus](#), called images).

2 But, even supposing that the eye can be struck by these spectres because they run up against it quite of their own accord, how the mind can be so struck is more than I can see. It will be your duty to explain to me, when you arrive here safe and sound, whether the spectre of you is at my command to come up as soon as the whim has taken me to think about you - and not only about you, who always occupy my inmost heart, but suppose I begin thinking about the Isle of [Britain](#), will the image of that wing its way to my consciousness?

3 But of this later on. I am only sounding you now to see in what spirit you take it. For if you are angry and annoyed, I shall have more to say, and shall insist upon your being reinstated in that school of philosophy, out of which you have been ousted "by violence and an armed force." In this formula the words "within this year" are not usually added; so even if it is now two or three years since, bewitched by the blandishments of Pleasure, you sent a notice of divorce to Virtue, I am free to act as I like. And yet to whom am I talking? To you, the most gallant gentleman in the world, who, ever since you set foot in the forum, have done nothing but what bears every mark of the most impressive distinction. Why, in that very school you have selected I apprehend there is more vitality than I should have supposed, if only because it has your approval. "How did the whole subject occur to you?" you will say. Because I had nothing else to write. About politics I can write nothing, for I do not care to write what I feel.

[15.19] Cassius to Cicero

[Brundisium, latter half of January, 45 B.C.]

L I hope that you are well. I assure you that on this tour of mine there is nothing that gives me more pleasure to do than to write to you; for I seem to be talking and joking with you face to

face. And yet that does not come to pass because of those spectres; and, by way of retaliation for that, in my next letter I shall let loose upon you such a rabble of [Stoic](#) boors that you will proclaim Catius a true-born Athenian.

2 I am glad that our friend Pansa was sped on his way by universal goodwill when he left the city in military uniform, and that not only on my own account, but also, most assuredly, on that of all our friends. For I hope that men generally will come to understand how much all the world hates cruelty, and how much it loves integrity and clemency, and that the blessings most eagerly sought and coveted by the bad ultimately find their way to the good. For it is hard to convince men that "the good is to be chosen for its own sake"; but that pleasure and tranquillity of mind is acquired by virtue, justice, and the good is both true and demonstrable. Why, Epicurus himself, from whom all the Catiuses and [Amafiniuses](#) in the world, incompetent translators of terms as they are, derive their origin, lays it down that "to live a life of pleasure is impossible without living a life of virtue and justice".

3 Consequently Pansa, who follows pleasure, keeps his hold on virtue, and those also whom you call pleasure-lovers are lovers of what is good and lovers of justice, and cultivate and keep all the virtues. And so Sulla, whose judgment we ought to accept, when he saw that the philosophers were at sixes and sevens, did not investigate the nature of the good, but bought up all the goods there were; and I frankly confess that I bore his death without flinching. Caesar, however, will not let us feel his loss too long; for he has a lot of condemned men to restore to us in his stead, nor will he himself feel the lack of someone to bid at his auctions when once he has cast his eye on Sulla junior.

4 And now to return to politics; please write back and tell me what is being done in the two Spains. I am terribly full of anxiety, and I would sooner have the old and lenient master [Caesar], than make trial of a new and cruel one. You know what an idiot [Gnaeus](#) is; you know how he deems cruelty a virtue; you know how he thinks that we have always scoffed at him. I fear that in his boorish way he will be inclined to reply by wiping our turned-up noses with the sword. Write back as you love me, and tell me what is doing. Ah! how I should like to know whether you read all this with an anxious mind or a mind at ease! For I should know at the same time what it is my duty to do. Not to be too long-winded, I bid you farewell. Continue to love me as you do. If Caesar has conquered, expect me to return quickly.

On March 15th 44 B.C., Caesar was killed in the senate-house by a group of senators, led by Brutus and Cassius. The next letter, written by one of the conspirators, describes the situation in Rome a few days later (the exact date is disputed).

[11.1] **D.[Brutus](#) to M.[Brutus](#) and C.[Cassius](#)**

[Rome, (?) March 22nd, 44 B.C.]

L Let me tell you how we are situated; [Hirtius](#) was at my house yesterday evening; he explained what [Antonius'](#) intentions were - utterly base, you may be sure, and untrustworthy; for he said

that he could not possibly give me my province, and also that it was not safe for any of us to be in Rome, so excited were the feelings of the soldiers and the people. You observe, am sure, that both those statements are false, and that the truth is to be found in what Hirtius pointed out - Antonius is afraid that, if our claims should have met with even moderate support, no part would be left for him to play on the political stage.

2 Being in these straits, I decided to demand for myself and our other friends an honorary ambassadorship, so as to discover some decent pretext for leaving Rome. This Hirtius has promised to obtain for me, and yet I have no confidence that he will so do, so insolent are these men, and so set on persecuting us. And even if they grant our request, it will not, I fancy, prevent us being declared public enemies or banned as outlaws in the near future.

3 "What then," you say, "have you to suggest?" Well, we must bow to fortune; I think we must get out of Italy and migrate to [Rhodes](#), or somewhere or other; if there is a change for the better, we shall return to Rome; if there is no great change, we shall live on in exile; if it comes to the worst, we shall have recourse to the last means of defending ourselves.

4 It will perhaps occur to someone among you at this point to ask why we should wait for that last stage rather than make some strong effort at once? Because we have no centre to rally around, except indeed Sextus [Pompeius](#) and Caecilius [Bassus](#), who, it seems to me, are likely to be more firmly established when they have this news about [Caesar](#). It will be time enough for us to join them when we have found out what their strength really is. On behalf of you and Cassius, I will make any engagement you wish me to make; in fact Hirtius insists upon my doing so.

5 I must ask you both to reply to my letter as soon as possible - because I have no doubt that Hirtius will inform me about these matters before the fourth hour - and let me know in your reply at what place we can meet, where you would like me to come.

6 Since my last conversation with Hirtius I have determined to ask for permission, while we are at Rome, to have a bodyguard at the public expense; but I do not expect they will grant us that privilege, because we shall raise a storm of unpopularity against them. Still I thought I should not refrain from demanding anything that I consider to be reasonable.

[12.1] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Pompeii, May 3rd, 44 B.C.]

L Believe me, Cassius, I never come to an end of thinking about you and our friend [Brutus](#), in other words, about the whole Republic, every hope of which lies in you two, and in D.[Brutus](#). I am myself more hopeful about it, now that it has been so brilliantly administered by my dear [Dolabella](#).

For that mischief in the city was spreading, and daily gaining such strength, that for my own part I began to despair of the city and of public order in it. But sedition has been so well

suppressed that it seems to me we are likely to be safe for all time, at any rate from that most degrading danger. Important things, and there are many of them, remain to be done, but they all rest with you three. However, let me discuss them in due order. As things have gone so far, it would seem that we have been delivered, not from a tyranny, but from a tyrant. For though we have slain the tyrant, we still watch that tyrant's every nod. And not only that, but measures which he himself would not carry through were he alive, we approve, because we suppose that he contemplated them. And indeed I see no end to that sort of thing; decrees are posted up, exemptions are granted, huge sums of money are squandered, exiles are recalled, sham decrees of the Senate are registered; so that it is only that hatred we had of an abominable character and our resentment at being slaves that we have got rid of, while the constitution lies prostrate amid all this confusion into which he plunged it.

2 It is for you three to clear away all these difficulties, and not to imagine that you have already satisfied the claims the Republic has upon you. It is true that you have given her more than I ever thought of even praying for, but she is not content, and looks for great things at your hands, to match the greatness of your hearts and services. So far she has avenged her injuries by the death through your agency of a despot; nothing could be more splendid. But what glories that she once enjoyed has she recovered? Is it that she obeys him dead, whom she could not brook alive? Is it that we uphold the mere handwriting of one whose laws we ought to have torn down from the walls? But such, it may be argued, were the terms of the decree. Yes, we certainly passed that decree as a concession to prevailing circumstances, which in politics are paramount; but certain persons are abusing our forbearance without restraint and without gratitude. But more of this and of much else, when we meet soon. Meanwhile convince yourself of this, that both in the interests of the Republic which has ever been most precious to me, and in the interests of our mutual affection, I have nothing more at heart than your position in the State. Do your best to keep well.

[11.2] **Brutus and Cassius, praetors, to M. Antonius [Mark Antony], consul**

[Lanuvium, end of May, 44 B.C.]

L Had we not been convinced of your sincerity and goodwill towards us, we should not have composed this letter to you; and we are assured, such being your habit of mind, that you will put the best possible construction upon it. We are told by letter that a large number of veterans have already assembled at Rome, and that as the Kalends of June approach, the number will be much larger. Were we to entertain any doubt or apprehension as regards yourself, we should be untrue to ourselves. But seeing that we have put ourselves at your disposal, and in deference to your advice have dismissed our personal friends from the provincial towns, and have done so not only by edict but by letter as well, we surely deserve that you should admit us into your counsels, especially in a matter which affects ourselves.

2 And for that reason we beg of you to inform us of your attitude of mind towards us, whether you think we shall be safe amid so great a throng of veteran soldiers, who, we are told, are

even thinking of replacing the altar, a thing we believe that hardly anybody can desire or approve, who desires our own safety and honour.

That we have from the beginning fixed our eyes on peace, and have sought nothing other than the liberty of the community, is made clear by what has happened. Nobody can play us false but yourself, and that is obviously foreign to your high character and integrity; but nobody else has the means of deceiving us; for it is you, and you alone, that we have trusted and shall continue to trust.

3 Our friends are terribly alarmed about us; and although they are fully assured of your good faith, still they are obsessed by the reflection that a mass of veterans can be more easily driven in any direction by anybody else than held in check by you. We ask you to reply to us on all points. For the allegation that such an order was issued to veterans because it was your intention to bring forward the question of their interests in the month of June is as frivolous as it is futile. Whom do you suppose to be likely to obstruct your intention, seeing that, as far as we are concerned, it is definitely decided that we shall take no action? Nobody has a right to impute to us an undue love of life, when nothing can befall us that will not be accompanied by universal ruin and chaos.

In view of the concerns of Brutus and Cassius, Antonius offered to appoint them to be corn commissioners, so that they could safely leave Rome. The following letter to Atticus vividly describes the meeting to discuss this offer.

[15.11] **Cicero to Atticus, greeting.**

[(?) [Antium](#), June 7th, 44 B.C.]

L I reached Antium before midday. [Brutus](#) was very glad to see me. Then in the presence of [Servilia](#) [*mother of Brutus*], [Tertulla](#) [*wife of Cassius*], [Porcia](#) [*wife of Brutus*] and a lot of others, he asked me for my opinion. [Favonius](#) was present too. I had made up my mind on the journey, and advised him to accept the control of the corn supply from [Asia](#). There was nothing else for us to do now except to keep him out of danger: by so doing we should have some safeguard for the republic too. When I was in the midst of my speech, in came Cassius. I said the same over again. Whereupon Cassius, with flashing eyes and fairly breathing war, declared he would not go to [Sicily](#). "Am I to take an insult like a favour?" "What will you do then?" I asked ; and he said he would go to [Achaea](#). "What of you, Brutus?" I said. "To Rome," he answered, "if you think I ought." "I don't think so at all, for you won't be safe." "Well, if it were possible to be there in safety, would you approve ?" "Yes, I would rather you did not go to a province either now or after your [praetorship](#); but I don't advise you to trust yourself in Rome." I gave him the reasons that will occur to you, why it would not be safe.

2 Then they kept on bewailing the chances that had been let slip, especially Cassius, and they complained bitterly of Decimus [Brutus]. I said they ought not to harp on the past, but I agreed with them. I went on to explain what ought to have been done, saying nothing new, but what

everybody is saying daily, and not touching on the point as to whether anyone else ought to have been attacked. When I said that they should have called the Senate, they should have roused the people to action with greater vigour, and they should have taken over the whole conduct of affairs, your friend Servilia exclaimed: "Well, I never heard the like!" After that, I kept quiet. But I think Cassius will go (for Servilia promises she will see that that appointment to the corn-supply shall be withdrawn from the senatorial decree): and our friend soon gave up his silly talk of wanting to go to Rome. So he has made up his mind that the games may be held in his absence under his name. I fancy, however, he wants to set out for Asia from Antium.

3 To cut the matter short, I got nothing that satisfied me out of that journey except the satisfaction to my conscience. It would have been wrong to allow him to leave Italy before I had met him. Save for fulfilling the duty I owed to our affection, I could not help asking myself: "*What reason have you for your journey here, seer?*" In fact I found a ship breaking up, or rather already in wreckage. No plan, no reason, no system. So, although I had no doubt even before, now I have still less - that I must fly away from here as fast as possible, "*Where I may hear no more report of [Pelops'](#) sons.*" . . .

In July, Brutus and Cassius put out a public statement, requesting that they should be excused from their duties as praetors, which would require them to return to Rome. This request was rejected by [Antonius](#).

[11.3] Brutus and Cassius, [praetors](#), to M. Antonius, consul

[Naples, August 4th, 44 B.C.]

L We trust that you are well. We have perused your letter, which closely I follows the lines of your public proclamation, being insulting, intimidating, and by no means a proper letter for you to have addressed to us.

On our part, Sir, by no single injurious act have we provoked you, and we never believed that it would cause you surprise if we [praetors](#), or indeed any men holding our position, should have appealed in a public manifesto for some concession from the consul. But if you resent our having ventured so far, permit us at least to regret that so small a favour is being refused by you to a Brutus and a Cassius.

2 You deny that you made any complaint as to the raising of troops, the requisitioning of sums of money, the tampering with the legions, and the sending of despatches across the sea. We indeed credit you with having made that denial in all good faith; at the same time, however, we refuse to acknowledge the truth of a single word of those allegations, and it surprises us that, though you kept silent about all this, you were so little able to control your anger as to reproach us with the death of Caesar.

3 This much, however, we would have you consider yourself - how far it is to be tolerated that [praetors](#) should not be allowed in the interests of harmony and liberty to waive by public

announcement some of their own rights, without being threatened with armed violence by the consul. Your reliance on such methods has no terrors for us; for neither is it seemly or suitable for us, on our side, to bow our spirit before any peril, nor is it for Antonius to claim lordship over those to whose efforts he owes his freedom. As for ourselves, were we urged by other considerations to wish to fan the flame of civil war, your letter would have no effect whatever; for the man who threatens has no authority among free men. But you are perfectly well aware that we are not to be driven either this way or that, and it is quite likely that the motive of your menacing behaviour is to give our prudence the appearance of panic.

4 Our opinions are these: we are anxious that you should hold a high and honourable position in any constitution that is free, and we challenge you to no kind of hostility; but, for all that, we attach less value to your friendship than to our own liberty.

Consider again and again what you are undertaking, and what strength you have for it; and be sure you remember, not how long was Caesar's life, but how short was his reign. We pray to heaven that your counsels may be favourable to the welfare of the State and of yourself; failing that, our prayer is that they may be as little harmful to yourself as is consistent with the welfare and honour of the Republic. Aug. 4th.

On September 2nd, [Cicero](#) spoke in the senate for the first time since the death of Caesar. This speech, later called the "First [Philippic](#)", was critical of Antonius' policies, and although it was deliberately moderate in tone, it showed that Cicero was prepared to voice opposition to Antonius in public.

[12.2] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Rome, (?) September 25th, 44 B.C.]

L I am extremely delighted with your approval of my opinion and speech; were I able to make such speeches more often, it would be no trouble at all to recover our freedom and constitutional rights. But that crazy and desperate fellow [Antonius], far more of a scoundrel too than he of whom you said "the prince of scoundrels has been slain", is bent on starting a massacre, and accuses me of having instigated the assassination of Caesar, simply and solely with the object of inciting the veterans against me - a danger that has no terrors for me, provided only it adds to my reputation by giving it a share in the glory of your achievement.

Neither [Piso](#), therefore, who was the first to assail him without finding anybody to back him up, nor I, who did the same a month afterwards, nor P.[Servilius](#), who immediately followed us, are allowed to enter the Senate with safety. For the swordsman is bent on bloodshed, and imagined that he would make a beginning of it with me on the 19th of September, on which day he had turned up ready primed, after studying his speech for several days at the villa of [Metellus](#). But, I ask you, what sort of study was possible amid scenes of debauchery and drunkenness? So, as I wrote to you before, the universal impression was that (as is his habit), he spewed rather than spoke his speech.

2 As to your writing therefore that you are sure some good can be done by my influence and eloquence, well, considering how great are our troubles, some good has been done. It has been brought home to the people of Rome that there are three ex-consuls, who, because they have been patriotic towards the Republic, and have spoken freely, cannot enter the Senate with safety. Nor is there any reason for your expecting anything beyond this, since your relative [Paulus] is delighted with his new marriage-connection, so he no longer takes any very keen interest in the games, and is bursting with jealousy at the boundless applause given to your brother [Lucius]. A second relative of yours [Marcellus] also has found soothing balm in [Caesar](#)'s fresh memoranda. All this, however, one can put up with; what is not endurable is that a man [Philippus] can be found to think that his son will be consul in the year that belongs to you and Brutus, and for that reason makes a parade of being our brigand's very humble servant.

3 As for my dear friend [L.Cotta](#), yielding to a sort of irresistible despair (his own expression) he attends the Senate less regularly; L.Caesar, most admirable and gallant of citizens, is prevented by ill-health; Servius [Sulpicius](#), a man of the greatest influence and soundest sentiments, is away from Rome. As for the rest, with the exception of the consuls-designate, you must pardon me if I refuse to reckon them as consulars.

There you have the leaders of public policy; it would be an insignificant number, even if all were going well; what do you think of it in these days of despair? That is why our every hope lies in you; and if your only object in keeping away is to be in a safe place, there is no hope even in you. If, however, you are planning some scheme worthy of your glory, I should like to see it carried through while I am yet alive. But if that is not to be, none the less will the Republic speedily come to her own again through your agency. For myself, I never fail, and I never shall fail, to protect those dear to you; and whether they appeal to me for advice or whether they don't, I can in either case guarantee my love and loyalty to yourself. Farewell.

Antonius modified his offer to Brutus and Cassius, by appointing them to govern insignificant provinces abroad. In September, Cassius left Italy, ostensibly to go to his province of [Cyrene](#), but in reality he intended to proceed to Syria, where he knew that he could count on strong support.

[12.3] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Rome, early in October, 44 B.C.]

[L](#) Your friend [Antonius] gives more rein to his insanity every day; to begin with, he has had the statue, which he set up on the rostra, inscribed with the words "To the Father, for his glorious services," so that you are condemned not only as assassins, but now as parricides also. But why do I say "you are so condemned"? "We are condemned" is the better phrase; for that lunatic declares that I was the ringleader in that splendid achievement of yours. Would to heaven I had been! He would not now be troubling us. But for all that you are responsible; and now that it is past and done with, I only wish I knew what advice to give you. But I cannot even think what I myself ought to do. For what can be done against force without force?

2 Now the whole trend of these men's policy is to avenge the death of [Caesar](#). Consequently on the 2nd of October, Antonius was brought forward at a public meeting by Cannutius, and though it is true he left the platform in sore disgrace, yet he referred to the saviours of the country in terms that should have been applied to traitors. As to myself indeed he had no hesitation in declaring that all you had done and Cannutius was doing was the result of my advice. Of the rest of their conduct you may judge from the fact that they have robbed your [legate](#) of his travelling allowance. What explanation do you suppose they offer when they do this? Why, if you please, that the money is being conveyed to an enemy of the State! What a pitiful state of affairs! We, who could not brook the master, are the slaves of a fellow-slave. And yet, though my wishes are stronger than my hopes, even now there is a residue of hope to be found in your valour. But our forces, where are they? As to what remains, I prefer that you should consult your own heart, rather than listen to any words of mine.

In October, Cicero wrote the "Second Philippic". This was never delivered as a speech, but contains Cicero's most outspoken denunciation of the character and policies of Antonius. In the following passage, Cicero defends himself against the charge of inciting the conspiracy against Caesar. (Translated by C.D.Yonge)

L [2.25] . . . But these are all old stories now. This charge, however, is quite a modern one, that [Caesar](#) was slain by my contrivance. I am afraid, O Senators, lest I should appear to you to have brought up a sham accuser against myself (which is a most disgraceful thing to do); a man not only to distinguish me by the praises which are my due, but to load me also with those which do not belong to me. For who ever heard my name mentioned as an accomplice in that most glorious action? and whose name has been concealed who was in the number of that gallant band? Concealed, do I say? On the contrary, their names immediately became familiar to everybody! I should sooner say that some men had boasted in order to appear to have been part of that conspiracy, though they had in reality known nothing of it, than that any one who had been an accomplice in the deed could possibly have wished to conceal their part in it.

[2.26] Moreover, how likely it is, that among such a number of men, some obscure, some young men who had not the wit to conceal any one, my name could possibly have escaped notice?

Indeed, if leaders were wanted for the purpose of delivering the country, what need was there of my instigating the [Brutuses](#), one of whom [Decimus] saw every day in his house the image of Lucius [Brutus](#), and the other [Marcus] saw also the image of [Ahala](#)? Were these the men to seek counsel from the ancestors of others rather than from their own? and from elsewhere rather than at home? What? Caius [Cassius](#), a man of that family which could not endure, I will not say the domination, but even the power of any individual,- he, I suppose, was in need of me to instigate him? a man who even without the assistance of these other most illustrious men, would have accomplished this same deed in [Cilicia](#), at the mouth of the river [Cydnus](#), if Caesar had brought his ships to that bank of the river which he had intended, and not to the opposite one. [2.27] Was Cnaeus [Domitius](#) spurred on to seek to recover his dignity, not by the death of his father [L.[Domitius](#)], a most illustrious man, nor by the death of his uncle, nor by the

deprivation of his own dignity, but by my advice and authority? Did I persuade Caius [Trebonius](#)? a man whom I should not have ventured even to advise. On which account the republic owes him even a larger debt of gratitude, because he preferred the liberty of the Roman people to the friendship of one man, and because he preferred overthrowing arbitrary power to sharing it. Was I the instigator whom Lucius Tullius [Cimber](#) followed? a man whom I admired for having performed that action, rather than ever expected that he would perform it; and I admired him on this account, that he was unmindful of the personal kindnesses which he had received, but mindful of his country. What shall I say of the two Serviliuses? Shall I call them [Cascas](#), or Ahalas? and do you think that those men were instigated by my authority rather than by their affection for the republic? It would take a long time to go through all the rest; and it is a glorious thing for the republic that they were so numerous, and a most honourable thing also for themselves.

[2.28] But recollect, I pray you, how that clever man [Antonius] convicted me of being an accomplice in the business. When Caesar was slain, says he, Marcus [Brutus](#) immediately lifted up on high his bloody dagger, and called on [Cicero](#) by name; and congratulated him on liberty being recovered. Why on me above all men? Because I knew of it beforehand? Consider rather whether this was not his reason for calling on me, that, when he had performed an action very like those which I myself had done, he called me above all men to witness that he had been an imitator of my exploits. [2.29] But you, O stupidest of all men, do you not perceive, that if it is a crime to have wished that Caesar should be slain - which you accuse me of having wished - it is a crime also to have rejoiced at his death? For what is the difference between a man who has advised an action, and one who has approved of it? or what does it signify whether I wished it to be done, or rejoice that it has been done? Is there any one then, except you yourself and these men who wished him to become a king, who was unwilling that that deed should be done, or who disapproved of it after it was done? All men, therefore, are guilty as far as this goes. In truth, all good men, as far as it depended on them, bore a part in the slaying of Caesar. Some did not know how to contrive it, some had not courage for it, some had no opportunity,- every one had the inclination.

[2.30] However, remark the stupidity of this fellow,- I should rather say, of this brute beast. For thus he spoke:- "Marcus Brutus, whom I name to do him honour, holding aloft his bloody dagger, called upon Cicero, from which it must be understood that he was privy to the action." Am I then called wicked by you because you suspect that I suspected something; and is he who openly displayed his dripping dagger; named by you so that you may do him honour? Be it so. Let this stupidity exist in your language: how much greater is it in your actions and opinions? Arrange matters in this way at last, O consul; pronounce the cause of the Brutuses, of Caius Cassius, of Cnaeus [Domitius](#), of Caius Trebonius and the rest to be whatever you please to call it: sleep off that intoxication of yours, sleep it off and take breath. Must one apply a torch to you to waken you while you are sleeping over such an important affair? Will you never understand that you have to decide whether those men who performed that action are homicides or assertors of freedom?

[2.31] For just consider a little; and for a moment think of the business like a sober man. I who, as I myself confess, am an intimate friend of those men, and, as you accuse me, an accomplice of theirs, deny that there is any medium between these alternatives. I confess that they, if they be not deliverers of the Roman people and saviours of the republic, are worse than assassins, worse than homicides, worse even than parricides: since it is a more atrocious thing to murder the father of one's country, than one's own father. You wise and considerate man, what do you say to this? If they are parricides, why are they always named by you, both in this assembly and before the Roman people, with a view to do them honour? Why has Marcus Brutus been, on your motion, excused from obedience to the laws, and allowed to be absent from the city more than ten days? Why were the games of [Apollo](#) celebrated with incredible honour to Marcus Brutus? why were provinces given to Brutus and Cassius? why were [quaestors](#) assigned to them? why was the number of their [legates](#) augmented? And all these measures were owing to you. They are not homicides then. It follows that in your opinion they are deliverers of their country, since there can be no other alternative. [2.32] What is the matter? Am I embarrassing you? For perhaps you are incapable of understanding the dilemma that faces you. Still this is the sum total of my conclusion; that since they are acquitted by you of wickedness, they are at the same time pronounced most worthy of the very most honourable rewards . . .

In 43 B.C. Antonius was no longer consul, but he still had a strong army, with which he besieged Decimus Brutus at [Mutina](#) until April, when he was forced to abandon the siege.

[12.4] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Rome, February 2nd (?), 43 B.C.]

L I should like you to have invited me to your banquet on the [Ides](#) of March; there would have been no leavings. Now it is just your leavings that are worrying me, me indeed more than anybody else; it is true that we have admirable consuls, but the consulars are beneath contempt; we have a courageous Senate too, but it is those of the lowest rank who are most so. Nothing, however, could be braver or better than the people, and indeed the whole of Italy; nothing, on the other hand, more disgraceful, nothing more scandalous, than the conduct of [Philippus](#) and Piso as our emissaries. They were sent to deliver to Antonius certain definite instructions in accordance with the vote of the Senate, and when he failed to comply with any single one of them, they had the impudence to bring back certain insufferable demands from him to us. The result is that people are thronging round me, and for the first time, by supporting a really sound measure, I find myself a popular hero.

2 But as for you, what you are doing, what you intend to do, or indeed where you are, I have no idea. The story goes that you are in Syria, but there is nobody to vouch for it. As to Brutus, because he is nearer, the reports about him appear to be more trustworthy. [Dolabella](#) is soundly trounced by men with some command of sarcasm for being in such a hurry to take your place, though you had hardly been a month in Syria; so that it was obvious to all that he had no right to be admitted into the province. Both you and Brutus are the subject of the

highest praise, for having (as is believed) exceeded all expectations in getting together an army. I should write at greater length if I knew the circumstances of the case. As it is, what I write is only based on general opinion and hearsay. I am greedily awaiting a letter from you.

[12.5] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Rome, early February, 43 B.C.]

L I suppose it is the wintry weather that has so far prevented us from having any certain information about you - what you are doing, and most important of all, where you are. What everybody is saying however, I suppose because they wish it, is that you are in Syria, and in command of forces. This is all the more readily believed because it seems so likely to be true. Our friend M.Brutus indeed has won extraordinary distinction; his achievements have been so substantial and so unexpected that, welcome as they are in themselves, their brilliance has been enhanced by their rapidity. Now if you also hold in your hand all we believe you do, the props that support the Republic are strong; since from the nearest point of Greece right up to Egypt we shall find security in governments and armies commanded by citizens of the highest loyalty.

2 And yet, if I am not mistaken, the present position is such that the ultimate issue of the whole war depends apparently upon D.Brutus; if once he succeeds, as we hope he will, in breaking out of Mutina, it looks as if there would be nothing left of the war. In any case the forces investing him must by this time be inconsiderable, because the garrison with which Antonius holds Bononia is a strong one. Again our friend Hirtius is at Claterna, and Caesar at Forum Corneliu, each of them with an army that can be trusted, while, at Rome, Pansa has collected strong forces by means of an Italian levy. So far winter has made active operations impossible. Hirtius, as he frequently hints to me in his letters, seems unlikely to do anything without careful consideration. With the exception of Bononia, Regium Lepidi, and Parma, we can count upon the whole of Gaul as being enthusiastically loyal to the Republic. Your clients beyond the Padus too we find surprisingly in sympathy with our cause. The Senate is thoroughly staunch, except, of course, the consulars, of whom L.Caesar alone is as staunch as he is straight.

3 We have lost a powerful safeguard by the death of Servius Sulpicius. All the others lack either spirit or sound principle; not a few of them are jealous of the honour paid to those whom they see winning the approval of the state. On the other hand the unanimity of the people of Rome and of all Italy is something wonderful. This is practically all that I think you ought to know. And now my prayer is that the sunlight of your valour may shine forth from wherever you are in the East.

[12.6] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Rome, late in March or early in April, 43 B.C.]

L What the state of affairs was when I sent you this letter, you can find out from C. Tadius Strabo, a man of merit, and excellently well disposed to the Republic - I need not add most eager to join you, seeing that he has left his home and all that he possesses, to come to you rather than to anybody. So I do not so much as recommend him to you. His having made his way to you himself is recommendation enough.

2 I would have you consider and assure yourself that if anything untoward happens, which I should deplore, the only refuge left for honest citizens is with you and Brutus. As I write these words, matters have come to the final crisis; for Brutus is now barely able to hold his own at Mutina. If he has come safe through it, we have triumphed; if otherwise (heaven avert the omen!) there is but one direction in which we can all rush, and that is to you. See to it, therefore, that you have all the courage and all the resources needed to win back the Republic in its entirety. Farewell.

[12.7] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Rome, March 7th, 43 B.C.]

L With what enthusiasm I defended your political position, both in the Senate and before the people, I prefer that you should learn from your friends rather than from myself. And that proposal of mine in the Senate would easily have carried the day but for the violent opposition of Pansa. Having made the proposal, I was brought before a public meeting by the tribune of the plebs, M. Servilius. I said all I could about you in a ringing voice that filled the forum, and the shouting and applause of the people was - well, I never saw anything like it! I hope you will forgive my having acted against the wishes of your mother-in-law [Servilia]. The lady is nervous, and was afraid of Pansa 's taking umbrage at it. Indeed Pansa stated in the public meeting that your mother also and brother [Lucius] had objected to my making that proposal. But all that left me unmoved; I had better things to think about. I was advocating the public cause, which I have always advocated, and your political position and prestige as well.

2 But as to the matter that I discussed at considerable length in the Senate, and as to what I said at the public meeting, I should be glad if you would redeem the pledge I gave. I promised and almost positively asserted that you had not waited for nor would wait for any decrees of ours, but would yourself defend the constitution in your own good way; and although we have not yet heard anything as to your present position, or the forces at your disposal, for all that I take my stand on the fact that all the forces and troops in your part of the world are yours, and that it is through you I am assured that the province of Asia has already been won back for the Republic. Do your utmost to surpass yourself in enhancing your own glory. Farewell.

[12.11] **C.Cassius, proconsul, to M.Cicero**

[Camp at Tarichea, March 7th, 43 B.C.]

L If you are well, that is good; I and my army are well. You must know that I have started for Syria to join the generals L.Murcus and Q.Crispus. When those gallant officers and admirable citizens heard what was going on in Rome, they handed their armies over to me, and are themselves administering the affairs of the State side by side with me, and with the utmost resolution. I beg to inform you also that the legion which Q.Caecilius Bassus had, has come over to me, and I beg to inform you that the four legions A.Allienus brought out of Egypt have been handed over by him to me.

2 For the present I do not suppose that you need any encouragement from me to defend us while we are away, and the Republic too, as far as in you lies. I should like you to be assured that neither you and your family, nor the Senate are without strong safeguards, so that you may defend the Republic in the best of hopes and with the highest spirit. What business remains will be transacted with you by L.Carteius, an intimate friend of mine. Farewell. Dated the 7th of March, from camp at Tarichea.

[12.12] **Cassius, proconsul, to M.Cicero**

[Camp in Syria, May 7th, 43 B.C.]

L If you are well, that is good; I and my army are well. I have read your letter, in which I recognise afresh your wonderful affection for me. For it seemed that you not only back me up - that you have always done, both for my sake, and the sake of the Republic - but also that you have shouldered a burden of anxiety, and feel seriously perturbed about me. And therefore, because in the first place I thought you were under the impression that, after the crushing of the constitution, I could never keep quiet, and secondly, because I thought you were anxious, both about my safety, and the ultimate issue of affairs, since you would naturally suspect me of taking drastic measures; for both these reasons then, as soon as I took over the legions A.Allienus had brought away from Egypt, I wrote to you, and sent quite a number of letter-carriers to Rome. I also wrote a despatch to the Senate, forbidding it to be delivered until it had been read out to you - if it happens that my people have been good enough to regard my wishes. But if no letter has reached you, I have no doubt that Dolabella, who, since his abominable murder of Trebonius, has overrun the Asian provinces, has arrested my letter-carriers and intercepted my despatch.

2 I hold all the troops that were in Syria. There has been some slight delay in the fulfilment of my promises to my men. Now at last my hands are free. I beg of you to regard my claim to honour as committed to your care, if you realise that there is no danger, no toil, I have refused to face for my country, if it was at your instance and with your encouragement that I took up arms against the most presumptuous brigands, if I have not only raised whole armies to defend the cause of the State and its liberty, but have even snatched it from the hands of the most bloodthirsty tyrants; for had Dolabella anticipated me in getting hold of them, his army, not only by its actual arrival, but by the mere hope and expectation of it, would have strengthened the hands of Antonius.

3 For these reasons I beg you to look after my men, if you are aware of their amazing services to the Republic, and so to manage matters that not one of them may regret having set the call of the Republic above the love of loot and rapine. Attend too, as far as you possibly can, to the claims of the commanders, [Murcus](#) and [Crispus](#). As for [Bassus](#), the poor fool would not hand his legion over to me. And had not his men broken his orders and sent me a deputation, he would have kept the gates of [Apameia](#) shut until I had stormed it. These requests I make of you not only in the name of the Republic, which has always been most precious to you, but also in that of our friendship, which I am sure counts for very much with you.

4 Take my word for it, these troops under my command are at the disposal of the Senate and all loyal citizens, and most of all at yours; for being constantly told of your sympathies makes them astonishingly fond of you, and you are their favourite; and if once they grasp the fact that you have their interests at heart, they will feel that there is nothing they do not owe you.

5 Since writing this letter I have been told that Dolabella and his forces have arrived in [Cilicia](#). Cilicia will be my objective. I shall do my utmost to let you have early news of what I have been able to do. And may I express a hope that our luck may be in proportion to our public deserts? Mind you keep your health and your affection for me. In camp, May 7th.

The following excerpt from a letter sent by a Roman commander with a similar name - C.Cassius Parmensis - shows that as he expected, Cassius was soon fighting against Dolabella. Dolabella was eventually defeated and committed suicide.

[12.13] **C.Cassius, quaestor, to M.Cicero**

[[Cyprus](#), June 13th, 43 B.C.]

L . . . 4 Just as the people of [Tarsus](#), our treacherous allies, did, so now the inhabitants of [Laodiceia](#), who are even more foolish, have gone out of their way to send for [Dolabella](#); and he, by recruiting a rabble of Greek soldiers out of both those states, has worked up the semblance of an army. He has pitched camp in front of the town of Laodiceia; he has pulled down part of the wall, and has linked his camp with the town. Our friend Cassius with ten legions, twenty auxiliary cohorts, and a cavalry force of 4000, has pitched camp twenty miles away at Paltus, and anticipates a bloodless victory, seeing that with Dolabella the price of wheat is already three [tetradrachms](#) [for a [medimnus](#)]. Unless he contrives to bring in supplies in the ships of the [Laodiceians](#), he is doomed to die of hunger very soon; and to prevent Dolabella from importing will be an easy task for Cassius's fleet, quite a large one, under the command of Sextilius [Rufus](#), and the three fleets Turullius, Patiscus, and myself have respectively brought here. I want you to have high hopes, and to rest assured that the difficulties of the State can speedily be solved on our side, as you have solved them at home. Farewell.

Dated June 13th. Crommyacris, in Cyprus.

Antonius received a great boost to his forces at the end of May, when he was joined by M.Lepidus, the governor of [Narbonese](#) Gaul.

[12.8] Cicero to Cassius

[Rome, shortly after June 8th, 43 B.C.]

L The scandalous conduct of your relative Lepidus and his amazing fickleness and inconstancy I imagine you have already learnt from the daily gazette which I am assured is being sent to you. So now, when the war, as we imagined, had been finished, we are waging a resuscitated war, and we have no other hope than in D. [Brutus](#) and [Plancus](#); indeed, if you want the exact truth, than in you and my friend M. [Brutus](#), not only to serve as our immediate refuge, should anything untoward occur (which I should deplore), but also to set on a firm basis a freedom that will last for ever.

2 We are having satisfactory news here about [Dolabella](#), but we have nobody definitely to vouch for it. As for you, I would have you know that you are a great man here, not only in men's present estimation, but also in their anticipations of your future. With this before your eyes, see to it that your aims are of the highest. There is no success so great that the people of Rome do not deem you capable of achieving, yes, and of maintaining.

[12.9] Cicero to Cassius

[Rome, middle of June, 43 B.C.]

L The shortness of your letters makes me too write shorter ones; and, to tell you the truth, I have no clear conception as to what I am to write. Our affairs, as I am well aware, are duly reported to you in the daily gazette, while we know nothing of yours. Just as though Asia were under a blockade, nothing reaches us except rumours about the crushing of Dolabella, which are certainly quite consistent, but lack authority.

2 We imagined that the war was finished, but all of a sudden we have been thrown into an agony of anxiety by your friend Lepidus. You must, therefore, convince yourself that the best hope of the Republic lies in you and your forces. Our armies of course we can trust; but though everything should go on happily (and I hope everything will), even so it is of great importance that you should come here. There are but faint hopes of a free constitution (I shrink from saying there are none), but whatever they are, they are bound, as by betrothal, to the year of your consulship.

[12.10] Cicero to Cassius

[Rome, early in July, 43 B.C.]

L On the 30th of June your relative, and my once friend, [Lepidus](#), was declared a public enemy by an unanimous vote of the Senate, as were also all the others who joined him in deserting the

Republic; the latter, however, have been given the opportunity of returning to their senses before the 1st of September. The Senate is full of courage, but it is mainly based on the expectation of your support. As I write these words, thanks to the villainy and shiftiness of Lepidus, the war is really serious. The daily news about [Dolabella](#) is all we could desire; but it is still without a definite source, unconfirmed, and voiced only by rumour.

2 But, notwithstanding all that, your despatch, sent from your camp on the 7th of May, had the effect upon the State of making everybody believe that he had already been crushed, and that you were coming to Italy with your army; so that, if all were accomplished to our satisfaction, we should have your counsel and influence, but if, as so often happens in war, some slip should by any chance occur, we should have your army, to fall back upon. And, speaking of the army, I shall make all honourable provision for it within my power, but it will be time enough for that when we begin to get some idea of the amount of help it will give to the Republic, or how much it has already given. For so far we hear of nothing but attempts - noble and splendid enough I grant you - but what we are waiting for is achievement; and that I am confident has either come to pass in good measure already, or will in the near future.

3 Nothing can be more noble than your courage and greatness of spirit. So naturally we hope to see you in Italy as soon as possible. If we have both of you, we shall think we have the Republic here too. We would have won a glorious victory, if Antonius, stripped and unarmed and a fugitive as he was, had not been given refuge by Lepidus. It follows that never was Antonius so detested by the State as Lepidus now is. For the former applied the torch of war to universal public disorder, the latter to peace and victory. To oppose him we have the consuls-designate, and we have strong hopes of them, it is true; but there is the anxiety of doubt, owing to the uncertainty of issues on the field of battle.

4 Be absolutely assured, therefore, that all depends upon you and your friend Brutus, that you are both expected - [Brutus](#) indeed at any moment. But if our enemies are defeated (and I hope so) before you arrive, even so your influence will help the Republic to lift up her head, and be established on some tolerably firm basis. For the ills to be remedied are very many, even though it may appear that the Republic has been safely delivered from the villainy of its enemies.

Five months after this letter was written, Cicero was killed by the soldiers of Antonius. Cassius died the next year, in the first battle of [Philippi](#).

Post by “Joshua” of May 1, 2025 at 1:39 AM

Per usual, [Cassius](#), you are five years ahead of me. I have just read the whole packet straight through on Attalus, following my most recent re-listen of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and I must say these letters get quite harrowing in the run-up to Philippi.

Quote

Brutus

Are yet two Romans living such as these?
The last of all the Romans, fare thee well.
It is impossible that ever Rome
Should breed thy fellow. — Friends, I owe more tears
To this dead man than you shall see me pay.
I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time.
Come, therefore, and to Thasos send his body;
His funerals shall not be in our camp
Lest it discomfort us. Lucilius, come,
And come, young Cato; let us to the field.
Labeo and Flavius, set our battles on.
'Tis three o'clock; and, Romans, yet ere night
We shall try fortune in a second fight.

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Post by “Cassius” of May 1, 2025 at 6:56 AM

Yes it seems that the battle of Philippi could easily have gone the other way, and it's fascinating to think of what might have changed if a devoted Epicurean (as opposed to Caesar, who may have been Epicurean to some extent but didn't seem so philosophically inclined) had become one of the most powerful men in Rome for a much longer time.

Post by “Don” of May 1, 2025 at 7:08 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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Oh, there's alternative history fiction I'd read 😊