

Seneca on the Death of M. Livius Drusus (*Brev. 6.1-2*)

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1. EXEMPLUM 1: AUGUSTUS (*Sen. Brev. 4.2-5*)

4. (4) Tanta visa est res otium, ut illam, quia usu non poterat, cogitatione praesumeret. (*So desirable a thing did leisure seem that he anticipated it in thought because he could not attain it in reality.*) (Basore 1928)

2. EXEMPLUM 2: CICERO (*Sen. Brev. 5.1-3*)

5. (2) Moror in Tusculano meo semiliber. (*I am lingering at my Tusculan villa half at leisure.*); (3) Semiliberum se dixit Cicero. (*Cicero said that he was "half a leisure."*) (Basore 1928)

3. EXEMPLUM 3: DRUSUS (*Sen. Brev. 6.1-2*)

6. (1) Livius Drusus, vir acer et vehemens, cum leges novas et mala Gracchana movisset stipatus ingenti totius Italiae coetu, exitum rerum non pervidens, quas *nec* agere licebat nec iam liberum erat semel incohatas relinquere, execratus inquietam a *primordiis* vitam dicitur dixisse uni sibi ne *puero* quidem umquam ferias contigisse. Ausus est enim et *pupillus* adhuc et *praetextatus* iudicibus reos commendare et gratiam suam foro interponere tam efficaciter quidem, ut quaedam iudicia constet ab illo rapta. (2) Quo non erumperet tam immatura ambitio? Scires in malum ingens et privatum et publicum evasuram tam praecoquem audaciam. Sero itaque querebatur nullas sibi ferias contigisse a *puero* seditiosus et foro gravis. **Disputatur, an ipse sibi manus attulerit; subito enim vulnere per inguen accepto conlapsus est, aliquo dubitante, an mors eius voluntaria esset, nullo, an tempestiva.**

When Livius Drusus, a bold and energetic man, had with the support of a huge crowd drawn from all Italy proposed new laws and the evil measures of the Gracchi, seeing no way out for his policy, which he was not allowed to carry out nor freely abandon once started, he is said to have complained bitterly against the life of unrest he had had from the cradle, and to have exclaimed that he was the only person who had never had a holiday even as a boy. For, while he was still a ward and wearing the dress of a boy, he had had the courage to commend to the favour of a jury those who were accused, and to make his influence felt in the law-courts, so effectively, indeed, that it is very well known that in certain trials he forced a favourable verdict. To what lengths was not such premature ambition destined to go? One might have known that such precocious hardihood would result in great personal and public misfortune. And so it was too late for him to complain that he had never had a holiday when from boyhood he had been a trouble-maker and a nuisance in the forum. There is uncertainty whether he died by his own hand; for he fell suddenly from a wound received in his groin. Some doubted whether his death was self-inflicted, no one, whether it was timely. (Basore, 1928, with modifications)

4. DRUSUS' USUAL DEATH (*Sen. Cons. Marc. 16.4*)

Cornelia Livi Drusi clarissimum iuvenem inlustris ingenii, vadentem per Gracchana vestigia imperfectis tot rogationibus intra penates interemptum suos, amiserat incerto caedis auctore.

Cornelia, the wife of [the elder] Livius Drusus, had lost a son, a young man of distinguished ability and very great renown, who, while following in the footsteps of the Gracchi, was killed at his own hearth by an unknown murderer, just when he had so many measures pending and was at the height of his fame. (Basore, 1932)

5. DRUSUS' DEATH SCENE IN VELLEIUS PATERCULUS (2.14.1-2)

14. (1) Quod cum moliens revertisset e foro, immensa illa et incondita, quae eum semper comitabatur, cinctus multitudine in area domus suae cultello percussus, qui adfixus lateri eius relictus est, intra paucas horas decessit. (2) Sed cum ultimum redderet spiritum, intuens circumstantium maerentiumque frequentiam, effudit vocem convenientissimam conscientiae suae: ecquandone, inquit, propinqui amicitiae, similem mei civem habebit res publica? Hunc finem clarissimus iuvenis vitae habuit: cuius morum minime omittatur argumentum.

While [Drusus] was engaged in this effort, and was returning from the forum surrounded by the large and unorganized crowd which always attended him, he was stabbed in the area before his house and died in a few hours, the assassin leaving the weapon in his side. As he breathed his last and gazed at the assembly of grieving bystanders, he uttered words most fitting to his own feelings: “O my relatives and friends, will my country ever have another citizen like me?” Thus ended the life of this illustrious man. (Shipley, 1924, with modifications)

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