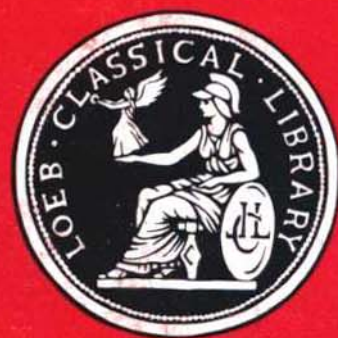


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VALERIUS MAXIMUS
MEMORABLE DOINGS
AND SAYINGS
BOOKS I–V



Edited and Translated by
D. R. SHACKLETON BAILEY

VALERIUS
MAXIMUS

江苏工业学院图书馆
MEMORABLE SAYINGS
AND SAYINGS

藏书章

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VALERIUS MAXIMUS

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D.R.S.B

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INTRODUCTION

Nothing is known of Valerius Maximus except what can be gathered from his work. His name survives in early manuscripts and epitomists, but without praenomen. The nomen and cognomen are both common and found combined in the great patrician gens Valeria down to the later third century B.C., when Maximus was replaced by Messalla, and again occasionally under the Empire, but this author has no better claim to aristocratic ancestry than Lucretius. A reference in 5.5. praef. to *imagines* (family masks) belongs to an imaginary figure, not the author himself.

Addressing the Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14–37) in his dedicatory preface Valerius refers to himself as *mea parvitas* (“my petty self”), and in 4.4.11 he has *parvulos census nostros* (“our petty fortunes”), indicative of modest station and means. But his writing shows him to be steeped in the art of rhetoric and eager to show off his literary talent. Perhaps then a dweller in some Roman Grub Street, at least until he found an eminent and wealthy patron in Sextus Pompeius, Consul in A.D. 14 and a patron-friend of Ovid (*Ex Pont.* 4.1.4, 5, 15).

Valerius’ literary legacy, a collection of “memorable deeds and sayings,” is arranged in nine Books (*libri*) subdivided into chapters, each purporting to illustrate a theme,

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for example Roman religious observance, or moral quality. Roman examples are usually followed by some non-Roman (external) ones.

Stray items of internal evidence suggest that composition was still proceeding in A.D. 30 or thereabouts. A personal digression (2.6.8) recalls an incident on the Aegean island of Ceos during a voyage to Asia along with other Romans in Pompeius' company.¹ If Pompeius was on his way there as governor, as is more than likely, Syme showed that it was probably in or about 25. Pompeius seems to have died between the end of 29 and the end of 31, and a warm obituary tribute is attached to 4.7.ext.2, along with a complaint about the malice which association with the great man had drawn upon the writer. An impassioned denunciation (9.11.ext.4) of a conspirator against the Emperor who (in spite of some recent scepticism) can only be Sejanus² takes us to 31, though the passage may

¹ Recent doubt about the identity has been conclusively refuted by John Briscoe in his "Notes on Valerius Maximus" (*Sileno* 1993, 395–408). Yet D. Wardle in his commentary on Book 1 (1998) leans the other way: "the casual way in which he is introduced would make V. seem a very ungrateful client; Pompeius may thus become a humble unknown and any date for the episode be lost." A humble unknown was unlikely to be traveling to Asia with Valerius and a company of Romans—actually *ex hypothesi* his suite (*cohors*). And a lady of the highest station would not have been so anxious for the honour of his presence at her deathbed "to add lustre to her passing." The *seemingly* casual introduction of the episode, along with a generous dose of flattery, probably appeared to Valerius as a graceful manoeuvre, the dedication of his work having gone to the Emperor, not to Pompeius.

² Again Briscoe's discussion should have settled all doubts about whether the nameless conspirator really was Sejanus.

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have been added to an earlier draft. A reference to Julia (Livia) Augusta, who died in 29, as still alive (6.1.praef.) fits in, but other suggested evidential allusions do not convince.

In its opening sentence the purpose of the work is defined in terms of practical utility: Valerius has decided to select from famous authors and arrange doings and sayings worthy of memorial, both Roman and foreign, in order that persons looking for illustrative examples may be spared the trouble of a search among sources. Nothing is said here about edification. But there follows a reference to the virtues and vices of which he is about to write, and his items are mainly arranged as illustrating moral qualities or tendencies, and frequently provided with moralistic comment. Like his Emperors, Valerius is, or poses as, a proponent of traditional religion and mores; politically he is conservative (pro-senatorial) as concerns the republican past but a eulogist of the new imperial order and its architects the Caesars: Julius, Augustus, and not least Tiberius. Hence a substratum of ideology, soil for the flowers of rhetoric that are this author's pride and joy. How far his style was his own creation can only be guessed, but the like of it is not found among earlier Latin survivors. He writes in periods, therein following Cicero and Livy as opposed to Sallust, but in his hands they are apt to sprawl as though he had trouble winding them up. Epigrams and other ornaments of variable quality display themselves in language often ponderous, stilted, and strained; but the charge of obscurity does not hold below the surface. Textual uncertainties apart, basic sense is simple and clear, if not banal, even to bathos as in the comment on Democritus' devotion to philosophy (8.7.4): "The mind boggles at such diligence,

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and passes elsewhere.” The verbal flourishes may be mannered and involuted but hardly ever puzzle a patient and practiced reader (translating them is another matter). At the same time, Valerius is capable of lively, well-organized narrative, as in the Ceos episode, and many of his examples are interesting and informative, especially of course the minority not found in other sources.

Lacking the historical virtues, he is not overly careful in his use of his authorities: blunders are not rare and sometimes clangorous. Cicero, Livy, Varro, and Trogus are his standbys,³ but he loves hype like any child of modern media.

In antiquity Valerius was not forgotten. In his encyclopedic *Natural History* the elder Pliny lists him among his sources, and Plutarch mentions him twice as a historical writer. Anonymous borrowings elsewhere are supported by two ancient epitomes (see below) as evidence of at least a modest vogue. For the medieval world thirty manuscripts are known to have been produced in the twelfth century or earlier. In the Renaissance they abounded, as did printed editions from 1470 on. For readers of that period, as Briscoe remarks (*Sileno* 1993, p. 395), Valerius provided easily digested information about episodes and customs in the non-Roman as well as the Roman world. But changes in literary taste and stricter canons of research put him out of reputation, at least until recent years, in which the same expert points to a marked resurgence of interest especially among anglophone scholars.

³ My references to occurrences of Valerius' examples in earlier or later ancient authors derive with few exceptions from Kempf's first edition as supplemented in Briscoe's lists.

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Text and Translation

With J. Briscoe's edition in the Teubner series (1998) Valerius at last acquires a good working apparatus and a (Latin) preface to which those interested in his textual problems must resort.

Until 1937 the text was held to depend on two very closely linked ninth-century manuscripts: Bernensis (A) and Ashburnhamensis (L). In that year D. M. Schullian promoted the eleventh-century Bruxellensis (G), and its claim to represent an independent version of their source (at one remove according to Briscoe) is now credited.⁴ I have to state a different impression, admittedly not based on detailed research. G corrects many of AL's errors, but to my eyes its contribution resembles those of GR in Cicero's *Epistulae ad familiares* or the Leidensis of Tacitus: a far-rago of hit-or-miss medieval conjecture with at best occasional survivals from an earlier stratum.

Numerous corrections, many of them in G, were entered in A by abbot Servatus Lupus, "the typical humanist of the ninth century" (F. W. Hall). He added many after he had gained access to Paris' Epitome (see Briscoe's preface, xiii f.).

Two epitomes have come down from late antiquity, by Julius Paris and Januarius Nepotianus, the latter stopping at 3.2.7 and too free to be of much use. Briscoe's edition has them in full; some others like the present one contain a specimen replacing a large gap in the manuscripts (1.1.ext.4–1.4.ext.1). Paris comes in a good ninth-century manuscript and he worked from a text often better, and of

⁴ Ignored, however, by Combès (Budé 1995).

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course very much older, than AL, often following its wording closely. But it is usually impossible to feel any assurance that a discrepancy from AL does not originate with the abridger. Of scarcely any interest is a flotsam "On prae-nomina," added in Paris as Valerius' tenth book but clearly not his.

Many of AL's corruptions have been convincingly emended, but others remain problematical and yet others no doubt undetected. Briscoe's text is lavish with the obelus, but his apparatus cites proposed remedies generously, usually without indication of preference. My text has been formed independently. Readability being an important consideration, I have been ready to espouse a conjecture in cases of choice between acceptables, especially where the doubt lies in the wording rather than the sense.⁵ Some conjectures of my own are new, others are from a forthcoming article by W. S. Watt. My critical notes, necessarily kept to a minimum, ignore many trivial or obvious and generally accepted improvements on AL. The obelus has been a last resort.

Apart from the translation of Book I by D. Wardle in his commentary on the same (1998), I know of none in English except one by Samuel Speed in 1678, which I have not consulted. Translations exist in other languages (see the Bibliography). Nothing that can be called a commentary exists in any language except Wardle's aforesaid. This makes a good start on the historical and antiquarian side.

⁵ "Conjectures in a prose text, though they may restore the meaning with certainty or probability, often admit of verbal variations. What editors should do in such cases is a matter of opinion" (SB, *Select Classical Papers*, p. 353).

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Sigla

A = cod. Bernensis

L = cod. Florentinus Ashburnhamensis

G = cod. Bruxellensis

P = epitome of Paris (cod. Vaticanus)

Nepot. = epitome of Nepotianus

☞ = inferior manuscripts or early editions

Br = see Briscoe's apparatus criticus

An asterisk indicates an obelus in Briscoe's text

Per. = Perizonius

SB = Shackleton Bailey in this edition

SB¹ = "Textual Notes on Lesser Latin Historians," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 1981, 158–67

SB² = *ibid.*, 1983, 239 (comments from E. Badian on SB¹)

SB³ = "On Valerius Maximus" (*Rivista di fil. classica*, 1996, 175–84)

SB⁴ = *Two Studies in Roman Nomenclature*, 2nd ed., 1991

Torr. = Torrenius (ed. 1726)

Watt¹ = W. S. Watt, "Notes on Valerius Maximus and Velleius Paterculus," *Klio* 1986, 465–73

Watt² = "Notes on Valerius Maximus," *Euphrosyne*, 1995, 237–42

Watt³ = In Briscoe's edition

Watt⁴ = "Notes on Valerius Maximus," forthcoming in *Eikasmos*

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