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Dead on Time: Valerius Maximus 9.13 and Stoicism*

ABSTRACT

Valerius Maximus' collection of *exempla* has received attention from modern scholars as a window into the morality of the early imperial period at Rome: for example, the recent work of Rebecca Langlands has drawn out the ethical complexities of the text. Little has been said, however, about the possible formal philosophical context of Valerius' work since the suggestion of Franz Römer in 1990 that the *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* was deliberately structured to represent the Stoic cardinal virtues. This paper argues that there is a place for further study of the language and ideology of Stoicism in the *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*. To illustrate this point, chapter 9.13: *De Cupiditate Vitae* and its accompanying series of three *exempla* under the title *Quam Exquisita Custodia Vsi Sint Quibus Suspecti Domestici Fuerunt* are examined in detail. It is argued that Valerius' selection and framing of his *exempla* are in close sympathy with Stoic ideas of rational death, the passions, and the importance of self-control.

After many years of scepticism[1] recent scholarship has become more receptive to the idea that Valerius Maximus could have been a deliberate author, thoughtfully choosing and arranging his *exempla* into themed chapters to create an original literary work. This trend began with Martin Bloomer, Clive Skidmore, David Wardle and Hans Mueller, who have all published valuable monographs on the *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* in the past twenty years.[2] Building on this work, Rebecca Langland's recent publications have argued forcefully for the chapter as the level at which the work must be studied, a proposition with which I wholeheartedly agree, and have approached the idea that Valerius Maximus has particular ideas about ethics and morality that he wishes to explore beyond the obvious themes embodied in the chapter titles.[3]

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1 For example, Moses Hadas, *A History of Latin Literature* (New York, 1952) 238, declared 'Valerius himself has nothing to say worth hearing', and C.J. Carter, 'Valerius Maximus', in T.A. Dorey (ed.), *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II* (London 1975) 30, commented that Valerius is distinguished chiefly by his 'supreme mediocrity of talent'.

2 Martin W. Bloomer, *Valerius Maximus and the Rhetoric of the New Nobility* (Chapel Hill NC 1992); Clive Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen* (Exeter 1996); David Wardle, *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Deeds and Sayings Book I* (Oxford 1998); and Hans Mueller, *Roman Religion in Valerius Maximus* (London 2002).

3 Rebecca Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge 2006) 191 and 125.

While it is one thing to admit that Valerius could be thoughtfully and carefully composing his work, it is another to see in the *Facta et Dicta* an intentional philosophical framework; this is not an area that has been widely explored.[4] Rebecca Langlands has come closest in recent years, suggesting that the conceptual language of Valerius' work may have common ground with Cicero's writings and other works of practical philosophy with a concern for 'situation ethics': at the end of 2011 she published an article exploring the connections between the *Facta et Dicta* and Cicero's *De Officiis* in particular.[5] In this article she suggests that the *Facta et Dicta* shows a broader appreciation of the link between ethics and exemplarity and the way in which moral principles can be disseminated and brought to bear in the variable circumstances of everyday life; this is useful, she argues, precisely because it is outside formal philosophical frameworks.[6] While in her article Langlands does suggest that Valerius is engaging with 'ongoing Stoic debates',[7] she elsewhere describes the work as 'revealing the edifice of Roman ethics at a sub-philosophical level'.[8]

In contrast, Franz Römer argues in an article in 1990 that the whole *Facta et Dicta* does have a definite philosophical alignment; in fact, he suggests that the work is structured to reflect the Stoic cardinal virtues: Wisdom, Moderation, Justice and Courage.[9] Given the focus on the universality of *virtus* and the primary importance of behaviour over any considerations of birth which I have argued is clear in the *Facta et Dicta*, a Stoic framework for Valerius' text is attractive.[10] Unfortunately, as Wardle recognised in 1998 when he discounted it, Römer's argument is difficult to sustain.[11] One particular problem that Römer encounters is what to do with the last part of book nine, which does not seem to fit neatly into any of the virtues or their companion vices. He proposes two

[4] Mueller, *Roman Religion* (n. 2) 3, summarises the general feeling when he comments on Valerius' lack of philosophical insight.

[5] Langlands, 'Roman *Exempla* and Situation Ethics: Valerius Maximus and Cicero *de Officiis*', *JRS* 101 (2011) 100-22.

[6] Langlands, 'Roman *Exempla*' (n. 5) 102. Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2007) 122-59, also explores Valerius Maximus as a source for Roman ethics outside formal philosophy. A.A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy* (Oxford 2006) 390, underlines the potential for exploration in this area when he comments on the 'exemplary' nature of Epictetus' teachings, where students are deliberately shown a constant progression of potential real-life experiences. This could be argued to accord with the series of historical *exempla* with which Valerius builds the philosophical themes of his chapters.

[7] Langlands, 'Roman *Exempla*' (n. 5) 121-2.

[8] Langlands, *Sexual Morality* (n. 3) 125.

[9] Franz Römer, 'Zum Aufbau der Exemplasammlung des Valerius Maximus', *WS* 103 (1990) 99-107.

[10] S.J. Lawrence, *Inside Out: The Depiction of Externality in Valerius Maximus*, PhD diss., University of Sydney, 2006.

[11] Wardle, *Valerius Maximus* (n. 2) 7.

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different ways to deal with it: first, he suggests that 9.12 (On deaths out of the ordinary) and 9.13a (On craving for life) are designed to bring to a close Valerius' exploration of the human character. This does not help, however, with the remainder of the chapters (9.13b: Those who took great care for their safety while suspecting their servants; 9.14: On similarity of appearance; and 9.15: Those who arose from low birth via similarity of appearance and inserted themselves into famous families by falsehood).[12] Römer then suggests that the *Facta et Dicta* may have been designed to end with 9.11.ext.4 (a passage that is generally read as referring to Sejanus)[13] and that the remaining chapters were added at a later time.[14]

In this article I examine in detail one of the chapters that Römer suggests could be overlooked to create a neater structure for the *Facta et Dicta*, 9.13: *De Cupiditate Vitae* (On Lust for Life). Given the Stoic concern with taking a rational approach to both life and death, and especially with the need to recognise when life has run its natural course,[15] it might be expected that this chapter would preserve subject matter that is relevant to an exploration of Stoic ideas. If we can demonstrate a consistently Stoic position in this chapter, it would support Römer's argument regarding Valerius' ideological framework, although it will not resolve the question of structure.

A Dangerous Desire for Life

De Cupiditate Vitae is composed of a preface, three stories about Romans and one story about the Persian King Xerxes, followed by three further external (foreign) *exempla,* which are included as part of 9.13 by editors, but under a different heading.[16] In the preface to the chapter Valerius clearly conveys his opinion of those who cling on to life beyond the rational endpoint:[17]

> uerum quia excessus e uita et fortuitos et uiriles, quosdam etiam temerarios oratione attigimus, subiciamus nunc aestimationi enerues et effeminatos, ut

[12] Römer, 'Zum Aufbau' (n. 9) 104.

[13] Cf. Jane Bellemore, 'When did Valerius Maximus Write the *Dicta et Facta Memorabilia*?', *Antichthon* 23 (1989) 67-80, at 77-9. Bellemore suggests that the passage could refer to M. Scribonius Libo Drusus.

[14] Römer, 'Zum Aufbau' (n. 9) 106.

[15] John Sellars, *Stoicism* (Berkeley 2006) 109. This idea, as has been forcefully argued, becomes increasingly politicised under the conditions of the civil war between Pompey and Caesar and the changed political landscape that followed; Cato the Younger provides the *locus classicus*: Miriam Griffin, 'Philosophy, Cato and Roman Suicide: II' *G&R* 33 (1986) 192-202, at 196-7; Paul Plass, *The Game of Death in Ancient Rome* (Madison WI 1995) 105.

[16] C. Kempf, *Valerius Maximus* (Stuttgart 1888) 731, explains the rationale for this format. The form is preserved by J. Briscoe (ed.), *Valerius Maximus Vol. II* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1998) 627-30, and D.R. Shackleton Bailey (trans.), *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Doings and Sayings Vol. II* (Cambridge MA 2000) 382-4.

[17] The text of Valerius Maximus used throughout is that of John Briscoe (n. 16). Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated

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> ipsa comparatione pateat quanto non solum fortior, sed etiam sapientior mortis interdum quam uitae sit cupiditas.
>
> But since we have touched on exits from life, both accidental and manly, and even rash, in this discourse, I will now bring forward for judgment the weak and unmanly, so that by comparison it should become clear, not only how much braver, but also wiser, greed for death sometimes is than greed for life.

We should not underestimate how harsh Valerius' language is here: his criticism of these men as *enerues et effeminati* is the absolute opposite of what was required for Roman men. In contrast, the remarkable deaths in 9.12 are either characterised as brave (*uiriles*), tipping over into rash (*temerarii*),[18] or the result of chance (*fortuitos*): individuals are either actively pursuing courses that result in their own deaths, embodying a kind of aggressive self-determination (9.12.4, 5, 6, 7, ext.1, ext.9, and ext.10) or are victims of bad luck (9.12.1, 2, 3, 8, and ext.2-8). The deaths in 9.13, we are warned, are of a different kind. Here individuals have the opportunity to make decisions about their approach to death throughout and consistently make the wrong decisions, weak and unmanly decisions. Valerius' ironic hyperbole in recommending *cupiditas mortis* as an alternative at the conclusion of the preface seems to connect back to the brave and reckless deaths of 9.12: better even to pursue self-determination in death too eagerly than demonstrate one's irrational fear of death. Having set this framework in place, Valerius goes on to his first *exemplum*, M'. Aquillius, consul of 101:

> M'. Aquillius, cum sibi gloriose exstingui posset, Mithridati maluit turpiter seruire. quem aliquis merito dixerit Pontico supplicio quam Romano imperio digniorem, quoniam commisit ut priuatum opprobium publicus rubor existeret.
>
> M'. Aquillius, when he had the option to end his life gloriously, preferred, shamefully, to serve Mithridates. Some might well have said that he was worthier of Pontic execution than Roman command since he ensured that private dishonour became a public disgrace.

When Valerius' account is compared to those found in other ancient sources, its distinctive preoccupations emerge. The *exemplum* is loaded with three different words for disgrace – *turpiter, opprobium* and *rubor* – but Valerius muddies the exact nature of Aquillius' dishonourable end: he was, we know, defeated in war by Mithridates VI of Pontus in 89 BC and captured. According to Appian, after his capture Mithridates paraded the Roman around tied to the back of a donkey, made him introduce himself to people as a 'maniac', and finally poured molten gold down his throat to

[18] One may see the close connection between bravery and recklessness in the Roman mind in Vell. 2.68.3 where Milo is described as *ultra fortem temerarius.*

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kill him (*Mithr*. 21). Both Appian and Pliny the Elder sees this form of execution as an insult directed at the Roman people as a whole for their enthusiasm for bribery (App. *Mithr.* 21; Plin. *NH* 33.14.48), but Pliny stresses that this insult was to the *uniuersis* – the whole of the Roman people – and Aquillius' death attracts no personal criticism (33.14.48). Velleius Paterculus states that Aquillius was handed over to Mithridates in chains and comments that this was disgraceful for the people of Mytilene, rather than for Aquillius (2.18.3). Cicero even includes Aquillius in a list of men who, guided by *prudentia*, were able to face torture with equanimity (*Tusc.* 5.14).[19] So the other ancient sources, while acknowledging that the incident has the potential to reflect badly on wider groups, seem to lack the fierce and explicit personal criticism of Aquillius for his choice to delay death that is present in Valerius.

The second *exemplum* is Gnaeus Carbo:

> Cn. quoque Carbo magnae uerecundiae est Latinis annalibus. tertio in consulatu suo iussu Pompei in Sicilia ad supplicium ductus, petiit a militibus demisse et flebiliter ut sibi aluum leuare prius quam expiraret liceret, quo miserrimae lucis usu diutius frueretur, eo <us> que moram trahens donec caput eius sordido in loco sedentis abscideretur. ipsa uerba tale flagitium narrantis secum luctantur, nec silentio amica, quia occultari non merentur, neque relationi familiaria, quia dictu fastidienda sunt.
>
> Gnaeus Carbo is also a great source of shame in the Latin annals. In his third consulship when he was led out to execution by order of Pompey in Sicily, he asked the soldiers humbly and tearfully that he be allowed to lighten his bowels before he breathed his last, so that he might enjoy the use of the most wretched light for a little longer. Finally he dragged out the delay till at last his head was cut off sitting in that filthy place. The very words of one relating such a burning shame wrestle with themselves; they aren't suited to silence, since they do not deserve to be hidden, nor are they comfortable in the telling, since they are disgusting to speak.

Once again, Valerius' contempt for Carbo is extreme: he is a *uerecundia* to Rome, he begs for a little more life *flebiliter et demisse*, he debases himself, and Valerius cannot work out what to do with such *flagitium*. We can compare this to other accounts of Carbo's death and these also highlight Valerius' distinctive angle. Plutarch tells the story in his *Life of Pompey* 10, and it is a story that brings shame to Pompey, not Carbo. He says that Pompey treated Carbo with 'unnatural insolence' by dragging him in front of a tribunal in chains to be publically cross-examined (10.3) and, while he includes the detail about Carbo's

[19] These accounts, as has been observed by K. Morrell, *Pompey, Cato, and the Governance of the Roman Empire*, PhD diss., University of Sydney, 2014, 252, tend to form part of a discourse around the reputation of Roman provincial government and foreign policy, rather than focus on Aquillius' personal attitude towards death.

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request to lighten his bowels, it is told without apparent judgement, and is followed immediately by another example of Pompey's 'unnatural cruelty' (10.4). Appian too tells the story of Carbo in chains before the tribunal as an example of Pompey's cruelty (*BC* 1.96), adding that his head was cut off and sent to Sulla after death. The only explicit criticism of Carbo in these sources comes from Livy's *Periochae* (89) where Carbo is pictured *flens muliebriter mortem tulit*. No other account contains both the tearful entreaties and emergency bathroom stop, and the other versions omit the most damning part of the story: the image of Carbo cowering in the latrines until the soldiers are forced to enter the place and cut his head off there. In comparison with other authors, it becomes clear that Valerius has gone out of his way to make Carbo look as bad as possible.

The final internal *exemplum* deals with Decimus Brutus, one of Julius Caesar's assassins:

> quid D. Brutus? exiguum et infelix momentum uitae quanto dedecore emit! qui a Furio, quem ad eum occidendum Antonius miserat, comprehensus, non solum ceruicem gladio subtraxit, sed etiam constantius eam praebere admonitus ipsis his uerbis iurauit: 'ita uiuam, dabo'. o cunctationem fati aerumnosam! o iurandi stolidam fidem! sed hos tu furores, immoderata retinendi spiritus dulcedo, subicis sanae rationis modum expugnando, quae uitam diligere mortem non timere praecipit.
>
> What about Decimus Brutus? He bought a tiny and unlucky moment of life at such a price of disgrace! When he was arrested by Furius, whom Antony had sent to kill him, not only did he jerk back his neck from the sword but on top of that when he was warned to present his neck more firmly he swore in these very words, 'I swear on my life I will give it'. O wretched delay of fate! O stupid sworn oath! But you, unbridled sweetness of retaining the breath of life, you subject us to these insanities by breaking down the restraint of sane reason which instructs us to love life, not to fear death.

Valerius describes Brutus as *dedecus* – disgraceful, *stolidus* – stupid, *aerumnosus* – wretched, and puts all the stories of 9.13 under the head of *furores* – acts of madness. In contrast, Livy seems to have baldly repeated the fact of Decimus' death (*Per.* 120), while Appian (*BC* 3.98) and Orosius (6.18.7) both show more interest in what happens to Brutus' head post mortem than they do in his words in life. Even Velleius Paterculus, who curses Decimus as a traitor to Caesar, notably does not take the opportunity to sneer at his manner of facing death (2.64). Only two authors introduce elements of Valerius' story: the first is Cassius Dio, who tells us that Decimus complained about his imminent murder until Helvius Blasio killed himself as an encouragement to act, but leaves out the story of Decimus' cunning plan to avoid execution by swearing on his life that he will undergo execution (46.53). The other source is Seneca the Younger – to whom we shall return.

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We can see, then, that there is a distinctive and unusual element in Valerius Maximus' accounts; he condemns these men in strikingly strong terms for failing to meet their deaths with courage and acceptance. This does not mean, of course, that his criticism is philosophically inspired; it could be explained by Timothy Hill's argument that, in general terms, the difference between a good and a bad death at Rome is defined by the extent to which the manner of death allows the individual to demonstrate their understanding and awareness of aristocratic social norms and to show both their adherence to these norms and control of their appetites.[20] In each case mentioned here Valerius shows the violation of social norms; he explicitly makes the case that Aquillius is unfit for Roman command, demonstrates the manner in which Carbo's cowardice renders his death almost too disgusting to talk about and condemns Decimus Brutus' impossible oath which twists the essential principle of *fides*. These could, then, simply be deaths that are unbefitting by social conventions about aristocratic behaviour.

Valerius and Seneca on Disgraceful Deaths: A Shared Framework

The alternative version of Decimus Brutus' oath that we find in Seneca the Younger, however, suggests that these deaths have a particular significance for Valerius Maximus. Writing some 30 years after Valerius Maximus, Seneca tells the story in one of his *Epistulae Morales* (82.12-13):

> mors enim illa, quae in Catone gloriosa est, in Bruto statim turpis est et erubescenda. hic est enim Brutus qui, cum periturus mortis moras quaereret, ad exonerandum uentrem secessit et euocatus ad mortem iussusque praebere ceruicem, 'praebebo', inquit 'ita uiuam'. quae dementia est fugere, cum retro ire non possis? 'praebebo', inquit 'ita uiuam'. paene adiecit: 'uel sub Antonio'. O hominem dignum qui uitae dederetur! sed, ut coeperam dicere, uides ipsam mortem nec malum esse nec bonum; Cato illa honestissme usus est, turpissime Brutus.
>
> For instance, the death that in Cato's case is glorious, is in the case of Brutus forthwith base and disgraceful. For this Brutus, condemned to death, was trying to obtain postponement; he withdrew a moment in order to ease himself; when summoned to die and ordered to bare his throat, he exclaimed: 'I will bare my throat if only I may live!' What madness it is to run away when it is impossible to turn back! 'I will bare my throat if only I may live!' He came very near saying also: 'even under Antony!' This fellow deserved to be condemned to *life*! But, as I was going on to remark, you see

[20] Timothy Hill, *Ambitiosa Mors: Suicide and Self in Roman Thought and Literature* (New York 2004) 19. Plass, *The Game of Death* (n. 15) 90, also makes the point that tactical decisions to die well are not necessarily philosophical decisions. The wider societal preference is also addressed by Miriam Griffin, 'Roman Suicide: II' (n. 15) 192-202, at 194.

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> that death in itself is neither an evil nor a good; Cato experienced death most honourably, Brutus most basely.[21]

There is obviously some degree of connection between the texts; in fact, it looks very much as though Seneca has used Valerius Maximus and has accidentally conflated two *exempla* told one after another to combine Carbo's trip to the latrines with Decimus' oath.[22] This similarity gives us an excellent opportunity to compare the ways in which the two authors contextualise the stories. In the wider letter (82), Seneca voices an idea that he, in keeping with his Stoic outlook, consistently assumes as a corner-stone of his philosophy (to the extent that he has been described on occasion as death- and suicide-obsessed):[23] that the wise man does not fear death because the only thing to be feared is fear itself, as its presence indicates that you are no longer governed by *ratio*.[24] If you are sufficiently in control of yourself, which to the Stoics means sufficiently wise, death presents no challenges and, in fact, allows an individual a final opportunity to demonstrate their freedom and their wisdom.[25] At Letter 30 of the *Epistulae Morales*, Seneca gives the example of a gladiator who can redeem his own great timidity in the arena by offering his throat and directing the sword that will kill him to his neck (30.8). Meeting one's death with fortitude is not the only option: as Seneca underlines by putting Decimus Brutus into contrast with Cato the Younger and his famous suicide, an individual not only has the option to meet death bravely, but also to take control of their own death.

The same options are articulated by Valerius Maximus in 9.13. If we look back to the first *exemplum*, Valerius proposes an alternative course of action for Aquillius; he opens the *exemplum* with the comment that Aquillius preferred shamefully to serve Mithridates *cum sibi gloriose*

[21] This translation is that of Richard Mott Grummere, *Seneca the Younger: Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium Vol. 2* (Cambridge MA 1920) ad loc.

[22] Seneca's judgment of this oath, together with the language in which he chooses to convey it, echoes that of Valerius. He calls it *turpis . . . et erubescenda*. Seneca here uses *turpis*, picking up Valerius' use of *turpiter* at 9.13.1, and the noun *rubor,* which links back to *erubescenda* in the same *exemplum*.The contrast Seneca draws between brave and shameful deaths also recalls the beginning of the preface to 9.13 where Valerius introduces his series of shamefully prolonged lives as a point of contrast with the previous chapter, which presents deaths of very different characters: *uiriles* and *temerarii* (9.13.pr.).

[23] R.W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics* (London 1996) 106; J.M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge 1969) 249. Seneca, of course, explicitly rejects the idea of lust for death at *Ep*. 24.

[24] With Brad Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (Oxford 2005) 1, I take Seneca as voicing an overwhelmingly Stoic position in his writings. See also Miriam Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford 1976) 175; A.A. Long 'Roman Philosophy', in David Sedley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge 2003) 203-6.

[25] For this idea in other Stoics of the Roman world, see Epict. *Diss.* 1.1.22, 1.17.25-28, 2.1.38-9, 4.1.160-5, and Muson. 3.42; for the idea in the pre-Roman Stoa: Diog. Laert. 7.1.28-31, 7.1.102.

exstingui posset: although he had the option to die gloriously. This makes active and explicit what is present implicitly in the preface to the chapter where Valerius compares lust for death favourably with lust for life – in certain circumstances it is *fortior* and *sapientior* to embrace death over life. The remaining *exempla* sit within this opening framework: Carbo and Decimus are not powerless; rather, they have two clear options by which they may exercise their will: either meet their executioners by demonstrating their contempt for death or subvert the process, demonstrating their freedom and wisdom (like a Stoic *sapiens*) by taking matters into their own hands. Either option, as we shall see, would be compatible with Stoic ethics.

It seems that the link between Seneca and Valerius may not be simply a linguistic remnant of Seneca raiding the earlier text for *exempla*; there is also considerable sympathy in their ideological frameworks when it comes to death. According to the Stoics, ending one's own life could be a perfectly legitimate response to certain situations.[26] Traditionally, these situations were limited: to benefit the country, one's friends or family, or to escape pain or disease.[27] In Seneca, rational suicide is largely concerned with freedom. In Letter 77 he tells the story of an enslaved Spartan youth who, the first time he is asked to do something he considers *seruilis* and *contumeliosus* (empty a chamber pot), hits his head against the wall to secure his death. Seneca encapsulates the story with the line *nam uita, si moriendi uirtus abest, seruitus est:* ('for life, if courage to die be lacking, is slavery': 77.15). The Spartan boy, unlike Aquillius who is criticised in Valerius' first *exemplum*, found this an intolerable deal.

To kill oneself on the point of execution is, as Rist comments, a rather different thing.[28] Seneca explores this idea in Letter 70, where he first seems to suggest that one should let the executioner do the job he is paid for, using the example of Socrates' obedience to the laws (70.8-9), but then comments that to continue to live for two or three days while waiting for the fatal blow is to do *alienum negotium* ('another's business': 70.10). He goes on to give examples of admirable deaths wrested from imminent death at the hands of another (70.20-21). Thus Seneca praises a German gladiator who, while being led to the games to fight to the death, asked to withdraw to relieve himself and, unlike Carbo, used this opportunity to kill himself with the sponge on a stick used there to clean oneself. He concludes the letter by commenting that *iniuriosum est rapto uiuere, at contra pulcherrimum mori rapto* – a statement that could really be used to sum up the lesson in Valerius Maximus' chapter *De Cupiditate Vitae.*[29]

[26] Diog. Laert. 7.1.130.

[27] Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (n. 23) 239. For further discussion, see Miriam Griffin, 'Philosophy and Roman Suicide: I', *G&R* 33 (1986) 64-77, at 73-4.

[28] Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (n. 22) 248.

[29] This idea is also clearly articulated by Musonius Rufus, frag. 28 and 35.

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Because Valerius' text precedes that of Seneca, Valerius cannot simply be reflecting Seneca's language or ideas blindly. We are left with three possibilities: that the two authors have used the same source with a similar lack of original input on their parts, that Seneca is lifting material from Valerius without much input of his own, or that the two share a similar ideology. As neither of the first two seem likely,[30] the connections between Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* and Valerius' stance in this chapter suggest that it is possible that *De Cupiditate Vitae* reflects not just a general societal preference for facing death bravely, but also a particular appreciation of Roman interpretations of Stoic ideology in these two authors in the early imperial period.[31]

Virtues Under Pressure

It is not only Valerius' moral judgments but also the other themes and language in 9.13 that suggest that the connection between Valerius and Seneca is a shared appreciation for the wider thought of Stoics at Rome. There is, for instance, a consistent emphasis on the virtues of wisdom, courage, and moderation, or rather the lack of these virtues, in the chapter. In the preface to the chapter Valerius assumes that we should judge actions in terms of whether they are *fortis* and *sapiens*. The lack of *fortitudo* shown by Carbo and Decimus Brutus is particularly pronounced in their failures to meet death with honour; Carbo begs for a little more time tearfully and humbly, Decimus Brutus (unlike Seneca's gladiator) pulls his neck away from the sword and has to be told to show greater *constantia*. When it comes to Decimus' oath, Valerius frankly terms it *stolida*, given the impossibility of swearing on your life that you will die. More broadly, *temperantia* underpins much of the chapter; moderation or self-control is understood by Diogenes Laertius as a state of mind that is 'never overcome in that which concerns right reason, or a habit which no pleasures can get the better of' (7.1.92).[32] Valerius, in contrast, shows how

[30] Rudolf Helm, 'Valerius Maximus, Seneca und die 'Exemplassamlung'' *Hermes* 74 (1939) 130-54, at 152, argues against the notion of a common source for Valerius and Seneca on the basis of close examination of a range of passages, but does suggest the possibility that Seneca read and used Valerius' work. This is, incidentally, a potential example of the flaws in Seneca's research process as hypothesised by Ronald Mayer, 'Roman Historical Exempla in Seneca', in P. Grimal (ed.), *Seneque et la prose latine*: *Entretiens Fondation Hardt 36* (Geneva 1991) 151, but it still seems like a stretch to suggest that Seneca adopted from Valerius ideas which are so dominant in his (i.e. Seneca's) works.

[31] As C. Gill, 'The School in the Roman Imperial Period', in Brad Inwood (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge 2003) 33-58, at 33, points out, the boundaries of Stoicism are not precise in the Roman world and there is significant overlap between the cultural and the philosophical. Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality* (Oxford 2010) 15, comments on this overlap in the specific context of ethics and morality.

[32] The translation of Diogenes Laertius used throughout is that of Robert Drew Hicks (trans.), *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (London 1925).

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the excessive sweetness (*immoderata dulcedo*) of craving for life chases out *sana ratio*, once again by their notable absence underlining the fundamental importance of both self-control and wisdom.[33] This is particularly true in the Carbo *exemplum*, which shows a gross violation of the *uerecundia* that Cicero sees as integral to *temperantia et modestia*. Carbo, by delaying, effectively forces the soldiers to intrude into activities which should be done *modo occulte* (Cic. *Off*. 1.127).

The presentation of Xerxes as the first foreign *exemplum* might at first seem quite different from the other *exempla* in the chapter, but it actually serves to drive home how important it is to moderate one's emotional responses given the innate mortality of humans:

> eadem Xerxen regem pro totius Asiae armata iuuentute, quod intra centum annos esset obitura, profundere lacrimas coegisti. qui mihi specie alienam, re uera suam condicionem deplorasse uidetur, opum magnitudine quam altiore animi sensu felicior: quis enim mediocriter prudens mortalem se natum fleuerit?
>
> The same sweetness forced Xerxes the king to shed tears for the armed youth of the whole of Asia because within a hundred years they would perish. This man to me seemed in appearance to bewail the condition of another, but truly to bewail his own; a man luckier in the scope of his power than the depth of his understanding. For what man even moderately wise would mourn that he was born mortal?

Valerius twice underlines the absence of *sapientia*: Xerxes' understanding is not deep and he is not *prudens*. While a Roman commentator might expect such behaviour of an Asiatic king, Valerius does not choose to underline Xerxes' origins here, something he is certainly capable of doing in other cases when the point of an *exemplum* or chapter requires it.[34] This *exemplum* also connects to the representation of Stoic thought in Seneca's moral letters; the closest parallel comes in Letter 77 when Seneca describes the decision of Tullius Marcellinus to take his own life on the advice of *amicus noster Stoicus* (77.6), over alternative views presented by a *consilium* of his friends;[35] the *Stoicus* then guides Marcellinus through the practicalities of a voluntary death (77.7-9). Seneca, following this account by refuting the expected objections of his reader Lucilius, exclaims:

> No one is so ignorant as not to know that we must at some time die; nevertheless, when one draws near death, one turns to flight, trembles, and

[33] Morgan, *Popular Morality* (n. 6) 145-6, notes the central role of self-control in the *Facta et Dicta*.

[34] For example, his characterisation of Greeks in 4.7.4; though see S.J. Lawrence, *Inside Out* (n. 10) on Valerius' consistently ironic use of racial stereotypes.

[35] Seneca lays considerable stress on the expertise of this anonymous figure, commenting: *homo egregius et, ut uerbis illum, quibus laudari dignus est, laudem, uir fortis ac strenuus, uidetur mihi optime illum cohortatus* (77.6).

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> laments. Would you not think him an utter fool (*stultissimus omnium*) who wept because he was not alive a thousand years ago? And is he not a fool who weeps because he will not be alive a thousand years from now?

The term he uses here is *stultissimus* ('most stupid'), according with Valerius' comments on Xerxes' lack of intellect; both responses stress the mortality of humans and put this in the context of a much longer historical arc. The failure to recognise this relationship demonstrates a lack of the virtue of *sapientia*. This links closely to the idea that underpins the rest of Valerius' chapter: because we are mortal, because death is inevitable and also sometimes preferable, it is nonsensical to lose control of one's emotions because one will, or is about to, die.[36] The judgement Xerxes has made as to the significance of mortality is irrational and a source of shame.

This idea is expanded in the three *exempla* affixed to the end of the chapter under the heading *Quam Exquisita Custodia Vsi Sint Quibus Suspecti Domestici Fuerunt*, as Valerius further demonstrates how one's attitude to death reveals one's degree of emotional control.

Wisdom, Emotion and Death

In Book four of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, one of our key sources both for Cicero's interpretation of Stoic ideology on emotion and for that of Chrysippus,[37] Interlocutor 'A' comments that he cannot understand how it is possible for a *sapiens* to be without emotions or, as he puts it, to be without *omnis perturbatio animi* (4.8). A's learned counterpart, 'M', responds that, while it is possible to experience good emotions (4.4), there are also emotions that are particularly dangerous, for instance *cupiditas*:

> Ea libido est uel cupiditas effrenata, quae in omnibus stultis inuenitur.
>
> This is passion or wild desire, which is found in all stupid people.

This comment picks up two key points in Valerius' chapter 9.13; the particular behaviour that brands an individual as lacking in wisdom (as in the case of Xerxes' tears at 9.13.ext.1) and the out of control emotion that often prompts this behaviour (such as the *furores* prompted by the *immoderata retinendi spiritus dulcedo* in 9.13.3). Valerius explicitly states that this kind of emotion drives out *ratio* (9.13.3). In contrast, Cicero's speaker goes on to explain that an individual who practises *temperantia* and builds their life around the dictates of *ratio* will never be at the mercy of this kind of sickness of the mind (*aegritudo*) caused by particularly strong passions, such as fear (*metus*) and desire (*libido*)

[36] This recalls the (rather challenging) advice offered by Epictetus on dealing with the mortality of one's family members (*Ench.* 11, 14.1, 16). A.A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus* (n. 6) 382, comments that the Stoic position on grief is one of the more unappealing aspects of the philosophy for modern readers.

[37] Margaret Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (Chicago 2007) 12.

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(4.13-14, 22, 26). Much of Book 4 is then dedicated to showing the way in which these strong feelings are in conflict with *ratio* and thus *natura* (for example, 4.26, 30, 36, 61). The concern here in both authors, I would argue, is with the irrationality that results when individuals fail to understand what is actually good and bad in life and thus what should be rationally desired or avoided; that is, a failure to judge impressions of events accurately.

According to Diogenes Laertius, Hecato, Zeno, and Chrysippus were all in agreement that the disturbing, damaging emotions of fear, desire, grief, and pleasure arise from incorrect judgments as to whether events and things are good, bad, or indifferent (7.1.110-1).[38] Thus, for example, greed for money arises from the incorrect judgment that money is a good thing (7.1.111).[39] Many things that we would regard as good things or bad things (and thus to be rationally desired or treated with caution: 7.1.116) are not intrinsically so to the Stoics. The vast majority of things, in fact, are classified as indifferent, and so neither to be desired nor feared on the basis of their own intrinsic value; this category includes life itself, health, pleasure, beauty, good reputation, disgrace, poverty, and physical pain (7.1.102).[40] Cicero argues that failing to understand that these things are neither to be desired nor feared results in either *metus*, caution directed towards things that do not need to be feared, or *libido*, desire for things that are not actually desirable on rational grounds (*Tusc.* 4.26). The impact of experiencing these emotions is serious; Cicero, for example, provides a string of adjectives to describe the potential behaviour of one affected by *metus*: *humile, summissum, molle, effeminatum, fractum, obiectum* (*Tusc*. 4.64). These terms recall the preface to chapter 9.13 where Valerius contrasts those whose deaths are *uiriles* with those *enerues et effeminati* who, terrified of death, cling onto life beyond a rational point. As Valerius later in the chapter asserts, death need not be feared if it is understood rationally (9.13.3).

Exercising correct judgement about the value of impressions, then, is a route to freedom; the *sapiens*, practising *moderatio* and *constantia*, governs himself rather than living under the dominance of the passions (Cic. *Tusc.* 4.37 and 4.30).[41] Seneca maintains that the route to *libertas* is twofold: first,

[38] Also Stobaeus, 2.88.8-90,6, in A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers: Volume 1 Translations of the Principle Sources, with Philosophical Commentary* (Cambridge 1987) 65A, and Andronicus, *On Passions* 1 (Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 65B). Posidonius did not share this view: Galen, *On Hippocrates' and Plato's Doctrines*, 4.3.2-5 (Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers,* 65K).

[39] Galen quotes Chrysippus on the dangerous descent into illness that potentially follows a love of money: *On Hippocrates' and Plato's Doctrines*, 4.5.21-5 (Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 65L).

[40] It is worth noting, however, that there was once again disagreement within the School regarding the positioning of elements as good, bad or indifferent (Diog. Laert. 7.1.103).

[41] Or an individual, who is trained in Stoic philosophy, even if he or she is not yet a *sapiens*: Richard Sorabji, 'Is Stoic Philosophy Helpful as Psychotherapy?' *BICS* 41 (1997)

one must reject the demands of the body: the *sapiens* will recognise that the body is simply a vessel of no intrinsic importance (*Ep.* 65.18, 65.21-2, 92.10, 92.33); this means that serving the desires and aversions of the body, such as pleasure and an absence of pain, is a pointless exercise (*Ep.* 65.22, 92.6-7). Second, Seneca maintains that *libertas* can only be gained by focusing purely on what one can control (*Ep.* 110.20, 125.6). This means rejecting both desire and fear, because desire puts a man at the mercy of *fortuna* (*Ep.* 71.37, 59.14), while fearing death or physical suffering leaves an individual utterly prey to inevitable events outside his own control (*Ep.* 4.8-9, 24.15, 71.16, 66.23, 93.12, 101.7, 104.10). In contrast, happiness is only possible when the guiding light of all decisions and actions is *ratio*. While Seneca suggests early in the *Epistulae Morales* that not all emotion is entirely to be rejected (59.18), he later warns his correspondent Lucilius that even a little *affectu*s is a risk, as emotions like love, which depend on the behaviour of another, tend to spiral out of the individual's control (*Ep.* 116.3).[42]

The importance of self-control is similarly prominent in other Roman authors in the Stoic tradition, such as Musonius Rufus, who stresses the need to resist emotion and focus on self-control. As Lutz argues, the surviving texts of Musonius set out a program maintaining that inner freedom and tranquillity come from the ability to understand that all but virtue and vice are indifferent and a subsequent clarity as regards all judgments in life.[43] Musonius argues for the importance of a philosophical education because it teaches the student self-control; this self-control manifests itself in resistance to pleasure and greed and an understanding that death and hardships are not intrinsically bad things (8.62, 6.52). Musonius' pupil, Epictetus, sums up the lesson neatly:

> The gods have released you from accountability for your parents, your siblings, your body, your possessions – for death and for life itself. They made you responsible only for what is in your power – the proper use of impressions.[44]

It is up to the individual, helped by their philosophical training, to judge and manage their impressions of external events and to determine not only

197-209, at 199. Susanne Bobzien, 'Stoic Conceptions of Freedom and their Relation to Ethics', *BICS* 41 (1997) 71-89, at 76, sets out the connection between assent to impressions and freedom with great clarity.

42 Seneca does allow for an individual to experience a first, unthinking, reaction without attracting the charge of falling prey to one's passions (*De Ira* 2.3.1).

43 Cora Lutz, *Musonius Rufus: The Roman Socrates* (New Haven 1947) 28.

44 Epict. *Diss.* 1.12.33-4. The translations of Epictetus used throughout are those of Robert Dobbin (trans.), *Epictetus: Discourses and Selected Writings* (London 2008). Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity* (n. 30) 60 notes the particular emphasis on the question of self-control in Epictetus' teachings, and Bobzien, 'Stoic Conceptions of Freedom' (n. 41) 81, underlines the radical autonomy that this imparts: because freedom is defined by self-control, there is no external circumstance that can stop one exercising one's freedom.

what it is good, bad, or indifferent, but also to forego attempts to control external events and focus on control of the self.[45] The truly wise man recognises the limits of his own authority, and this certainly includes control over his own mortality.[46]

Fear and the Failure to Fight It

In contrast, in 9.13.ext.2-4 of Valerius Maximus' *Facta et Dicta*, we see a series of powerful but terrified figures attempting to defend their own lives through extreme precautions. These men are frantically, and foolishly, trying to control something outside their control in order to avoid an event which is not a bad thing and thus should hold no fear and which is impossible to avoid in any case.

The section begins with a story, found nowhere else, depicting Masinissa's decision to protect himself with dogs rather than people.

> I will turn now to those who, holding others in suspicion, took rather particular care of themselves. I won't begin with one from the most lowly (*miserrimus*), but with him who is believed to have been the most fortunate of all amongst the chosen few (*inter paucos felicissimus*).
>
> King Masinissa, putting too little trust in the intentions of humans, buttressed his safety with a guard of dogs. To what purpose did he extend his power (*imperium*) so widely? To what purpose such a great number of children? To what purpose, finally, Roman friendship secured with such firm goodwill, if he considered that these things should be protected by nothing more surely than a dog's bark and bite?

Masinissa, despite the many zones of his influence, is crippled by his fear. Valerius draws an initial contrast between Masinissa's true state as *miserrimus* despite his apparent status as *felicissimus*, then, in a series of rhetorical questions, he throws doubt on the value of Masinissa's wide-ranging *imperium*, his many children, and his possession of the friendship of Rome, if he thought that he could rely on no protection more securely than the bite and bark of dogs. Valerius raises no concerns about the nature of Masinissa's rule, and his power is not characterised as tyrannical or excessive; indeed, the concluding example of his good fortune, his relationship with Rome, tends to suggest approval on Valerius' part. Masinissa is *felicissimus*, and yet the most impressive degree of power and influence, even the friendship of Rome, is meaningless, if one cannot keep control of one's suspicion and fear. Epictetus makes this very point, quoting Socrates' warning that not only can peace and happiness not be

[45] Steven K. Strange, 'The Stoics on the Voluntariness of the Passions', in Steven K. Strange and Jack Zupko (eds) *Stoicism: Traditions and Transformations* (Cambridge 2004) 32-51, at 35.

[46] Epict. *Diss.* 1.12.32-5, 1.1.24, 2.13.9-10, 3.22.30, 4.1.1.

found in the body, but they cannot be found in wealth, political office, or even kingship; in fact, these things cause the holders to complain that 'their lives are worse and less safe' as a result of their success (*Diss.* 3.22.26-30).[47] Despite his great power, Masinissa will never feel safe because he is looking for his sense of security in the wrong place.

The story of Masinissa could nevertheless be read as making a range of points; in the next *exempla*, however, where alternative versions exist for comparison, it is possible to isolate the author's intentions more clearly. Against the background of this comparative material, Valerius' particular point about the powerlessness of powerful men comes into sharper focus at 9.13.ext.3, where Alexander of Pherae cannot be saved by his status or his guards because he is already the victim of *metus* and *amor*:

> Alexander was unluckier than this king, whose heart love tortured on the one hand, fear on the other (*cuius praecordia hinc amor hinc metus torserunt*): for although he was seized by boundless passion (*cum infinito ardore*) for his wife, Thebe, coming from the feast to this woman, he would order a barbarian, tattooed with Thracian symbols, with a drawn sword, to go before him into the bedroom. Nor would he trust himself to the same bed before it had been searched carefully by his bodyguards. A punishment designed by the wrathful spirit of the gods, neither to be able to control one's lust, nor one's fear. The same thing was both the cause and the end of this fear: for Thebe, enraged (*ira mota*) over the installation of a rival, killed Alexander.

The originality of Valerius' reading is clear when his text is compared to the other extant versions of these stories. Xenophon's version describes Alexander's cruelty and his death at the hands of his wife but there is no reference to his fear for his life (*Hellen.* 6.4.35-7) and Plutarch, while he mentions the precautions Alexander had put in place to protect his bed-chamber from outside threats, does not focus on his fear (*Pelop.* 35).[48] A more interesting parallel emerges from a comparison between 9.13.ext.3 and Cicero's *De Officiis* 2.25: there is obviously a close connection between the two versions[49] as Cicero not only relates the story of

[47] It is notable that all of Valerius' external *exempla* in 9.13 document the miseries of kings and tyrants; this is, of course, partially a function of needing figures who have a reason to be afraid of external threats (although not so in the case of Xerxes at 9.13.ext.1), but this in itself aligns neatly with another point made by Epictetus on the tendency of people to misjudge what is really of value in life: '. . . remember, tragedies take place among the rich – among kings, and potentates. . . Kings start off well enough: "Deck the palace halls." But then around the third or fourth act, we get, "O Cithaeron, why did you receive me?" Fool, where are your crowns, your diadem? Even your guards can't help you now.' (*Diss.* 1.24.15-7).

[48] Versions of the story that focus simply on Thebe's role in her husband's death also appear in Ov. *Ib.* 321-8 and Diod. Sic. 16.14.1.

[49] Helm, 'Valerius Maximus' (n. 29) 43-3, points to Valerius' use of *De Officiis* elsewhere in the work. Langlands, 'Roman *Exempla*' (n. 5) 103, also argues that Valerius engages with the work.

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Alexander but also links this to the fate of Dionysius of Syracuse who appears next at 9.13.ext.4 in the *Facta et Dicta*.[50] However, Valerius uses the story of Alexander to articulate quite a different message from that of Cicero. In Cicero's version, the story is about the misuse of power: he introduces the stories of Dionysius and Alexander of Pherae by stating:

> etenim qui se metui uolent, a quibus metuentur, eosdem metuant ipsi necesse est.
>
> And so those who want to be feared, need themselves to be afraid of those very same people by whom they are feared.

As Cicero shows, this kind of tyrannical power distorts even those relationships that should be closest, leading Alexander to trust the ultimate outsider (a tattooed barbarian) over his own wife.[51] Cicero then concludes by making the point that *tanta uis imperii*, oppressed by fear, has little longevity (2.25). This is entirely in keeping with the context of the *exemplum* in *De Officiis*: a discussion of fear and the way in which it both creates and destroys tyrants (2.23-4). It is notable, however, that Valerius does not mention Alexander's political power (not even in terms of specifying his position as king) or the misuse of this power both inspired and necessitated by fear, choosing instead to focus on the protagonist's lack of emotional self-control:

> supplicium irato deorum numine compositum, neque libidini neque timori posse imperare.
>
> A punishment designed by the wrathful spirit of the gods, neither to be able to control one's lust, nor one's fear.

This statement puts us squarely into the middle of a very Stoic idea of the passions; Alexander is trapped between desire and aversion as he assents to the pull of damaging lust for his wife and pointless fear for his own life and allows these passions to control him.[52] Valerius underlines Alexander's lack of control from the opening sentence of the *exemplum*

[50] Cicero also gives the bare details of the story at *De Inv.* 2.144, focusing once again on the murder of Alexander by his wife. Xenophon's version lacks any discussion of Alexander's fear or precautions and posits his murder as a fair recompense for his thefts 'by land and by sea' and cruelty towards the Thebans and Athenians (*Hell.* 6.4.35-7).

[51] The detail of the barbarian's tattoos underlines his distance from 'civilised' society: C.P. Jones, 'Stigma: Tattooing and Branding in Graeco-Roman Antiquity', *JRS* 77 (1987) 139-55, at 141. The depiction of Alexander's eventual death as a result of another breach of trust (*pelicatus*) further underlines the violation of the proper order between husband and wife. Andrew R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Officiis* (Ann Arbor 1996) 398, comments that Cicero's explanation of Thebe's motivation differs from other accounts of the story, putting an emphasis on lust, while other sources suggest a response to the perceived infertility of his wife.

[52] Strange, 'The Stoics on the Voluntariness of the Passions' (n. 45) 38; Sorabji, 'Stoic Philosophy' (n. 44) 197-8. See Margaret Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (n. 37) 30, on the development of fear and desire as key movements of the spirit in Cicero.

by ensuring that he is not the grammatical subject of an active verb; instead his heart is the grammatical object of torture, and he is possessed (*teneretur*) by his boundless *ardor* for Thebe.[53] When Alexander does take the role of an active subject, a vaguely comic scene ensues, as he orders the bodyguard to interpose himself almost literally between husband and wife. Essentially, through his commands to his security detail to make his wife's bed safe so that he can exercise his passion, Alexander is trying to control the wrong thing; to stop the torment in which he is living he simply needs to control his own fear or his own desire and, preferably, both.[54] Alexander, then, is wrong on two fronts. First, he has misjudged lust and fear by supposing that fulfilling desire is a good thing and that death is a bad thing. Second, compounding this error, he has made a decision that it is right for him to act on this judgement and thus made a fundamental mistake about his power to control external events. By focusing on defending his life, as opposed to controlling his emotions, Alexander has entered a battle he can never win, because he is mortal and at the mercy of *fortuna*.[55] This is clearly demonstrated when Thebe finds a way to kill him anyway, herself motivated by *ira*.[56] At every point, the passions are destructive in this *exemplum*, and Valerius sets up a powerful argument for control of the self as the only effective form of control available, even for kings.[57]

The image of a powerful man as the helpless victim of torture recurs in 9.13.ext.4:

> Look at this, the tyrant Dionysius of Syracuse – how long a tale of this torture! He dragged out his mastery for thirty-eight years in this fashion (*age, Dionysius Syracusanorum tyrannus huiusce tormenti quam longa fabula! qui duodequadraginta annorum dominationem in hunc modum peregit*.) He removed his friends and in their place substituted men of the most ferocious tribes and select, outstandingly strong slaves from the families of the rich; to such as these he entrusted his flanks. Also, in fear of barbers, he taught his daughters to shave and not daring to trust iron to their hands

[53] *hoc rege infelicior Alexander, cuius praecordia hinc amor hinc metus torserunt: nam cum infinito ardore coniugis Thebes teneretur* . . . In contrast to Cicero's comments on the validity of Alexander's fear in *De Officiis*, Valerius does not condone either of Alexander's judgments, stating instead simply that the same woman was the *causa et finis* of his fear, thus allowing Alexander's death perhaps even to be seen as a release – an end to fear – rather than the great evil he went to such lengths to avoid.

[54] Musonius Rufus warns against sexual indulgence, even within marriage, purely in the service of pleasure (12.86).

[55] Sorabji, 'Stoic Philosophy' (n. 41) 197, underlines the precision of the two separate judgements that determine an emotional reaction in Chrysippus' theory.

[56] *cuius timoris eadem et causa et finis fuit: Alexandrum enim Thebe paelicatus ira mota interemit.*

[57] Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers* (n. 38) 419, see this vision of the importance of self-control as one of the defining features in the ancient perception of Stoicism.

> after they approached maturity, he instructed them to burn away his beard and hair with the scorching shells of walnuts. Nor was he a more confident husband than father. For at the same time he was tied up in two marriages, to Aristomache of Syracuse and Doris of the Locri. He never sought the embrace of either woman unless she had been searched, and he even encircled the couch in the bed chamber with a broad trench just like an encampment; into this room he took himself on a wooden bridge, when the door of the bedroom, closed from the outside by his guards, he himself had carefully blockaded with a bolt on the inside.

Tyrannus sits side by side at the opening of the *exemplum* with the image of Dionysius as a victim of torture, and the uncomfortable contrast between these conditions is reinforced as, by stressing the longevity of Dionysius' *dominatio*, Valerius reinforces that this is a state to be endured, not enjoyed. The source of the tyrant's torment is once again fear. Valerius describes Dionysius choosing to trust the most unlikely allies (*ferocissimarum gentium homines*) over his closest friends and family, but is not explicit about the tyrant's motivation until he treats Dionysius' decision to teach his daughters to shave him because of his *tonsorum metus*. Valerius does not put this in terms of Dionysius' political suspicion, but rather in terms of simple fear, an emotion that leads him to ever more extreme solutions. Dionysius' fear extends, Valerius points out, beyond his role as a father and into his role as a husband. Driven by the tyrant's fear, the marriage bed becomes a *castra* in which the married couple is effectively under siege.

Cicero's fullest version of this story (*Tusc*. 5.57-9) does not explicitly refer to Dionysius' fear. Rather, as in his presentation of Alexander of Pherae in *De Officiis*, Cicero focuses on Dionysius' *cupiditas* for power and the suspicious, ruthless behaviour that makes him a target (5.57). As we have seen, Valerius makes ironic use of the terms *tyrannus* and *dominatio* when he introduces Dionysius; Cicero, in addition to using *tyrannus* and *dominatus*, describes Dionysius' kingdom as *oppressam seruitute* and refers to his *iniusta dominatus cupiditas* (5.58); Cicero also characterises Dionysius as *maleficus* and *iniustus* – thus underlining the abuse of power that prompts much of his fear for his own safety. As he states, Dionysius' *errata* even as a young man guaranteed that he could never feel safe (*saluus*: 5.62), even should he reform. In the midst of his quite extensive treatment of Dionysius' isolation and paranoia, Cicero comments that Dionysius went so far as to almost shut himself up *in carcerem*.

It is clearly this version, focused on Dionysius' misuse of power, that Valerius is using, as Dyck has observed, rather than the version at *De Officiis* (2.25) where Cicero describes Dionysius as suffering the *cruciatus timoris*.[58] Nevertheless, Valerius strips out Cicero's explicit references to the link between the nature of Dionysius' power and his fear for his own

[58] Dyck, *De Officiis* (n. 51) 397. Plutarch's version of the story includes markedly different details and proofs of Dionysius' paranoia (*Dion*. 9).

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life and limits the rhetoric around tyranny to the opening contrast between perceived absolute power and the reality of Dionysius' victimhood under the *tormentum* inspired by uncontrolled fear. Valerius' decision to focus closely on fear despite his use of a version in Cicero that highlights *cupiditas* for power might seem perverse. The solution, however, may be found in the carefully designed structure of 9.13 as a whole: underlining Dionysius' fear allows Valerius to use the memorable details of the tyrant's domestic arrangements to set up a clear progression in 9.13: 9.13.1-9.13. ext.1 deal with desire (*cupiditas vitae*), while 9.13.ext.2-4 are about fear. The chapter leaves the reader with the final image of Dionysius cowering in his marital cage; the tyrant trapped inside his own defences: he has no freedom because he fails to control both his desire for, and fear of, things that lie beyond his control.[59] At both 9.13.ext.2 and 3, Valerius has drawn upon Cicero, but he has made significant alterations to the focus of the original material; the effect of an abuse of power in Cicero becomes the failure of the individual to exercise power over himself in Valerius. This new focus is also in keeping with the broader ideas in Cicero's work to which Valerius was clearly exposed.

It is significant that Valerius is using *Tusculan Disputations* in particular as his source for the story of Dionysius.[60] As previously stated, in Book Four of the work Cicero discusses the *perturbationes* that plague the individual who is not in control of their own emotions.[61] Cicero devotes particular attention to the opposed but equally dangerous disturbances embodied in *metus* and *libido*.[62] The presence of either of these emotions indicates a loss of *ratio* (4.38) and both are deeply dangerous to the integrity of the sufferer (4.64, 4.68-75). It is entirely in keeping with this idea that Valerius should describe Alexander's position, caught between fear and desire, as being a kind of divine punishment.[63] Likewise, Cicero explicitly references the painful nexus between opposing passions in his extended discussion of Dionysius' attempts to ward off threats, commenting that *sic distrahuntur in contrarias partes impotentium cupiditate*s ('in this way the desires of those unable to control themselves are dragged in opposite directions': *Tusc*. 5.60). Langlands has already identified similarities between the mental framework of *De Officiis* and

[59] Bobzien, 'Stoic Conceptions of Freedom' (n. 41) 85.

[60] The similarities in language and phrasing are marked; for instance, Valerius writes *et a familiis locupletium electos praeualidos seruos . . . substituit* and Cicero: *ex familiis locupletium seruos delegerat*; similarly,Valerius: *tonsorum quoque metu tondere filias suas docuit*, and Cicero: *quin etiam ne tonsori collum committeret, tondere filias suas docuit*.

[61] As previously mentioned, at 4.8 'A' struggles to believe that even a *sapiens* can be immune to the effects of strong emotion.

[62] For example, 4.8, 4.11, 4.35 (*metus*), 4.36 (*libido*).

[63] Cicero refers to those who cannot control their *cupiditas* and suffer the pangs of these *perturbationes* as *stulti* (4.12, 4.14, 4.39), recalling Valerius' dismissive characterisation of Xerxes as *opum magnitudine quam altiore animi sensu felicior* and lacking in *prudentia* (9.13.ext.1).

Valerius' work and suggested that Valerius was familiar with Cicero's text.[64] In 9.13 we can see Valerius similarly demonstrating his familiarity with the *Tusculan Disputations*, a work in which Cicero writes about largely Stoic theories of emotion, in the context of a chapter in which Valerius passes judgement on a series of figures for failing to live up to these very standards, all the while using appropriate Stoic terminology. It could be argued, in fact, that Valerius is actually amplifying the Stoic content of Cicero's work.[65] Throughout 9.13, where alternative versions of the *exempla* exist, it can be shown that Valerius is deliberately and consistently focusing on fear, desire and the ultimate importance of rational self-control.

There seems, then, to be much common ground between the values and ideas that Valerius Maximus articulates in 9.13 and the theoretical framework that we see in Roman writers on Stoicism both following and preceding his period. In fact, on the basis of the consistent outlook Valerius articulates in 9.13, Römer's attempts to trace a structural debt in the *Facta et Dicta* to the Stoic cardinal virtues, while still beset with difficulties, might actually benefit from the inclusion of the chapters after 9.11 which he saw as problematic.[66] The similarities between Valerius and Seneca extend beyond the plots of *exempla* to encompass a consistent articulation of ideas and values, while Valerius, in using stories from Cicero's philosophical works, sharpens the focus to remove political aspects and concentrate on the psychological. Even accepting the influence of Stoicism on educated discourse generally at Rome,[67] to argue that this is simply a question of inherited language requires us not only to deny Valerius' independence on the one hand, but also to question that of Seneca the Younger on the other. The simplest explanation appears to be that Valerius was familiar with Stoic ethics and that he embraced at least part of the doctrine with some enthusiasm. It is clear that the argument that Valerius was indeed working within a particular philosophical framework is worthy of considerable further investigation.

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[64] Langlands, 'Roman *Exempla*' (n. 5) 103.

[65] Particularly as Cicero did not himself subscribe to a Stoic framework: G. Reydams-Schils, 'Philosophy and Education in Stoicism of the Roman Imperial Era', *Oxford Review of Education* 36 (2010) 561-74, at 562.

[66] Römer, 'Zum Aufbau' (n. 9).

[67] J. Brunschwig and D. Sedley, 'Hellenistic Philosophy', in Sedley, *Greek and Roman Philosophy* (n. 23) 165.

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