

the same line (*uiro uir*) is also Ennian, although in extant verse the only exact parallel for this particular doubling is Furius Bibaculus (fr. 10C/75H *pressatur pede pes, mucro mucrone, uiro uir*).¹⁵ Such features support the notion that Ennius lies behind Virgil's battle description, whose numerous similarities to the narrative in Sallust could thus be explained by the reliance of both authors upon a common source; yet, as we have seen, a case can certainly be made that Sallust himself is 'a possible model' for Virgil here.¹⁶

Sallust tells us that the sedition of Catiline and his followers was felt in Cisalpine Gaul (*Cat.* 42.1), and Eden comments that this was 'perhaps the first political event to impress itself on the boyhood of Virgil (about seven at the time)'.¹⁷ The *Eclogues* were written under the patronage of Asinius Pollio,¹⁸ who shared with Sallust both a literary consultant and a Thucydidean style,¹⁹ and in the *Aeneid* Virgil depicted Catiline, *pendentem scopulo*, and the younger Cato, *dantem iura*, alongside each other on Aeneas' shield (8.668–70).²⁰ Several recent scholars have suggested various ways in which Virgil may have been indebted to Sallust,²¹ and it would not be at all surprising if, as he wrote about the conflict between Etruscans and Latins in Book 10, the events of a more recent civil war came into his mind.

Durham

A.J. WOODMAN

ajw6n@virginia.edu

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CVIVS MENSÆ SACRA? A TEXTUAL PROBLEM IN VALERIUS MAXIMUS (VAL. MAX. 4.2.3)*

ABSTRACT

This note proposes to emend the problematic preserved reading ad cuius mensae sacra (Val. Max. 4.2.3) to ad Iouis mensae sacra.

Keywords: Valerius Maximus; textual criticism; *epulum Iouis*; *mensae sacra*

¹⁵ See J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry* (Oxford, 1996), 194–8.

¹⁶ So Harrison (n. 1) on 10.366–7; he mentions our passage of Sallust again in his notes on 369 and 372–3.

¹⁷ P.T. Eden, *A Commentary on Virgil: Aeneid VIII* (Leiden, 1975), 177.

¹⁸ Cf. F. Cairns, 'Pollio and the *Eclogues*', *CCJ* 54 (2008), 49–79.

¹⁹ For Ateius Philologus as literary consultant, see Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 10.6 and R.A. Kaster, *C. Suetonius Tranquillus De grammaticis et rhetoribus* (Oxford, 1995), ad loc. For Pollio and Sallust, see Woodman (n. 9), 127–8 and id., *From Poetry to History* (Oxford, 2012), 138–9.

²⁰ For Virgil's interest in the figure of Catiline, see D.H. Berry, *Cicero's Catilinarians* (Oxford, 2020), 194–6.

²¹ See R. Ash, 'Epic encounters? Ancient historical battle narratives and the epic tradition', in D.S. Levene and D.P. Nelis (edd.), *Clio and the Poets* (Leiden / Boston / Cologne, 2002), 253–73, at 256–67, N. Horsfall, 'Sallustian politicians and Virgilian villains', *SCI* 21 (2002), 79–81, V.E. Pagán, 'Forestalling violence in Sallust and Virgil', *Mouseion* 10 (2010), 23–44, J. Marincola, 'Eros and empire: Virgil and the historians on Civil War', in C.S. Kraus, J. Marincola and C. Pelling (edd.), *Ancient Historiography and its Contexts. Studies in Honour of A.J. Woodman* (Oxford, 2010), 193–204.

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In *exemplum* 4.2.3 of his *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, Valerius Maximus recounts the reconciliation of the elder Scipio Africanus and Tiberius Gracchus, the father of the Gracchi:¹

clarum etiam in Africano superiore ac Ti. Graccho depositarum inimicitiarum exemplum, si quidem ad cuius mensae sacra odio dissidentes uenerant, ab ea et amicitia et adfinitate iuncti discesserunt: non contentus enim Scipio auctore senatu in Capitolio Iouis epulo cum Graccho concordiam communicasse, filiam quoque ei Corneliam protinus ibi despondit.

The scene described by Valerius is clear. Despite their personal enmities, the two men had come together on the Capitoline Hill to partake in the *epulum Iouis*, the public banquet in honour of Jupiter.² At the request of the Senate, they put aside their hostilities, with Scipio going as far as betrothing his own daughter to Gracchus. As it stands, however, the *exemplum* contains a textual issue. From a grammatical as well as semantic perspective, the preserved reading *ad cuius mensae sacra* appears odd, as the pronoun *cuius* has no obvious referent. It might therefore be worthwhile to consider emending the problematic reading *ad cuius mensae sacra* to *ad Iouis mensae sacra*.

The phrase *mensae sacra*, which is not attested before Valerius, can be found on four other occasions within the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* (2.1.8, 5.3.3, 8.15.7, 9.2.2). In all of these instances, it seems to denote a certain ritualized and divinely sanctioned agreement to honour the principles of friendship and concord around the banquet table.³ Only at Val. Max. 4.2.3, however, is the phrase specified further by a genitive attribute. The problem is that, without an obvious referent, the preserved pronoun *cuius* is difficult to maintain. Given the continuation of the second part of Valerius' *exemplum* and the fact that Aulus Gellius (*NA* 12.8.1–4) makes so much of the reconciliation happening at the *epulum Iouis* (by comparison with the somewhat vague version at Livy 38.57.5), an emendation of the reading *ad cuius mensae sacra* to *ad Iouis mensae sacra* instead seems far more appealing.⁴

From a palaeographical perspective, it certainly is not impossible that the reading *Iouis* was corrupted to *cuius* by an inattentive scribe. The letter combinations *ui* and *iu* can be rather difficult to distinguish in minuscule script, where they are usually modified by serifs at the top and bottom (cf. Val. Max. 1.6.ext.1 *iuxta indem* [AL; L^c *indum*] for *uix tandem* [G]; 6.3.6 *iniuriis* [AL] for *in uiris* [A^cL^cG]), and the common error of *u* for *o* is also attested at Val. Max. 1.8.4 (*Curiolanum* [α] for *Coriolanum* [dett.]). Within this context, it does not seem inconceivable that a scribe misread the initial *i* (perhaps with a particularly prominent serif at the bottom) for *c*, a mistake

¹ The standard text of the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* is J. Briscoe's Teubner (Stuttgart, 1998). Regarding Val. Max. 4.2.3, D.R. Shackleton Bailey's Loeb (Cambridge, Mass., 2000) agrees entirely with Briscoe's text.

² On the *epulum Iouis*, see H.H. Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (Ithaca, NY, 1981), 182–3.

³ For a more thorough analysis of the implications of the term *mensae sacra* in the *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, see J. Lennon, 'Dining and obligation in Valerius Maximus: the case of the *sacra mensae*', *CQ* 65 (2015), 719–31.

⁴ Note in particular the account at Gell. *NA* 12.8.2–3 *ea similtas cum diu mansisset et sollempni die epulum Ioui libaretur atque ob id sacrificium senatus in Capitolio epularetur, fors fuit, ut apud eandem mensam duo illi iunctim locarentur. tum quasi diis immortalibus arbitris in conuiuio Iouis Optimi Maximi dexteris eorum conducentibus repente amicissimi facti*. Cf. also H.-F. Mueller, *Roman Religion in Valerius Maximus* (Abingdon, 2002), 72, who, in regard to Val. Max. 4.2.3, observes that 'Jupiter's feast enjoys in this anecdote a central prominence'.

easily made (for a similar case, see the different readings preserved at Plin. *Ep.* 1.9.1 *iunctisque vs cunctisque*).

However, there is further philological evidence which might support the emendation proposed here. On the only other occasion on which Valerius specifically talks about anyone's table in his work, the owner's name goes in the genitive before *mensa* (9.1.1 *Oratae mensae*). In terms of word order, the reading *ad Louis mensae sacra* would, therefore, be entirely feasible. The double genitive within the *ad ... sacra* might be seen as stylistically awkward, but there can be no doubt that the proposed emendation is far less problematic than the extant text.⁵

And so the key question that remains is whether the term *Louis mensa* was ever used to refer to the *epulum Louis*. While there is no thoroughly conclusive evidence, a passage in the elder Pliny may hold an important clue. At *HN* 25.105, discussing the various purposes of the verbena plant, Pliny explains that, among other things, the herb was used to sweep 'Jupiter's table': *hac Louis mensa uerritur*.⁶ Within the passage, the term *Louis mensa* clearly seems to denote a table used for the purpose of religious offerings to Jupiter (for *mensa* in the sense of 'sacrificial table', see *TLL* 8.743.35–61). The presence of such a table would, without doubt, have been implicit in the celebration of the *epulum Louis*, which revolved around a *lectisternium* for the Capitoline Triad (cf. Val. Max. 2.1.2 *nam Louis epulo ipse in lectulum, Iuno et Minerua in sellas ad cenam inuitabantur*). However, it may not even be necessary to establish a direct link between the term *Louis mensa* and a physical table that could have been used in the *epulum Louis* at Rome. In light of the deliberate variation in terminology at Gell. *NA* 12.8.2–3 (*epulum Loui libaretur; in conuiuio Louis Optimi Maximi*), it may be more likely that Valerius is effectively using the phrase *Louis mensae* as a synonym for *epulum Louis* (for *mensa* as a synonym of *conuiuium* or *cena*, see *TLL* 8.741.55–742.11).

Pliny's confident use of *Louis mensa*, without the need to provide more specific information, certainly suggests that his early imperial Roman readership would easily have been able to understand the precise implications of this term without further explanation. It may therefore be surmised that Valerius' readers too would have been able immediately to connect the *Louis mensa* with the *epulum Louis*, which clearly stands at the core of this *exemplum*. Valerius' initial reference to the *Louis mensae sacra* could thus be seen as the setting of the scene for the exemplary reconciliation of Scipio and Gracchus, the religious significance of which is then further highlighted by a second reference to the *epulum Louis*.

University of Fribourg

HEIKO WESTPHAL

heiko.westphal@unifr.ch

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⁵ That Valerius principally is not opposed to the idea of stringing together genitives becomes evident at, for example, 2.1.5 (*nulli ... subsessorum alienorum matrimoniorum oculi*) and 4.3.2 (*huius uiri abstinentiae testis*).

⁶ Because of its obvious religious significance, the verbena plant was known as *hiera botane* (Plin. *HN* 25.105; see also Dioscorides 4.60.2 *ἱερὰ βοτάνη*).