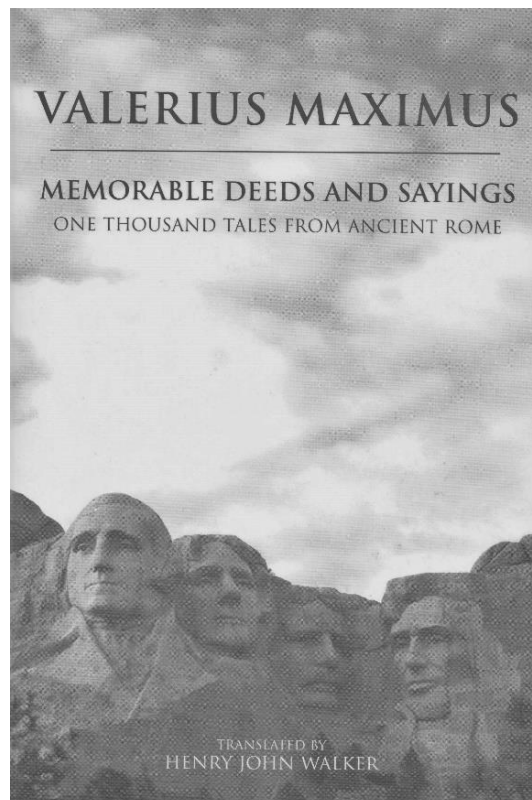


BELLARIA LI



Some editions of Valerius Maximus, very popular in the Middle Ages, from 1527-1726

Valerius Maximus I



FACTORUM ET DICTORUM MEMORABILIVM LIBRI IX

Note: I here express my considerable gratitude to Harry Walker, Senior Lecturer in Classical and Medieval Studies in Bates College, Maine, USA, for permission to use his superb translation of *FDML* (Hackett, 2004).

Introduction

Here Valerius explains what he is trying to do:

Preface [addressed to the Emperor Tiberius]

Many of the deeds and sayings from the city of Rome and from foreign nations are well worth recording. Other authors have dealt with these stories at great length, but this makes it impossible to learn about them in a short period of time, so I have decided to make a selection of them from the most famous writers. I have arranged the stories in such a way that readers who want to find historical precedents would be spared the trouble of spending a lot of time on research. I had no desire to include everything. Who could collect the achievements of all time within a modest number of volumes? What person in his right mind would hope that he could record the course of Roman and foreign history, which has been treated by previous writers in an elegant style, and do so either with greater attention to detail or with more striking eloquence?

Praefatio: urbis Romae exterarumque gentium facta simul ac dicta memoratu digna apud alios latius diffusa sunt quam ut breuiter cognosci possint, ab inlustribus electa auctoribus digerere constitui, ut documenta sumere uolentibus longae inquisitionis labor absit. nec mihi cuncta complectendi cupido incessit: quis enim omnis aeuu gesta modico uoluminum numero comprehenderit, aut quis compos mentis domesticae peregrinaeque historiae seriem, felici superiorum stilo conditam, uel attentiore cura uel praestantiore facundia traditurum se sperauerit?

He continues by begging Tiberius to look favourably on his collection of c. 1000 *exempla* of Roman, including some other peoples', words and deeds worthy of record.

FDML mentions the death of Sejanus, and for other reasons it was probably published around the same time, i.e. AD 31-2, though it must have taken years to compile. The tone of the work is moralistic—exemplary virtues and vices the theme—presumably for edification but also as a storehouse on which orators could draw. The book is organised by topics, with headings (which may not be original). Here, for example, are the headings of Book 8:

Chapter 1. Why People Accused of Infamous Crimes Were Acquitted or Found Guilty

Chapter 2. Famous Private Cases

Chapter 3. Women Who Pleaded Cases before Magistrates on Behalf of Themselves or Other People

Chapter 4. Interrogations

Chapter 5. Witnesses

Chapter 6. People Who Committed Offences but Punished Others for Similar Offences

Chapter 7. Enthusiasm and Dedication [see example below]

Chapter 8. Leisure

Chapter 9. How Great the Power of Eloquence Is

Chapter 10. How Much Importance Lies in Proper Enunciation and Appropriate Physical Gestures

Chapter 11. How Great the Results of the Liberal Arts Can Be

Chapter 12. Each Person is the Best Practitioner and Teacher of His Own Profession

Chapter 13. Old Age

Chapter 14. The Desire for Glory

Chapter 15. Marvellous Honours That Were Given to Certain People

OMENS

De ominibus

Note: Valerius restricts the term 'omen' to refer only to spoken remarks that predict the future. The prefaces under each heading, explaining the topic's importance and value, are Valerius' work.

1.5. Preface: The observation of omens has some connection with religion since people believe that these things do not happen by chance but are caused by divine providence.

1.5. praef. *ominum etiam obseruatio aliquo contactu religioni innexa est, quoniam non fortuito motu, sed diuina prouidentia, constare creduntur.*



Romans sack Veii 396 BC

Rome or Veii as centre of the world?

1.5.1 Omens had an important effect when the city had been devastated by the Gauls (i). The Conscript Fathers were deliberating whether they should move to Veii or rebuild our city walls. At that moment, some cohorts were returning from guard duty, and their centurion (ii) happened to shout in the assembly place, 'Standard-bearer, set up the standard; this is the best place for us to stay.' When it heard these words, the Senate declared that it accepted the omen, and it removed all traces of its plan to move to Veii (iii). These few words determined their choice of a home for what would eventually be the greatest of empires! I think the gods must have felt it was not right that the Roman nation, which had begun with the most favourable auspices, should change its name and turn into the city of Veii, and that the glory of

their famous victory should be granted to the ruined city recently defeated by them.

(i) The Gauls captured Rome in 390 B.C.

(ii) A centurion commanded a unit (about 60 men). A cohort contained six units, but cohorts were not used until the Second Punic War.

(iii) Veii had been sacked by the Romans so it would have been humiliating to move there in 390 B.C.

1.5.1 quae effecit ut urbe a Gallis disiecta, deliberantibus patribus conscriptis utrum Veios migrarent an sua moenia restituerent, forte eo tempore praesidio cohortibus redeuntibus, centurio in comitio exclamaret 'signifer, statue signum, hic optime manebimus': ea enim uoce audita, senatus accipere se omen respondit, e uestigioque Veios transeundi consilium omisit. quam paucis uerbis de domicilio futuri summi imperii confirmata est condicio! credo indignum diis, existimantibus prosperrimis auspiciis Romanum nomen ortum, Veientanae urbis appellatione mutari, inclitaeque uictoriae decus modo abiectae urbis ruinis infundi.



Camillus accepts the plunder from Veii (Nicolas Guy-Brenet, 1785)

Camillus' (mis)fortune

1.5.2 The man who brought about this glorious achievement, Camillus (i), when he had prayed that if any one of the gods thought that the Roman people were too successful, then he should be allowed to satisfy that god's jealousy by some personal misfortune, suddenly slipped and fell down. It seemed that this omen was referring to the judicial conviction that later ruined him (ii). The victory and the holy prayer of this very distinguished man have rightly competed for glory: for a man who wants to promote the good of his country and a man who wants to deflect its evils toward himself are equally brave.

(i) The dictator Marcus Furius Camillus sacked Veii in 396 B.C.

(ii) Camillus was exiled in 391 B.C. for allegedly stealing some of the booty from Veii.

1.5.2 huius tam praeclari operis auctor Camillus, cum esset precatus ut, si cui deorum nimia felicitas populi Romani uideretur, eius inuidia suo aliquo incommodo satiaretur, subito lapsu decidit. quod omen ad damnationem, qua

postea oppressus est, pertinuisse uisum est. merito autem de laude inter se uictoria et pia precatio amplissimi uiri certauerint: aequae enim uirtutis est et bona patriae auxisse et mala in se transferri uoluisse.



Paullus' triumph (Carle Vernet, 1789)

Puppy omen

1.5.3 And what of the memorable omen that came to the consul Lucius Paullus! (i). When it fell to him by lot to wage war against King Perseus (ii), he went back home from the Senate house and kissed his little daughter Tertia, who was a very small girl at that time. He noticed that she was sad, and he asked her why she had that face on her. She answered that Persa was dead. A puppy that the girl adored had died, and its name was indeed Persa. Paullus seized the omen and from that chance statement he acquired almost certain hope of a very glorious triumph (iii).

(i) Lucius Aemilius Paullus (cos, 182 B.C.) was consul for a second time in 168 B.C. when the war against King Perseus of Macedonia broke out.

(ii) The Senate would cast lots to decide which consul would command the army. The lots supposedly revealed the will of the gods.

(iii) Paullus defeated King Perseus at Pydna in 168 B.C. and celebrated a triumph over him in 167 B.C.

1.5.3 quid illud, quod L. Paulo consuli euenit, quam memorabile! cum ei sorte obuenisset ut bellum cum rege Perse gereret et domum e curia regressus filiulam suam nomine Tertiam, quae tum erat admodum paruula, osculatus tristem animaduerneret, interrogauit quid ita eo uultu esset. quae respondit Persam perisse. decesserat autem catellus, quem puella in deliciis habuerat, nomine Persa. arripuit igitur omen Paulus exque fortuito dicto quasi certam spem clarissimi triumphi animo praesumpsit.



Tomb of (a later) Caecilia Metella on the Via Appia

An aunt's omen

1.5.4 Caecilia, the wife of Metellus (i), early in the night, in the old-fashioned way, was looking for an omen for her sister's adult daughter, and she herself provided the omen. She had been sitting in a little temple waiting for a long time, but she heard nothing that would suit her purpose. The young woman grew tired of standing for so long and asked her maternal aunt to let her sit down for a while. She replied, 'You are welcome to take my place.' These words were inspired by kindness, but they were a clear omen of what would happen. For Caecilia died not long after, and Metellus married the young woman I am talking about.

(i) All three characters in this story were members of the aristocratic Caecilius Metellus family.

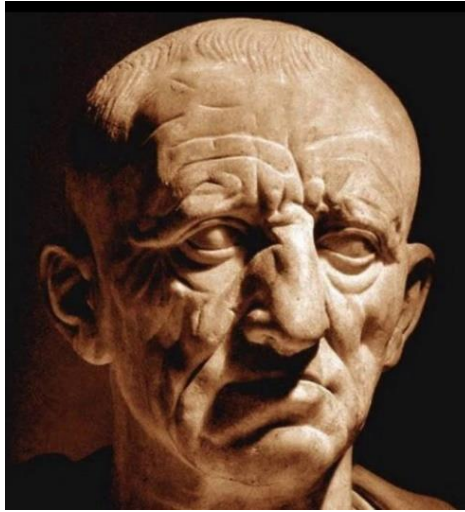
1.5.4 *at Caecilia Metelli, dum sororis filiae, adultae aetatis uirgini, more prisco nocte concubia nuptiale petit omen, ipsa fecit: nam cum in sacello quodam eius rei gratia aliquamdiu persedisset, nec aliqua ulla uox proposito congruens esset audita, fessa longa standi mora puella rogauit materteram ut sibi paulisper locum residendi adcommodaret. cui illa 'ego uero' inquit 'libenter tibi mea sede cedo'. quod dictum ab indulgentia profectum ad certi ominis processit euentum, quoniam Metellus non ita multo post mortua Caecilia uirginem, de qua loquor, in matrimonium duxit.*

ENTHUSIASM AND DEDICATION

De studio et industria

8.7 Preface. Why should I hesitate to celebrate the effectiveness of dedication? Its confident spirit encourages those who serve in the army; it inspires people to fame in the Forum; it takes every activity to its trustworthy bosom and nurses it. Whatever wonderful things people do with their mind, with their hands, with their speech, dedication brings their activity to the height of glory. It is the most complete form of virtue, and the harder it grows, the stronger it becomes.

8.7 praef. *quid cesso uires industriae commemorare, cuius alacri spiritu militiae stipendia roborantur, forensis gloria accenditur, fido sinu cuncta studia recepta nutriuntur, quidquid animo, quidquid manu, quidquid lingua admirabile est, ad cumulum laudis perducitur? quae cum sit perfectissima uirtus, duramento sui confirmatur.*



Cato the Elder (possibly...)

Tough old boy

8.7.1 When Cato the Censor was eighty-six years old, and his mind still maintained its youthful vigour in defending the Republic, his enemies accused him of a capital crime (i). He pleaded his own case, and as far as people could notice, his memory was not slower, the strength of his lungs was in no way diminished, and his speech suffered from no impediment. By constant and consistent dedication, he had maintained all his faculties in their original condition.

In fact, right at the end of his long life, he spoke in defence of Spain against the charges made by Galba, a very eloquent speaker (ii). Cato also wanted to study Greek literature—how late we can judge from the fact that he studied Latin literature only when he was quite an old man—and although he had already won great glory from his eloquence, he took care to become very learned in civil law also. (i) Cato the Censor was often prosecuted by his enemies. He was eighty-six years old in 149 BC.

(ii) Servius Sulpicius Galba (cos, 144 B.C.) treacherously massacred eight thousand Lusitani who had surrendered to him in 150 B.C. Galba was tried in 149 B.C., and the Censor spoke out against him. Galba was acquitted, and Cato died later that year.

8.7.1 *Cato sextum et octogesimum annum agens, dum in re publica tuenda iuuenili animo perstat, ab inimicis capitali crimine accusatus causam suam egit, neque aut memoriam eius quisquam tardiores aut firmitatem lateris ulla ex parte quassatam aut os haesitatione inpeditum animaduertit, quia omnia ista in suo statu aequali ac perpetua industria continebat.*

quin etiam in ipso diutissime actae uitae fine disertissimi oratoris Galbae accusationi defensionem suam pro Hispania opposuit. idem Graecis litteris erudiri concupiuit, quam sero, inde aestimemus, quod etiam Latinas paene iam senex didicit, cumque eloquentia magnam gloriam partam haberet, id egit, ut iuris ciuilibus quoque esset peritissimus.



Cato the Younger, great-grandson of the Elder

Chip off old block

8.7.2 His amazing descendant, the Cato who is nearer to our times (i), was so fired up with the love of learning that even in the Senate house, when the senators were assembling, he could not refrain from reading Greek books. His dedication showed that some people lack time and other people make time.

(i) Cato of Utica (committed suicide on hearing Caesar had won the civil war, 46 BC)

8.7.2 *cuius mirifica proles propior aetati nostrae Cato ita doctrinae cupiditate flagrauit, ut ne in curia quidem, dum senatus cogitur, temperaret sibi quo minus Graecos libros lectitaret. qua quidem industria ostendit aliis tempora deesse, alios superesse temporibus.*



Certainly not Publilius or Lupus

Rising above it

8.7.5 Publilius, a senator, and Pontius Lupus, a Roman equestrian, were celebrated pleaders in their own day, and even after they went blind, they pursued their legal careers with the same dedication (i). People came in even bigger crowds to hear these men. Some of the crowd were delighted by their talents, others were amazed by their persistence. Generally, people who suffer from such afflictions go into

retirement, and they double their gloom by adding their own optional difficulties to the ones that fortune has forced upon them.

(i) It is not known who these men were or when they lived.

8.7.5 Publilius uero senator et Lupus Pontius eques Romanus suis temporibus celebres causarum actores luminibus capti eadem industria forensia stipendia executi sunt. itaque frequentius etiam audiebantur, concurrentibus aliis, quia ingenio eorum delectabantur, aliis, quia constantiam admirabantur: nam, qui tali inconmodo percussi secessum petunt, duplicant tenebras fortuitis uoluntarias adicientes.



Aristonicus (Eumenes III)

Power of language

8.7.6 During his consulship, Publius Crassus came to Asia to finish off the war against King Aristonicus (i). He took such great care in acquiring a knowledge of the Greek language that he became fluent with every part and aspect of the five dialects into which it is divided. This completely won over the affections of our allies, because whatever dialect was spoken by anyone who appealed to his tribunal, Crassus would respond to them with a decree in their own dialect.

(i) Publius Licinius Dives Crassus Mucianus (cos, 131 B.C.) fought against Aristonicus in 130 B.C. Aristonicus defeated him, but lost next year to Marcus Perpena, who annexed Asia Minor to Rome. Aristonicus was paraded in the triumph and then strangled.

8.7.6 iam P. Crassus, cum in Asiam ad Aristonicum regem debellandum consul uenisset, tanta cura Graecae linguae notitiam animo comprehendit, ut eam in quinque diuisam genera per omnes partes ac numeros penitus cognosceret. quae res maximum ei sociorum amorem conciliauit, qua quis eorum lingua apud tribunal illius postulauerat, eadem decreta reddenti.

In Praise of Roscius

*constiteram exorientem Auroram forte salutans,
cum subito a laeua Roscius exoritur.
pace mihi liceat, caelestes, dicere uestra
mortalis uisus pulchrior esse deo.*

I stood by chance to greet the uprising Aurora,
when suddenly, on the left, Roscius rose up.
Please, o heavenly gods, give me leave to say
that a mortal seemed to me more handsome than a god.

Quintus Lutatius Catulus (d. 87 BC)

Stage fame

8.7.7 Roscius should not be left out, as he was the most famous case of dedication to the stage (i). When he faced the general public, Roscius never dared to make a single gesture that he had not practised at home. So it was not his acting career that made Roscius famous, but Roscius who made acting famous. And he did not just win the admiration of the masses; he even became intimate with the leaders of the state. These are the rewards for a devotion to work that is conscientious, painstaking, and unceasing, so it is not inappropriate to include an actor among these stories honouring the greatest men (ii).

(i) Quintus Roscius Gallus was a famous comic actor. He died in 62 B.C.

(ii) Most actors were slaves, and the acting profession was despised in ancient Rome. Actors could neither vote nor join the army.

8.7.7 *ne Roscius quidem subtrahatur, scaenicae industriae notissimum exemplum, qui nullum umquam spectante populo gestum, nisi quem domi meditatus fuerat, promere ausus est. quapropter non ludicra ars Roscium, sed Roscius ludicram artem commendauit, nec uulgi tantum fauorem, uerum etiam principum familiaritates amplexus est. haec sunt attentis et anxii et numquam cessantis studii praemia, propter quae tantorum uirorum laudibus non inpudenter se persona histrionis inseruit.*

LENIENCE OF PARENTS TO SUSPICIOUS CHILDREN

De parentum aduersus suspectos liberos moderatione

Can this be my son?

5.9.4 Next to the compassionate actions of these great men, I shall place the decision of an obscure father who thought about things in a strange and unusual manner (i). When he discovered that his son was plotting against his life, he could not get it into his head that his own flesh and blood would go so far as to commit such a crime. So he took his wife aside and pleaded with her not to keep him in the dark any longer but to reveal whether the young man had been another woman's baby or one that she herself had conceived with another man.

(i) This 'obscure father' and his son have never been identified.

5.9.4 *magnorum uirorum clementibus actis, ignoti patris nouae atque inusitatae rationis consilium adiciam. qui, cum a filio insidias necti sibi comperisset nec inducere in animum posset ut uerum sanguinem ad hoc sceleris progressum crederet, seductam uxorem suppliciter rogauit ne se ulterius celaret, siue illum adulescentem subiecisset siue ex alio concepisset.*



Yes, it is!

5.9.4 By her emphatic assertions under oath, she convinced him not to have any suspicions of that kind. The father took his son to a remote place, gave him a sword that he had hidden on his person, and offered him his throat to cut, assuring him that there was no need of any poison or hired assassin to carry out the death of his father.

This action had no gradual effect; it gave the young man a sudden shock and filled his heart with honest intentions. At once he threw the sword away and said, 'I want you to live now, Father, and if you are kind enough to allow me to make this prayer, I even want you to live on after me. The only thing I ask is that my love for you should not seem less valuable because it arises from repentance.'

O wilderness, stronger than the ties of blood; o forests, more peaceful than the home; o sword, more convincing than parenthood; o gift of freely offered death, more effective than the gift of life!

5.9.4 *adseueratione deinde eius et iure iurando se nil tale suspicari persuasus in locum desertum filio perducto gladium, quem occultum secum adtulerat, tradidit ac iugulum ferendum praebuit, nec ueneno nec latrone ei ad peragendum parricidium opus esse adfirmans.*

quo facto non paulatim, sed magno impetu recta cogitatio pectus iuuenis occupauit continuoque abiecto gladio 'tu uero' inquit, 'pater, uiue, et si tam obsequens et hoc precari filio permittas, me quoque exupera. sed tantum quaeso, ne meus erga te amor eo sit tibi uilior, quod a paenitentia oritur'.

solitudinem sanguine meliorem, pacatioresque penetibus siluas, et alimentis blandius ferum, ac mortis oblatae quam datae uitae felicius beneficium!

Next week: ancient Roman customs (e.g. how the young *once* used to shower honours of the old [sniff]) and some innate characteristics (e.g. how Cato the Younger, aged 4, rejected the Italians' plea for citizenship).