even if grounded in nature, *tamen perficienda doctrina est: mores ante omnia oratori studiis erunt excolendi atque omnis honesti iustique disciplina pertractanda*, and continued with detailed advice on what he now calls 'the arts that teach virtue'.

Critics, seeing no sense in *praemuntur*, have at times looked for a verb meaning 'are handed down' or the like (*promuntur*, *praecipiuntur*, *traduntur*). On a different tack, I suggest *praemetuuntur*. The studies that Quintilian demands are feared in advance, though they will seem less frightening once they are embarked upon. This takes up a remark in 9:

> Vereor tamen ne aut magna nimium uidear exigere, qui eundem uirum bonum esse et dicendi peritum uelim, aut multa, qui tot artibus in pueritia discendis morum quoque praecepta et scientiam iuris ciuilis praeter ea quae de eloquentia tradebantur adiecerim, quique haec operi nostro necessaria esse crediderint uelut moram rei *perhorrescant et desperent ante experimentum*.'

praemetuere is found only occasionally in classical Latin, but in respectable authors: Lucretius, Caesar, Virgil, and Phaedrus, oddly always in the present participle. Quintilian uses other rare compounds in *prae-*; note *praecogito* (once each in Livy and Seneca), *praeformo* (once each in Scribonius Largus and Silius Italicus), and *praemollio* (Quintilian's are the first two instances). Especially pertinent is Quintilian 4.5.5 *nam est nonnumquam dura propositio, quam iudex si prouidit non aliter praeformidat quam qui ferrum medici prius quam curetur aspexit*. Elsewhere that verb is only found once, in Silius.

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THE REDDLING OF VALERIAN

The fate of the Roman emperor Valerian after *c.* A.D. 260, when he was defeated by Shapur I, remains unknown; ancient authors and chroniclers remain silent or invent fanciful stories about his captivity and death. The most famous—and best preserved—representation of the triumph of Shapur I over Valerian is the one on the rock relief at Naqsh-i-Rustam; similar reliefs were carved at Bishapur and Darabgird;[1] it is also believed that it is these two enemy rulers who are represented on a sardonyx cameo that depicts a Roman and a Persian horseman fighting.[2] The

Abbreviations
CAD (*Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*) = *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (J. J. Augustin, 1956–).
RA = *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale.*

[1] Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*. III *The Royal Tombs and Other Monuments* (Chicago, 1970), 127–8 and pls. 83 and 85; see also K. Erdmann, *Die Kunst Irans zur Zeit der Sassaniden* (Mainz, 1969), 59–62 and figs. 21 and 22, and many other studies of these monuments. The identification of Valerian as the standing figure, held by the hand by Shapur in some of the reliefs, and not the kneeling one, has been established by R. Göbl, *Der Triumph des Sāsāniden Šahpuhr über die Kaiser Gordianus, Philippus und Valerianus. Die ikonographische Interpretation der Felsreliefs*, Denkschriften d. Österr. Akademie d. Wissensch., phil.-hist. Kl. 116 (Wien, 1974), 12–28.

[2] Erdmann (n. 1), 116 and fig. 92 = E. Babelon, *Catalogue des camées antiques et modernes de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1897), 193, n. 360 = pl. XLII, 360. The case for this interpretation was made by Göbl (n. 1), 15 and 33.

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ancient written sources have been catalogued by L. Wickert, in *RE* 13 (1910), 492–5, s.v. Licinius (Valerianus); most later authors refer to this article, see, for example, A. Alföldi, *Berytus* 4 (1937), 41–68.[3]

The most detailed, and also the most disputed, report about Valerian's fate after having been taken captive by the Persians comes from Lactantius, who wrote *c.* A.D. 320.

Here is what Lactantius says: *derepta est ei cutis et exuta visceribus pellis infecta rubro colore, ut in templo barbarorum deorum ad memoriam clarissimi triumphi poneretur* 'he was flayed, and his skin, stripped from the flesh, was dyed with vermilion, and placed in the temple of the gods of the barbarians, that the remembrance of a triumph so signal might be perpetuated'.[4]

As Benjamin Isaac remarks,[5] among the ancient sources only Agathias says that Valerian was flayed alive, and that this form of gruesome punishment was introduced by Shapur (I).[6] Not only are the narratives of Lactantius and Petrus Patricius silent about the circumstances of the flaying; Petrus Patricius specifically mentions that this ignominy was inflicted on Valerian after death when he quotes the words of the Roman emperor Galerius to Narses, king of Persia: μετὰ θάνατον μυσαρᾷ τινι τέχνῃ τὸ δέρμα αὐτοῦ φυλάξαντες θνητῷ σώματι ἀθάνατον ὕβριν ἐπηγάγετε [*Etiam post mortem nefaria arte cutem eius custodientes, mortali corpori immortalem ignominiam inussistis*] 'Even after death, with loathsome art you kept his skin and inflicted undying insult on his dead body.'[7] Ambiguous is Constantine, who addresses Valerian, pointing out that as punishment for his persecutions of the believers, at the behest of Shapur, king of the Persians, ἐκδαρῆναι κελευσθεὶς καὶ ταριχευθείς 'you were ordered to be flayed and *embalmed*'.[8]

Of all the extant sources only Lactantius goes on to say that the flayed skin was dyed red (*infecta rubro colore*). Among the indignities that Valerian is said to have suffered, such as serving as mounting block to Shapur whenever the Persian king

[3] Reprinted in *Studien zur Geschichte der Weltkrise des 3. Jahrhunderts nach Christus* (Darmstadt, 1967), 123–53. See also id., *CAH* 12², ch. 6. For a more recent collection of ancient sources dealing with the end of Valerian see W. Felix, *Antike literarische Quellen zur Aussenpolitik des Sāsānidenstaates* 1: Sitzungsberichte d. Österr. Akademie d. Wissensch., phil.-hist. Kl. 456 (Wien, 1985), 69–73, 'fragments' 75–85.

[4] *De mort. pers.* 5.6, trans. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (edd.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 7 (Edinburgh, 1886).

[5] 'The late Roman army', in *The Near East under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1998), 440–1, originally published in A. Cameron et al. (edd.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III. State, Resources and Armies*. Papers of the Third Workshop on Late Antiquity and Early Islam (Princeton, 1995), 125–55. Doubts about Agathias' version of the flaying were expressed as early as the late seventeenth century by Le Nain de Tillemont, *Histoire des empereurs, et des autres princes* . . . (Brussels, 1732–40), 3.169a, who bases his account of Shapur's treatment of Valerian on Lactantius and Petrus Patricius, and dismisses Agathias' report as 'contraire aux meilleurs historiens'.

[6] Agathias' text with its translation is quoted by Averil Cameron in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–70), 120–1. Note that English translations of this and other ancient sources relating to the history of Rome and the Persian wars are conveniently available in M. H. Dodgeon and S. N. C. Lieu (edd.), *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars* (London and New York, 1991–2002).

[7] Petrus Patricius, fr. 13, in *FGrH* 4.188. Translation M. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran. Sapor and Kartir* (Chicago, 1953), 111.

[8] *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum*, 24; neither P. Allard's French translation, in his *Les dernières persécutions du troisième siècle* (Paris, 1924), 173, nor M. Edwards's 2003 English translation of Constantine's *Oration to the saints* in *Constantine and Christendom* (Liverpool, 2003), seems to me to clarify what happened to the flayed skin of Valerian.

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mounted his horse,[9] and among the various stories about Valerian's subsequent fate, several of which are preserved in the Arabic chronicle of Tabari,[10] which are usually dismissed as folklore, such as having built the dam at Shushtar at the orders of Shapur, it is the dyeing of Valerian's skin, mentioned by Lactantius alone, that has most puzzled historians. They either dismissed Lactantius's account as 'invention' ('fantaisie de Lactance', Ghirshman [n. 9]), as wishful thinking ('Christliches Wunschdenken', M. Schottky, *Neue Pauly* 12.1, 1090) or at least as a mere legend ('blosse Legende', Huyse [n. 13], 83–4). With great ingenuity it was even suggested, mainly on the basis of a comparison with Firdausi's Shahnameh, that the 'purple' in the account of Lactantius (although he speaks of *ruber*, 'red' not 'purple') refers not to the hide of the unfortunate ruler but to the purple imperial robes that Valerian had to divest himself of, only to wear some hide, dyed purple, as a mockery of the imperial insignia.[11]

Such explanations were put forward because, it seems, no other source available to present-day historians could justify the fate that the Christian writers attributed to Valerian, especially the reddling of his flayed skin. Yet, it is precisely this treatment that the Assyrian king Sargon II inflicted on a defeated enemy in the late eighth century B.C. It is thus to vindicate the trustworthiness and no doubt truthfulness of Lactantius, who wrote so shortly after the events, that I have ventured into a territory alien to me.

The treatment of Valerian defeated by Shapur I in the third century A.D. and that of an enemy king defeated by King Sargon of Assyria in the late eighth century B.C., each without parallel among their historical records, present an uncanny similarity.

Sargon of Assyria (721–705 B.C.), in his so-called cylinder inscription that was, as usual for Assyrian and Babylonian foundation documents, buried in the foundations of his palace at Khorsabad, enumerates his victories over his enemies. Among the defeated kings is Ilubi'di, king of Hamath (modern Hama); Sargon boasts of 'having dyed the skin of the rebel Ilubi'di (as red) as red wool'.[12]

While the flaying of Valerian's (dead) body has been amply discussed in the pertinent literature,[13] the red colouring inflicted on the flayed skin has been usually

[9] Mentioned in Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 5.3, Orosius 7.22.3–4, and Ps. Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 32.5–6, and depicted in a pen-sketch by Holbein, prepared for a fresco intended for the Rathaus (town hall) in Basel, see H. A. Schmid, *Holbein der Jüngere, sein Aufstieg zur Meisterschaft und sein englischer Stil*. 2: *Plates* (Basel, 1948), and reproduced on plate XVI in the article by Roman Ghirshman, 'Chapour I^{er}, Valérien, Lactance—et Holbein', *Acta Iranica* 2 (1974), 303–6.

[10] See Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden, aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabarî* (Leiden, 1879; repr. Leiden, 1973) , 33 Now available in (slightly idiosyncratic) English translation in Dodgeon-Lieu (n. 6), 275–95.

[11] '. . . nous ne croyons plus être dupe d'une illusion en identifiant la "peau teinte en pourpre" exhibée en un sanctuaire de Perse comme dépouille de Valérien: celui-ci, une fois prisonnier, dut livrer ses vêtements impériaux et se contenter désormais de quelque "peau d'âne" quasi servile. . . . même après sa mort, Valérien ne subit pas d'écorchement; le roi sassanide . . . se contentant, en ce cas, de la teindre en pourpre à ce moment, pour continuer la caricature du style impérial romain' (Jean Gagé, *Syria* 42 [1965], 355–88, esp. 362–8).

[12] ša mašak Ilubi'di hammā'i iṣrupu nabāsiš: D. G. Lyon, *Keilschrifttexte Sargon's Königs von Assyrien* (Leipzig, 1883), 4.25.

[13] See, with many earlier references, B. H. Stolte, 'The Roman Emperor Valerian and Sapor I, King of Persia', *RSA* 1 (1971), 157–62. See further Jacques Schwartz, in J. Fontaine and M. Perrin (edd.), *Lactance et son temps,* Théologie historique 48 (Paris, 1978), 91–102, esp. 100, and the literature quoted by P. Huyse, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* Part III, I.2 (London, 1999), 83–4 and n. 144.

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dismissed as 'invention' or metaphor, as cited above. Still, Moreau in his commentary on Lactantius[14] takes his author seriously, and timidly suggests 'Rappel probable de la pourpre impériale'. Creed's 1984 edition of Lactantius has no comment.

Neither has Sargon's treatment of Ilubi'di given rise to any discussion. The phrase used by Sargon, *iṣrupu nabāsiš* 'dyed red as red wool', is unique in the cuneiform sources in reference to human skin; it was not singled out for comment, I am sorry to say, in the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, where it is cited under *ṣarāpu* B, nor in the most recent edition of the inscriptions of Sargon at Khorsabad.[15] The phrase 'to dye red as red wool' itself does occur in other contexts, such as in reference to the red hue of the horizon[16] in the Sumerian and Akkadian bilingual epic known from its incipit as *Lugale*, or to dyeing the landscape as red as red wool with the blood of defeated enemy warriors, an image often used by Assyrian kings, cited in the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary under *nabāsu* and under *ṣarāpu* B.

The flaying of Ilubi'di is represented on one of the palace reliefs of Khorsabad (Room VIII, no. 25), as noted by Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 30 (1933), 56. The original slab engraved with the scene of the flaying was lost in transport; only the drawings made by Flandin at the site survived.[17] Even if we had the original, and it had been indicated thereon, the red colour would hardly be discernible on the relief today.

Whether Shapur's treatment of Valerian's corpse described by Lactantius is a historical fact or not, the particular detail of dyeing the flayed skin red is in need of explanation. The studies dealing with the fate of Valerian[18] or with the sources of Lactantius either ignore this detail or explain it away, as do the works cited in notes 11 and 13. Most modern authors refer, for the historical events, to Alföldi's 'Die römische Münzprägung'.[19]

Since I am inclined to take Lactantius seriously, I can only suggest that he may have had access to rumours circulating about barbarian kings not only flaying their enemies (as we know from Late Antique and even Armenian sources, this was the custom of Persian kings) but also dyeing the flayed skin of their enemies red. If there were such stories going around, they still have to be found in the literature; I had no success in identifying any. Neither is there any trace in the cuneiform literature about reddling the defeated enemy's skin, even though Assyrian kings boast of flaying enemy kings (the verb used is *kâṣu*),[20] for example: 'I flayed the king of Katmuhi in Arbela and draped his skin over the walls of Arbela' or also 'I flayed all the chieftains who had rebelled, draped their skin over the pillars'; Sargon and Sennacherib specify 'I flayed his skin' (*mašakšu akūṣ*); king Assurbanipal uses the expression *mašakšu ašhuṭ*. 'I pulled off his skin.' Tantalizing but probably not pertinent is an obscure and partially broken passage in an inscription of Esarhaddon;[21] both are cited in the *CAD* under *šahāṭu* B meaning 2.

[14] J. Moreau, *Lactance. De la mort des persécuteurs*, 2 vols. Sources Chrétiennes 39 (Paris, 1954), 225.

[15] A. Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen, 1994), 35 (text) and 291 (translation).

[16] úr.an.na síg.hé.me.da.gim si.a.šè : išid šamê kīma nabāši ṣarip 'the horizon is dyed red as red wool' (J. van Dijk, LUGAL UD ME-LÁM-bi NIR-GÁL 1 [Leiden, 1983], 74, line 181).

[17] P. E. Botta, *Monuments de Ninive* 2 (Paris, 1849), pl. 120.

[18] For example, I. König, *Die gallischen Usurpatoren von Postumus bis Tetricus*,Vestigia 31 (Munich, 1981), 20–42, ch. 2. Das Ende Kaiser Valerians, also 20, n. 1 and 31, n. 1.

[19] A. Alföldi, 'Die römische Münzprägung und die historischen Ereignisse im Osten zwischen 260 und 270 n. Chr.', *Berytus* 5 (1938), 47–91.

[20] For full quotes see *CAD* s.v. *kâṣu* A, meaning 1b.

[21] R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien*. Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft 9 (Osnabrück, 1956), 105:21.

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The odd similarity of treating defeated enemies in two texts almost a millennium apart cries out for an explanation. Unexpected parallelisms in civilizations remote in time and culture should teach us something about the transmission of ideas or motifs. It seems to me that Lactantius's mention of this detail about dyeing red the defeated enemy's skin implies either that it corresponded to the truth, or that there were, in his time, some memories or stories about the cruelty of oriental kings manifesting itself precisely in dyeing red the flayed skin of their enemies.[22] Such a story could have been one of the no doubt numerous topoi that circulated in late antiquity and to one of which—old woman selling vegetables at the street corner—I have recently drawn attention.[23]

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[22] As Nöldeke ([n. 10], n. 3) stated: 'Über das Schicksal Valerians sind die Orientalen also noch mehr im unklaren als die Occidentalen, die wenigstens wissen, dass er nie wieder frei kam. Die Angaben über die Mishandlungen, welche er erlitten, und über seine Ermordung haben wenigstens keine Autorität, zumal wenn sie von der Feindschaft der Christen gegen Valerian ausgehn; aber freilich lässt sich auch nicht das Gegentheil behaupten.'

[23] 'The tale of the illiterate doctor in Nippur', *Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires* (2003), 54. See also my article 'Runaway—seize him' in the forthcoming *Festschrift* for Mogens Trolle Larsen.

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