

Tradition and Abridgement

A study of the exempla tradition in Valerius Maximus and the Elder Pliny

by

G. MASLAKOV, B.A. (Syd.)

A thesis submitted to Macquarie University in accord
with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the School of History, Philosophy and
Politics

May, 1978.

I hereby certify that no part of this work has been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. An earlier version of some material in Chapter three and the Appendix was included in an article on Valerius Maximus submitted to Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt in 1973. The article was accepted for publication, but delays in its appearance have led me to write to Dr. W. Haase withdrawing the original article and offering a new one for publication in 1979. Dr. Haase has generously accepted this suggestion.



G. Maslakov

CONTENTS

Certificate	
Contents	
Synopsis	i
Preface	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter one:	<u>Exempla</u> , exemplars and the monumental <u>exempla</u> tradition 18
Chapter two:	Antiquarians, <u>imagines</u> and <u>exempla</u> 29
Chapter three:	Valerius Maximus' collection - some problems of historical perspective 104
Chapter four:	Selection and abridgement: Livy - Valerius Maximus 137
Chapter five:	Selection and abridgement: Cicero - Valerius Maximus 256
Chapter six:	Pliny's response to the <u>exempla</u> tradition 339
Conclusion	366
Appendix	368
Bibliography	394

SYNOPSIS

An argument is developed in the Introduction that the Roman exempla tradition has to be seen in relation to the monumental and pictorial setting (statues, paintings and other forms of visual display - e.g. imago clipeata, signet rings) that conditioned and developed Roman historical consciousness. The evidence for the political/historical role of these images is taken from the Natural History and the discussion moves to consider Pliny's understanding of this material and his use of the sources from which it is drawn (antiquarian-prosopographical studies and the illustrated exempla literature that naturally developed together with these - Varro, Atticus). The ground is prepared for a detailed discussion of these sources in Chapter two and the concluding Chapter on Pliny's response to this tradition.

Chapter one follows through the theme of pictorial representation of historical figures and events into rhetorical theory and practice (Ad Herennium, Cicero, Valerius). This is done in order to make a comparison between Cicero's allusions to the exemplars of Roman virtus (which are grounded in familiarity with the representational images and monuments) and Valerius Maximus' second-hand, derivative and rhetorically conditioned references taken from orators and antiquarians. Contrast is also made between Valerius and Pliny. Unlike Valerius, Pliny transmits in a well-informed and relatively comprehensive manner material from the antiquarian writers.

Chapter two seeks to document the complexity of the exempla tradition. Valerius Maximus, it is suggested, is representative of only one aspect of it (the rhetorical one, though he does not completely exclude antiquarian material). Here an evaluation is given of the historiographical significance of the considerable body of lost exempla literature and its close links with antiquarian studies and developing prosopography (e.g. Atticus, Messalla). The importance of illustrated exempla literature is again underlined and Pliny's role in transmitting and interpreting this heritage is again noticed.

The moralism of this tradition is emphasized and presented as an important aspect of contemporary anxiety and insecurity. It is argued that the antiquarian tradition of scholarship has to be seen as an essential part of Roman historical thought.

Chapter three discusses Valerius Maximus' understanding of the historical traditions he inherits. Importance is placed on his lack of coherent perspective and effective overall control of material. Again a contrast is suggested between this approach and Pliny's handling of antiquarian items.

Chapter four examines the old problem of Valerius' sources from a new angle. A number of Livy-Valerius parallels are scrutinized to determine the distinctive aspects of Valerius' understanding and interpretation of annalistic material. His moralism and religious traditionalism emerge as crucial. In general, possible links of the Facta et Dicta with other strands of the exempla tradition are taken into account.

Chapter five deals with a number of Cicero-Valerius parallels, noting the numerous distinctive features of Valerius' interpretation of the Ciceronian material on Greek and Roman history. Particular attention is given to Valerius' understanding of the nature of the Roman political tradition (material that further illustrates points made in Chapter three), with special reference to his response to Cicero's De Senectute (which he cites).

Chapter six picks up a theme that runs right through this discussion - Pliny's response to the antiquarian exempla literature. The discussion centres on Pliny's use of that literature to develop a penetrating critique of Augustus and his political publicity. It is illustrated how Pliny exploits the resources of the antiquarian exempla to highlight the discontinuity in the Roman tradition brought about by the principate of Augustus.

PREFACE

The original idea of investigating the Roman exempla tradition came from Professor E. A. Judge. To him, above all, I owe an incalculable debt of gratitude. First, for the challenge and stimulation of his lectures and seminars on Roman political ideas and institutions. Secondly, for his patience and encouragement of my work over a number of years. I am only one of many of his students who, through his tireless enthusiasm and intellectual energy, have been motivated to take the rewarding path of historical research and teaching. It was his particular interpretation of Roman history that first aroused my interest in the Forum of Augustus, in Valerius Maximus and the Elder Pliny.

I also acknowledge a profound debt to Dr. C. E. V. Nixon, who supervised my work from 1975. He gave much of his valuable time to read the thesis in draft and make numerous helpful suggestions for improving the coherence and the general direction of my arguments. I profited greatly from his concern and guidance.

Dr. N. Horsfall of University College, London, read the first draft of Chapters one and six, saving me from numerous errors and adding bibliographical information. Over the years I have gained much from his interest in my work.

I am grateful to Dr. A. Emmett for her generous help in proofreading the typescript. Much of this thesis was written during my sabbatical leave in 1977, for which I would like to thank Macquarie University.