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The important geographical position of Cyprus, which constituted a point of transition to the East, the island's presence in various historical developments, and especially its rich mythology, offered ancient Cyprus many opportunities to appear – explicitly or implicitly – in Classical, Postclassical and Modern European literature and art. The studies in this volume move in this direction and attempt to shed light on the presence of Cyprus in the ancient world and on how it was perceived, as well as to consider its contribution to the Roman world and, by extension, to Western European culture.



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D.E.

SPYRIDON TZOUNAKAS (ED.)

THE RECEPTION OF ANCIENT CYPRUS

3



THE SEEDS OF  
TRIPTOLEMUS

3

Spyridon Tzounakas (ed.)

## THE RECEPTION OF ANCIENT CYPRUS IN ROMAN SOURCES AND BEYOND: ELEVEN STUDIES



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SPYRIDON TZOUNAKAS is Associate Professor of Latin Literature at the University of Cyprus, where he is currently Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Letters. His main research and publications focus on Roman satire (especially Persius), Roman epistolography (especially Pliny the Younger), Roman epic (especially Lucan and Valerius Flaccus), Roman elegy (especially Tibullus), Cicero's orations, and Roman intertextuality. He has published many articles in international refereed journals and collective volumes, has edited a book on praises of Roman leaders, co-edited a book on the reception of ancient Cyprus in the culture of the western world and another one on Cyprus through travel literature (15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), and completed a book on Persius' *Satires*. He is currently working on a volume on Pliny the Younger's intertextuality and on a research project on Persius' intertextuality.

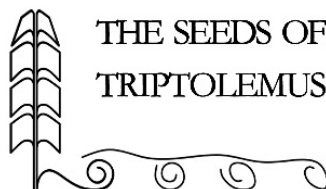




# THE SEEDS OF TRIPTOLEMUS

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THE RECEPTION OF ANCIENT CYPRUS  
IN ROMAN SOURCES AND BEYOND: ELEVEN STUDIES

On the cover: reworking of the mosaic of the House of Dionysus, Paphos  
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## PREFACE

*Spyridon Tzounakas*

This volume (*The Reception of Ancient Cyprus in Roman Sources and Beyond: Eleven Studies*) emerged as a result of the papers presented in two Workshops that took place in Nicosia, on 29 May 2021 and 7 July 2021 respectively, within the context of my research programme entitled *The Reception of Ancient Cyprus in the Culture of the Western World* (RACCWW). This work was co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Cyprus through the Research and Innovation Foundation (Project: EXCELLENCE/1216/0525). The main aim of this research programme is to shed light on the presence of Cyprus in the ancient world and on how it was perceived, as well as to consider its contribution to the Roman world and, by extension, to Western European culture. The important geographical position of the island, which constituted a point of transition to the East, the island's presence in various historical developments, and especially its rich mythology, offered ancient Cyprus many opportunities to appear – explicitly or implicitly – in Classical, Postclassical and Modern European literature and art. The studies in this volume move in this direction and supplement a volume with a similar title that ensued from an international conference held in Nicosia in February 2021: Spyridon Tzounakas, Stella Alekou and Stephen Harrison (eds.), *The Reception of Ancient Cyprus in Western Culture*, Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter 2023 (Trends in Classics 139). For more information on the aims and the main findings of the research programme, see the “Introduction” there (pp. 1-10), as well as the website of the programme (<https://receptionofancientcyprus.com.cy>).

The present volume is divided into three parts. Part 1, entitled “The Roman Conquest of Cyprus and the Exemplarity of the Island”, includes three studies. Spyridon Tzounakas (“The Roman Conquest of Cyprus in the Rhetorical Strategies of Cicero’s *De domo sua* and *Pro Sestio*”) examines the way the Roman conquest of Cyprus is rhetorically exploited by Cicero in his attempt to denigrate Clodius’ image in two speeches. He argues that the case of Ptolemy, king of Cyprus, is harmoniously incorporated in the broader argumentation of the speeches, reinforces the tragic aspects of Clodius’ opponents and works as an *exemplum* that illuminates Clodius’ stance towards Cicero and Sestius. Georgios Vassiliades (“The Roman Conquest of Cyprus in Ancient Sources: A *bellum iustum* or *iniustum*?”) continues the discussion of the Roman conquest of Cyprus. Through the analysis of relevant Latin and Greek sources, his chapter attempts to show how the Roman authors and, probably, the Roman public opinion of the 50s BC morally evaluated the annexation of Cyprus on the basis of the moral and legal category of *bellum iustum*. It is concluded that Roman public opinion, which is reflected in



contemporary and later sources, was divided on the moral evaluation of whether the annexation of Cyprus was a *bellum iustum* or a *bellum iniustum*, by thus adopting the arguments of Clodius or Cicero respectively. Margot Neger (“Cyprus *in exemplis*: Cypriot Episodes as Narrated by Valerius Maximus”) scrutinizes the presence of Cyprus in Valerius Maximus’ narrative techniques. The chapter investigates a series of anecdotes concerning the island of Cyprus in the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* of Valerius Maximus. The single *exempla* are both self-contained narrative units and parts of different thematic sections on various virtues and vices. The chapter argues that the anecdotes on incidents regarding Cyprus can be read not only within their respective section but also as a cycle which reaches from the first to the last book of the collection. It also examines how the island, its inhabitants and visitors are depicted in a literary work composed in the time of the emperor Tiberius.

Part 2, entitled “The Cypriot Myths in Ovid and Beyond”, deals with the Cypriot myths in Orpheus’ song in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 10 and their reception in later literature and art. In his study “Prostitution in Ancient Cyprus, the Myth of the Propoetides in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and the Perpetuation of a Stereotype” Spyridon Tzounakas examines various ancient sources (with special emphasis on Latin literature and the myth of the Propoetides in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*) that contributed to the entrenchment of the promiscuous Cypriot women stereotype, which survives for centuries and is especially evident in travel writing from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Sophia Papaioannou’s study (“Pygmalion’s Inspiration and Pygmalion as Inspiration”) on the one hand discusses the presence of the myth of Pandora in Pygmalion and Ovid’s engagement with one of the most celebrated myths of the Hesiodic corpus, while on the other, it examines the incorporation of the Pygmalion episode in the stories of agalmatophilia featuring famous works of art and creators as well as in the Roman ideology of the *imagines maiorum*. In Stella Alekou’s study (“The Ambiguity of Love and the Ideology of Rape in Ovidian *ekphraseis*: Pygmalion’s Prequel to Arachne’s Story”) the myth of Pygmalion is examined as a prequel to that of Arachne, another famous artist in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. She reveals the ambiguous representation of love in these episodes, when Ovid exposes rape while apparently praising love, and argues that Ovid employs optical illusions to shed light on the image of love which in art appears as distorted, to address the politics of rape. The next study of this Part (“From the Humble Workshop in Cyprus to the Victorian Stage: Ovidian Pygmalion’s Reception in W. S. Gilbert’s Mythological Comedy *Pygmalion and Galatea*”) also deals with Ovid’s Pygmalion. Here Stamatia Kitsou demonstrates that W. S. Gilbert exploited the main outline of the Ovidian myth and proceeded to a generic transformation composing the first mythological comedy with Galatea, the statue’s name after Rousseau, as a

protagonist. As Galatea's inanimation and interaction with the other characters of the play is problematic and a series of misunderstandings arises from her lack of social education, Gilbert proves himself to be prolific in social criticism and masterful, almost latent, considerations regarding the gender-based roles and their social construction. In her second contribution to this volume ("The Ovidian and Alfierian Myrrha as an Odalisque in Lord Byron's *Sardanapalus*: Transformations and a Play of Identities"), Stamatia Kitsou investigates the presence of the Ovidian myth of Cinyras and Myrrha in Lord Byron's tragedy *Sardanapalus*. She argues that for the formation of Myrrha's dramatic persona, Byron takes into account the Ovidian Myrrha (*met.* 10.298-502) and mainly the protagonist of the pre-Romantic tragedy of Vittorio Alfieri, *Mirra*; thus, he creates a play of mutual transformations and conflicting identities, while maintaining the core of his classical models.

Part 3, entitled "Numismatic and Archaeological Evidence", includes three studies. In the first of them, Daniele Castrizio ("A Coin Series with Capricorn and Scorpion from Cyprus") deals, from an iconographic point of view, with an emission of bronze coins generally attributed to the island of Cyprus, and provides elements for a more precise dating of the coin series. Based on the writings of Manilius, this paper provides an interpretation of the importance of the zodiacal signs on ancient coins, and discusses the relationship between the zodiacal sign of Capricorn and the imperial propaganda at the time of Augustus. Next, Antonio Corso ("Pliny, *nat.* 34.81: The Bronze Sculptor Styppax of Cyprus and the *Splanchnoptes*") studies Pliny's inclusion of Styppax and of his bronze statue of the *Splanchnoptes* in his selective catalogue of the most important bronze statues and connects it to the political environment of the Flavian dynasty. Finally, Alessandra Bravi's article ("An Excellent Foreigner: Titus at the Sanctuary of the Paphian Aphrodite") sheds new light on the visit paid by Titus to the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos. Based on the archaeological data, she reconstructs the site as it looked at the time of the visit of Titus, and suggests a link between the sanctuary at Paphos and the *Templum Pacis*, inaugurated by the Flavians, where Venus has her own space. She concludes that the great eastern goddess Aphrodite/Isis/Astarte was the primary legitimacy of the *imperium* of the Flavians, since her oracle was needed to a plebeian family which could not claim mythical ancestors.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Research and Innovation Foundation of Cyprus, which generously supported our research project, to the Department of Classics and Philosophy of the University of Cyprus, which immediately embraced our workshops, to my dear colleagues and collaborators Dr. Stella Alekou, Dr. Despina Keramida and Dr. Stamatia Kitsou for their valuable involvement in the preparation of these events, and, of course, to all the speakers and the participants in these two

workshops, who contributed to their success. Special thanks go to Stefano Rocchi, the Director of the series *The Seeds of Triptolemus*, who supported the preparation of the manuscript with his help and advice, as well as to our publisher, Dr. Zaira Maranelli, and to Dr. Marco Filippi, at Deinotera Editrice, for their assistance and patience. I also thank the anonymous readers for their invaluable comments and suggestions which helped to improve the quality of the volume.

*Nicosia, July 2022*

PART 1  
THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF CYPRUS AND THE  
EXEMPLARITY OF THE ISLAND



CYPRUS *IN EXEMPLIS*: CYPRIOT EPISODES AS NARRATED  
BY VALERIUS MAXIMUS

*Margot Neger*  
University of Cyprus

INTRODUCTION

The *Facta et dicta memorabilia* of Valerius Maximus, a work dedicated to the Roman emperor Tiberius, are the only surviving representative of ancient *exempla*-collections which are otherwise also attested for Cornelius Nepos and Julius Hyginus.<sup>1</sup> Within 9 books, Valerius provides short narrations on various incidents in the history of the Greco-Roman world. The single *exempla* are arranged in thematic sections, many of them treating moral virtues and vices, and are divided into *exempla domestica* (Roman examples, around 2 thirds) and *exempla externa* (foreign examples, around 1 third).<sup>2</sup> The chapter headings found in the manuscripts and printed in modern editions are probably not original.<sup>3</sup> Famous protagonists of ancient history, such as Scipio Africanus the Elder, Caesar, Pompey, Hannibal, Sulla, the Catones, Alexander the Great and others appear in several examples spread over the corpus and embody various virtues and vices.<sup>4</sup> Rather than offering historically accurate accounts or consistent character-sketches of various individuals, Valerius' work provides insights into the value system of his own times, the early Imperial age.<sup>5</sup> As LANGLANDS 2011 has argued, a key feature of the anecdotes presented by Valerius is their 'situational variability'. What matters for Valerius is the point of each *exemplum* and its potential to illustrate a specific topic or idea.<sup>6</sup>

Scholarship has not always pronounced very kind judgements on Valerius and criticized him, for instance, as a little talented writer with an affected

<sup>1</sup> See FUHRMANN 1999, 297-299; according to WEILEDER 1998, 11, the existence of these works has to remain hypothetical; for Valerius and the Roman *exempla*-tradition see MASLAKOV 1979; MASLAKOV 1984; MURRAY / WARDLE 2022; for *exempla* in Roman culture see ROLLER 2018.

<sup>2</sup> See BLANK-SAGMEISTER 1991, 338; for the structure of the work see RÖMER 1990; THURN 2001; LUCARELLI 2007, 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> See HELM 1955, 97-98; HONSTETTER 1977, 22-25; WESTPHAL 2015, 193 n. 7; BRISCOE 2019, 28.

<sup>4</sup> See BLOOMER 1992, 150; Scipio Africanus appears most frequently, followed by Julius Caesar, Pompey, Hannibal and Marius.

<sup>5</sup> See WESTPHAL 2015, 194.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. LAWRENCE 2006, 8.

style and as a mean flatterer of the emperor Tiberius for whom rhetorical effect was more important than historical accuracy.<sup>7</sup> In older scholarship, his collection of *exempla* has been considered nothing more than a handbook providing material for orators and others who wanted to easily find various anecdotes for their speeches.<sup>8</sup> The harsh criticism of scholars dedicated to *Quellenforschung*<sup>9</sup> stands in stark contrast to the popularity which Valerius enjoyed during medieval times and in the Renaissance as a mediator of knowledge about ancient history.<sup>10</sup> More recent contributions, however, have started to see the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* in a more positive light. Especially the rhetorical techniques and moral aims of the work have interested scholars<sup>11</sup> as well as its role as a mirror of the historical self-awareness and the Roman value system in the early Imperial age,<sup>12</sup> including religion and social interactions.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to studies investigating historical, ethical and social matters, contributions on Valerius' literary techniques are still comparatively scarce. Apart from Valerius' 'Silver Latin',<sup>14</sup> classicists have also discussed the possible principles behind the arrangement of the *Facta et dicta memorabilia*.<sup>15</sup> There is still a lot of work to do – so far, only commentaries to Books 1, 2, and 8 have been published<sup>16</sup> (in addition, two dissertations on Book 9 are available online).<sup>17</sup> Sporadically, aspects such as intertextuality, stylistic and narrative techniques and the like have been studied in single articles and chapters.<sup>18</sup>

It has long been noted that Valerius' work stands somewhere between historiography and declamation.<sup>19</sup> An aspect to which scholars have not yet paid much attention is the question to what extent Valerius combined the

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. NORDEN 1898, I, 303; CARTER 1975, 26: "one of the most tedious and affected products of the ancient world"; GUERRINI 1981, 11; an overview of research on Valerius is provided by WEILEDER 1998, 9-20; LUCARELLI 2007, 18-23.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. HELM 1955, 93-94 and 97; CARTER 1975, 34-36.

<sup>9</sup> For Valerius' use of his sources, see BOSCH 1929; HELM 1940; KLOTZ 1942; BLISS 1951.

<sup>10</sup> See GUERRINI 1981; VON ALBRECHT 1992, 857-858; VON MOOS 1996.

<sup>11</sup> See BLOOMER 1992; SKIDMORE 1996; LANGLANDS 2011; see also LANGLANDS 2008 on *severitas*; WESTPHAL 2015 on *moderatio* and PITTARD 2021 on *patientia*.

<sup>12</sup> See WEILEDER 1998; WIEGAND 2013 on the background of the Tiberian age.

<sup>13</sup> On religion see MUELLER 2002; on social interactions see LUCARELLI 2007.

<sup>14</sup> See SINCLAIR 1980.

<sup>15</sup> HONSTETTER 1977; RÖMER 1990; DAVID 1998; THURN 2001.

<sup>16</sup> WARDLE 1998 on Book 1; THEMANN-STEINKE 2008 on Book 2; BRISCOE 2019 on Book 8.

<sup>17</sup> MATRAVERS 2016; MURRAY 2016.

<sup>18</sup> For intertextuality see WELCH 2013; for Valerius' use of metaphors, see BLASCHKA 2018.

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. WELCH 2013, 67.

tradition of historiography and declamation with the aesthetics of Hellenistic and Augustan poetry books. As it appears to me, there are several meta-literary statements as well as literary strategies which suggest that, besides the so far existing prose genres (among them also the tradition of miscellaneous and antiquarian writings), Valerius might have as well be inspired by poetic works, especially those which we would classify as ‘small-scale-poetry’. Similar to representatives of minor poetic genres, Valerius emphasizes the ideals of *brevitas* and *varietas* in his work.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the thematic arrangement of anecdotes which otherwise appears in ancient biography, a pattern brought to perfection by Suetonius,<sup>21</sup> might also have been inspired by anthologies such as Meleager’s *Stephanos* where multi-authored poems on related topics are often juxtaposed.<sup>22</sup> Valerius too provides a prose anthology of historical events which he, as he states in the preface, had selected from famous authors, and re-narrates with his own words:

Urbis Romae exterarumque gentium facta simul ac dicta memoratu digna, quae apud alios latius diffusa sunt quam ut breviter cognosci possint, ab inlustribus electa auctoribus digerere constitui, ut documenta sumere volentibus longae inquisitionis labor absit. Nec mihi cuncta complectendi cupido incessit: quis enim omnis aevi gesta modico voluminum numero comprehenderit, aut quis compos mentis domesticae peregrinaeque historiae seriem felici superiorum stilo conditam vel attentiore cura vel praestantiore facundia traditurum se speraverit?

I have determined to select from famous authors and arrange the deeds and sayings worthy of memorial of the Roman City and external nations, too widely scattered in other sources to be briefly discovered, to the end that those wishing to take examples may be spared the labour of lengthy search. Nor am I seized with ambition to be all-

<sup>20</sup> For *brevitas* cf. 1.*praef.*; 2.7.5; 4.1.12; 6.8.6; 8.1.*damn.* 5; for *varietas* cf. 1.6.*ext. praef.*; 2.10.*ext.* 1; for brevity as an ideal in ancient epigram see e.g. NEGER 2019, 181-183; brevity and variety, of course, were also important principles of miscellaneous and antiquarian writings, as the preface of Aulus Gellius suggests; see HOLFORD-STREVENSON 2003, 29; for the Roman concept of variety see FITZGERALD 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 9: *proposita vitae eius velut summa partes singillatim neque per tempora sed per species exequar*; see HÄGG 2012, 221.

<sup>22</sup> See GUTZWILLER 1998, 276-322; PRIOUX 2019; one might also compare the Milan papyrus (P.Mil.Vogl. VIII 309), an epigram book composed by Posidippus of Pella and arranged in thematic sections (*lithika, oinoskopika, anathematika, epitymbia, andriantopoiika, hippika, nauagika, iamatika, tropoi*); see GUTZWILLER 2005 and GUTZWILLER 2019.



embracing. Who should comprise the transactions of all time in a moderate number of volumes? Or who in his right mind should hope to transmit with closer care or superior eloquence the procession of domestic and foreign history recorded by the felicitous pens of predecessors?<sup>23</sup>

In his introduction, Valerius highlights the ideal of brevity (*ut breviter cognosci possint ... modico voluminum numero*) as well as his role as a collector of material from other writers (*ab inlustribus electa auctoribus*), a material which he himself rearranged in his collection (*digerere constitui*).<sup>24</sup> Thus, the *Facta and dicta* somehow oscillate between a multi-authored anthology and a mono-auctorial work of literature. Repeatedly Valerius opposes the modest format of his project (*modico voluminum numero*) to more extensive works of literature (*latius diffusa ... ut ... longae inquisitionis labor absit ... nec mihi cuncta complectendi cupido incessit*).<sup>25</sup> As JANSON 1964, 154 observes, Valerius is an early example of an ancient prose compiler who advertises the quality of *brevitas*. Moreover, by distinguishing his collection from larger historical narratives (*historiae seriem*) and pretending to be unable to compete with previous *ingenia*, Valerius varies motifs which are also familiar from poetic *recusationes*.<sup>26</sup> Although Valerius tries to appear as modest in his preface, this modesty seems to be staged.<sup>27</sup>

Another feature which links Valerius' work with the textuality of ancient poetry books is the recurrent appearance of certain individuals, places and motifs throughout the collection and in different thematic sections. One could compare poetic cycles such as those embedded into the *libelli* of Catullus, Horace and the Roman love elegists.<sup>28</sup> In the *Facta et dicta*, single *exempla* are not only linked within the thematic context of the respective sections which form narrative units on a common topic, but also within the macro-text of

<sup>23</sup> Translations of Valerius Maximus by SHACKLETON BAILEY 2000, slightly modified; the Latin text follows BRISCOE 1998, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>24</sup> The verb *digerere* is a conjecture by Meursius, whereas the manuscripts transmit *deligere* which is not out of place here; with the wording *ab inlustribus electa auctoribus deligere constitui*, Valerius might be imitating Cic. *Att.* 13.45.3: *si ex omnibus esset eligendum, nec diligentioorem ... facile deligissem Vestorio*.

<sup>25</sup> Valerius reflects on his own literary activity and the need for conciseness also in 4.1.12: *... angusto ambitu orationis ... multa breviter dicenda sint ... strictim se narrari patientur*; for a discussion of textual issues see WARDLE 2021.

<sup>26</sup> The *topos* of the poet's lacking talent which prevents him from composing grand works appears in Hor. *carm.* 1.6 addressed to Agrippa; both Horace and Valerius Maximus refuse to write grand works while addressing men of great deeds; for the *recusatio* see WIMMEL 1960; HUNTER 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. BLASCHKA 2018, 369; for the rhetorical *Bescheidenheitstopos* see HAGENBICHLER 1992; for a similar strategy in Plin. *epist.* 1.1 see TZOUNAKAS 2007a.

<sup>28</sup> For poetic cycles see BARWICK 1958; YPSILANTI 2005.

the whole work and in the course of a linear reading, thus connecting different sections and books and inviting the reader to compare them with each other. As a case study, the present chapter focuses on a cycle of anecdotes on various incidents connected with the island of Cyprus and demonstrates how Cyprus and its inhabitants are represented from the perspective of a writer living in the age of Tiberius.<sup>29</sup>

#### LIVE AND LET DIE IN CYPRUS

The first book of the *Facta et dicta* deals with religious matters,<sup>30</sup> and it is in the section on omens that we also encounter the first instance where Cyprus is mentioned (1.5.6 *de ominibus*):

Pompeius vero Magnus in acie Pharsalica victus a Caesare, fuga quaerens salutem cursu in insulam Cyprum, ut aliquid in eam virium contraheret, classem direxit appellensque ad oppidum Paphum conspexit in litore speciosum aedificium gubernatoremque interrogavit quod ei nomen esset. qui respondit Κατωβασίλεια vocari. quae vox spem eius † quae quantulumcumque restabat † comminuit, neque id dissimulanter tulit: avertit enim oculos ab illis tectis ac dolorem, quem ex diro omine ceperat, gemitu patefecit.

When Pompey the Great was defeated by Caesar at the battle of Pharsalia, he sought safety in flight and directed his fleet to the island of Cyprus in the hope of gathering some forces there. Putting in at the town of Paphos, he observed a handsome edifice on shore and asked the skipper its name. The same replied that it was called Catobasileia (Palace Below). His words shattered what little hope Pompey had left, nor did he try to conceal it. He turned away from the structure and with a groan made plain the distress the baleful omen had caused him.

<sup>29</sup> For Cyprus under Tiberius see Tac. *ann.* 3.62.5 on a Cypriot delegation visiting the Senate in Rome in order to see the privileges of *asyla* for three temples confirmed; one of the most spectacular findings in Cyprus from Tiberius' reign is an inscription with an oath of allegiance to the new emperor; see MITFORD 1960; SEIBERT 1970; most recently HUSSEIN 2021, 109-214.

<sup>30</sup> See MUELLER 2002.

It is the shore of Paphos which serves as the scene for this anecdote with Pompey as its main protagonist.<sup>31</sup> In only one sentence Valerius narrates the events leading from Pompey's defeat in Pharsalos to his escape to Cyprus where he approaches the harbour of Paphos and catches sight of a conspicuous building. The helmsman's answer to Pompey's question regarding the building's name in Greek<sup>32</sup> comprises only a short sentence and forms the climax of the narrative. The rest of the anecdote describes Pompey's reaction: *dolor et gemitus*, as he understands the omen and loses all of his hopes.

Although Pompey's escape to Egypt via Cyprus is mentioned in several other sources,<sup>33</sup> nowhere else we find this version where Pompey catches sight of the beautiful building whose name, according to his skipper, was *Κατωβασίλεια*.<sup>34</sup> Scholars have speculated that Valerius refers to a palace of the Ptolemies on the South-west of the Fanari hill or a monumental temple within the city walls of Nea Paphos.<sup>35</sup> In the *exemplum*, the building thus symbolizes the underworld and Pompey immediately understands the meaning of this omen. Pompey's *gubernator*, who remains anonymous in this narrative, thus resembles the mythical ferryman Charon. With this anecdote, Cyprus is introduced into the collection as an uncanny place, a place resembling the underworld. The *speciosum aedificium* recalls the motif of the house of Hades as for example in Homer, the *δόμος Ἄϊδος*.<sup>36</sup> If we consider that the Greek name Ἄϊδος or Ἄϊδος means the "invisible", "the one who cannot be seen",<sup>37</sup> it is striking that the visual aspect plays such an important role in Valerius' anecdote: *Pompeius conspexit ... speciosum aedificium* and finally *avertit oculos* (after realizing what he had seen).

<sup>31</sup> It is also the first *exemplum* in the *Facta et dicta* where Pompeius Magnus appears; cf. 1.6.12; 1.8.9-10; 1.8.*ext.* 13; 2.4.6; 3.2.13; 3.2.23a; 3.8.7; 4.5.5; 4.6.4; 4.6.*ext.* 2; 5.1.9-10; 5.2.9; 5.3.5; 5.5.4; 5.7.*ext.* 2; 6.2.4-9; 6.2.11; 6.9.9; 7.6.*ext.* 3; 7.7.2; 8.14.3; 8.15.8-9; 9.2.4; 9.5.3; 9.11.4; 9.13.2; 9.14.1; cf. 9.1.8.

<sup>32</sup> WARDLE 1998, 176: "Single Greek words were permissible in formal literary Latin, but never appeared in history".

<sup>33</sup> Caes. *civ.* 3.102; Liv. *periocb.* 112.1-10; Lucan. 8.456-459; Plut. *Pomp.* 77.1; see SAMSON 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Georgios Vassiliades suggested to me that Valerius might have found this anecdote in Gaius Oppius' lost work on Julius Caesar; for Gaius Oppius as a source for Valerius Maximus see also TOWNEND 1987, 341: "for Valerius, unconcerned with anything but illustrations of particular virtues and vices, he provided some excellent material for rhetorical development".

<sup>35</sup> See SANTINI 1996, 20; WARDLE 1998, 176.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Il.* 23.19: χαῖρέ μοι ὦ Πάτροκλε καὶ εἰν Ἄϊδαο δόμοισι; *Od.* 23.252: ἤματι τῷ ὅτε δὴ κατέβην δόμον Ἄϊδος εἶσω.

<sup>37</sup> See ENACHE 2008 on Plato's interpretation of the name in the *Phaedo* (80d-81c) and *Cratylus* (403a-404b).

Although Venus, the goddess worshipped in Cyprus, is not mentioned directly in the anecdote, Valerius' readers might have associated the town of Paphos with the famous cult site of Aphrodite. In other words, Cyprus was famous as the birthplace of the goddess from whom Julius Caesar, Pompey's adversary, claimed genealogical descent, an idea advertised especially during and after the civil war.<sup>38</sup> Thus, besides the omen narrated by Valerius, also the location itself might have reminded Valerius' contemporary readership of the close connection between Venus and the victorious Julius Caesar, Tiberius' ancestor in the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

I wonder whether, apart from referring to the underworld, the term *Κατωβασιλεια* can also be understood on a meta-literary level,<sup>39</sup> preparing the reader for further narrations within the collection's cycle on Cypriot episodes: perhaps it also foreshadows the narrative on Cato (*Κάτων*) and his expedition to Cyprus in the context of the Roman annexation of the island and its royal treasure, an enterprise which led to the suicide of Ptolemy, the island's *rex*. This event, of course, predates Pompey's journey to Cyprus by around 10 years but is narrated later in the work, beginning with Book 4 (see below).

Whereas in 1.5.6 a building in Paphos serves as the omen for Pompey's imminent death in Egypt, in Book 3 Cyprus is presented as the place where another famous individual dies – this time the philosopher Anaxarchus whose death exemplifies the virtue of *patientia* (3.3.ext. 4):

Talis patientiae aemulus Anaxarchus, cum a tyranno Cypriorum Nicocreonte torqueretur nec ulla vi inhiberi posset quo minus eum amarissimorum maledictorum verberibus invicem ipse torqueret, ad ultimum amputationem linguae minitanti 'non erit' inquit, 'effeminate adulescens, haec quoque pars corporis mei tuae dicionis', protinusque dentibus abscisam et commanducatam linguam in os eius ira patens expuit. Multorum aures illa lingua et in primis Alexandri regis admiratione sui attonitas habuerat, dum terrae condicionem, habitum maris, siderum motus, totius denique mundi naturam prudentissime et facundissime expromit. Paene tamen occidit gloriosius quam vixit, quia tam forti fine illustrem professionis actum comprobavit,

<sup>38</sup> See KREBS 2018, 36; SAMSON 2021; however, Pompey too worshipped Venus and added her temple to his theatre in Rome; see SCHILLING <sup>2</sup>1982, 296-301.

<sup>39</sup> The adverb *κάτω* can also be used geographically and mean "southward" (see LSJ, 931 *s.v.*); it thus could indicate the continuation of Pompey's journey to the south, i.e. to Egypt where he will be assassinated; I am indebted to Costas Panayotakis for this observation.

Anaxarchique non vitam modo decoravit,<sup>40</sup> sed mortem reddidit clariorem.

His fortitude was emulated by Anaxarchus. Tortured by the tyrant of Cyprus, Nicocreon, no violence could stop him from torturing the tyrant in his turn with lashings of the most wounding insults. At last Nicocreon threatened to cut off his tongue, to which Anaxarchus replied: “Womanish young man, this part of my body at least will not be in your power”, and straight away he cut off his tongue with his teeth, chewed it up, and spat it into the other’s mouth, which was open in fury. That tongue had held the ears of many lost in admiration, above all king Alexander’s, as it wisely and eloquently expounded the state of the earth, the condition of the sea, the movements of the stars, in fine the nature of the entire universe. But it perished almost more gloriously than it flourished, because by so brave an end it validated the illustrious performance of what it professed and not only adorned Anaxarchus’ life but rendered his death more renowned.

The chapter on *patientia* consists of only two Roman (Mucius Scaevola and a legate named Pompeius from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) and seven foreign examples.<sup>41</sup> Four of the foreign anecdotes narrate encounters between Greek philosophers and tyrants. Valerius starts the *exempla externa* in this section with an anecdote from the time of Alexander the Great (3.3.ext. 1), and then inserts a praise of philosophy before continuing the narration with a list of philosophical examples. The section is obviously inspired by Cicero’s *Tusculanae disputationes* where we also encounter a praise of philosophy (*Tusc.* 5.5-6) as well as a similar list of philosophers (2.52).<sup>42</sup> Like Cicero, Valerius mentions Zeno of Elea and Phalaris (*ext.* 2), again Zeno and Nearchus (*ext.* 3)<sup>43</sup> – some confusion obviously happened here –, Anaxarchus and Nicocreon (referred to as Timocreon in Cicero’s list), Theodotus and Hieronymus (*ext.* 5; cf. Liv.

<sup>40</sup> The reading *non vitam modo decoravit*, a conjecture by Foertsch, is followed by SHACKLETON BAILEY 2000; BRISCOE 1998 prints † *non vitam modo deseruit* †.

<sup>41</sup> See PITTARD 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Cic. *Tusc.* 2.52: *Obversentur species honestae animo: Zeno proponatur Eleates, qui perpressus est omnia potius quam consocios delendae tyrannidis indicaret; de Anaxarcho Democritio cogitetur, qui cum Cypri in manus Timocreontis regis incidisset, nullum genus supplicii deprecatus est neque recusavit. Callanus Indus, indoctus ab arbibus, in radicibus Caucasi natus, sua voluntate vivus combustus est;* for Valerius’ use of Cicero as a source see BLOOMER 1992, 81-84.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Diog. Laert. 9.26.

24.5.10-14), Indian sages (*ext.* 6; cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 5.77) and a barbarian slave and Hasdrubal (*ext.* 7; cf. Liv. 21.2.6). The chapter is concluded by reflections on *virtus* which, according to Valerius, does not depend from an individual's social standing. This thought provides a neat transition to the next chapter 3.4 about individuals who were born from humble homes and later became illustrious (*de humili loco natis qui clari evaserunt*).

As is known from several other sources (especially Diogenes Laertius, 9.58-60),<sup>44</sup> Anaxarchus had offended Nicocreon of Cyprus at a banquet which he visited together with Alexander and later, after Alexander's death, was arrested in Cyprus and pounded to death in a mortar. Valerius too locates the anecdote in Cyprus and draws a parallel between the physical torture which the philosopher suffers by Nicocreon (*torqueretur*) and the verbal torture the tyrant has to endure by the philosopher (*ipse torqueret*), thus depicting the episode as a kind of contest between the two protagonists.<sup>45</sup> Valerius connects the *exemplum* with the previous one on Zeno and Nearchus (*ext.* 3) through the opening *talis patientiae aemulus Anaxarchus*. Both anecdotes are connected through the motif of biting off someone's body part – in *ext.* 3 it is the philosopher Zeno who bites off the ear of the tyrant. Valerius' anecdote about Anaxarchus with its comparatively detailed narrative belongs to ancient *exitus* literature: in only one sentence Valerius narrates the tortures Anaxarchus endured by the tyrant of Cyprus, reproduces the philosopher's invectives against the tyrant in direct speech and depicts his brave act of biting off his own tongue, thus exemplifying the virtue of *patientia*, the ability to suffer pain but at the same time asserting “autonomy and influence over superiors”.<sup>46</sup> The second half of the anecdote contains a homage to Anaxarchus' tongue, i.e. his philosophical *sermo*, during his lifetime, thus implicitly contrasting the tyrant Nicocreon, whom Anaxarchus scorns as *effeminatus adulescens*, with Alexander the Great who is said to have admired the philosopher (*admiratione sui*; cf. 8.14.*ext.* 2 [*de cupiditate gloriae*]). Valerius concludes the anecdote with the comment that Anaxarchus' brave behaviour can be praised as an ornament for both his life and death.

Death is also a motif which plays a central role in two *exempla* regarding Solon, the Athenian statesman. In 5.3.*ext.* 3b (*de ingratis*) we learn that Solon had to emigrate to Cyprus in his old age:<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Cic. *nat. deor.* 3.82; Ov. *Ib.* 571-572; Plin. *nat.* 7.87; Plut. *Alex.* 8.5; 28.5; 52; *Mor.* 449e; 505d; Diog. Laert. 9.26; see the apparatus in Briscoe's edition (BRISCOE 1998) of Valerius Maximus.

<sup>45</sup> See LAWRENCE 2016, 248.

<sup>46</sup> PITTARD 2021, 350.

<sup>47</sup> Solon also appears in 4.1.*ext.* 7; 7.2.*ext.* 2a; 8.7.*ext.* 14; 8.9.*ext.* 1.

Iam Solon, qui tam praeclaras tamque utiles Atheniensibus leges tulit, ut, si iis perpetuo uti voluissent, sempiternum habituri fuerint imperium, qui Salaminam velut hostilem arcem ex propinquo saluti eorum imminentem recuperavit, qui Pisistrati tyrannidem primus vidit orientem, solus armis opprimi debere palam dicitare ausus, senectutem Cypri profugus exegit, neque ei in patria, de qua optime meruerat, humari contigit.

And Solon? He who proposed such splendid and useful laws for the Athenians that if they had chosen to practice them in perpetuity they would have kept their empire forever; who recovered Salamis, which threatened their safety from close by like an enemy citadel; who was the first to see Pisistratus' tyranny rising and the only one who dared to say openly that it should be crushed by arms – Solon spent his old age as a fugitive in Cyprus and did not find burial in the country from which he had deserved so much.

After a life full of merits for the Athenians (Valerius mentions three of them: the laws, the conquest of Salamis and Solon's resistance against Pisistratus' tyrannis), Solon in old age had to emigrate to Cyprus where he died. Valerius also seems to imply that Solon was buried in Cyprus when he states that Solon did not find burial in his homeland.<sup>48</sup> According to other sources, Solon was buried on Salamis, an assumption which Plutarch refutes in his *Life of Solon* (32.4: "incredible ... and fabulous").<sup>49</sup> The anecdote on Solon is part of a series of *exempla externa* on famous individuals who were forced to leave their countries or were treated ungratefully by their compatriots, in most cases the Athenians: Hannibal had to leave Carthage (5.3.ext. 1), Lycurgus had to leave Sparta (ext. 2), Theseus was banished from Athens to the island of Scyros where he was buried (ext. 3a), Solon from Athens to Cyprus where he was probably also buried (ext. 3b), Miltiades had to die in prison in Athens (ext. 3c), Aristides had to leave Athens (ext. 3d), Themistocles had to flee from Athens to the Persians (ext. 3e) and Phocion was buried outside of Athens (ext. 3f). Valerius concludes the chapter *de ingratis* with an epilogue where he attacks the Athenians for their ungratefulness and stages an imaginary trial at court (5.3.ext. 3: *quod si ... effici posset, ut excellentissimi viri quorum modo casus rettuli legem ingratorum vindicem retinentes patriam suam in ius ad aliam civitatem pertraherent ...*, "If ... it could have

<sup>48</sup> See also LINFORTH 1919, 308-309.

<sup>49</sup> According to Diogenes Laertius (1.62-63), Solon died in Cyprus at the age of eighty but was buried in Salamis; cf. *AP* 7.86-87; see ALY 1919.

been brought about that the excellent personages whose fates I have just recounted could haul their country into court before another community, invoking the law that penalizes ingratitude ...”):<sup>50</sup> in the role of an attorney, Valerius ‘represents’ the aforementioned individuals who are now *mutae umbrae* (“mute shades”) through his *lingua sermone licenti soluta* (“tongue loosed in unbridled discourse”). Thus, the negative depiction of the Athenians in the section *de ingratis* is characterized as the *narratio* (cf. *quorum modo casus rettulī*) of a hypothetical prosecution speech which Valerius delivers on behalf of Solon and the other individuals listed in this section.

Solon’s death is also the topic of 8.7.ext. 14 (*de studio et industria*): although the island of Cyprus is not mentioned explicitly in this anecdote, for a reader familiar with the Solon-*exemplum* from Book 5 it will not be difficult to remember the place where Solon had died.

Nam Solon quanta industria flagrauerit et versibus complexus est, quibus significat se cotidie aliquid addiscentem senescere, et supremo vitae die confirmavit, quod, adsidentibus amicis et quadam de re sermonem inter se conferentibus, fatis iam pressum caput erexit, interrogatusque quapropter id fecisset, respondit, ‘ut cum istud, quidquid est, de quo disputatis, percepero, moriar’. Migrasset profecto ex hominibus inertia, si eo animo vitam ingrederentur, quo eam Solon egressus est.

With what diligence Solon was inspired, he put into the verses in which he tells us that he grew old learning something every day, and he confirmed it on the last day of his life. His friends who were sitting by his side were talking about some matter among themselves, when he raised a head already weighed down by the fates. Asked why he did so he replied: “So that as soon as I shall have understood<sup>51</sup> what you are discussing, whatever it is, I may die”. Surely sluggishness would have departed from men if they had entered life in the same spirit as Solon left it.

At the beginning of this short narration Valerius refers to Solon’s verses where the Athenian states that while ageing he constantly learned something new (fr. 22.7 Diehl: *γερᾶσκω δ’ αἰεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος*). Valerius obviously

<sup>50</sup> BRISCOE 1998 prints *retinentes*, a reading transmitted by the manuscripts, while SHACKLETON BAILEY 2000 follows Watt’s conjecture *recitantes* and translates “reciting”.

<sup>51</sup> I follow Ryan’s suggestion (RYAN 2017) to translate the future perfect *percepero* with “I shall have understood”.



reworked a passage from Cicero, *Cato maior de senectute* (26: *Solonem versibus gloriantem videmus, qui se cotidie aliquid addiscentem dicit senem fieri*) as the verbal parallels suggest.<sup>52</sup> The rest of the anecdote, however, where we read about Solon's curiosity even on his deathbed is not attested elsewhere.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the previous *exemplum* (5.3.ext. 3b), Valerius blanks out the spatial setting of the story. The participle *adsidentibus amicis* evokes the image of Solon's *cubiculum* where his closest friends have gathered to spend his last hours at his side.<sup>54</sup> While Solon is already in a state between life and death, they are having a conversation (Valerius does not specify its topic) which arouses Solon's curiosity and motivates him to raise his head one last time in order to comprehend what the discussion is about. Solon's peaceful death among his friends stands in stark contrast to the violent death of Anaxarchus depicted in Book 3. In both cases, however, Valerius integrates the famous last words of each individual: in the one case it is an invective of the heroically dying philosopher against his torturer, the other case an ingenious *bon mot* of the famous sage.<sup>55</sup>

If we read the *exempla* concerning various manners of death near and on Cyprus in a linear fashion, we can see an interesting progression concerning the motif of dying: in the Pompey-example in Book 1, imminent death is announced through an omen located on Cyprus – the island itself is not the place where Pompey will die, but its geographic closeness to Egypt makes Cyprus a suitable location for a narrative where Pompey's death is foreshadowed. Quite in contrast, the next example in Book 3 stages an actual death-scene with the famous last words and deeds of Anaxarchus. It is certainly the most dramatic of the three anecdotes, confronting the stock character of the tyrant who is driven by anger (*ira*) with the resilience and outspokenness of the philosopher. The anecdote on Solon in Book 5 varies the motif of a famous individual's burial far from home, the one in Book 8 offers another *exitus*-narration, this time a much more peaceful one as the way of dying exemplifies another quality, the thirst for knowledge. In addition, we move backwards in time from a chronological perspective: the first example belongs to the more recent past (the year 48 BC), the next one to the time soon after Alexander's death (after 323 BC) and the third one to around 560 BC.

<sup>52</sup> See BRISCOE 2019, 154-155.

<sup>53</sup> RYAN 2017 believes that the story was invented, probably already earlier than Valerius, and that it was inspired by the account of Socrates' death in Plat. *Phd.* 115a-118a.

<sup>54</sup> For similar narrations cf. Plin. *epist.* 1.12.6-8; Suet. *Aug.* 99-100.1.

<sup>55</sup> In 4.1.ext. 7 Solon is explicitly mentioned as one of the Seven Sages; cf. 7.2.ext. 2; for the importance of the *ultima verba* in ancient *exitus*-literature see DUNSCH 2015, 327-329.

## CATO'S EXPEDITION: ROMAN STEADFASTNESS VS. EASTERN TEMPTATIONS

The cycle narrating various aspects of death on Cyprus overlaps with another cycle of *exempla* where Cato the Younger is the main protagonist<sup>56</sup> who is sent to Cyprus in an official mission in the context of the Roman annexation of the island.<sup>57</sup> This cycle stretches over Books 4, 8 and 9. The most detailed account of Cato's mission is provided by Plutarch in his *Cato Minor* (34-39): Cato probably started his expedition in late spring 58 BC, and after visiting Rhodes and Byzantium, he may have arrived in Cyprus in autumn 58 BC; Cato left Cyprus in 56 BC and returned to Rome either at the end of the year or already in May/June.<sup>58</sup> Valerius' narration of Cato's expedition to Cyprus is fragmented, split into four examples in Books 4, 8 and 9. In contrast to Cicero and other sources, Valerius does not question the legitimacy of the annexation of Cyprus. Instead, he presents Cato as a Stoic hero, embodying Stoic virtues, whereas the Cypriots represent ridiculous avarice and eastern decadence (Ptolemy).

The first *exemplum* dealing with Cato's mission to Cyprus belongs to the section *de moderatione* which opens the fourth book (4.1.14):<sup>59</sup>

Tot familiis in uno genere laudis enumeratis Porcium nomen velut expers huiusce gloriae † silentio praetereundum se negat fieri debere † posterior Cato, non parvo summae moderationis fisis indicio. Cypriacam pecuniam maxima cum diligentia et sanctitate in urbem deportaverat. Cuius ministerii gratia senatus relationem interponi iubebat, ut praetoriis comitiis extra ordinem ratio eius haberetur. Sed ipse id fieri passus non est, iniquum esse adfirmans quod nulli alii tribueretur sibi decerni, ac ne quid in persona sua novaretur, campestem experiri temeritatem quam curiae beneficio uti satius esse duxit.

When so many families have been enumerated in one category of praise, the younger Cato forbids that the Porcian name be passed over in silence as though having no share in this glory. He relies on one no small token of the highest

<sup>56</sup> For the depiction of Cato the Younger in the *Facta et dicta* see BLOOMER 1992, 187-191; WUSSOW 2004, 270-273.

<sup>57</sup> For the Roman acquisition of Cyprus see CALVELLI 2020; see also Tzounakas and Vassiliades in this volume.

<sup>58</sup> See OOST 1955.

<sup>59</sup> This anecdote is also discussed by CALVELLI 2020, 270-273.

moderation. He had brought back the Cyprian money to Rome with the utmost diligence and integrity. In appreciation of this service the Senate ordered that a motion be put allowing him to stand in the praetorian elections out of regular order. But he himself would not let this be done. It was unfair, he maintained, that a privilege not granted to anybody else should be decreed for him. And rather than see an innovation apply to him individually, he thought it better to take his chance with a capricious electorate than make use of the Senate's concession.

In the opening sentence, Valerius explicitly connects the present anecdote with the previous ones which belong to the same "category of praise" (*in uno genere laudis*). The chapter *de moderatione* stands on a prominent position at the beginning of Book 4.<sup>60</sup> The dramatic date of this anecdote is the year 56 when Cato had returned from Cyprus back to Rome and participated in a meeting of the Senate. After the introduction (*Tot ... indicio*), the narration starts with *Cypriacam pecuniam*, thus emphasizing the island of Cyprus as the starting point of the following action. As Valerius states, Cato brought the money back to Rome *cum diligentia et sanctitate* and refused to accept the reward for this service<sup>61</sup> offered by the Senate, i.e. that he may stand in the praetorian elections *extra ordinem*. Cato's *moderatio* manifests itself in his rejection of a special treatment and privilege offered by the Senate.

Cato's mission is the topic of another example in the same book, but this time an earlier stage of the expedition stands in the focus (4.3.2 *de abstinentia et continentia*):<sup>62</sup>

Verum ut huius viri abstinentiae testis Hispania, ita M. Catonis Epiros, Achaia, Cyclades insulae, maritima pars Asiae, provincia Cypros. Unde cum pecuniae deportandae ministerium sustineret, tam aversum animum ab omni venere quam a lucro habuit in maxima utriusque intemperantiae materia versatus: nam et regiae divitiae potestate ipsius continebantur et fertilissimae deliciarum tot Graeciae urbes necessaria totius navigationis deverticula erant. Atque id Munatius Rufus, Cypriacae expeditionis fidus comes, scriptis suis significat. Cuius testimonium non amplector:

<sup>60</sup> See WESTPHAL 2015.

<sup>61</sup> On the Latin term *ministerium* see CALVELLI 2020, 53: "Il vocabolario degli autori della prima età imperiale (Livio, Velleio e Valerio Massimo) sembra dunque riflettere ancora, seppur parzialmente, la terminologia presente nella legge relativa all'incarico di Catone".

<sup>62</sup> A discussion of this anecdote is also offered by CALVELLI 2020, 234-236.

proprio enim argumento laus ista nititur, quoniam ex eodem naturae utero et continentia nata est et Cato.

Spain was witness to this great man's abstinence; to M. Cato's, Epirus, Achaëa, the Cyclades islands, the coast of Asia, the province of Cyprus. Having a commission to bring money back from the last named to Rome, he kept his mind as averse from all sexual indulgence as from profit, in the midst of abundant material for both forms of intemperance. For the king's wealth lay in Cato's own power and so many cities of Greece fertile in delights were necessary halts through the entire voyage. Munatius Rufus, a faithful companion of the Cyprian expedition, signifies that in his writings. I do not embrace his testimony, for this glory rests on its own proof: continence and Cato were born from the same womb of Nature.

Again, Valerius creates a narrative line by marking the transition from the previous example (4.3.1) about Scipio Africanus the Elder to the Cato-example. Now the setting of the story is the Eastern Mediterranean where Cato manages to resist the temptations of both sexual pleasures and money (in this case the royal treasure). The single locations in this area, listed from west to east,<sup>63</sup> with Cyprus prominently mentioned at the end of the list are personified as witnesses to Cato's *abstinentia et continentia*. We may even detect Venus as the goddess of Cyprus in the wording *tam aversum animum a venere ... habuit*.<sup>64</sup> Apart from the places, Valerius also mentions another witness for Cato's *abstinentia*, this time a real individual who had accompanied him on his mission: Munatius Rufus and his writings. Whereas Plutarch later narrates about a discord between Munatius and Cato, Valerius does not mention any tensions between the two men.<sup>65</sup> As Valerius states, he does not want to "embrace Munatius' testimony" – a phrase which he seems to have adopted

<sup>63</sup> CALVELLI 2020, 235: "Tale elenco di località corrisponde evidentemente alle tappe obbligate (*necessaria deverticula*) dell'itinerario compiuto dalla spedizione romana che mise in atto la conquista di Cipro (*Cypriaca expeditio*)".

<sup>64</sup> CALVELLI 2020, 253: "A livello congetturale, si può comunque ritenere che lo scrittore intendesse alludere al fascino dei santuari di Afrodite a Palepafo e a Cnido, nonché, probabilmente, a un'immagine convenzionale della Grecia e dell'Asia come luoghi di dissolutezza e fonti di tentazione".

<sup>65</sup> For Munatius Rufus as Valerius' and Plutarch's common source see CALVELLI 2020, 229-240.

from Cicero –,<sup>66</sup> but instead the *exemplum* itself shall suffice. The narration concludes with the image of Cato and the virtue of *continentia* having been born from the same womb of Nature.<sup>67</sup> With his portrait of Cato, Valerius defends the famous Roman against the accusations made by Clodius who blamed Cato for having embezzled money from the expedition to Cyprus, an allegation which was also discussed in contemporary Roman declamation.<sup>68</sup>

In the two examples looked at so far, Cato is depicted as resisting to both special honours and temptations, thus reacting to influences from outside and demonstrating rather passive virtues such as *moderatio*, *abstinentia* and *continentia*. A further anecdote in Book 8 likewise depicts Cato in a rather passive role when he is the subject of a section on “distinction falling to individuals” (8.15.10 *quae cuique magna contigerunt*):<sup>69</sup>

Potest et M. Catonis ex Cypro cum regia pecunia revertentis appulsus ad ripam Tiberis memorabilis videri, cui nave egredienti consules et ceteri magistratus et universus senatus populusque Romanus officii gratia praesto fuit, non quod magnum pondus auri et argenti, sed quod M. Catonem classis illa incolumem advexerat laetatus.

And M. Cato’s putting in at the Tiber’s waterside as he returned from Cyprus with the royal treasure may seem worth remembrance. As he left the ship, the Consuls and other magistrates and the entire Senate and the Roman people were on hand to greet him, rejoicing that the fleet brought, not a great mass of gold and silver, but M. Cato safe and sound.

Again, Cato appears in a prominent position, this time in the section concluding Book 8.<sup>70</sup> Like in the *exemplum* opening the cycle on Cato’s expedition, we find ourselves in Rome after Cato’s return. The setting of this anecdote are the docks at the river Tiber where Cato’s ship had landed. The whole narration consists of one sentence only: when Cato arrived, all the

<sup>66</sup> Cic. *Q. Rosc.* 37: *Est hoc primum et ex condicione iuris et ex consuetudine cautionis firmissimum et gravissimum argumentum, quod ego pluribus verbis amplectere, si non alia certiora et clariora testimonia in causa haberem.*

<sup>67</sup> Cato’s *continentia* in connection with his expedition to Cyprus is also highlighted by Cicero in *De domo sua* (20), a passage which probably inspired Valerius; see CALVELLI 2020, 256.

<sup>68</sup> Sen. *contr.* 10.1.8: *M. Cato Pulchro obiciente furtorum crimina audivit. Quae maior indignitas illius saeculi esse potuit quam aut Pulcher accusator aut reus Cato!*; cf. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 45.

<sup>69</sup> For this anecdote see also CALVELLI 2020, 260-262.

<sup>70</sup> See BRISCOE 2019, 233.

Roman magistrates, the Senate and the people had come to welcome him and, allegedly, rejoiced more over the fact that he had returned safely than that he brought a large amount of gold and silver.<sup>71</sup> In this anecdote, the Romans are the main protagonists instead of Cato who is depicted as the object of admiration rather than the subject of any specific action.

If one reads Valerius' work in a linear way, it becomes evident that the cycle on Cato's expedition to Cyprus starts from the chronological endpoint by depicting Cato in the Senate after his return, then in a kind of analepsis looks back at Cato's stay in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, before moving again to Rome and focusing on Cato's arrival at the docks. The logical order of the events (1. Cato in Cyprus, 2. Cato arriving with his ship at the Tiber, 3. Cato honoured in the Senate) is dissolved and rearranged (3., 1., 2.).

In the last *exemplum* where the annexation of Cyprus is the topic, the focus shifts from Cato the Younger to his antagonist, king Ptolemy of Cyprus. Already in the section *de abstinentia et continentia* (4.3) which, as we have seen, contains one of the anecdotes on Cato's mission to Cyprus, Valerius in the introduction to this section opposes the virtues which he is about to illustrate with the vices of *libido* and *avaritia*. In Book 9, the Cypriot king is depicted as an example for the latter vice (9.4.ext. 1 [*de avaritia*]):<sup>72</sup>

Odium merita Septimulei avaritia, Ptolomaei autem regis Cypriorum risu prosequenda: nam cum anxiiis sordibus magnas opes corripuisset propterque eas periturum se videret et ideo omni pecunia imposita navibus in altum processisset, ut classe perforata suo arbitrio periret et hostes praeda carerent, non sustinuit mergere aurum et argentum, sed futurum necis suae praemium domum revexit. Procul dubio hic non possedit divitias, sed a divitiis possessus est, titulo rex insulae, animo pecuniae miserabile mancipium.

Septimuleius' avarice deserved hatred, that of Ptolemy, king of the Cypriots, was laughable. With anxious greed he had amassed great wealth and saw that on account of it he was likely to perish. He therefore placed all his money on ships and put out to sea, intending to scuttle his fleet and perish at his own will, depriving his enemies of their plunder. But he did not have the heart to sink the gold and silver, and so

<sup>71</sup> Plutarch offers a very similar account of this event (*Cat. Min.* 39.1) which also overlaps verbally with Valerius' narration; CALVELLI 2020, 260-261 assumes that also here both writers used Munatius Rufus as a common source.

<sup>72</sup> For this passage see MATRAVERS 2016, 222-226; MURRAY 2016, 171-172; CALVELLI 2020, 205-207.

brought home the future reward of his own death. No question, he did not possess riches but was possessed by them, in title the king of an island, in mind a miserable slave of money.

Once more Valerius makes the transition from the previous anecdote on Lucius Septimuleius to the present story by way of antithetic comparison (*odium / risu*). The present anecdote is the only *exemplum externum* in this section and serves as a comic closure to the section *de avaritia* as well as to the cycle on Cato's expedition. The anecdote also concludes the whole cycle on incidents connected with or located on Cyprus, a cycle which started with anecdotes concerning death, as we have seen. I wonder whether the motif of travelling by ship in the first and last example of the cycle (in Book 1 and 9) might have any metaphorical connotations, symbolizing the process of beginning and ending the production and reception of a literary work (as it is often the case in poetry).<sup>73</sup> As Valerius states, the avarice of the Cypriot king Ptolemy deserves laughter (*risu prosequenda*) instead of hatred (*odium*). The actual narration of the *exemplum* comprises only one sentence. Due to Ptolemy's greed, his suicide attempt failed on open sea as he tried to make his ship sink together with the royal treasure on it.<sup>74</sup> After the examples praising Cato the Stoic in Books 4 and 8, this anecdote reminds one a bit of a Satyr play following the performance of tragedies. Whereas Cato has to be admired for his steadfastness – his name has become a synonym for integrity by the time of Valerius –,<sup>75</sup> Ptolemy is depicted as a subject for laughter. After narrating Ptolemy's failed suicide attempt, Valerius concludes the anecdote with a *sententia* which bears strong Stoic connotations. From the extant sources, only Valerius links Ptolemy's suicide to his avarice and only here Ptolemy fails to dump the treasure in the sea because of his greed. According to Plutarch and Cassius Dio, Ptolemy drank poison,<sup>76</sup> according to Appian (*BC* 2.23) he threw his money into the sea and committed suicide afterwards. As Oost already observed, Ptolemy and his greed can be read as a fiction created as counterfoils to Cato and his honesty.<sup>77</sup> Valerius in this anecdote blanks out the historical context and creates a cautionary tale of a greedy king who becomes the ridiculous victim of his own avarice. As some sources suggest, Ptolemy already killed himself before Cato's arrival when he had

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Verg. *georg.* 2.541 (*sed nos immensum spatiis confecimus aequor*); see NÜNLIST 1998, 265-276.

<sup>74</sup> An evaluation of the sources on Ptolemy's suicide is provided by CALVELLI 2020, 202-213.

<sup>75</sup> See WUSSOW 2004, 269.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 36; Dio Cass. 39.22.2.

<sup>77</sup> OOST 1955, 102.

learned about the Romans' plan to annex the island.<sup>78</sup> Thus, Valerius concludes the cycle on Cato's mission with an anecdote which, due to its dramatic date (58 BC), actually belongs to the beginning of the narration whereas, as we have already seen, he opens his cycle with an *exemplum* narrating an incident which, in chronological terms, belongs to the end of the story.

#### LUXURY AND DECADENCE

Book 9 of the *Facta et dicta* contains a second *exemplum* connected to Cyprus, and also here the motif of *luxuria* stands in the centre. This is the only instance in the whole Cyprus-cycle (perhaps with the exception of the prostitutes only implicitly referred to in 4.3.2) where female protagonists play the leading part (9.1.*ext.* 7 [*de luxuria et libidine*]):<sup>79</sup>

Sed tamen effeminator multitudo Cypriorum, qui reginas suas mulierum corporibus velut gradibus constructis, quo mollius vestigia pedum ponerent, currus conscendere aequo animo sustinebant: viris enim, si modo viri erant, vita carere quam tam delicato imperio optemperare satius fuit.

More effeminate, however, was the multitude of the Cypriots, who calmly tolerated that their queens should mount chariots on the bodies of women piled up like steps, so that they should place their footsteps more softly. As for the men, if men they were, it would have been better for them to lose life rather than obey so luxurious a regime.

This anecdote which presents the queens of Cyprus using the bodies of their maids to enter their chariots stands in emphatic position at the end of the section *de luxuria et libidine*. Both the Cypriot queens and their male subjects form the climax of effeminacy (*effeminator*) in comparison with the other examples narrated in this section, especially the Egyptians mentioned in the previous *ext.* 6. This *exemplum* stands between the last Cato-example in Book 8 and the anecdote on king Ptolemy in Book 9. Here too, Valerius does not provide any chronological hints, thus the reader could associate these queens with the court of king Ptolemy, Cato's antagonist. However, in other sources these women belong to an earlier period, the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It seems

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Strab. 14.6.6; Plut. *Cat. Min.* 36.1; CALVELLI 2020, 203.

<sup>79</sup> For this anecdote see MATRAVERS 2016, 118-120; MURRAY 2016, 91-92.



to be a ‘floating anecdote’ narrated in different ways and from different perspectives. Whereas in the *exemplum* narrated by Valerius, the queens of Cyprus as well as the men who allowed their behaviour are criticized for their *luxuria*, later Greek sources (Plutarch and Athenaeus) criticize the women who let themselves be used as human stairs as flatterers. Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 50e (in the essay *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*): οὐδὲ τὰς ἐν Κύπρῳ κολακίδας, ἐπειδὴ διέβησαν εἰς Συρίαν, κλιμακίδας προσαγορευθείσας, ὅτι ταῖς γυναιξὶ τῶν βασιλέων ἀναβαίνειν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀμάξας δι’ αὐτῶν ὑποκατακλινόμεναι παρεῖχον (“nor the flatteresses in Cyprus, who when they had crossed over into Syria, acquired the nickname of ‘ladderesses,’ because by prostrating themselves they afforded by their bodies a means for the women of the royal household to mount their carriages”).<sup>80</sup> Here the κολακίδες or κλιμακίδες (“female ladders”) from Cyprus are characterized as flatterers who humiliated themselves in front of the queens in Syria. According to Athenaeus (6.256c-d) the κολακίδες or κλιμακίδες were women from Cyprus who formed human stairs for the wives of the Persian satrap Artabazus and his Greek brother in law, Mentor (4<sup>th</sup> century BC): ... γυναικες ὑπὸ τὰς ἀνάσσεις αἱ προσαγορευθεῖσαι κολακίδες (“women who were called flatteresses by their mistresses”). In the *Deipnosophistai*, the anecdote is part of Clearchus of Soli’s discussion of the flatterer. Other than his Greek successors, Valerius is not interested in the aspect of flattering but in the decadent behaviour of the Cypriot queens<sup>81</sup> and the leniency and effeminacy of the Cypriot men, thus creating a link between the *multitudo Cypriorum* in 9.1.ext. 7 and the tyrant Nicocreon whom Anaxarchus scorns as *effeminatus adulescens* in 3.3.ext. 4 (both anecdotes belong to roughly the same period, the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC).

## CONCLUSION

The picture of Cyprus painted by Valerius Maximus is not a very flattering one: Cyprus is introduced into the collection as an uncanny place, pointing to the *κάτω κόσμος* and announcing Pompey’s imminent death. Interestingly, and probably not unintentionally, the cycle also ends with an anecdote where the main protagonist is on a ship and death plays a crucial role again, this time in the form of a failed suicide attempt. Furthermore, Cyprus is depicted as an island ruled by tyrants such as Nicocreon and greedy

<sup>80</sup> Translation of Plutarch by BABBITT 1927.

<sup>81</sup> Athenaeus too criticizes the decadence of the aristocratic women (6.256d): εἰς τοῦτο τρυφῆς, ἵνα μὴ ἀθλιότητος εἶπω, προηγάροντο τεχνώμεναι τὰς ἀφρονεστάτας (“This is the degree of luxury – I should really call it degradation – into which they treacherously lured these foolish women”, transl. OLSON 2008)

kings like Ptolemy who are presented as stereotypes of cruel and greedy monarchs. Within the geography of Valerius' *exempla*, Cyprus is also the home of effeminate men who allow their queens to indulge in *luxuria* as well as a place remote both from Rome as the centre of power (cf. Cato's expedition and Pompey's escape) as well as from a city like Athens as the centre of Greek civilization (cf. Solon's emigration in his old age and death). Regarding the annexation of Cyprus by the Romans and Cato's mission to the island, Valerius is only interested in Cato's behaviour and his depiction as a positive character representing Stoic virtues, an example of *moderatio*, *abstinentia* and *continentia*, whereas the discourse on the legitimacy of Cyprus' annexation which we encounter already in Cicero's speeches is completely ignored in the *Facta et dicta*. Valerius depicts Cyprus from a highly moralizing stance and a feeling of Roman supremacy over foreign, especially Eastern nations. It is striking that in Valerius' work the inhabitants of Cyprus embody the opposite of Stoic virtues, although the island was also known as the home of Zeno of Citium, the famous founder of the Stoic school.<sup>82</sup> Valerius paints an image in black and white in order to dramatize the events and create more pointed narratives. He constructs a Cyprus which represents Eastern decadence as opposed to Roman values and leaves no room for a more nuanced depiction of the island. As I have tried to show in this chapter, Valerius' work can be read not only by thematic sections structuring single books, but also by cycles which connect several books by referring to the same protagonists, places or motifs. The time is ripe to study Valerius' literary techniques in more detail and to appreciate his work as a valuable document for the literary tastes of his time.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 5.34: *Zeno Citiens*; Diog. Laert. 7.1: Ζήνων ... Κιτιεύς ἀπὸ Κύπρου; 12: οὐκ ἀρνεῖσθαι αὐτὸν εἶναι Κιτιέα; see HOSSENFELDER 1996, 63.



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BMCRE = H. Mattingly *et al.*, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, London 1923-1976.

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RPC = *Roman Provincial Coinage*, London / Paris 1992-.  
RSC = H. A. Seaby, D. R. Sear, R. Loosley, *Roman Silver Coins*, London 1978-1987.  
SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Lugduni Batavorum 1923-.  
SNG = *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*, London 1931-.  
ThL = *Thesaurus linguae Latinae*, Lipsiae (then also Stutgardiae, Monachii, Berolini, Novi Eboraci, Bostoniae) 1900-.  
VLQ = *Codices Vossiani Latini in Quarto*.

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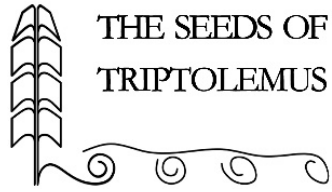
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