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VALERIUS MAXIMUS ON HIS OWN ACTIVITY (4.1.12)*

As he draws toward the conclusion of a lengthy string of Roman *exempla* on the topic of *moderatio*, a virtue highly regarded by the reigning Emperor Tiberius,[1] Valerius introduces a brief discussion on the challenges he faces in producing the kind of account he wants to create. Unfortunately, for a rare passage in which Valerius speaks about his own work, the text is uncertain: various problems have been identified and different solutions have been proposed, but not, I will argue, ones that satisfactorily recognize the prominence of Valerius' authorial role here or understand his meaning or pay appropriate attention to the immediate context in which he makes his remarks. I propose a new emendation which helps clarify that the primary challenge concerns the scale and the style of coverage of individual *exempla* required by the *Facta et dicta memorabilia*. I will show that Valerius deliberately alludes to his own programmatic remarks in the work's preface, which then illuminate his purpose and practice, both broadly in relation to his mission to record and praise outstanding individuals and more narrowly in providing a transition to a specific *exemplum.*

Before turning to the passage to be examined in detail, it is important to quote from the preface to the work in which Valerius explains to his dedicatee, the Emperor Tiberius, and to the reader what he has set out to do:

> Vrbis Romae exterarumque gentium facta simul ac dicta memoratu digna, quae 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 aeui gesta modico uoluminum numero conprehenderit, aut quis compos mentis domesticae peregrinaeque historiae seriem felici superiorum stilo conditam uel attentiore cura uel praestantiore facundia traditurum se sperauerit?
>
> The city of Rome and foreign nations have produced both deeds and sayings which are worthy of record. They are too widely scattered among other authors to be mastered in a short time, and so I have decided to make a selection from famous authors and to arrange them so that those who wish to embrace the examples may be spared the toil of lengthy research. I have not been seized by a desire to encompass everything. For who could cover the deeds of every age in a modest number of volumes? Or who in his right mind could hope to pass on the sequence of domestic and foreign history recorded by the felicitous pen of our predecessors either with more scrupulous accuracy or more distinguished eloquence?[2]

In the last section of these opening remarks Valerius highlights two areas in which he has had to make authorial choices: (i) he cannot include everything and so has had to

* I wish to thank Jeffrey Murray and the anonymous readers for their comments; all remaining errors are to my account.

[1] See H. Westphal, '*Imperium suum paulatim destruxit*: the concept of *moderatio* in Valerius Maximus' *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 4.1', *AClass* 58 (2015), 191–208, especially 191–3.

[2] Translation from D. Wardle, *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Deeds and Sayings* (Oxford, 1998) with the adoption of Shackleton Bailey's 'felicitous pen' for the original 'finer style'.

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choose what he covers, that is, how many *exempla* to include, from which periods, what virtues and vices to treat; (ii) he cannot equal his sources in *facundia*, which, I believe, has two relevant elements. First, the scale of his individual *exempla* is smaller than that of his sources;[3] second, he claims that his 'eloquence' is inferior, which must include what we could call 'style'.[4]

In the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* significant reflections by Valerius on his authorial role are relatively few, but 4.1.12 is certainly a key passage. And in this case the reflection is heralded by the appearance of the two key nouns from the title of Valerius' work, *facta* and *dicta*.[5] As a starting point for more detailed discussion I quote the text from Briscoe's relatively conservative Teubner edition, which is now the standard text for Valerius:[6]

sentio quos ciues quaeue facta eorum ac dicta quam † breuissimo † ambitu orationis amplectar. sed cum magna † mihi atque per † multa breuiter dicenda sint, claritate excellentibus infinitis personis rebusque circumfusus utrumque praestare † non potuit itaque † propositi nostri ratio non laudanda sibi omnia sed recordanda sumpsit. quapropter bona cum uenia duo Metelli, Macedonicus et Numidicus, maxima patriae ornamenta, strictim se narrari patientur.

Briscoe's decision to resort to the obelus on three occasions in such a short passage indicates the substantial problems in reconstructing Valerius' original text from the evidence of the extant manuscripts.[7] Manuscript A (and manuscript L's) *quam ambitu orationis* (line 1) attracted adverse comment from Servatus Lupus of Ferrières, but he suggested no correction. *breuissimo* (line 1) appears in the eleventh-century manuscript G, which does not derive from A and L, showing that the text was problematic at an earlier stage in the transmission. The combination *quam breuissimo ambitu orationis* is considered 'grammatically more feasible' by Westphal,[8] but Shackleton Bailey follows the tradition of many of the later manuscripts, and Kempf, and inserts *angusto*.[9]

[3] Examples of the excerpting that Valerius undertakes are well documented: see e.g. G. Maslakov, *Tradition and Abridgement: A Study of the* Exempla *Tradition in Valerius Maximus and the Elder Pliny* (Diss., Macquarie University, 1979). Different degrees of abbreviation are evident: reworking a Ciceronian *exemplum*, where the latter has already shaped it for his oratorical or philosophical purpose, often needs far less cutting than taking a narrative from Livy.

[4] Cf. Valerius' use of *facundia* and *facundus* for Plato (5.10.ext.2, 8.7.ext.3), Pindar (9.12.ext.7) and Livy (1.8.ext.19), of written works, and for Hortensius (8.3.3) and Caesar (8.9.3), of oratory. The anonymous reader urges the idea that Valerius may be somewhat ironic in claiming that he cannot match his sources, and suggests that 4.1.12 is a case in point, with its many rhetorical flourishes.

[5] Cf. 6.2.prf., 7.2.prf., 7.3.prf., 9.3.prf., 9.11.prf., 9.11.12.

[6] J. Briscoe, *Valeri Maximi facta et dicta memorabilia* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998). For a justification of this label, see D. Wardle, *BMCR* 1999.09.25 (http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1999/1999-09-25.html). In what previously was the standard edition, C. Kempf, *Valerii Maximi Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri novem* (Leipzig, 1858) presents the same three sections as beyond restoration. In the Budé edition—R. Combès, *Valère Maxime: Faits et dits mémorables* (Paris, 1997), which is of limited value in establishing Valerius' text (see e.g. J. Briscoe, 'The Budé Valerius Maximus', *CR* 49 [1999], 76–9)—Combès admits no uncertainties and his apparatus criticus contains none of the scholarly debate around this passage.

[7] For a useful introduction to the transmission of Valerius' text, see P.K. Marshall in L.D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), 428–30 and J. Briscoe, *Valerius Maximus Facta et Dicta Memorabilia Book 8* (Berlin, 2019), 15–28.

[8] H. Westphal, 'Valerius Maximus on *moderatio*. A commentary on *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 4.1' (Diss., University of Western Australia, 2018), 148.

[9] D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Valerius Maximus. Memorable Deeds and Sayings* (Cambridge, MA, 2000): *sentio quos ciues quaeue facta eorum ac dicta quam angusto ambitu orationis amplectar*. Although Valerius uses *angustus* only four times (8.5.6, 8.14.ext.2, 9.1.4, 9.8.ext.1), the sense is easily understood.

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A superlative form *angustissimo* would give an intelligible sense (and echo the explanatory *breuissimo*), but, although Valerius is excerpting and condensing, his purpose is not to abbreviate *as far as possible* but rather to the degree appropriate to the scale of his work, so the positive *angusto* is preferable.[10] Westphal suggests that we should read *tam angusto*, because, 'framed by the words *dicta* and *angusto*, the particle *tam* could easily have been misread and falsified to *quam* in the light of the preceding pronouns'.[11] However, it is far more likely that we have a third interrogative element introduced by *quam* (or something similar) dealing with the idea 'on what scale',[12] a question that Valerius then proceeds to clarify in the next sentence.[13]

The problems of the next sentence are more complex with three principal loci of disagreement among Valerius' editors. The starting point, however, for an attempt to unravel some of the difficulties was identified clearly by Gertz, who rightly emphasized that *utrumque* (line 3) shows that Valerius presented himself as wrestling with two difficulties.[14] Therefore, the first part of the sentence must set forth two authorial dilemmas. The different readings of the manuscripts with two substantives, *magna* and *multa* (line 2), and one adverb, *breuiter*, present just one problem, that of scale.[15] So scholars have suggested introducing a second adverb to follow *magna*: Heller conjectured *magnifice*,[16] Gertz *abundanter*, albeit cautiously,[17] and most recently Westphal *digne* on the grounds that this is a 'less invasive' addition. The challenge is to propose an adverb that could easily have been corrupted into *atque* or *atque per*. I suggest that *apte* fits the bill palaeographically and creates perfect sense. Indeed, Valerius uses the adverb on two other occasions both in authorial contexts: *hoc loco apte referuntur Polystratus et Hippoclides* (1.8.ext.17) and *quia appellatione <LATINA> uix apte exprimi possunt, Graeca pronuntiatione dicantur* (7.4.prf.). Thus Valerius explains his task as presenting important or weighty material in a manner

[10] *arto* would be a palaeographically easier supplement, but Valerius predominantly uses this adjective in the sense of 'close' (see E. Otón Sobrino, *Léxico de Valerio Máximo* [Madrid, 1977)], 198); only at 4.4.10 does it have the sense of 'limited' or 'restricted'. *stricto* would also give the required sense, but Valerius' use of *strictim* at the end of the *exemplum* makes it very unlikely.

[11] Westphal (n. 8), 149.

[12] *ambitus* occurs only here in Valerius with this meaning (see Otón Sobrino [n. 10], 142); cf. *OLD* s.v. *ambitus* 5: 'an expression, phrase' and *TLL* 1.1860.46–79. That Valerius describes his writing as *oratio* is unproblematic: he uses the word in two other authorial passages (cf. 5.10.3, 9.13.prf.).

[13] I had considered whether a copulative (*et*, *ac* or *que*) or an alternative (*ue*) is needed with the third interrogative element, as Shackleton Bailey suggests in his English translation, i.e. to read *quoue* or *quoque*, the final syllable of which it is easy to believe was lost through the following *am* of *ambitu*. However, Valerius subjects virtually all his exemplars to brevity, whether his material focusses on their words or deeds, and so the third element is hierarchically more important than the other two, and a copulative would reduce it to something of equal importance. So in English I would translate the sentence as follows: 'I realize what citizens and what deeds and sayings of theirs I am including in how narrow a compass of my words'; cf. the translations of S. Speed, *Romae Antiquae Descriptio*: *A View of the Religion, Laws, Customs, Manners, and Dispositions of the Ancient Romans and Others, Comprehended in their Most Illustrious Acts and Sayings Agreeable to History, Written in Latine by that Famous Historian Quintus Valerius Maximus, and now Carefully Rendred into English, together with the Life of the Author* (London, 1678), 158 and H.J. Walker, *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Deeds and Sayings* (Indianapolis, 2004), 124.

[14] M.C. Gertz, 'Symbolae criticae ad Valerium Maximum', *Tidsskrift for Philologi og Paedagogik* 10 (1872–3), 260–99, at 275.

[15] Shackleton Bailey (n. 9) and Combès (n. 6) print the reading of manuscript A without obeli: *sed cum magna mihi atque permulta breuiter dicenda sint*.

[16] H.J. Heller, 'Emendationes Valerianae', *Philologus* 27 (1868), 343–8, at 347.

[17] Gertz (n. 14), 275.

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fitting its nature and presenting a large volume of material, specifically many *exempla*, in abbreviated form.

Both considerations are reinforced in the sequel: his subjects excel in *claritas* (line 2) and the author is faced with a range of human and other affairs that are beyond counting (*infinitus*). Overwhelmed both by the stature and significance of his exemplars and by the sheer number of them, the result was an inability to do justice to both (*utrumque praestare*). With Kempf (although he did not go so far as to print it), I follow Gertz in emending the *potuit* of manuscript A (line 3) to *potui*, a first-person verb that is highly appropriate in this authorial passage. Then *itaque* (line 3) can stand as first word in the next sentence, its usual position in Valerius.[18]

What follows, then, is an explanation of what Valerius has been able to do, first through a statement of principle, which returns to what he has set out in the preface, and then through an application of the principle to a specific *exemplum.* This resolution of his authorial dilemma can be usefully compared with another authorial passage that occurs at the beginning of his treatment of foreign exempla of *ira*, but which also looks back at the eight cases of Roman anger that he has just presented (9.3.ext.prf.):

neque ab ignotis exempla petere iuuat et maximis uiris exprobare uitia sua uerecundiae est. ceterum cum propositi fides excellentissima quaeque conplecti moneat, uoluntas operi cedat, dum praeclara libenter probandi necessaria narranti conscientia non desit.[19]

It is not helpful to search for examples from unknowns and criticising great men for their vices is a matter of concern. Nonetheless, although faithfulness to my purpose urges me to embrace all things excellent, my wishes must be subordinate to my work, so long as the one narrating what is necessary is conscious of his ready approval of what deserves great fame.

Here again there are two competing ideas: in the first eleven chapters of the final book of his work Valerius has determined to present an uninterrupted treatment of vices, which in itself is a stark contrast to eight books of predominantly positive examples of virtue,[20] and in the middle of his treatment of anger he reflects on what he is doing. In general, for Valerius and other writers of exemplary literature, the more famous the exemplar the more powerful the force of the example. So the vast majority of Valerius' exemplars are renowned figures. Yet, to treat the vices of the great (*uiri maximi*), who were in other respects exemplars of virtues (for example, from this chapter, M. Livius Salinator, T. Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus and, most relevantly, Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus), was difficult for an author of inferior status.[21] None the less, Valerius declares that he will not do what is easy, that is, refrain from such criticism, but will pursue the plan for his work that includes vices as a key aspect. The final proviso, whether one accepts the manuscripts' *narrandi* or Madvig's emendation *narranti*, re-presents the issues—Valerius wants to signal his approval for all kinds of positive *exempla*, but also narrates what he has to, that is, *exempla* of vice.

[18] 88 out of 99 occurrences, by my count.

[19] I follow Shackleton Bailey in accepting Madvig's *narranti* for the manuscripts' *narrandi*.

[20] For Valerius' chapters on vice as an example of apotreptic, contrasting with the more prominent protreptic, see S.R. Matravers, *Commentary on Valerius Maximus' Book IX.1–10. A discourse on uitia: an apotreptic approach* (Diss., University of Birmingham, 2016), especially 16–18.

[21] This is the most plausible interpretation of *uerecundia* in this context (see R.A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community in Ancient Rome* [Oxford, 2005], 15, 26), which echoes the lowliness of Valerius that he highlights in the work's preface (*mea paruitas*).

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To return to 4.1.12: confronted by a double challenge and unable to fulfil both aspects of it, Valerius has prioritized the need to write briefly on many topics over writing with a level of detail or style appropriate to his august exemplars: *quis enim omnis aeui gesta modico uoluminum numero conprehenderit?* He cannot include everything, but has chosen to include many.[22] The gerundive *recordanda* (line 4) picks up firstly the *memoratu digna* of the opening clause of the work, while *non laudanda* (line 4) reminds the reader that the *exempla* he has chosen include things to be imitated and things to be avoided, which is an idea reflected in the praise of Tiberius, *cuius caelesti prouidentia uirtutes, de quibus dicturus sum, benignissime fouentur, uitia seuerissime uindicantur.* Importantly, this is (again) a programmatic theme outlined in the opening preface. Valerius' reminder to his reader needs to be issued here because of his concern over the transition to the next *exemplum.* Although the laudable aspect of the *exemplum* proper that follows immediately is Metellus Macedonicus' *moderatio* after the death of Scipio Aemilianus, categorized expressly by Valerius as *praecipua ueneratione prosequenda*, it was particularly remarkable precisely because of the preceding enmity (*inimicitiae*) of the two which arose from the ignoble motive of *aemulatio uirtutis* and escalated into a kind of civilian warfare (*tantum non togata proelia*).

In the final sentence of this authorial section Valerius shows us how he has resolved his major dilemma and how he handles this particular instance of two *maximi uiri* behaving badly. The clear causal link, *quapropter* (line 4), and the words *strictim se narrari* (line 5) confirm for the reader that an abbreviated account is what the work requires. In the two other instances in which Valerius uses *strictim*, it introduces cursory lists of exemplars (6.1.13, 8.13.6), but here the scale is noticeably different: the actual *exemplum* of Macedonicus' *moderatio* is 138-words long, not short in the context of the whole work. None the less, it is a remarkable work of compression, not just of the events of 129 B.C. in the immediate aftermath of Scipio Aemilianus' death but also of the years of rivalry.[23] Valerius has not produced a detailed rehearsal of the enmity or of the key events of 129 B.C. The second idea introduced by *bona cum uenia* (line 4) and by *patientur* (line 5) is the *uerecundia* that Valerius feels at presenting ignoble behaviour by the noble. Those long dead could not prevent Valerius from unveiling their shortcomings, but, by presenting them as consenting to his representation of them, they voluntarily become exemplars. As the anonymous reader has suggested, a useful lesson that might be extracted from the *exemplum* for Valerius' readers is that moral improvement is possible: what began ominously with *acerrime ... dissenserat* ends upliftingly with the claim *omnia nimirum ista praecipua ueneratione prosequenda deleuit moderatio.*

So for 4.1.12 I suggest the following text:

sentio quos ciues quaeue facta eorum ac dicta quam angusto ambitu orationis amplectar. sed cum magna mihi apte et multa breuiter dicenda sint, claritate excellentibus infinitis personis rebusque circumfusus utrumque praestare non potui. itaque propositi nostri ratio non laudanda sibi omnia sed recordanda sumpsit. quapropter bona cum uenia duo Metelli, Macedonicus et Numidicus, maxima patriae ornamenta, strictim se narrari patientur.

[22] Over 1,050 by my count. The opening *itaque*, which Shackleton Bailey rightly translates as 'therefore', signals the consequence of Valerius' authorial decision.

[23] For a handy summary of the possible timeframe and explanations for the renowned disagreement, with attestation in classical sources, see L. Beness and T.W. Hillard, 'Another voice against the "tyranny" of Scipio Aemilianus in 129 B.C.?', *Historia* 61 (2012), 270–81, at 272–3.

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I realize what citizens and what deeds and sayings of theirs I am including in how narrow a compass of my words. But because I have great things to be told fittingly and very many things to be told in brief, and I am overwhelmed by the countless number of people and deeds, I have not been able to fulfil both duties for those who excel in renown. So the principle of my undertaking has not been to praise everything but to put it all on the record. So with good grace the two Metelli, Macedonicus and Numidicus, great ornaments of their country, will permit themselves to be narrated in short order.

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