

The Princeps Optimus:
Towards a New Reading of Velleius Paterculus' History

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Abstract

This thesis works towards a new reading of Velleius Paterculus' survey of Roman history, published in AD 29 or 30. Modern scholarship has tended to condemn Velleius as historian and stylist. Though opinions have started to change in the last few decades, even the most recent works generally treat him as a passive and perhaps unconscious conveyor of Roman cultural ideals and Augustan ideology. This thesis argues that the historian is, in fact, manipulating these themes to make definite political points. It focuses on the negativity of the history's conclusion as it stands in stark contrast to the preceding narrative celebrating the principates of Augustus and Tiberius. The thesis tentatively concludes that Velleius was trying to express concern over Rome's future, and specifically to influence Tiberius to return to Rome from his retreat on the island of Capri and curb the power of his "assistant," Sejanus.

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Introduction*

0.1 Prologue

How does one influence an autocrat? When one sees him acting contrary to the accepted norms and not quite living up to the values and goals of his regime, how can one correct him? An auxiliary question may be, how can one attempt to reshape that behaviour with a degree of safety? These are questions essential to the interpretation of Velleius Paterculus' history.¹ Here we find a man in an essential search for peace, security and order in his life. The meaning he is looking for is intimately connected to Tiberius, his family – the *domus Augusta* – and the prosperity and calm they brought to the empire.

* All abbreviations, unless otherwise explained, follow the guidelines of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

1 The original title of the work does not survive. The traditional title given to it in modern times, *Historia Romana*, while very possibly not accurate, is apt. I resist the urge to label Velleius' history "universal," which is the new trend in Velleian scholarship. Hellegouarc'h (1976: 240), for example, states that "l'oeuvre que l'on désigne traditionnellement sous le titre d'*Histoire romaine* est en réalité une *Histoire universelle*." While the work does probably start with the Assyrian empire (Kramer 2005: 148) and spends considerable time with Greek history, its direction is always towards Rome. Kramer has ably shown that Velleius inserted these earlier epochs into the history in part to present Rome as the culmination of empires. He adds (2005: 152, 158) that Velleius viewed the non-Roman portions as a digression and that Velleius' narrative becomes much more detailed and dense after he comes to the height of Republican Rome. Where the second *lacuna* ends we find ourselves between the second and third Punic Wars. Thus much Roman history must have come beforehand and Velleius, except for two chapters on Greek literature (1.16, 18), never returns again to themes outside of Rome. Kramer himself (2005: 159-160) reasonably maintains, however, that Book I was "to a certain extent universal." But this does mean that the work overall is a universal history.

He is thus a devout loyalist to the Julio-Claudian line, but it will be argued that the historian believed that Tiberius was no longer fully achieving the ideals of the Principate as established by Augustus and Tiberius' own past conduct. In particular, it will be argued that Velleius disapproved of the aged Tiberius' retreat to the island of Capri and his reliance on his equestrian assistant to transact state affairs: his *adiutor*, Sejanus. It seems that he feared that the internal harmony that Augustus had introduced into Rome after years of civil war was going to come to an end. But of course the question is, how did he try to influence Tiberius, especially when the *adiutor* had a proven violent streak?

0.2 Tiberius and Velleius: The Relationship

This thesis is attempting to place Velleius' history in its historical and political context. I read it as a document that not only reflects its time but as a document specifically crafted to influence it. Furthermore, I assume that Tiberius was a target audience, granting that Velleius also had goals amongst his more immediate, aristocratic audience.² In what follows, I will be concentrating on themes that would have been important to the senate of which Velleius himself was a member.

2 Starr (1981: 173-174), for example, argues that Velleius' work was for educated men who needed a "quick" refresher, for those with no education and needing a "skeleton" of Mediterranean history and for school boys in the early stages of their education. These suggestions, I think, devalue the history as a work of literature, ignore the complexities of style and structure and do not answer other questions like the purpose of the dedication to M. Vinicius and the negativity of the final chapters. Lobur (2007: 225-227) more realistically argues that the history was "more a display of rhetorical virtuosity" and meant to demonstrate Velleius' command of his subject matter to elite audiences. By arguing however that the work reflects the "absorption, reproduction and regeneration of implicit ideology" (2007: 228), he too is devaluing Velleius' merits as an independent thinker and writer.

Velleius' work is a survey of all Roman history, condensed into just two books. It can be described as a long history of great men, of whom Tiberius at the end is the culmination.³ He dominates the last thirty-seven chapters, even though most of them are set during Augustus' principate.⁴ Thus in these respects, one may reasonably maintain that Velleius' focus is on his current princeps throughout the history. The work was published in AD 30 and Velleius had probably known Tiberius for close to thirty years. He had been a military tribune under Gaius Caesar and may have formed part of his honour guard, as he boasts of having witnessed the young Caesar's meeting with the Persian King (2.101.3). In AD 4, he became *praefectus equitum* and later a *legatus* during Tiberius' wars in Germany and Pannonia and even had the pleasure of accompanying him from Rome to the frontier (2.104.3; 2.111.4). He further boasts that Augustus gave him the responsibility of leading troops to Tiberius (*traditi ab Augusto*, 2.111.3), that Tiberius himself spoke highly of the historian's brother (2.115.1) and that they both partook in Tiberius' triumph (2.115.1; 2.121.3). Considering the remark about the *singularem amicitiam* between Velleius' grandfather and Tiberius' father (2.76.1), Sumner adds the suggestion that there may have been a tradition of *amicitia* between the Velleii and Claudii.⁵ Moreover, Tiberius is well known for his love of literature, and though his preference was for oratory, myth and astronomy, as well as the Greek language, he did not ignore Latin authors and other subjects.⁶ Houston argues that Tiberius' villa on Capri

3 Hellegouarc'h 1974: 75-76; Woodman 1977: 43-45.

4 The "Tiberian narrative," as Woodman calls it, starts at 2.94, but Augustus does not die until 2.123. The work concludes at 2.131.

5 Sumner 1970: 265. Velleius' father was also a *praefectus equitum* under Tiberius (2.104.3).

6 Suet. *Tib.* 70, Plin. *NH. Praef.* 25. See the following for his habit of surrounding himself with scholars: Tac. *Ann.* 4.58; Suet. *Tib.* 11; Hor. *Ep.* 1.3.6; Plut. *de def. or.* 17. Moreover, he tried himself to write a

possessed a considerable library.⁷ And while Tiberius himself may have been difficult to reach on his island, he was not isolated. He frequently received friends, family and letters and he did make excursions to the mainland, which may have improved the chances of seeing him, though our later sources usually take the excursions as opportunities to criticise Tiberius' aloofness still more (Tac. *Ann.* 4.74; 6.1; Dio Cass. 58.21.1, 25.1).⁸

0.3 The Political Goals of Velleius' History: Past Scholarship

For many scholars the idea that Velleius may have foreseen Tiberius as a reader may explain the historian's glowing portrait of his princeps – hence the whole point of the book: flattery due to genuine respect and/or to encourage favours.⁹ It is a cynical and simplistic view of the historian that is based on an assumption that he was an amateur and

few Latin works (Suet. *Tib.* 61, 70) and had several authors dedicate their (Latin) works to him (Goodyear 1984: 605-606).

7 Houston 1985: 189-190. We of course do not know anything about its contents.

8 Houston 1985: 183-187, 191.

9 Hellegouarc'h is the last major exponent of this view point. He does forcibly argue several times against earlier theories that Velleius was a mere "propagandiste officiel" for the Principate (1964: 684; 1974: 83; 1984: 427), but he still maintains that the work was meant to "obtenir de substantielles faveurs." Saddington (2000: 171-172), however, has pointed out that Velleius' praise of Tiberius resembles that of Valerius Maximus and equestrian inscriptions, which he argues are to obtain favours. This is the topic of my next project. But already I do not see the link to be as strong as Saddington. Many of the examples he gives do not seem to closely resemble those found in Velleius. Moreover, Velleius has long since been a senator, so he, who often identifies with the *optimates* in his work, may have had a different attitude and goals than these equestrian sources.

clumsy writer.¹⁰ Many of these assumptions still linger,¹¹ but scholarship in the last forty years, led by the research of Woodman, has progressed to argue that Velleius was not only a skilled and original writer, but that he was trying to express other, deeper concerns. This can be seen from the structure of the work. Despite its two large *lacunae*, it seems certain that Book I is almost entirely positive, extolling Rome's astonishing rise to sole command of the world.¹² Book II begins with her descent into the chaos of the late republic when civil violence reigned. The Principate established by Augustus and continued by Tiberius is presented as a glorious rejuvenation, morally and politically. Velleius' praise is unwavering – until the final few chapters. Suddenly he becomes negative and anxious. He appears uneasy about Sejanus, Tiberius' powerful *adiutor*. He complains to the gods about the conspiracies of three leading men in Roman society, about the deaths of Tiberius' sons and mother and about the shame brought upon the princeps by Agrippina and Nero, Germanicus' wife and son. He ends thus with a prayer to the gods, asking them to protect the current peace, princeps and form of government and also for successors far

10 Frederick W. Shipley, the author of the one English translation still in print, is the best example of this view. He begins his introduction with an apology (1924: VIII): "Velleius Paterculus does not rank among the great Olympians of classical literature either as stylist or as historian. But as Pliny the Elder says, no book is so poor that one cannot get some good out of it." He goes on (1924: XV) to call Velleius an "amateur," a "novice," and his history "an example of the soldier's uncritical, but loyal and enthusiastic devotion to his old commander." Fowler (1899: 216) similarly comments that he has "doubtful character as a historian" and "obvious defects" of style.

11 Goodyear (1984: 604, 606), for instance, called the history "repugnant," and suggests that it is representative of a "contagion of flattery" that spread during Tiberius' principate. Anne Jacquemin (1998: 150) states that Velleius suffered from "illusions", "aveuglement" and "une myopie politique." The language alone betrays her bias. See also my comments above (0.2) on Starr (1981) and Lobur (2007) and below (Ch. 1.6, n. 59) on de Monte (1999).

12 Velleius inserts a few foreshadows of the eventual fall near the end of Book I. Carthage's destruction was more due to jealousy (*invidia*) than to any real threat (1.9.5), Aemilius Paulus' triumph was the most luxuriant ever (1.9.6), the jealousy of others almost blocked it (1.9.6) and Metellus Macedonicus's temple was "either the beginning of munificence or luxury" (*vel magnificentiae vel luxuriae princeps fuit*, 1.11.5).

into the future, after Tiberius has finished his long post in the mortal world. It is clear that his loyalty still rests with the *domus Augusta*, but it is also clear that he is worried about its direction. The works of Sumner and Woodman have shown that Sejanus was in fact a major source of that concern.

The final depressing tone has not failed to stimulate interest. Woodman argues that it is a “striking rejection of the traditional pattern.”¹³ Imperial history, first seen with Livy, is a venue to display one's patriotism: a historian portrays his own time in terms of progress, success, harmony and rejuvenation.¹⁴ This Velleius does so abundantly throughout most of his Principate narrative that Woodman concludes that “it is of the greatest significance that he, loyal supporter of Tiberius as he was, should bring his narrative to the ambivalent and anxious conclusion.”¹⁵ According to Woodman, the historian was “disturbed” by the events of 26-29 and his *votum* is an “apprehensive response.”¹⁶ Velleius' work is thus an intimate commentary on his own time, but Woodman, whose interests are expressly textual and philological, does not pursue this rather historical point to any great extent.¹⁷ Perhaps Velleius was trying to make a point, concealed to be sure, but something more definite than simply an expression of apprehension.

After Actium, there is a noticeable decline in the output of Latin histories. Toher argues that histories written during the Republic were intimately connected to “the

13 Woodman 1977: 54.

14 Woodman 1977: 38.

15 Woodman 1977: 54.

16 Woodman 1977: 54, 276 respectively.

17 Woodman (1977: 281) does assert that Velleius is “discounting” a mooted assumption that Sejanus was going to be successor, but I believe there is much more going on here (see Ch. 3 and the conclusion).

senatorial struggle for power and prestige within the community.”¹⁸ They were partisan and highly topical and thus their genre was ill-suited to an era defined by the ascendancy of a single family.¹⁹ Many, it seems, felt it wiser not to write at all. As Woodman brings out so well,²⁰ the new imperial history that began to emerge dealt largely with external matters, especially wars. This not only provided ample material with which one could praise the emperor, but it freed an author from dealing extensively with internal politics which can be touchy and even risky.²¹ Towards the end of Augustus' life (more precisely, after a *senatus consultum* in AD 6), verbal slander against the living princeps (and soon a *divus* princeps) started to become equated with treason and was thus punishable by exile.²² Indeed we hear of authors, poets and historians alike either being exiled or committing suicide in lieu of a sentence (Ov. *Tr.* 2.207, 212; Suet. *Aug.* 55; Dio Cass. 55.27.1-3, 57.20.4; Tac. 3.49).²³ Similarly, Velleius himself twice acknowledges the difficulty with praising one's contemporaries (2.36.3; 2.116.5). It was a historical *topos* that praise for one still active in politics will anger another.²⁴ Thus Velleius followed

18 Toher 1990: 146.

19 Toher 1990: 151-154.

20 Woodman 1977: 39. Toher 1990: 151-152.

21 Tacitus in his introduction of the *Histories* (1.1) notes that historians under the Principate lost the independence of their Republican counterparts, and either wrote histories flattering to the princeps or not at all. Related to this, Toher (1990:153) observes that a consistent theme of Greek historians under Augustus was *concordia*, social harmony, which the Principate brought to the empire. See Gabba's corresponding comments (1984: 61-68) on Nicolaus of Damascus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

22 Bauman 1974: 14, 16-18, 29, 39, 48, 51. This thesis is a development of his earlier ideas (Bauman 1967: 261-265).

23 For Ovid see Bauman 1967: 243-245; Suetonius names several authors (*Tib.* 61) who were executed during Tiberius' rule because of their works. Cremutius Cordus is a good example (Sen. Tac. *Ann.* 4.34; Suet. *Tib.* 61; Dio Cass. 57.24). He was struck down in a *maiestas* trial engineered by Sejanus (so the ancient authors infer) ostensibly for his history which was favourable to Brutus and Cassius, but truly for his opposition to the *adiutor*. Bauman strongly suggests (1974: 101-103; contra Rogers 1965: 359), however, that Tiberius himself took personal offence and encouraged the proceedings.

24 A point well brought out by Woodman (1977: 187).

Livy's example for the great majority of his Principate narrative.²⁵ When he does turn to internal matters, the subjects are usually judiciously selected to reflect positively upon the princeps (2.126; 2.129-130.2). So by ending the work with negativity and internal matters (Sejanus, deaths of heirs and Livia, shameful acts of Agrippina and Nero, plea for successors), Velleius was making a decided break with tradition, which must have been dangerous in the political situation of AD 30. These points are further enhanced when we consider the great emphasis on structure in ancient, as well as modern, writing. Everything is in its place for particular reasons and the conclusion is undoubtedly going to leave an impact upon the rest of the work.²⁶ It is not too much to suggest then that by taking this bold step, Velleius had more to express than anxiety.

Sumner suggests that Velleius was proposing M. Vinicius as successor, arguing that the whole work is dedicated to him in celebration of his *consulatus ordinarius* of 30. Vinicius subsequently married a niece of Tiberius in 33,²⁷ so we may assume that the princeps thought highly of him. Despite the dedication, however, the theory does not hold. Velleius clearly and consistently lauds the *domus Augusta* as the sole house capable of holding the empire together, as will be seen. He does mention Vinicius' family at opportune moments (2.96.2; 2.101.3; 2.103.2; 2.104.2), but never grants them extended

25 Woodman 1977: 39. For the Principate narrative I take 2.88 as the start, for it is only here that the aftermath of Actium is over and we find the Principate firmly established.

26 It is hoped that readers will excuse the commingling of genres, but one's thoughts turn to Virgil's *Eclogues*, due in part to the themes shared with Velleius' history. Each poem has a definite and calculated structure and so does the work as a whole (Otis 1964: 128-131; Skutsch 1969). *Eclogue Ten* concludes the set, by inviting the reader to leave the bucolic world and the escapism it provided (Perkell 1996: 138; Smith 1965: 303-304). One interpretation is that this encourages a determined and proactive mindset in its readers, which in turn suggests how Virgil wished his audience to tackle Rome's problems of civil violence and distrust alluded to in the other *Eclogues*.

27 Vinicius also received the *ornamenta triumphalia* (AD 42) and was *consul ordinarius* a second time in 45 (Sumner 1970: 289-290).

praise as he does Augustus and Tiberius, or even other eminent personalities. M. Vinicius himself is addressed from time to time in the second person (1.8.1; 1.12.6; 1.13.5; 2.7.5; 2.49.1; 2.65.2; 2.101.3; 2.113.1; 2.130.4), but he does not receive the homily that one would think necessary to make the case for a future heir.²⁸ Thus it seems that we have to look elsewhere for Velleius' goals.

Cizek, I think more on the point, has argued that Velleius saw the potential for some type of collapse. He brilliantly connected Velleius' literary excursus (1.16-18; 2.9; 2.36.2-3) to the overall political narrative. He observes that the literary expositions contain a consistent theme of growth, pinnacle then fall.²⁹ The Republic, as we saw in schematic above, follows the same trajectory. It peaked (presumably)³⁰ with the Second Punic War and began to fall after the Third into ever intensifying civil violence. Yet in the final analysis he refrains from drawing a direct inference for the Principate. Having not seen Sumner's illuminating analysis of the Sejanian chapters (which will be discussed in Ch. 3), Cizek believed them to be positive and this clearly led him to undervalue the urgent tone in the final prayer. Thus he argues that Velleius believed that the Principate, as long as it maintained its unique combination of virtue and fortune, could end this cycle

28 At least not in the narrative sections that deal with his lifetime. There must have been something, however, in the preface, but unfortunately it does not survive. That being said, one would still expect some type of extended mention nearer to the end of the work, especially when he comes to the succession problem.

29 Cizek 1972: 86-89.

30 The section of the narrative dealing with the Second Punic War is of course lost, yet judging from the tone of what does survive from Book I and the overall historiographical tradition of Roman decline which Velleius is following (Lintott 1972), it certainly seems to be the case that Velleius believed that Rome peaked politically and morally with the Punic Wars. Kramer (2005: 152), moreover, has hypothesised that the narrative becomes almost twice as dense around the time of the First Punic War. The non-Roman elements and early Roman history seem to have contained about twenty-six words per year, while the middle Republican narrative seems to have expanded to about fifty.

of growth and decline “définitivement.”³¹ He interpreted the plea for successors as hope for a bright future instead of anxiety.³²

Thus, there remains more to be done. Cizek's work has shown that Velleius tried to express his concerns in places other than the final chapters. This suggests the depth of his anxiety and also that it is interwoven into the text and meant to reflect upon it and is not just tacked onto the end.

0.4 Methodology

My methodology will be to place those final chapters firmly in the context of the rest of the work, to treat them as an integral part and not as a separate entity. Ancient history in part functions as a well of *exempla*.³³ Historians employed examples of behaviour from the past in order to provide models for the present generation either to emulate or avoid. One result was a sense of continuity between past and present. Chaplin has persuasively argued that Livy, whose generation experienced political and social disorder and change with the civil wars and then Augustus' victory at Actium, employed

31 Cizek 1972: 92.

32 Cizek 1972: 92. “Il nous semble important de relever aussi que Velleius n'envisage pas la fin de la phase culminante, agencée à l'époque de Tibère et il ne croit pas possible . . . Il croyait sincèrement toutefois et . . . il espérait que la poussée diachronique s'arrêterait.” “Ésperait” and the use of the subjunctive with “s'arrêterait” suggest that he did not believe that Velleius was totally confident, but it can also be seen from the other above quotations that he felt that Velleius was fairly confident.

33 A few examples where ancient writers explicitly state their hope (or record someone else's hope) that history will provide models for present conduct are: Thuc. 1.22.4; Livy *Praef.* 9-10; Tac. *Ann.* 3.55; Suet. *Aug.* 89. Frontin. *Str.* 1.1. See Chaplin (2000: 5-16) for an excellent overview of the subject. Woodman (1975b: 17) asserts that Velleius' work betrays the goals of any typical ancient history: *utilia* and *dulcedo*.

exempla in part to create a “foundation” on which a new Rome could be built.³⁴ In other words, he employed them with a political purpose. Examples of the behaviour and deeds of Rome's past leaders would set the precedents and help ensure political stability and security.³⁵

This argument is directly relevant to Velleius, who, as we will see, feared a return to the disorder and violence of Livy's generation. He himself frequently pauses to make personal judgements on the personalities that populate his narrative, concentrating on individuals, whom he deems important to the themes being developed in the narrative.³⁶ This is often at the expense of the actual situations that served to introduce the personalities,³⁷ as well as other individuals who may have played an equal or even greater role. For example, with a brief mention of the Jugurthine war and its principal Roman general, Q. Metellus, Velleius launches into an extended sketch of C. Marius, who, we learn, was “the best in war, the worst in peace, uncontrolled [in his search] for glory, insatiable, violent and always causing trouble” (*quantum bello optimus, tantum pace pessimus, immodicus gloriae, insatiabilis, impotens, semper inquietus*, 2.11.1). We then learn of Marius' criticisms of Metellus' leadership, of Marius' election to the consulship and his success in getting the people to transfer the war's command from Metellus to him (2.11.2). Marius' career will prove to be critical to Velleius' theme of moral decline, thus here he overshadows the other major characters and events itself. Only afterwards do we hear about Metellus' accomplishments and the overall fortunes of his family, even though

34 Chaplin 2000: 202.

35 Chaplin 2000: 202.

36 Hellegouarc'h 1964: 678; 1974: 75-76; Woodman 1977: 43-45.

37 Woodman 1977: 42-43.

Velleius states that Rome's victory primarily belongs to him. Jugurtha and the war itself are mentioned but coincidentally (2.11.2; 2.12.1).³⁸ For him, like all Roman historians from the Gracchan era on, one's conduct and character were the principal agents of historical change and by extension the health and well being of the empire.³⁹

One advantage of the survey history genre is that it frees the historian to comment on characters of the past while still closely linking them to an imperial narrative. In other words, it provides an indirect but still potent way for a writer to comment on the current principate.⁴⁰ Velleius can muse over the dangers of concentrating power into the hands of Pompey, for example, and in ten chapters begin to discuss Octavian and the origins of the Principate. In extended histories, such as Livy's 142 book oeuvre, connections in the accounts of the two periods may be lost. But one does not even have to go that far back. By concentrating so much attention on Tiberius, by bemoaning disappointments and by lauding successes and certain values, the historian is invariably encouraging him to act in a particular fashion. Thanking someone for his honesty, is also telling him to continue to be honest.

While such encouragement may often be a secondary point, it does not necessarily have to be so. As will be indicated throughout this work, Velleius' history closely

38 Another excellent example (discussed below, Ch. 1.1) is Velleius' focus on Tiberius in the wars he shared with his brother, Drusus. As the focus of the last thirty-seven chapters, Tiberius is given much greater attention.

39 Badian 1966: 13-18, 22-26.

40 This idea is not too dissimilar from fears that Tacitus discussed concerning his own work. He declined to state a personal stance (expressly anyway, *Ann.* 4.33) concerning the treason trials during Tiberius' principate for fear that his contemporaries would take offence at the treatment of their relatives or that others would read these accounts as commentary on their own actions. Gabba similarly argues (1984: 71) that Dio used his narrative of the Augustan Principate as a comparison to the Severan age.

resembles in language, structure and *topoi* the imperial panegyric.⁴¹ The genre had undergone significant development during the principate of Augustus as a tradition began of consuls thanking the princeps in the senate for their selection.⁴² No speech survives from the early Principate, but this thesis shall use the panegyric of the younger Pliny and those from the third and fourth centuries as examples of the characteristics of the genre. It has been persuasively argued that through the panegyrics' effuse and one-sided praise of a current emperor's successes and values the authors were attempting to influence his behaviour.⁴³ This is what I believe Velleius is doing.

0.5 Charismatic Theory

Though it does not reveal itself at the surface, at the heart of this study is charismatic theory. Around the beginning of the twentieth century, Max Weber greatly develop and legitimise this theory and it has since been thoroughly tested and augmented, particularly in the sixties and seventies. It continues to be frequently employed today in a wide variety of disciplines. It maintains that charisma satisfies the “basic” human need for a sense of peace, order and belonging in the world.⁴⁴ Charisma provides purpose to

41 Woodman 1975: 290-296; Ramage 1982: 268, 270-271.

42 MacCormack 1975: 149.

43 Wallace-Hadrill 1981: 318-319. In his study of panegyrics from the third and fourth centuries, Burdeau also argued this (1964: 54), but only to a point. He does not actually state that it was a conscious goal of panegyrics: “ils ont contribué, à leur façon, à combattre l'autoritarisme.” Potter (1999: 71), meanwhile, expressly agrees with Wallace-Hadrill's thesis. Furthermore, Suetonius (*Tib.* 61) and Dio (58.4.4) record that Tiberius had a poet prosecuted for including criticisms of Agamemnon in a tragedy. The story is doubtful, at least how they relate it, but it does tell us that Tiberius was aware that literature could be read in this way.

44 Eisenstadt 1995 (1968): 191.

peoples' daily lives and is in part an antidote to feelings of alienation and despair. For Edward Shils, the charismatic may be a religion, an artist, a legal law, a scientific law or a corporation, anything which is perceived to be in contact with some "vital layer" of reality and which provides "an order within which [people] can locate themselves, an order providing coherence, continuity and justice."⁴⁵ Expanding upon Shils' ideas, Eisenstadt hypothesises that people are most attracted to the charismatic during times of transition, doubt and when their routine is threatened. He summarises it as follows:⁴⁶

[people who] experience some shattering of the existing social and cultural order to which they are bound . . . become more ready to respond to people who are able to present to them new symbols which could give meaning to their experiences in terms of some fundamental cosmic, social, or political order, to prescribe the proper norms of behaviour, to relate the individual to collective identification, and to reassure him of his status and of his place in a given collectivity.

A charismatic leader then is able to persuade people of his extraordinary capabilities, perhaps magic, a special relationship with a god, great physical capabilities,⁴⁷ or, more simply, their "vision" or "grand design."⁴⁸ Basically the charismatic stimulates loyalty because he is able to present an aspect of himself that convinces people that he has a solution to some of their fundamental problems. Sociologists often describe him as a creative force in society that breaks up and re-establishes social norms.⁴⁹ In this way,

⁴⁵ Shils 1965: 203.

⁴⁶ Eisenstadt 1995 (1968): 181. By 1975, Glassman (617) called such a formulation of charisma as Eisenstadt's a "cliché," indicating its general acceptance among sociologists. He (1975: 625) appropriately describes a charismatic's role as "morale-boosting." Jean Robinson (1985: 187) stated that "all charismatic movements *will* address the problems of stress and distress in society through the formulation of a presumably permanent and transcendent world view in which the leader embodies the promise of salvation from distress" (emphasis her own).

⁴⁷ Weber 1968: 241-242.

⁴⁸ Eisenstadt 1995 (1968): 184-188.

⁴⁹ Mommsen 1965: 37-41; Eisenstadt 1995 (1968): 170-171, 174-176; Robinson 1985: 187.

charisma is an excellent means to build consensus, for, by appealing to basic needs, it is often able to cut across racial and social barriers and attract a broad cross-section of society. Velleius' portrait of Tiberius, as we will see, contains all these aspects.

With our historian, however, we find ourselves with a potential problem.⁵⁰

Charismatic theory is meant to interpret the actual actions and strategies of rulers and the people's strong reactions to them. But Velleius is an author who is describing someone else in terms which today we recognise as charismatic. Moreover, my contention is that due to the negative conclusion of the work, he did not completely believe in his portrait. So how do we apply the theory? To take his Tiberius on its own terms and ignore the author would be to miss a crucial aspect of the intended message. The theory is still beneficial, I would argue, because even if it is not to be applied in a traditional manner, it still provides a framework of analysis that allows us to read into the author's intentions. Perhaps Velleius portrayed Tiberius as he did because he wanted the princeps to fulfil those basic needs for order, peace and belonging.

Jean Robinson, who has studied the three modern charismatic regimes of Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong and Muammar al-Qadhafi, has concluded that popular support only goes so far and that "charismatic authority cannot mobilise the population indefinitely." People invariably became disenchanted with their leader because their (often too) high hopes are dashed.⁵¹ Her observations agree with Eisenstadt's theorisation that the hopes,

⁵⁰ We must also be aware that Weber was both influenced by and wrote to influence the political situation of Germany contemporary to his day (Mommsen 1965: 38). Mommsen further points out (1965: 38, 41, 43) that Weber believed in only rigorous, rational analysis, yet sometimes "was afraid" and would "come down strongly" or "pour contempt" onto certain, topical issues. One thus must be cautious in applying the theory to an ancient subject.

⁵¹ Robinson 1985: 181-182, 185, quote 202.

values and goals upon which the charismatic regime is based are particularly important, for they form the standard by which the rest of a charismatic's rule is measured and that of every successor. Thus the charismatic leader, though an autocrat, is not totally free himself. His own promises and professed values serve as checks on his power. He must carefully heed public opinion, as it is the source of his authority. Legitimacy is conditional. If the people responsible for his rise believe that the charismatic has gone too far outside the accepted norm, or worse, to have failed the goals of his own regime, the very rationale for his presence vanishes.⁵² Thus Robinson asserts that charismatic leaders must constantly be seen as working in order to maintain their authority. From her experience, she notes that people will accept some failure as long as they perceive effort and sincerity behind it.⁵³

As we shall see, Velleius deliberately presents Tiberius as carrying on Augustus' reforms and, more importantly, the tone and values which he established for the Principate. Velleius knew that the *domus Augusta* was the only guarantee of the continued peace and prosperity of the empire. For someone else to rule would require civil war, a situation which he abhorred. Yet he also had grave concerns about the direction of Tiberius' principate. An aim of his history is to remind Tiberius of those goals and ideals set by Augustus and to encourage him to live up to them.

⁵² Eisenstadt 1995 (1968): 191-192; Robinson 1985: 185; Bendix 1965: 21.

⁵³ Robinson 1985: 203.

0.6 The Text

The main text which I will be using is the second edition of Watt's Teubner text published in 1998. I will, however, also frequently consult the critical editions of Woodman (1977, 1983) and, to a lesser extent, Elefante (1997). Woodman's texts, which cover chapters 2.41 to 2.131, or the "Caesarian," "Augustan" and "Tiberian" narratives of Velleius' history, have been particularly influential due to his strong scholarship and clear explanations for the acceptance or rejection of each emendation. I rely on Watt for most readings, however, for he has applied his skills to the whole text, as well as incorporated some newer ideas, including some of Woodman's. Where the two do conflict, I often take Woodman's side. The consultation of the three texts is critical for Velleian scholarship. The historian was almost unknown until an eighth century manuscript, lacunose and corrupt, was discovered in 1515 at an Alsatian monastery. Its problems, however, did not end here. A young scribe who was charged with the duty of copying it rushed his efforts but they, nonetheless, formed the basis for the *Editio Princeps* published in 1520. The printers apparently were also inattentive. Thus the textual problems have only multiplied.⁵⁴ To make matters worse, the original manuscript has since been lost, last mentioned in a late 18th century letter as being sold.⁵⁵ Our modern sources for the history are now limited to a copy of the young scribe's copy, the *editio princeps* which contains a commentary by the celebrated latinist Beatus Rhenanus and an appendix of corrections

54 Woodman 1977: 3-6; Hellegouarc'h 1976: 241-243; 1984: 406-408; Fowler 1899: 217-218.

55 Woodman 1977: 12.

also made in 1520 by comparing the *editio princeps* to the manuscript, and which comprises about ten pages.⁵⁶ Woodman suggests, however, that the appendix does not always preserve original readings from the manuscript but sometimes the modern author's conjectures.⁵⁷ Thus with the text's chequered lineage, Hellegouarc'h cannot be more correct when he advises a conservative attitude in accepting the many suggested emendations that have accumulated since the manuscript's discovery.⁵⁸ My hope is that I have followed this advice. I have aimed to at least indicate textual problems and to discuss them when they pose a particularly serious problem to the history's interpretation. All translations are my own.

0.7 Structure

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Ch. 1⁵⁹ examines Velleius' glowing portrait of Tiberius. It concentrates on Tiberius' humane values, the basis for his authority in Roman society and on the picture of immorality and chaos that he draws for the late Republic. Ch. 2 investigates why Velleius places so much emphasis on Tiberius' values and the possible role he saw them playing in Roman society. In particular, it attempts to link his focus on virtues with his equally intense focus on how men wield power. Chh. 3 and 4 attempt to interpret the first two chapters by means of the final, negative conclusion

⁵⁶ Woodman 1977: 6-26.

⁵⁷ Woodman 1977: 9-10.

⁵⁸ Hellegouarc'h 1984: 409; 1976: 241-243.

⁵⁹ I have decided to abbreviate the word chapter throughout when referring to the thesis itself. This is to limit confusion with references to the chapters of Velleius' work.

of the history, which, it is assumed, provide a peek into Velleius' thoughts on the contemporary political situation at Rome. Ch. 3 considers the Sejanian chapters, while Ch. 4 analyses 2.130.3-131. With reference to the problems Velleius describes that struck the empire after Tiberius' Rhodian retreat, Ch. 4 concludes that the historian feared that Sejanus' power was growing too great and that he was trying to suggest to Tiberius that he return to Rome from Capri. Only the princeps could justly handle power.

Chapter 1: Velleius' Ideal Tiberius: from Virtues to Consensus

1.1 The Early Career

Velleius is well known for his effuse flattery of Tiberius. This is a fact that cannot be denied. “I was a witness of his most celestial deeds,” Velleius says, alluding to his many years of service under him (*caelestissimorum eius operum . . . praefectus aut legatus spectator*, 2.104.3). The first four chapters (2.94 – 97), where Tiberius is permanently introduced into the narrative, serve to set the tone for the rest of the work. We learn that he was “greatly furnished” with not only a beautiful body and height, but also the “best studies” and the “greatest talent” (*forma, celsitudine corporis, optimis studiis maximoque ingenio instructissimus*, 2.94.2). We are told of his early successes as a young quaestor reorganizing Rome's grain supply and stabilizing the East against the Parthians almost by reputation alone, successes that are in turn held up as proof “of all his virtues” (*praecipuis omnium virtutum experimentis in eo tractu editis*, 2.94.4) and of “how great a man he was to become” (*quantus evasurus esset eluceret*, 2.94.3). With a mythological touch, we also learn that Augustus “resolved to test Tiberius” (*Neronem . . .*

experiri statuit, 2.95.1) with the war against the Raeti and Vindelici, but not his brother, it seems, even though Drusus was co-commander (Dio Cass. 54.22). In Velleius' account he is only described as his brother's "assistant" (*adiutore*). Despite overwhelming odds (ferociousness of the enemy, their numbers and the difficult terrain), the two nonetheless succeeded in thoroughly dominating them (*perdomuerunt*) and even then, Velleius stresses, only with "danger" to the army and no actual losses on the Roman side (*maiore cum periculo quam damno Romani exercitus*, 2.95.2). The blood shed belonged to the enemy. This event is favourably contrasted with the censors of 22 BC, L. Munatius Plancus and Paulus Aemilius Lepidus, whose own vices prevent their time in office from benefiting the *res publica* (2.95.3).

In the third chapter (2.96) we find the death of Agrippa in 12 BC and Tiberius' subsequent marriage to his widow Julia, Augustus' daughter, which Velleius says "moved Nero closer to Caesar" (*admovit propius Neronem Caesari*, 2.96.1). The chapter concludes with Tiberius taking over Agrippa's command of the Pannonian war. Velleius notes the war's importance, the "multiple victories of this great general" (*multiplikes eo bello victorias tanti imperatoris*), as well as the resulting ovation (2.96.3). The final chapter (2.97) records the destruction of the fifth legion and the loss of its eagle. According to the historian, Augustus' legate, Marcus Lollius, was at fault, due to his greed (*in omnia pecuniae . . . cupidiores*, 2.97.1) and other vices (*vitiorum . . . vitiosissimo*). He did not desire to behave uprightly (*quam recte faciendi cupidiores*).

Velleius also recounts how Drusus Claudius was first given command. He relates

his many virtues (*tantarumque vitutum*), but in such a way as to limit them. Velleius cannot decide if he is better suited to a military or civic life, and his brother trumps him in physical beauty (*cuius ingenium utrum bellicis magis operibus an civilibus suffecerit artibus in incerto est . . . nam pulchritudo corporis proxima fraternae fuit*, 2.97.2-3).

Velleius reserves his unconditional praise for Tiberius, who completes the war “with his own virtue and fortune” (*sua et virtute et fortuna*, 2.97.4), explaining that he traversed every part of Germany so that the country was almost reduced to a tributary status. And as in the earlier German war, he did this “without any loss to the army entrusted [to him]” (*sine ullo detrimento commissi exercitus*).

All the elements of Velleius' ideal Tiberius are here. He is uniquely gifted and almost the sole reason for Rome's successes: he is commanding, dedicated to the *res publica*, blessed by the gods (*fortuna*) and Augustus' true successor. He positively shines in comparison to the censors¹ and Lollius, who recall the selfish and destructive behaviour of the late Republic, which Velleius had recently finished lamenting. Even Tiberius' own brother pales in comparison. Already the message is clear: Tiberius is uniquely suited to lead the empire.

Elsewhere too we hear of his hard work (2.122.2), great generalship (*ducum maximus*, 2.99.1), strict code of conduct (2.114.3), martial skills (2.121.1) and bravery in the face of danger (2.122.2). The Germans in the war of AD 12, for example, lost their

¹ Wright (2002: 181, 183-184) develops the thesis that Velleius' consistent vilification of the censor L. Munatius Plancus (2.63.3; 2.67.3-4; 2.74.3; 2.76.2; 2.83.1-3; 2.95.3) is due to his reliance on Asinius Pollio's *Orationes* and also because it fits in with his moralistic themes of loyalty and duty. In this short work, however, Wright does not take the last point as far as I do, which is that this particular passage on Plancus and Lepidus (2.95.3) is inserted to underscore the successes and necessity of Tiberius.

confidence “wherever Caesar was” (*ubicumque Caesar esset*, 2.112.3). This is despite their great numbers, training and superior positions. In Dalmatia the Perustae and the Desiades were “almost unconquerable” (*paene inexpugnabiles*, 2.115.4). Yet they too were almost “entirely destroyed” (*funditus eversi*), and not simply by Tiberius' leadership, but “by the hands and weapons of [Tiberius] Caesar himself” (*nam iam ductu sed manibus atque armis ipsius Caesaris*). Furthermore, Fortuna attends his every step. Above we saw that he described Tiberius' *virtus* and *fortuna* as *sua*, “his own” (2.97.4), indicating that this combination is unique to him alone. When he took on the German war of AD 12, Velleius again notes that “the same virtue and fortune” attended Tiberius, “which there had been since the beginning” (*eadem et virtus et fortuna . . . quae initio fuerat*, 2.121.1).² He is the only one of his generation to whom Velleius attributes these positives. Augustus was the only one of his (2.74.4; 2.79.5; 2.80.1).² Roman virtues and the will of heaven are united in the *domus Augusta*. Hellegouarc'h rightly argues that this marks Tiberius as being quasi-divine and on a godly mission.³ Burdeau observes that the profession of a close relationship between the emperor and the divine was typical of imperial panegyrics, and, as discussed at Ch. 0.4, Velleius often employs the motifs of this genre. The emperor is not a god himself, but the divine guides him, ensuring victory

2 The only other person who has this combination is Scipio Aemilianus, who is said to have conducted his Spanish war with the same fortune and valour evinced in Africa (*fortunae virtutisque expertae in Africa*, 2.4.2).

3 Hellegouarc'h 1964: 678-679. Burdeau (1964: 27-29) in his analysis of the Gaulish panegyrics from the third and fourth centuries notes that *virtus et fortuna* (or *felicitas* as is more often the case) continued to be a consistent theme. Yet he notices that these later authors consistently express embarrassment in the application of fortune to the emperor for it takes away agency. They are more comfortable with discussing his *virtus*. Velleius does not express this discomfort, yet he does downplay *fortuna* to focus on Augustus and Tiberius' own qualities and the two together are only mentioned in military contexts. As in the later panegyrics, Fortuna plays a key role in war, for as much confidence as an emperor has in his abilities, final victory rests in the hands of the gods who favour him.

and the eternity of the empire.⁴

Therefore, when Tiberius returned to Rome after eight years on Rhodes to secure the empire from a series of threats, it was due to *Fortuna*. She returned to the *res publica* “its protection” (*Fortuna . . . iam tum rei publicae sua praesidia reddiderat*, 2.103.1). The fabulous fulfilment of this divine mission is celebrated in a panegyric (2.126). Near the end of the work Velleius praises Tiberius' principate for having restored the state back to its proper functioning. Faith returned to the forum and sedition was removed; political ambition left the Campus Martius, discord left the Curia and theatres. Tiberius “increased the authority of the magistracies, the sovereignty of the senate, and the dignity of the courts” (*accessit magistratibus auctoritas, senatui maiestas, iudiciis gravitas*, 2.126.2). “Justice, equality and hard work have returned to the city!” (*iustitia aequitas industria civitati redditae*). When Velleius comes to describe actual details of Tiberius' principate (2.129-130.2), we hear of his firm handling of the prince Rhascupolis, the wars he efficiently ended in Gaul and Africa, his generosity to the plebs, the provinces of the East and to senators who lost their wealth due to no fault of their own. We also hear of his magnificent buildings⁵ and the great foresight with which he held the conscription of the army, normally “a matter of perpetual and particular fear for men” (*hominum rem perpetui praecipuique timoris*, 2.130.2). The message is that everything is as it should be;

4 Burdeau 1964: 31-33. See Pollini (1990: 352-353, 356-357) for an analysis of the numismatic evidence for Augustus' claimed association with the gods. He concludes too that Augustus was not trying to assert that he was a god, but that he was content to be closely associated with them, especially his divine parent.

5 Woodman (1977: 270) comments that Tiberius notoriously failed in the erection of public buildings (Tac. *Ann.* 6.45; Suet. *Tib.* 47), but he observes that Velleius uses *quanta* not *quot* (*quanta . . . extruxit opera*): “he is referring to splendour, not number.”

the empire is in the best hands possible.⁶ “When was the *annona* more moderate, when was peace happier?” Velleius demands (*quando annona moderatior? quando pax laetior?* 2.126.3).

Tiberius' panegyric largely duplicates the one to Augustus where he too is lauded for having restored peace and stabilised the *res publica* (2.89.2-6). Just a little earlier, Velleius had proclaimed Actium to have been the greatest day ever (*dies terrarum orbi praestiterit*, 2.86.1), when a favourable fortune finally came to the Roman people (*statum pervenerit fortuna publica*). He further vaunts the natural clemency that Augustus showed to the defeated (2.86-2.3), thus establishing social harmony as a key theme to his narrative of the Principate. Augustus' panegyric celebrates this realisation. Just like Tiberius, he is said to have ended wars, returned force to the laws, authority to the courts, sovereignty to the senate and power to the magistracies. Moreover, respect returned to religion, cultivation to the fields, laws were amended and property rights and safety for all men were secured. The repetition of many of the same actions found in Tiberius' panegyric stresses that the new princeps is committed to the ideals, values and policies of his predecessor.⁷ Only Tiberius can guarantee that Rome's new golden age continues.

6 The one allusion to trouble which Velleius makes concerns Tiberius' care and respect for Germanicus and the successes of Germanicus and Drusus (his son) in the field. They of course had died years before Velleius published his work, so these references look forward to the complaints to the gods, to which he is about to proceed.

7 Ramage 1982: 270. See also Woodman 1975: 291. Ramage in particular addresses the debate about whether Tiberius' panegyric is a mild critique of Augustus. By showing that Tiberius needed to repeat many of the accomplishments of Augustus, this cannot reflect well upon his predecessor. Ramage himself is unclear on where he stands. He argues that any “objective” reading will see the sometimes “pointed” criticisms (1982: 267), but he also stresses that this was (or would become) standard for imperial panegyric and that the critiques were “mild,” “only implied,” “almost incidental” and diluted (“dilute”) (1982: 266, 267, 271). He also points out that Tiberius truly respected Augustus and his accomplishments, but that Velleius does seem to negatively portray Augustus *vis-à-vis* Tiberius elsewhere (2.100.1 is the most notable; Ramage 1982: 268, 270). It is perhaps not fair to assert that

This is a theme repeated in the notices of Augustus' adoption of Tiberius (2.103.3; 2.104.1) and when Velleius records that the dying princeps entrusted to Tiberius his “possessions” and “works” (*commendans illi sua atque ipsius opera*, 2.123.2).

1.2 The Virtues of Tiberius

This guarantee, however, is not just due to his stunning physical and mental capabilities and the support of the gods, which we have thus far seen. Just as important are the virtues⁸ which Velleius describes as being particularly important to Tiberius. In those first four chapters, he remarks twice on the great care Tiberius spent on his troops, making it of paramount importance that no one came to harm. This, Velleius says, was “always” the “primary” concern of “this leader” (*praecipue huic duci semper curae fuit*, 2.97.4). *Huic duci* again demonstrates the special emphasis that our author places on Tiberius. Only he has this quality. Indeed, for the later German and Pannonian war, Velleius, as an avowed eyewitness, lauds Tiberius for putting his soldiers' lives before his own reputation and a quick chance to win (2.115.5). He mentions that he put at the services of the injured of all ranks his horse-drawn vehicles, his own litter even, and his

Ramage is “unclear,” for it is argued in Ch. 2.4 that Velleius does allude to some reservations about Augustus elsewhere. But here in the panegyrics the message is clear: Tiberius is Augustus' successor, not just as his heir, but in the style and goals of governing the *res publica*.

- 8 This is a term that I do not use lightly. “Virtues” describes the qualities “considered morally good or desirable in a person” (*OED s. v. virtue*). But in the study of Roman emperors it is also often used to describe the products of his good character, like *concordia* and *securitas*, which are states not virtues. Fears, for example, (1981: 832) argues that “virtues” are a “most satisfactory equivalent” to the Greek and Latin terms πράγματα and *utilitates*, but already we can see that the Latin and Greek terms are much broader in their possible meanings. Levick (1976: 84) proposes “principles,” and “values” seems another acceptable and inclusive term, but they are too broad. Here I am only talking about Velleius' conception of Tiberius' moral character, thus “virtues” is the most accurate term.

personal doctors, kitchen and bathing equipment. Velleius claims to have made use of them himself. There was no one, he states here, that “Caesar's care” (*Caesaris cura*, 2.114.1) did not sustain, despite all his other onerous duties. The meaning for his principate seems evident. As emperor everyone is in his charge and he will, simply through his natural character, do everything in his power for their well being.

These examples have led Eriksen to argue that Velleius was attempting a “redefinition” of Roman *virtus*.⁹ For her, the historian is turning away from the martial aspects of the word, like courage and ambition, as found, for example, in Livy, to a softer *virtus* based on *humanitas*, a multi-purpose word which ranges in meaning from great education and urbane wit, to humanity and deep concern for one's fellow man. Velleius employs the term *humanitas* in order to describe Tiberius' care for his injured soldiers (2.114.3-4). In addition, we have Tiberius' *conscientia*, his moral sense, which guides his decisions before any care for reputation (*ante conscientiae quam famae consultum*, 2.115.5). There are his *prudentia* and *providentia*, his foresight and practical judgement, which permit him to make the most advantageous decisions.¹⁰ Velleius, for example, calls him the very best judge, noting how he prefers utility to ostentation (*optimus . . . agebat iudex et utilia speciosis praeferens*, 2.113.2). Closely related is the *cura* of the leader (*mira . . . cura ducis*, 2.106.3.), which does not just denote his compassion as seen above, but more generally his careful attention to detail and sense of responsibility. Accordingly, we have the emperor's *liberalitas*, his generosity which comes to the aid of those in need

⁹ Eriksen 2002: 112.

¹⁰ *prudentia ducis . . . furentes eorum vires universas evasimus*, 2.111.4; *qua prudentia hiberna disposita sunt!* 2.114.4; *sed exercitus providentia ducis rectus est*, 2.115.5; *quanta cum quiete hominum rem perpetui praecipuique timoris, supplementum, sine trepidatione dilectus providet!* 2.130.1.

(2.130.2). Furthermore, we find *pietas*, not in its broad sense of “dutifulness” which is covered by the other concepts, but in the loving devotion of a son to a father.¹¹ It is *pietas* that drove Tiberius back to Rome after the summer campaigning season in Germany (2.105.3) and made him retire to Rhodes and make way for Augustus' grandsons (2.99.2). And it was with “pious generosity” (*pia munificentia*, 2.130.1) that he built his temple to Augustus. In short, *pietas* proclaims a united family and ensures that the successor will hold dear the values and style of government of his predecessor.¹² Finally, Velleius makes sure to convey Tiberius' *moderatio*, the resolve to limit one's own powers when dealing with others and to resist unnecessary consumption.¹³ For example, the historian describes the “middle course” that (*agebatque medium*, 2.114.3) Tiberius pursued when dealing with officers on campaign. Though he kept to a strict and exacting code of conduct himself, he would often lightly censure those who did not possess such an iron will according to the severity of the infraction. Only the very worst received harsh punishment (*vindicata rarissima*).¹⁴ Furthermore, Velleius remarks on the *coercitio*, the restraint with which Tiberius settled the dissension in Vienna, modern Viens, France. He remarks on the moderation (*quam magnifico animi temperamento*, 2.130.1) that allowed him to rebuild the theatre of that enemy of Caesar, Pompey. And with respect to honours, a whole chapter is dedicated to Tiberius' “remarkable moderation” (*singularis moderatio*, 2.122.1)

11 Saller 1994: 106-114, 131.

12 Fears 1981: 891.

13 Livia, Tiberius' mother, is also praised for this feature: *cuius potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis*, 2.130.5. This suggests that Velleius sees it as an attribute of the *domus Augusta*. See also his many comments below on Augustus' *clementia*.

14 Eriksen argues (2002: 115) that this is an example of Tiberius' *clementia*, but see my discussion of this point in Ch. 2.3.

which he says “shines out and is prominent” (*elucet atque eminet*). “In this man,” he concludes, “I do not know whether you should admire more that he consistently exceeded the bounds of work and danger or that he was temperate with regards to honours” (*sed hoc viro nescias utrum magis mireris quod laborum periculorumque semper excessit modum an quod honorum temperavit*, 2.122.2).

I would disagree with Eriksen that this all adds up to a “completely new way” of defining *virtus* and the conduct of a leader.¹⁵ Velleius is also praising Tiberius' bravery, hard work and generalship and other more typically 'manly' virtues, as well as the “venerable and ancient severity” found in other individuals under the Principate (*prisca antiquaque severitate usus*, 2.125.4; see also 2.81.1; 2.92.2 [twice]).¹⁶ The praise of compassionate and conscientious qualities in a leader is also found in writings of the late Republic. Cicero in the *pro Marcello*, for example, praises Caesar's *clementia*, *modus*, *sapientia*, *iustitia*, *lenitas animi*, *aequitas*, *misericordia*, *virtus*, *liberalitas*, *magnitudo animi* and *benevolentia* (1.1, 4.12, 6.19, 11.34). Augustus himself boasted of being a protector of citizens, courageous, clement, just and dutiful (*RG* 34.2) as well as a father figure for his country (*patrem patriae*, *RG* 35.1).¹⁷ Eriksen's main comparison is with

15 Eriksen 2002: 121. Eriksen only cites a few of the above examples, though she often does pick the most representative. In general, I find that her argument does not fully convince. See my comments at the end of the paragraph, but in addition she ignores all the other character sketches from the Republic and Principate. These men are often admired not just for learning and compassion, but also for courage, bravery and other forceful actions. Sentius Saturninus' consulship (2.92.2-5) is one example, as well as the *legati* of the Caesars noted for their *antiquae mores* and *severitas* (2.92.2; 2.116.3; 2.125.4; 2.127.4, 2.127.4; 2.128.1).

16 Though Eriksen does not make the connection, her thesis admittedly fits in well with Ferguson's (1958: 162; 166; 172), who argues that Roman *virtus* (especially in Republican times) is a mixture of three main elements: *virtus* in its narrow, martial sense, *pietas* and *gravitas*. *Gravitas* (1958: 172) he emphatically states was opposite to *levitas*, and he implies the same for *humanitas* and *liberalitas* (1958: 176-178). But in the end, this is not a completely new definition.

17 Downey 1975: 95-97; Benario 1975: 83-84.

Livy,¹⁸ suggesting that there is a great difference in outlook between the two authors. She does not consider that the subject matter of the two authors is very different. Yet Eriksen is right in that Velleius does put more stress on these latter values, for even when the historian turns to Tiberius' martial exploits, the accounts are constructed in such a way as to spotlight his moral qualities (cf. Chh. 1.3-4; 1.6). His Tiberius, like Augustus himself claimed, is more *pater* than *imperator*, a father figure who selflessly looks after the best interests of everybody.¹⁹ Velleius' enthusiasm then is for a leader who carefully plans for all contingencies, who cares about those in his charge and who is conscientious of his responsibilities and the effects of his actions on others. It is no wonder then that Velleius calls him the “perpetual patron of the Roman empire” (*perpetuus patronus Romani imperii*, 2.120.1), its “guardian and protector” (*vindicem custodemque imperii*, 2.104.2) and states that “the safe keeping of the empire” is in his hands (*tutela imperii*, 2.105.3).²⁰

1.3 Virtues in Action

But it is not enough simply to describe one's virtues. For an author to persuade a reader of his subject's virtues, he or she must show them in action. This Velleius does amply. So much so in fact that one cannot describe in detail all instances in such a

¹⁸ However, Eriksen does not point to any specific passages in Livy.

¹⁹ This is a point made by Eriksen as well (2002: 115), yet we must be careful here for Velleius does not actually address Tiberius as such, perhaps because Tiberius himself had turned down the title of *pater patriae* in 15 (Tac. *Ann.* 1.72). The habit of characterising leaders as fathers was indeed current, stemming from Republican, senatorial tradition, as well as Greek kingship literature (Stevenson 1992: 424, 129-131). The ruler/parent analogy would be a consistent theme of Seneca's *de beneficiis* (Stevenson 1992: 125-127).

²⁰ Velleius even calls him *vindicem Romani imperii* as a two year old infant (2.75.3).

circumscribed work as this. It is perhaps best to focus on a few key scenes, but in doing so, to look not just at what Tiberius does, but also at the language and literary techniques employed. It is the latter that shed more light on the author's intentions.²¹ One particularly interesting aspect to Velleius' accounts is the speed implied in Tiberius' performance of his duties. It suggests efficiency, but more importantly the genuineness of his virtues. One acts quickly because one cares. Swiftmess of action was a commonly recognised attribute of Tiberius and our author alludes to it in several ways.²²

An excellent example is Velleius' account of Tiberius' campaign against various German tribes in AD 4. He did not just enter Germany, but “entered at once” (*intrata protinus Germania*, 2.105.1).²³ The adverb *protinus* makes Velleius' intent to highlight the princeps' speed clear, but the historian doubles the effect by subordinating the phrase to the overall sentence. The above clause is an ablative absolute. This construction compresses time, compounding the sense of speed. It suborns one action to another, and so it is concerned only with the relationship between the action of the secondary clause and the reaction in the primary. There could be years between the two and the reader would never know it. Thus Tiberius entered Germany and suddenly we hear that the Canninefates, Attuarii and Bructeri were “subdued” (*subacti*), the Cherusci “retaken” (*recepti*), the Weser River “crossed” (*transitus*) and the “more extreme regions penetrated”

21 Bews (1987: 201-202) makes this same point regarding Tacitus' *Agricola*.

22 Woodman 1977: 218 (citing Weber 1936: 6, n. 10). See also 2.107.3 (*eadem qua priore anno festinatione urbem petens*), Livy per. 142; Plin. *HN* 7.84 and Val. Max. 5.5.3.

23 The entire part of the sentence under discussion is as follows: *intrata protinus Germania, subacti Canninefates Attuarii Bructeri, recepti Cherusci, gentes utinam minus mox nostra clade nobiles, transitus Visurgis, penetrata ulteriora, cum omnem partem asperrimi et periculosissimi belli Caesar vindicaret* . . . The sentence concludes with a character sketch of Sentius Saturninus.

(*penetrata ulteriora*). To increase the pace even more, as well as the drama, Velleius leaves out the perfect augments *est* and *erunt*.²⁴ The passive voice, meanwhile, underscores the impact which Tiberius made upon these tribes. It and the quick pace suggest a complete inability to resist this great general. These points are further enhanced if one considers the sexual allusions. The feminine Germania is “entered” and her interior regions are “penetrated” by the masculine general.²⁵ Such imagery was typical of Roman (indeed Western) art and literature and, in part, emphasises the supreme power of the conqueror and the total helplessness of the inhabitants.²⁶ Yet this is still not the end of the sentence. After the list of his successes, we finally come to Tiberius himself. Here in a causal *cum* clause we learn that this all happened “because” Tiberius had “assigned to himself all the harshest and most dangerous parts of the war” (*cum omnem partem asperrimi et periculosissimi belli Caesar vindicaret*), leaving the safer parts (*quae minoris . . . discriminis*) to his legate, Sentius Saturninus. So at a rapid pace, aided by the adverb *protinus*, the reader gets the impression that the general did not just defeat, but dominated four tribes and a vast stretch of countryside. Tiberius truly cared about the safety of the empire.

We see many of these techniques again wrapped up into a simpler sentence introducing Tiberius' management of the *clades Variana* of AD 9. Velleius marks the whole episode as important to his narrative themes by giving it a disproportionately large

24 Cf. Bews (1987: 205, 208-209) for a description of this technique in Tacitus' *Agricola*.

25 In the *Agricola* for example, after defeating the Britons' surprise night attack, the soldiers roared that “Caledonia must be penetrated” (*penetrandam Caledoniam*, Tac. *Agr.* 27.1).

26 Whittaker 2004: 119, 121, 127-128, 130. Whittaker does not make the final point that I do in so many words, but it is suggested in his analysis.

amount of space: four and a half chapters – a lot for a book that spans 185 years in just 131 chapters. The author's intention, as Woodman notes, is to heighten his praise of Tiberius.²⁷ He dedicates the first three chapters (2.117-119) to the terrible slaughter of the three legions (2.117.1, 2.119.1-2), the cowardly acts of a few officers (2.119.4), the vices and negligence of their commander Varus (2.117.2-4; 2.118.1, 4), the perfidy and deceit of the German tribes (2.118.1), and the intelligence and ambitions of their leader Arminius (2.118.2). It is thus a sumptuous stage setting for the great general, full of danger, pathos and all-round melodrama. To launch Tiberius' role, the author writes: “when the disaster had been heard, Tiberius flew back to his father Caesar” (*his auditis revolat ad patrem Caesar*, 2.120.1). Here again we find another ablative absolute. There is no *protinus* this time, but there does not have to be. Tiberius heard and he reacted. The message of the verb *revolat* hardly needs explaining. Velleius uses it again just three chapters later to describe the speed with which Tiberius reacted to the news of Augustus' imminent death. There too Velleius states that he “flew” back to his father's side (*ad patrem patriae*),²⁸ arriving before he was even expected (*expecto revolvit maturius*, 2.123.1). In both cases, the mention of Tiberius' earnest desire to be at his father's side in a time of need underlines his dedication to the welfare of the empire and the ideals of Augustus. He is standing firm, side by side with the *res publica*'s earlier saviour at Actium. The brief notice of Augustus being *pater patriae* at 2.123.1 further indicates their

²⁷ Woodman 1977: 188.

²⁸ Watt (1998) places *patriae* in brackets, though it is found in our sources for Velleius' text. Woodman (1977: 217) retains it, “after some hesitation,” arguing that Velleius may have been subtly reminding his audience of Augustus' (and now Tiberius') responsibility to the *res publica*.

deep commitment.²⁹ Back in Germany, this was already clear. In one short introductory sentence, we witness Tiberius' many virtues in action, underlined again by a sense of speed.

At the time of Arminius' ambush, however, Tiberius was concluding the Pannonian War at the end of the campaigning season (Suet. *Tib.* 17-18). This means that he could not have immediately invaded Germany. Velleius' account then, while not false, does stretch the truth. Tiberius did not “fly” back to Rome purely out of concern for the country's safety, but was probably returning anyway to pass the winter. Furthermore, it is unlikely that Tiberius would have rushed his departure from Pannonia just to confer with Augustus about a campaign months away. This all illuminates again Velleius' desire to put Tiberius' actions in the best light possible. And indeed, in the same sub-chapter he goes on to describe his careful efforts to ensure not just success in war but to ensure the safety and spirit of everyone in the region. At a *staccato* tempo, he announces that Tiberius was “sent” the following spring to Germany (*mittitur*, 2.120.1), that he “strengthened” the Gaulish provinces (*confirmat*),³⁰ “dispatched” the armies (*disponit*), “enforced” the garrisons (*munit*) and crossed the Rhine to attack (*transgreditur*), but only when everything accorded to his own high standard (*se magnitudine sua . . . minabantur*). It is a list of painstaking efforts on behalf of the empire, her citizens and soldiers. It is for these reasons that Velleius calls Tiberius here the “perpetual patron of the Roman empire”

29 Woodman 1977: 217. Woodman (1977: 218) also points out that rushing to the deathbed of a father or other family member was a *topos* of later imperial panegyrics.

30 I owe this translation to Shipley (1924), as a better one could not be found that covers the physical and mental aspects of *confirmare*. “Reassure” suggests both Tiberius' concern to hearten the Gauls and also that he increased their defences.

(2.120.1). The active voice of the verbs serves to highlight Tiberius as achiever and their present tense impresses in the audience's minds the necessity and swiftness of Tiberius' achievements.³¹

Another interesting point before we move on is that it is not until after this account of Tiberius' actions, that he recounts the heroic deeds of Romans trapped by Arminius (2.120.2-6). It is as if he did not want them to detract from Tiberius' own heroics.³²

1.4 The Defeat of Madness

The historian's positive focus on Tiberius' virtues may also be detected in his use of the verb *furere* and his treatment of the Pannonian and Dalmatian War of AD 6-9. *Furere* means "to rave, rage and be mad."³³ It is typically used in poetry and history to describe wild beasts, bacchic revellers, barbarians, the insane, mutinying soldiers and political conspirators. It implies a complete lack of civilisation and the absence of bounds and checks on one's behaviour.³⁴ As Cooley notes, it is the very opposite to *humanitas*.³⁵

Thus Cicero attaches the verb *furere* to Catiline's men to help recall the horrors of Sulla's

31 See Roberts (1988: 120, cf. 124) for an analysis of Tacitus' similar use of the active voice to describe the Romans' conquest of the island of Mona.

32 Watt (1998), following an earlier emender (Woodman 1977: 203), has rearranged the chapters, and indeed, sub-chapters, of the episode. What the manuscripts have as 2.120.1 he puts at 2.120.6, but Woodman (1977: 203-204) convincingly rejects this. Though for a different reason than I have put forward here, he most notably argues that any rearrangement would take away from the climactic ending of this section.

33 *TLL s. v. furo*, A and B.

34 Traub 1953; Woodman 2006: 312-314.

35 Cooley 1998: 200.

proscriptions and dictatorship (Cic. *Cat.* 2.20) and he describes Antony's crimes against his fellow Romans with the same verb (Cic. *Phil.* 3.31). In a similar manner, Velleius describes the electioneering in 52 BC as “raging” (*furente ambitu*, 2.47.3), for it led to “swords and the slaughter of citizens” (*in gladios caedesque civium*). He explains that there was “neither bound nor limit” on the elections (*neque finis reperiebatur nec modus*) and that this led directly to Pompey's third and sole consulship and the growing divide between him and Caesar.³⁶ Not too much later we hear that Antony and Lepidus were similarly “mad” (*furente*, 2.66.1) when they renewed Sulla's proscriptions – mainly for revenge and greed, Velleius insinuates (2.66.1, 2.67.2). The historian further reminds his audience that the senate had pronounced them to be enemies of the *res publica* (2.66.1; cf. 2.63.3; 2.64.4), underlining again that they were operating outside all laws and customs.³⁷

When Velleius comes to the Pannonian and Dalmatian War, he is careful to note both the bloodshed that the barbarians wreaked and the great threat that they posed to Rome. They had already slaughtered citizens, traders, colonies of veterans and even occupied Macedonia (*oppressi, trucidati, ad internecionem, caesus, occupata armis; igni ferroque vastata*, 2.110.6). They were in the “prime of their power” (*adulta viribus*, 2.110.2), their generals were very harsh and skilled (*acerrimis ac peritissimis ducibus*, 2.110.4) and the army was a disciplined force of 800,000 men (2.110.3; *familiaris*

36 Similarly, Velleius (2.12.6) describes Servilius Glaucia and Saturninus Apuleius' attempts to hold consecutive offices and their civic violence as a *furor*, which Marius happily “checked” (*compescuit*) by having them sentenced to death. Agrippa Postumus' behaviour was also *furor* (2.112.7).

37 Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 16.28, where Eprius Marcellus' speech equates the rejection of laws and customs with treason and being an enemy to Rome. Wirszubski 1950: 141.

armorum . . . exercitatio, 2.110.5). The panic they sparked in Rome, the historian tells us, was so great that it “even shook and terrorised the soul of Augustus” (*etiam . . . Caesaris Augusti animum quateret atque terreret*, 2.110.6). Luckily, Velleius suggests, Tiberius was at the frontier. He did not try to win a quick victory, but “gave necessity precedence over glory” (*necessaria gloriosis praeposita*, 2.110.3). He withdrew the army closer to Italy for the winter (AD 6-7), for it did not seem “safe” (*neque tutum visum*) to winter in the interior of Germany.

Not surprisingly, in his short description of Tiberius' first series of engagements with the Pannonians the following year, the historian describes the enemy twice as “raging” (*furentes . . . vires; furens . . . †hostis†*, 2.111.4). Before the emperor they are no longer the disciplined and threatening force as before, but a mad mass of unrestrained barbarity. Surrounding the notices of the mad enemy are Tiberius' virtues. Velleius praises the general for his “great foresight” (*prudencia ducis; qua prudencia*), his work ethic (*quanto opere*)³⁸ and the proper balance (*temperamento*) that he was able to strike between utility and something else. The phrase he uses for the latter point is corrupted. Most modern editors emend the text as follows:³⁹ *quanto cum temperamento simul ** utilitatis res auctoritate imperatoris agi vidimus!* Due to the genitive case of *utilitas*, *temperamentum* obviously retains its original sense of “a proportionate mixture.”⁴⁰ Some

38 Whom *opere* is describing is not clear. It relates how the enemy was hemmed in by *exercitus nostri*, so logically one would think that it describes the army's work. But so far, such opening praises, like *qua prudencia* and *quanto cum temperamento*, have described Tiberius. But even if the noun is describing the entire Roman army, it still describes foremost Tiberius the general.

39 Woodman 1977: 71; Elephante 1997: 138; Watt 1998: 76.

40 There is some debate about whether it could mean moderation or not, but the sense of the sentence seems clear. Woodman 1977: 165.

editors have conjectured *civilitas* instead of *utilitas* and *securitas* for the missing word.⁴¹

Thus confusion on Velleius' exact message exists, but the spirit is clear: he is celebrating the unique blend of skills and values that make Tiberius the sole person capable of leading the empire. It was by these qualities, Velleius states, that opportunities were opened up (*quantis prudentia ducis opportunitatibus*) and that they were able to “remove” the enemy's forces as they “rage” (*furentes . . . vires universas evasimus*) and to gradually break their strength “as they rage in their numbers” (*intra se furens viribus [hostis] elanguesceret*).⁴² It is a victory of Tiberius' rationality over irrationality, of control over chaos.⁴³ Thus the historian states that “all” would have come to naught, “had the one who guided these matters not been there” (*omnia haec frustra praeparassemus nisi qui illa regeret fuisset*, 2.111.2).

If Tiberius can put down madness here, he can put down madness in domestic affairs too. A little later on in his account of the war, Velleius bids the younger M. Vinicius, to whom the work is dedicated, to understand that Tiberius “was as great a leader in war, as you see him now as a princeps in peace” (*accipe nunc, M. Vinici, tantum in bello ducem quantum in pace vides principem*, 2.113.1). Like Horace's frequent personal addresses to his *amici* in the *Odes*, Velleius is using Vinicius as a metaphor for his general reader.⁴⁴ He is extending an invitation to his audience to apply directly his

41 Woodman 1977: 165.

42 Here I am using Woodman's emendation of the text. Watt (1988) obelises from *viribus* to *elanguesceret*, but Woodman's reasoning seems sound (1977: 165-166).

43 See Roberts (1988: 121-125) for a parallel theme in Tacitus' account of the Roman conquest of Mona off the western coast of Britain. Roberts neatly spells out how Tacitus emphasises the emotional aspects of the Britons (including madness), particularly of the Druids and women, and the Romans' systematic conquest after a brief hesitation.

44 J. Benario 1992: 261 (citing Johnson 1982: 3).

comments on the Pannonian and Dalmatian War to the political situation of his day.⁴⁵ It is a blurring of past and present. And to be sure, after the address he goes on to recount the same themes as seen above: Tiberius' excellent judgement (*optimus eorum quae agebat iudex*, 2.113.2), the utility of his actions (*utilia speciosis praeferens*) and soon his *humanitas* (2.114.1), *cura* and *moderatio* (2.114.4). Indeed further on in the history, Tiberius' virtues are directly applied to internal madness when Velleius comes to the mutinies of the lower Rhine and Pannonian legions in AD 14. The historian lashes the soldiers for having thrown everything into deep confusion (*profunda confundendi omnia cupiditate*, 2.125.1) and for desiring “a new leader, a new political arrangement, a new *res publica*” (*novum ducem, novum statum, novam quaerebant rem publicam*). The Principate was in peril and Velleius is obviously stressing the possibility of civil war. Luckily, “the veteran commander” (*veteris imperatoris*, 2.125.3) was there. With his “ripe experience” (*maturitas*)⁴⁶ he “quickly” (*brevi*) put an end to this “madness” (*rabie*, 2.125.1). I argue in Ch. 2.5 that Velleius is holding up this event as an example of the princeps' *moderatio*. And again, as in his account of the Dalmatian and Pannonian War, he introduces the episode by extolling the benefits Rome gained by having Tiberius succeed Augustus (*neque diu latuit aut quid non impetrando passuri fuissemus aut quid impetrando prefecissemus*, 2.125.1). This is the behaviour needed from Rome's leader to ensure that mad behaviour outside the bounds of society, like that of Antony, Lepidus and

45 This idea goes against Hellegouarc'h (1974a: 77) and de Monte (1999: 124-125, 131) who both assert that Velleius is not very interested in internal affairs. His narration is more slanted to wars against external enemies. I argue, in fact, that this is not due to disinterest, but more to the reasons outlined in the Introduction (0.3), and that he is more interested in internal matters, particularly social harmony. See Chh. 1.5-6, esp. n. 59, 3-5 and the conclusion.

46 I owe my translation of *maturitas* to Shipley (1924), as a better English equivalent could not be found.

the legions, does not re-occur.⁴⁷

1.5 The Late Republic: a Descent into Chaos

Before proceeding any further, however, Velleius' backdrop to the Principate must be examined. The Republican and Principate narratives refer to and inform one another. When Velleius presents Tiberius' virtues as overcoming political and social madness, he is thinking back to the turmoil of the late Republic. He is using the narrative of the late Republic to validate and celebrate the rise of the Principate and to underscore the threat, if the Principate should cease to live up to the high standards which he lays out for it (Ch. 1.1-4). The historian presents the last century of the Republic as a series of tragedies which overwhelm the few positives that still existed, such as Cicero and the younger Cato. He laments the unbridled ambition of most great men, their irregular careers, the violence they unleash against their fellow citizens and the general upheavals caused to the lives of others. As we saw, Velleius criticised C. Marius for his divisive and bloody career (2.11.1; 2.23.1; 2.18.6). Cinna's cruelty was unsurpassed until Sulla came to prominence (*nihil illa victoria fuisset crudelius nisi mox Sullana esset secuta*, 2.22.1). The latter may have been "mild while conquering," but "after victory he would be crueller than anyone [ever] heard of" (*dum vincit . . . lenior, post victoriam audito fuerit*

⁴⁷ The idea of virtues overcoming madness had been recently employed in the *Senatus Consultum de Pisone Patre* of AD 20. It similarly characterises Piso as *feritas* (ll. 27) for his joy at Germanicus' death and his seditious actions among the Syrian legions which threatened a renewal of civil war. Also like Velleius, it describes the virtues of Tiberius, the *domus Augusta* and society's emulation of them as overcoming this *feritas* and keeping order (Cooley 1998: 208-209; Potter 1999: 76). See my further comments below (Ch. 1.6, n. 64).

crudelior, 2.25.3; 2.17.1; 2.28.2-4). Pompey, though possessing “greatness” (*magnitudo*, 2.29.2; 2.32.1, 6) and capable of many “great things” (*magna*, 2.29.1; 2.29.5), could “not brook anyone whatsoever as an equal” (*quemquam <aequo> animo parem tulit*, 2.33.3) and was “unrestrained in seeking out offices” (*in adpetendis honoribus immodicus*, 2.33.3; 2.29.3; 2.33.2; 2.34.2). Caesar was of a similarly mixed character.⁴⁸ Even the Senate was inconsistent and proved incapable of controlling its leaders. It sometimes supported the desires of men harmful to the *res publica*, and sometimes spurned the good will of others.⁴⁹

This resulted in a descent into chaos for the city. Velleius describes the Italian War as “savage” (*atrox*) and pointless (2.16.4; 2.17.1).⁵⁰ The battle between Cn. Pompeius and Cinna was also “savage” (*atrocique*, 2.21.3) and a “fatal outcome” (*eventus exitiabilis*) as much to the soldiers as to those watching from Rome's walls. He bemoans the *licentia gladiatorum* unleashed on Rome's citizens through the various conflicts of Cinna, Marius and Sulla, and gives pathetic descriptions of the murders of consuls, praetors, wives and even a pontifex maximus (Mucius Scaevola). These are people, Velleius emphasises, who had served the *res publica* well, and though the pretext for their deaths was their political affiliations, more likely it was their wealth.⁵¹ Pharsalus, meanwhile, was the “most

48 See the discussion in Chh. 1.6, 2.3-2.4.

49 Velleius writes that it “spurned” the “ancient dignity” (*priscum . . . decus*, 2.13.2) that Livius Drusus tried to restore to it and instead “approved more the woeful proposals of his colleagues than those proposed by the most upright man himself, . . . received the unlawful acts with an indifferent spirit which were being purposed by these other ones, and became jealous of his great glory [but] bore the others' excess” (*malefacta collegarum eius quam optime ab ipso cogitata senatus probaret magis, et honorem qui ab eo deferebatur sperneret, iniurias quae ab illis intendebantur aequo animo reciperet, et huius summae gloriae invideret, illorum <im>modicam ferret*, 2.13.3).

50 The fortune of the Italians was similarly “savage” (*fortuna atrox*) and their cause “most just” (*iustissima*, 2.15.2).

51 For the list of murders see 2.22.2-5; 2.26.2-3. Velleius calls C. Marius' march on Rome “baleful for its

damning day to the Roman name,” and not just because “the two heads of the *res publica* smashed together,” resulting in one's death, but also because “there was such an extreme amount of men slaughtered on the side of the Pompeians” (*illum cruentissimum Romano nomini diem tantumque utriusque exercitus profusum sanguinis et collisa inter se duo rei publicae capita effossumque alterum Romani imperii lumen, tot talesque Pompeianarum partium caesos viros*, 2.52.3). Velleius' opinion is evident; he never wishes to revisit this abhorrent period in Rome's history.

Relying on a well used historical *topos* as old as the Gracchi,⁵² Velleius blames Rome's fall on the destruction of Carthage, which removed the last external check on Rome's power and precipitated a loosening of its values that had raised Rome to its exalted position (2.1.1):

Potentiae Romanorum prior Scipio viam aperuerat, luxuriae posterior aperuit; quippe remoto Carthaginis metu sublataque imperii aemula non gradu sed praecipiti cursu a virtute descitum, ad vitia transcursum; vetus disciplina deserta, nova inducta; in somnum a vigiliis, ab armis ad voluptates, a negotiis in otium conversa civitas. tum Scipio Nasica in Capitolio porticus, tum quas praediximus Metellus, tum in circo Cn. Octavius multo amoenissimam moliti sunt, publicamque magnificentiam secuta privata luxuria est.

The first Scipio (Africanus) had opened the way to Roman power, the latter (Aemilianus) opened the way to luxury; because with the fear of Carthage removed and the rival for empire taken away, there was a withdrawal from virtue not with small steps, but in a headlong rush, and there was a run over into vices. Ancient discipline was deserted, a new one introduced. The city changed from watchfulness to sleep, from arms to pleasures, from work to leisure. First Scipio Nasica erected porticoes on the Capitoline, then Metellus erected his, which I mentioned earlier, then

citizens” (*pestifero civibus suis reditu*, 2.22.1), and says that “no victory would have been more cruel if Sulla had not soon followed” (*nihil illa victoria fuisset crudelius nisi mox Sullana esset secuta*, 22.1-2).

⁵² Lintott 1972: 626-627. See Wallace-Hadrill 1997: 9 for some brief criticisms. The earliest and fullest surviving exemplar of the *topos* is Sallust (*Hist.* 1.12, 16).

in the circus Cn. Octavius erected the most delightful portico by far, and private luxury followed this public grandeur.

His immediate proof is the inept (*inscitia*, 2.1.4) and disgraceful (*turpissima*, *turpia*, *detestabilia*) conduct of Rome's generals during the Spanish wars of 154-133 BC, and next the selfish and pernicious actions of the Gracchi, which only aggravated Rome's problems. After describing Tiberius Gracchus' death, Velleius states (2.3.3-4):

Hoc initium in urbe Roma civilis sanguinis gladiatorumque impunitatis fuit. inde ius vi obrutum potentiorque habitus prior, discordiaeque civium antea condicionibus sanari solitae ferro diiudicatae, bellaque non causis inita sed prout eorum merces fuit. quod haud mirum est; non enim ibi consistunt exempla unde coeperunt, sed quamlibet in tenuem recepta tramitem latissime evagandi sibi viam faciunt, et ubi semel recto deerratum est, in praeceptis pervenitur, nec quisquam sibi putat turpe quod alii fuit fructuosum.

This was the start of civil bloodshed in the city of Rome and a rashness of sword use. From here on out, right was overwhelmed by force and the more powerful were held to be pre-eminent. The disputes of citizens, [which] beforehand were customarily healed by agreement, were adjudged by the sword and wars were started not with [just] cause but according to their profit potential. This is hardly to be marvelled at; for examples do not cease where they commenced, but received onto a narrow path, they make a way for themselves for marching forth far and wide as they like and once someone has wandered away from uprightness he comes straight into extreme danger and there is not anyone who thinks that something is shameful for himself which was fruitful for another.⁵³

Particularly distressing to Velleius were the proscriptions of Sulla and the second triumvirate. Introducing the subject, he remarks that after Sulla's defeat of Marius, it seemed that the “evils” (*mala*, 2.28.2; cf. 2.66.1) had come to an end “when they were

⁵³ See 2.22.5, where Velleius goes on a similar digression lamenting the atrocities of Cinna, Marius and Sulla. He concludes that “everything was tumbling down in the *res publica*” (*omnia erant praecipitia in re publica*).

increased by the cruelty of Sulla” (*cum Sullae crudelitate aucta sunt*). Velleius reports with shock that not only was a price set for the slaying of citizens (in public no less) (*iugulati civis Romani publice constitueretur auctoramentum*, 2.28.3), but that the price even equalled that of a dead enemy, which suggests just how backwards Sulla's priorities were (*neque occisi hostis quam civis uberius foret praemium*). “Many innocents were savaged,” he laments, for now “whoever had the most [possessions] had killed the most” (*plurimumque haberet qui plurimos interemisisset . . . in multos insontes saevitum*, 2.28.3-4). He explains that many deaths were simply to seize the victims' possessions (2.22.5; 2.28.3-4). Furthermore, children were barred from their inheritances (*exclusique paternis opibus*, 2.28.4) and from seeking office (*petendorum honorum iure prohiberentur*). The “most indignant” (*indignissimum est*) part, the historian continues, was that the sons of senators still “bore the burdens of their order but lost the rights” (*onera ordinis sustinerent et iura perderent*). Velleius is thus describing the breakdown of Rome's political and social systems.

It was no better under the second triumvirate. The most startling aspect for our author this time seems to have been the breakdown in basic social bonds of the Roman *domus*. Wives remained quite loyal, Velleius assures us, but freedmen retained only an average amount of fidelity, slaves less and sons none at all (*uxorum fidem summam, libertorum mediam, servorum aliquam, filiorum nullam*, 2.67.2). “Nothing was left sacred to any one,” he exclaims (*ne quid ulli sanctum relinqueretur*). Three examples he gives are of Antony proscribing his uncle, L. Caesar, and Lepidus and L. Munatius Plancus

their brothers. For this, Velleius records, the soldiers jeered as they marched behind the chariots of the latter two (2.67.4). For Velleius the proscriptions represented the pinnacle of Rome's immorality and turmoil. Most important was the loss of a sense of duty to one's family and country. His amusement at the soldiers' jests indicates his sympathy for the plight of the common person and that he puts the blame squarely on the leaders of the time.

Velleius' negativity towards the late Republic is clear. He presents vices and the resulting strife as almost unstoppable once started. Yet it is also clear that Augustus, Tiberius, the *domus Augusta* and the Principate that they established are presented as the answer.⁵⁴ Their panegyrics almost directly answer his various complaints of the turmoil unleashed by the Gracchi and proscriptions. Force overcame law and the sword reigned, but as we saw the Principate returned power and pre-eminence to the laws, courts, senate and magistracies.⁵⁵ Actium was the greatest day ever (2.86.1) for now there was nothing which men could pray for or the gods grant, which Augustus did not achieve (2.89.2), and Rome and the provinces, rent by civil war, began to coalesce (2.90.1). As we have seen, however, most of Velleius' focus and indeed praise is reserved for Tiberius. He is Velleius' current princeps, and only he has the skills, divine favour and, above all, the personal values to carry on Augustus' creation. His *humanitas*, *cura*, *pietas* and *moderatio* almost

54 Augustus, at this point called Caesar, is largely presented as being outside the problems of the late Republic (but not totally, see Ch. 2.4). Though he was part of the second triumvirate, it was under Antony's "domination" that Rome was suffering (2.60.4; 2.61.1) and it was he and Lepidus who introduced the proscriptions against Caesar's will (2.66.1).

55 Woodman (1975a: 290-291; 1977: 234; 1983: 250) also points out the continual language of restoration present in both panegyrics (*revocata*, *restituta*, *redactum*, *revocata*, *reddiderat*, *reversus*, *repleverat*, *refulsit*).

directly oppose the vices that plagued Rome's earlier leaders. At his behest, “either the will was inspired or the need imposed on everyone to behave uprightly” (*recte faciendi omnibus aut incussa voluntas aut imposita necessitas*, 2.126.2). He is the *princeps optimus*, the very best leader, “who though he is greatest in power, is even greater as an example” (*cumque sit imperio maximus, exemplo maior est*, 2.126.5). Everything is now as it should be: “The humble support the strong not fear them, and the powerful are pre-eminent [but] do not spurn the humble” (*suspicit potentem humilis non timet, antecedit non contemnit humiliorem potens*, 2.126.3).

1.6 The Creation of Universal Consensus

In an excellent article, Hellegouarc'h asserts that this glowing portrait presents Tiberius as a unifying figure: “le ciment nécessaire de l'unité du monde romaine.”⁵⁶ This “quasi divin” character emits a “magnétisme” to which people cannot help but be drawn.⁵⁷ As general he does not just try to conquer “mais à intégrer et à unir.” In every region, among all peoples of the empire and the barbarians beyond he stands out and brings everyone together into a cohesive society. Hellegouarc'h's observations have proven critical to our understanding of Velleius and it is worth looking in detail at his central evidence: Velleius' treatment of Tiberius' eight year retreat to the island of Rhodes and his triumphal return.

⁵⁶ Hellegouarc'h 1974: 85-86. Woodman (1977: 142) similarly asserts that Velleius was trying to “emphasise the loyalty which Tiberius could command.”

⁵⁷ Hellegouarc'h 1974: 84-85.

The historian reports that the whole world “sensed” his departure from the “guardianship of the city” (*sensit terrarum orbis digressum a custodia Neronem urbis*, 2.100.1). Everyone was crying (*omnium lacrimae*, 2.99.3) and the country almost held out its hand to stop him (*quam paene ei patria manum iniecerit*). The historian then proceeds to recount a variety of tragedies that afflicted the empire over the next seven years: Augustus lost his two young successors, Gaius and Lucius Caesar (2.102.3; 2.103.3); the trusted advisor, M. Lollius, conducted traitorous acts (*perfida*, 2.102.1) and formed plans worthy of a mind “cunning and shrewd” (*subdoli ac versuti animi consilia*); Julia, Augustus' daughter and Tiberius' wife, caused a “storm” (*tempestas*, 2.100.2) to strike the *domus Augusta* with her many unspeakable acts (*foeda dictu memoriaque horrenda*) of marital infidelity; the Parthians broke their alliance and seized Armenia, and the Germans rebelled, “after the eyes of their conqueror had turned away,” he says (*aversis domitoris sui oculis rebellavit*, 2.100.1). The empire, so to speak, began to fall apart. Nonetheless, Velleius is careful to note that proconsuls and *legati* travelling to the East would stop at Rhodes and lower their *fascēs* to Tiberius. This is despite the fact that he was just a private citizen, Velleius says, though he muses whether such grandeur can ever be called “private” (*sed illa maiestas privata numquam fuit*, 2.99.4). He concludes that the visitors were thus “confessing” that his leisure was more respected than their official commands (*fassique sint otium eius honoratius imperio suo*).

Predictably Tiberius' return “filled the country with incredible happiness” (*reversus Rhodo incredibili laetitia patriam repleverat*, 2.103.1). Fortuna had returned her

“protection” (*sua praesidia*). He notes that Augustus did not hesitate to adopt him and give him the tribunician powers, which marks him as his successor. The importance of this moment Velleius emphasises by giving the exact day, the years since the founding of Rome and the name of the *consules ordinarii* to mark the year (2.103.3; 2.104.1). According to Velleius, this was a day of happiness and celebration for the city. Romans raised their hands into the air offering prayers and conceived hopes for the “perpetual security and eternity of the Roman empire” (*spemque conceptam perpetuae securitatis aeternitatisque Romani imperii*, 2.103.4). “Now” he says, their “hope shone out secure” for their children, the sanctity of marriage, their patrimonies and for “safety, calm, peace and tranquility” (*tum refulsit certa spes liberorum parentibus, viris matrimoniorum, dominis patrimonii, omnibus hominibus salutis quietis, pacis tranquillitatis*, 2.103.5). Their joy was so great that “it was not possible for more to be hoped, nor to have their hopes more happily fulfilled” (*adeo ut nec plus sperari potuerit nec spei responderi felicius*).

But Velleius' account does not stop here. He says that he accompanied Tiberius on his journey to the Rhine through “the most populated part of Italy and the entire course” of the Gallic provinces (*per celeberrimam Italiae partem <et> tractum omnem Galliarum provinciarum*, 2.104.3) in order to put down the German rebellion.⁵⁸ Along the way, he reports, the Italians and Gauls, then the soldiers waiting along the Rhine, and

⁵⁸ Due to this quote I believe that Velleius does not mean just settled veterans when he reports the celebration of the provincials upon seeing their “old commander” (*veterem imperatorem*, 2.103.3). Normally this phrase should be taken narrowly, but I believe that the context of Tiberius' broad travels indicates that our author is thinking of actual Italians and Gauls as well as veterans and Romans. Besides these veterans could also have been provincials.

finally an old barbarian from the far side of the Elbe River deep in the wilds of Germany all reacted in a fashion similar to the Romans.⁵⁹ They form part of what Woodman describes as a deliberate and successively expanding three part reaction to Tiberius' permanent return to the head of the empire: Roman, provincial/soldier and barbarian. Again Velleius is trying to emphasise his princeps' importance.⁶⁰ Though Velleius is not explicit, it is evident from the structure of the episode that the provincials and the barbarian are celebrating for the same reasons as the Romans. He writes that upon seeing Caesar (for Tiberius, he says, then merited the name, though he did not actually have it) the Italians and Gauls congratulated themselves "more heartily than they him" (*sibi quisque quam illi gratularentur plenius*, 2.104.3). For the soldiers, the sight of him "elicited joy, tears, frantic action, a certain strange exultation of welcoming and a desire to touch his hand" (*elicitae gaudio lacrimae alacritasque et salutationis nova quaedam exultatio et contingendi manum cupiditas*, 2.104.4). He goes on, recording the soldiers' cries: "Do we see you, commander? Have we received you safely? . . . I was with you, commander, in Armenia, I in Raetia. I was given my decoration by you in Vindelicis, I in Pannonia and I in Germania!" (*'videmus te, imperator? saluum recepimus?', ac deinde 'ego tecum, imperator, in Armenia, ego in Raetia fui, ego a te in Vindelicis, ego in Pannonia, ego in Germania donatus sum'*).

59 Pace de Monte; though he does not discuss this exact scene, his basic argument is that Velleius was "only interested in the act of conquest and pacification, not in its consequences or civilizing implications" (1999: 131, see also 124-125). De Monte argues that Velleius' "triumphal" history comes from a strict, Roman point of view, and thus there is an "avoidance of any kind of analysis" (1999: 124). In other words, he is not interested in non-Romans like the provincials or the German or indeed in any broad political message. While Velleius does concentrate overwhelmingly on the Romans, I hope this thesis shows that there is much analysis behind Velleius' work.

60 Woodman 1977: 142.

As for the old German, he stood silent in front of Tiberius for a long time (*diu tacitus*, 2.107.2), “gazing” at him (*contemplatus*). Velleius emphasises that he was alone (*unus, solusque*, 2.107.1), of advanced age (*aetate senior*), well built (*corpore excellens*), dignified (*dignitate*), intelligent (*cultus*), prominent (*eminens*), as well as *e barbaris*. Thus we may take him as a representative of all barbarians. When he finally found his voice, he says that the youth of his tribe “are mad” (*furit*, 2.107.2) for they worship the Romans' spirit when they are absent, but “when present, they fear their arms rather than follow their faith” (*praesentium potius arma metuit quam sequitur fidem*). The old man then declares the Romans to be “gods” (*hodie vidi deos*) and that he had neither “hoped for nor experienced at all a happier day in his life” (*nec feliciorem ullum vitae meae aut optavi aut sensi diem*, 2.107.2). He too asks to touch Tiberius' hand, and as he crosses back over the Elbe river Velleius reports that he “gazed back at Caesar without end” (*sine fine respectans Caesarem*).

It is clear that Hellegouarc'h's analysis is apt. Four basic elements of the Roman world view – Roman, provincial, soldier and barbarian – are shown to unite willingly around this great man. Tiberius himself is not described nor heard; we just get peoples' reactions to him. He certainly does seem divine and magnetic. If we look at Julius Caesar, one of his greatest failings, according to the historian, was his inability to unite. His clemency and generosity towards others failed to bind men to him (2.52.6; 2.56.3; 2.57; 2.69.6)⁶¹ and his victories only generated more wars (2.49.3 for Pharsalus, 2.54.1 for

⁶¹ Cicero too is said to have attempted to create *concordia*, first between Caesar and Pompey (2.48.5), then after Caesar's death (2.58.4).

Egypt, 2.55.1-2 for North Africa and 2.55.2-4 for Spain). The ability to create social harmony is a quality unique to the Principate and especially Tiberius. The old German's comment that his tribe's youth "are mad" for fleeing Tiberius' approach suggests that madness is not only provoking social instability or active resistance to Caesar, as we saw above (Ch. 1.4), but that it can be defined as the simple refusal to enjoy the benefits that he brings to the world. But what Hellegouarc'h does not stress are the emotions on display. These people are beside themselves with joy. Velleius even claims at one point that his words do not do justice to what he witnessed (*neque verbis exprimi et fortasse vix mereri fidem potest*, 2.104.4). His description of the Romans' hopes says it all. Through the figure of Tiberius, some of their most fundamental fears and needs are being answered. For better or for worse, their fates rest in him. His return from Rhodes and adoption by Augustus makes their hopes possible and their fulfillment comes with the panegyric which Velleius will pen some twenty chapters later. The continual imagery of hands (*manus*), seen five times in these seven chapters (2.99.3, 2.100.1, 2.103.4, 2.104.4, 2.107.2), stresses the intimate connection which these people have or at least wish to have with their leader. The Romans throw theirs into the air (2.103.4) and the soldiers and barbarian actually want to feel him (2.104.4; 2.107.2). Even personified countries are involved. Roma (*patria*, 2.99.3) almost interjected her hands to stop Tiberius from leaving and Parthia did interject hers into Armenia (2.100.1). These two parallel images, I suggest, magnify the sense of danger that Velleius wished to provide to Tiberius' departure. They create a clear cause and effect relationship: Tiberius' retreat allowed an

enemy to assault the empire. Thus he is the “necessary cement,” as Hellegouarc’h says, but this does not quite do justice. Tiberius is the physical, emotional and moral bedrock upon which everything rests. If he moves, as he did in 6 BC, the whole world feels the shock. The safest strategy is for him to stay at the centre, at the head of the empire. The continual use of the name “Caesar” only strengthens these points and serves to bring them up to Velleius' actual day.

Moreover, these are powerful images of unconditional and almost desperate support for the Principate. Such ideas are repeated again at 2.110.6-2.111.2 and 2.124.1-2. First a panicked (*tantus . . . metus*) *res publica* “demanded” from Augustus (*ab Augusto . . . poposcit*) that Tiberius be its “leader” (*ducem*) in the Pannonian and Dalmation war, second, an anxious senate and apprehensive people (*quae senatus trepidatio, quae populi confusio, quis urbis metus*; cf. *timueramus*) had to “fight” (*pugnatis*; cf. *velut luctatio civitatis*) with a hesitant Tiberius “to succeed” (*ut . . . succederet*) Augustus at his death. Back at Tiberius' return from Rhodes, the various peoples crowd him, as if they are hemming him in, making sure that he does not leave again. The combined message of the scenes is of spontaneous consensus: something which every emperor, from Augustus on, was careful to publicise.⁶² In Burdeau's formulation, consensus is what differentiated a princeps from a tyrant.⁶³ Velleius is attempting to establish with his audience that Tiberius' authority does not stem from legalities, being at the head of an army or even the election of the gods, but from popular,

⁶² RG 25.2; 35.1.

⁶³ Burdeau 1964: 35; followed by Ando 2001: 200.

indeed universal, support and joy. The people both want and need him there. The immediate reason for this support is obviously the German wars, which Tiberius is about to wage. But Velleius never articulates this as an actual motivation. With the backdrop of the late Republic, their expressed hopes for security, calm, peace and tranquility would seem to be as much a desire to be free from internal violence and discord as external enemies. In fact, Velleius is suggesting that internal issues are their main concern, for their more specific hopes centre around marriage, property and children and these almost directly mirror the problems instigated by the proscriptions of Sulla and the second triumvirate, as the historian relates them. He is therefore suggesting that the root of their support is found in their belief of Tiberius' values. It is his unique *humanitas*, *liberalitas*, *cura*, *pietas*, *conscientia* and *moderatio* which restricts his behaviour and preserves the harmony of the state.⁶⁴ Velleius does mention some of Tiberius' legal powers, such as his consulships and the tribunician powers, but it is infrequent and he never dwells on them (2.99.1; 2.103.3). The closest he comes to referring to his proconsular *imperium* for the provinces is with an inference in the honorary title *imperator*.⁶⁵ He seems to be

64 We see these points ten years earlier in the *Senatus Consultum de Pisone Patre*. It charges Piso with having tried to restart civil war long since buried by Augustus (ll. 45-48; Potter 1999: 78, 83). It further argues that it is the *domus Augusta*, specifically Tiberius and Augustus before him, that maintains the empire's peace through their virtues, particularly *clementia*, *iustitia*, *pietas*, *iustitia*, *moderatio* and *animi magnitudo*, and society's emulation of them (ll. 90-92, 132-133; Cooley 1998: 207-208; Potter 1999: 76). I think a close study between the *SCPP* and Velleius' history (starting from Potter's excellent initial efforts) would be very profitable and it is one I wish to make in the near future as they both employ similar themes. Such a study could shed much light on how Velleius is manipulating imperial themes. Unfortunately, time and space constraints at the moment do not allow for the amount of attention and detail that this investigation deserves.

65 Syme 1958: 176, 179-181 = 1979: 365, 369-370. Citing Tiberius' reminder to sycophants that he is only *imperator* to soldiers and *princeps* to other Romans (Dio Cass. 57.8.1), Hammond (1968: 50, 53) even argues that the title only "gradually" came to refer to the emperor's supreme power under the Julio-Claudians.

establishing that the legitimacy of Tiberius' authority is due more to his unique, personal virtues than to any constitutional or military basis.

Chapter 2: The Use of Power

As we saw in Ch. 1.6, Velleius seems to be attempting to establish that the legitimacy of Tiberius' position rested more on his virtues than legal powers.¹ His attention is on Tiberius as a rejuvenator and as the *patronus*, *vindex* and *custos* of the empire. In other words, his attention is given to the realities of the princeps' great authority and the good work he accomplishes with it. In this way, the historian is much like Augustus, who in his *Res Gestae* would rather reflect upon his deeds than sticky constitutional issues,² as well as other authors from this early period, such as Horace and Ovid, who preferred to focus on the stability and prosperity that the *domus Augusta* brought to Rome and on creating a dialogue that reflected the relationship they wished to see with the new autocrats.³ In Velleius' history, this can be seen with two words he employs to describe Augustus and Tiberius and their position: *princeps* and *principatus*, the latter being derived from the former.⁴ In this early stage of the Principate, these terms

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- 1 The actual constitutional position of the Principate has long been a contested issue in modern scholarship. There are, of course, alternative theories (Jones 1951: 118-119), but there seems to be some consensus for describing the princeps' legal position as a "concatenation" of various powers, titles and positions, but ones rarely invoked at the same time. Crook 1996: 121; Millar 1973: 61-63, 65.
- 2 Yavetz 1984: 10-15; Jones 1951: 117.
- 3 Gabba 1984: 62-65; Wirszubski 1950: 120-121; Millar 1973: 65-67; 1984a: 39, 52, 56.
- 4 *princeps*: 2.89.4; 2.94.2; 2.111.1; 2.113.1; 2.115.3; 2.116.4; 2.124.2; 2.125.2; 2.126.6; 2.129.2-4; *principatus*: 2.124.2, 2.129.1

do not refer to a specific institution as they sometimes do in Tacitus,⁵ but translate simply as “the first man” for the former and “the chief position in the state” for the latter.⁶ If he is the “first man,” he is the “first man of” something and that something was all Romans or, more specifically, senators. The two words then are qualitative terms that bespeak of identification with and belonging to these groups. It suggests that Rome's leader holds the same values and goals as his fellow Romans, but more specifically senators. To be first man means to not be a tyrant, for such a leader works for himself.⁷ Velleius' employment of *princeps* and *principatus* thus reflects his belief and hope that Augustus did use and that Tiberius is using their great power in accordance with accepted norms and to the benefit of the *res publica*.

It is worthwhile to consider very briefly what these powers were, for their realities weighed heavily on Velleius' mind. As *pontifex maximus* and a member of many other priesthoods, Augustus then Tiberius controlled important cultural aspects of the civic community. The armies were all personally sworn to them, as well as senators and many communities throughout the empire (*RG* 25.2; *Tac. Ann.* 1.8; *Dio Cass.* 58.17.2).⁸ They controlled all policy, both domestic and foreign. For the Roman elite, they controlled access to the senate, magistracies and army, as well as any promotion within. Their

5 For Tacitus see *Agr.* 3.1 and *Ann.* 4.6. For additional references see *OLD* 3, s. v. *principatus*. For a discussion of Tacitus' use of the word see Benario 1964.

6 See *OLD* 2, s. v. *principatus*, which cites 2.124.2. It is similar to Augustus' “*mea princeps*” in the *Res Gestae* (13, 30.1, 32.3), which does not refer to an institution, but simply leadership of the *res publica* (*contra* Wirszubski 1950: 115).

7 Benario 1992: 329-330; Wirszubski 1950: 115, n. 10; Hammond 1968: 111-112; Ando 2001: 46.

8 Bauman 1967: 222-227; González 1988: esp. 113, 118-119; Ando 2001: 359-362. See Versnel (1980: 562-577) for an analysis of the people's great devotion to the princeps in the time of Tiberius, though I believe that he stretches the evidence.

network of *amici* and *clientes*, not to mention the personal resources at their disposal, dwarfed that of any other family. And they were the supreme judges in all legal disputes, including those that called for the execution of a citizen.⁹ Of all of these points Velleius was very much aware. In fact, they are a point of celebration, for it was this family that had put an end to the civil wars and ushered in a golden age. But in what follows, we shall see that the historian was also apprehensive. What bounded the princeps' incredible authority? What should happen if another man were to get ahold of it? And if the empire's peace and security rested on the shoulders of one man, what would happen if he were to stumble?

2.1 Transition: From Republic to Principate

Velleius knew very well that the Principate was a great departure from Republican tradition. We see this idea more fully in the comparison of the final nine chapters of Book I to the Principate narrative. When the great lacuna of the first book ends, we find the Republic in its prime. It is the senate and people who decided commands (1.9.3) and the senate alone resolved to destroy Carthage (1.12.2) and to found colonies (1.14.1).¹⁰ Triumphs were a matter of debate (1.9.6) and in just these last nine chapters five different generals are said to have celebrated them, sometimes more than once (1.9.3, 5-6; 1.10.5;

⁹ Crook 1996: 114-116, 122-123; Burgers 1999: 564. For a discussion of the princeps' legal jurisdiction, especially with regards to treason, see Bauman 1967: 233.

¹⁰ Though the senate and/or the people are not named as the agents, it seems that Velleius is assuming that his reader will know this when he says that M. Popilius Laenas "was sent" (*missus est*, 1.10.1) to Alexandria as a *legatus*, Q. Metellus was "designated" (*designatus*, 1.12.1) for the Corinthian War and that Scipio Aemilianus "was elected consul" (*consul creatus est*, 1.12.3).

1.11.6).¹¹ They also carry the title of *imperator* (1.13.2-3), a matter of great pride for a consular.¹² These details reflect that distribution of power and honours, which Wirszubski argues guaranteed that no person gained an excessive amount of influence in the *res publica* and so set a limit to liberty.¹³

In the Principate narrative, however, the people, institutions and honours as well as the language and structure all betray a transformed reality. For example, where the first forty-three chapters of the Republican narrative mention 227 different individuals, the last forty-three, the narrative of the Principate, mentions only 118.¹⁴ Much more space is now dedicated to just two men. It is they who restored “authority to the magistracies, sovereignty to the senate and dignity to the courts” (2.89.3; 2.126.2). It was they who passed laws, reorganised the *comitia* (2.125.3), reviewed the roll of senators and donated money. In his panegyric to Augustus, Velleius states that the “leading men” (*principes viri*, 2.89.4) were encouraged to adorn the city by “the leading man” (*hortatu principis*). Tiberius, meanwhile, is specifically said to have “imposed the obligation” (*imposita necessitas*, 2.126.3) on everyone to behave uprightly, if he could not inspire it. And we have already seen (Ch. 1.6) that proconsuls and *legati* would stop at Rhodes to lower their *fascēs* before Tiberius (2.99.4). Furthermore, whereas before men were elected to

11 See also 1.112.4 where Velleius mentions the *corona muralis* and *corona obsidionis* of Scipio Aemilianus, 1.11.2 where he notes that Q. Metellus received the cognomen Macedonicus, and 1.13.2 where Aemilianus and L. Mummius are given the *cognomina* Africanus and Achaicus respectively. Velleius lets his readers assume that the senate awarded them.

12 Syme observes (1958: 179 = 1979: 369) that consular men would consistently take this title in lieu of the title of their office. He suggests that it expressed “the prestige of victory and the claim to victory’s crown, the triumph at Rome.”

13 Wirszubski 1950: 114

14 See the appendix for a list of the individuals mentioned in the Principate narrative.

offices, now there were *candidati Caesaris* instead. Velleius boasts that he and his brother were among the last by Augustus and the first by Tiberius to be nominated to the praetorship (2.124.4). Maecenas as well could have received from Augustus as many offices as Agrippa, if he had so wanted (2.88.2).¹⁵ Military commands in the provinces were similarly controlled. Only the emperor is called *imperator*,¹⁶ a title which recalls his unique *imperium*.¹⁷ But also, as Syme suggests, it had an almost “mystical” claim to victory and military skill.¹⁸ The consular men in charge of armies, meanwhile, are described as *legati*, a title which literally means that they were chosen by the emperor. They are presented as following Tiberius' orders and examples; A. Caecina and Plautius Silvanus, who did not, failed (2.112.4-6).¹⁹ Honours too now come from the princeps. Only he and members of his family celebrate triumphs (2.89.1; 2.99.1; 2.121.2, 2.122); the *legati*, on the other hand, despite all their valour, receive but the “ornaments” of a triumph (*ornamenta triumphalia*). Ostensibly voted by the senate, the *ornamenta* were on the emperor's approval.²⁰

15 These words are said in the context of Maecenas' desire to remain an equestrian and not achieve the same distinctions as Agrippa, which elsewhere are said to have been three consulships and the *tribunicia potestas* (2.90.1). This indicates that we should take the adjective *honoratus* more specifically as “honoured or distinguished by a public office” (*OLD* 2, s. v. *honoratus*). See also 2.54.3 for a similar use of the adjective and 2.59.3 for the verb *honoro*.

16 The one exception is Iuneus Blaesus. He is the lone proconsul named during the Principate narrative and Velleius mentions that he was hailed as *imperator* by his troops. This could happen because he had his own *imperium*. However, it may not be a coincidence that he does not actually write *imperator* as he does elsewhere (2.24.1, 59.2), but only that he earned *appellatio imperatoria*, which is not mentioned elsewhere.

17 Syme 1958: 176, 179-181 = 1979: 365, 369-370; Hammond 1968: 50, 53.

18 Syme 1958: 182 = 1979: 372; cf. Hammond 1968: 50, 53.

19 See also Velleius' account of Varus and the *clades Variana* (2.117.2-4, 2.118.4).

20 This last point is born out in part by Velleius himself. He writes that M. Lepidus received the *ornamenta triumphalia* from the senate, which was “agreeing with the judgement of the principes” (*consentiente cum iudicio principum*, 2.115.3). Abaecherli Boyce 1942; Talbert 1981: 362-363; Hammond 1968: 52; Eck 1984: 142-144.

It may be argued that in his language and structure Velleius is just reflecting his times, but notice how he subtly emphasises who commands and who follows. For the AD 5 campaign into Germany, we are told that Tiberius “claimed” (*vindicaret*, 2.105.1) the most dangerous parts of the war, after he had “appointed” (*praefecisset*) Sentius Saturninus to calmer areas. Later Sentius was “instructed” (*mandatum*, 2.109.5) to lead his troops against the Chatti, while Tiberius “decided to attack” (*adgredi statuit*) the Marcomanni. It is just a little farther on that we again learn that Tiberius “had resolved that Saturninus bring up” some legions (*Saturninum admovere placuerat*). Sentius was twice consul (19 BC, AD 4) and a skilled general in his own right, who receives two long laudations in Velleius' work for his efforts under the Principate (2.92; 2.105.2). He was an important man and Velleius makes sure that we know it. But he also makes sure that we know about his willing subordination and loyalty to the *domus Augusta*. As for himself, Velleius boasts that troops were “entrusted” to him “by Augustus to lead to his son” (*traditi ab Augusto perduxi ad filium eius*, 2.111.3) and he repeats immediately afterwards that as a *legatus* “he was sent to the same man of the same man” (*eiusdem ad eundem mis<sus> sum*, 2.111.4). The repetition is hardly necessary, but it makes its point. All in all, of the fifty-three men of consular rank Velleius names in the Principate narrative, sixteen are explicitly stated to have been appointed or commanded by Augustus or, more often, Tiberius – sometimes multiple times.²¹ He only names one proconsul (2.125.5), a rank that still held a command independent from the princeps. Velleius, it

21 Six he calls *legati* and the other ten are specifically said to have been “put in charge” with the understanding by Augustus or Tiberius.

seems, wanted to keep his focus squarely on the emperor and those directly in his authority.

Furthermore, six men are said to have earned the *ornamenta triumphalia* and another six to have earned other honours from the principes. Again in a few cases we hear of people receiving multiple honours. A whole chapter is even dedicated to *legati* who had earned triumphal honours and those who would have if they had had the opportunity (2.116). The last true triumphators to be named not from the *domus Augusta* are Lepidus (47 BC), Plancus (43 BC) and P. Ventidius Bassus (38 BC) at 2.67.4 and 2.65.3. The actual last person was L. Cornelius Balbus in 19 BC and there were more than nine men between him and Ventidius.²² The historian glosses over these with a simple “leading men with triumphs” (*principes viri triumphisque*, 2.89.4). He is stressing that under the Principate only members of the *domus Augusta* may now hold this honour. In this way, he is reflecting Augustus' own manipulation of triumphal iconography,²³ such as the arch dedicated in 19 BC to his diplomatic victory over the Parthians. If the modern reconstructions from numismatic evidence are correct, on its pillars were lists of all triumphators in Rome's history, as well as all consuls; on top were suppliant Parthians offering Rome's lost *fascēs* to a triumphant Augustus driving a quadriga.²⁴ These are fine points, but considering the short length of the history as well as its broad scope, it seems that Velleius went out of his way to insert them. It is as if he wanted to set the power structure straight. The *domus Augusta* is on top and the rest follow its orders.²⁵ Those who

²² A section of the *fasti triumphales* is missing. *EJ* 33-36 = *ILLRP* 13, fasc. 1.

²³ Hickson 1991: 138.

²⁴ Holland 1946: 54-55; Kleiner 1985: 25-27; Richardson 1992: 23; *LTUR* 1: 81-85; Scott 2000: 184-185.

²⁵ It could be argued that most of the evidence comes from a military context and so skews the results, but

do so well are honoured.²⁶ This is the way to ensure harmony among Rome's leaders.

A further example will emphasise many of these points. At 2.115.1, Velleius briefly notes that Tiberius celebrated a triumph for his Pannonian and Dalmatian victories (*triumphans . . . Caesar*). Yet surrounding this mention is a brief encomium to M. Lepidus for his conduct in the wars. Velleius writes that at the start of winter, he was “placed in charge of all the forces by Caesar” (*omnibus copiis <a> Caesare . . . praefectus est*, 2.114.5). The next spring, he fought his way to “*imperator* Tiberius” (*ad Tiberium imperatorem*, 2.115.2) and he arrived (*ad Caesarem*) “happy with victory and weighed down by booty” (*laetus victoria praedaeque onustus*). He earned the *ornamenta triumphalia* but Velleius tells us that “he would have been owed a triumph, if he had been warring under his own auspices” (*si propriis gessisset auspiciis, triumphare debuerat*, 2.115.3). By mentioning the triumphant Tiberius in the middle of an acclamation for another important man, Velleius is drawing attention to the *domus Augusta*'s central position in society. Some things had not changed, like generals winning booty, but others had. Rome's hierarchy had shifted and everyone was inferior now to the princeps. Velleius is stressing that honours and positions now come from him alone.²⁷ Such was the cost for stability. Judging from his views on the Republic's troubles, he felt it was well worth it.

the above examples of the principes' reorganisation of the courts, elections and senate, as well as general morality, show that Velleius held a similar conception of the domestic sphere.

26 See Eck (1984: 142) who argues that the *ornamenta* were highly sought out by Roman commanders as a prestige symbol. They were a successful tool for encouraging the elite to work well under the Principate.

27 Talbert 1984: 362-369.

2.2 The Fear of Absolute Power

This does not mean, however, that Velleius did not have reservations. He generally lauds Rome's victories, but also alludes to the idea of Rome as a violent oppressor. In one of Velleius' limited uses of *oratio obliqua*, he quotes the Samnite leader during the Italian Wars, Pontius Telesinus, as calling the Romans “wolves” (*lupos*, 2.27.2) and “rapers of Italy's liberty” (*raptores Italicae libertatis*).²⁸ This is similar to Tacitus' well known usage of the technique to make points about his own society.²⁹ That Velleius was doing the same can be seen from his sympathetic treatment of Telesinus' death.³⁰ Nonetheless, this remains a limited case. Another example more to the point is Sulla. As I argued above, Velleius uses the personalities of the past to comment on issues germane to current situations. Introducing the subject of Sulla's dictatorship, he writes that it seemed that the “evils” of the civil war had come to an end, but that they were actually “increased by the cruelty of Sulla” (*mala, cum Sullae crudelitate aucta sunt*, 2.28.2). Velleius points out the office's irregularity, noting that it had been obsolete for 120 years, last used after the defeat of Hannibal. Feeling compelled to give a reason for its revitalisation, he suggests that the Romans voted it out of “fear” (*in metu*), “so much had they feared the power [of the dictator] in peace time” (*ita in otio timuisse*

28 Moreover, even though Crete was a major haven for pirates, he still comments that in 67 BC the island “was punished with the end of its liberty” (*longissimae libertatis fine multata est*, 2.38.6).

29 Tac. *Agr.* 15 exemplifies this point excellently.

30 Velleius records that he was found half dead with “an expression more of a victor than of someone dying” (*victoris magis quam morientis vultum praeferens*, 2.27.3). Certainly the point is that Telesinus, and by virtue all those on the Italian side, felt their cause to be just. Earlier Velleius (2.16.4, 2.17.1) had already expressed sympathy with their cause.

potestatem). The message seems to be that only extreme cases can lead people to put their lives into the hands of someone else. Velleius' stressing of fear suggests that the choice is, in fact, irrational. And with Sulla, their gamble did not pay off. "Because he was made dictator" (*quippe dictator creatus*), Velleius continues, he did not use his *imperium* to save Rome as earlier dictators had (*priores ad vindicandam maximis periculis rem publicam*), but "he used it as a license for unrestrained cruelty" (*eo <in> immodicae crudelitatis licentiam usus est*). Velleius thus directly links the very act of becoming dictator with unnecessary civic bloodshed. And as we saw in Ch. 1.5, he details the tragedies which Sulla's proscriptions "savaged upon many innocents" (*in multos insontes saevitum*, 2.28.4). "Would that he had been the last" (*et utinam ultimus*, 2.28.3). Though more spread out, Velleius' comments on Marius and Cinna are similar (2.18.6; 2.19.1; 2.20.2; 2.22; 2.23.1-3; 2.24.4). Concentrating so much power into one man's hands is risky business.

Our author elaborates his views with Pompey. Velleius' grandfather had close ties with him (2.76.1)³¹ and in the historian's discussions of the Great One he quite naturally talks of his "grandeur" (*cuius viri magnitudo*, 2.29.2) and his lofty goal to "restore dignity to his fatherland" (*restituendamque dignitatem patriae*, 2.29.1). Despite this, he disapproves of his special command against the pirates noting that it "granted to one man command over almost the entire world" (*quo scito paene totius terrarum orbis imperium uni viro deferebatur*, 2.31.3). It was a bad precedent (*exemplo nocet*, 2.31.4); such power either "increases invidiousness or decreases it" (*ita invidiam auget aut levat*). It produces,

31 Sumner 1970: 262-263.

in other words, unpredictable results.³² Velleius observes that to some people one does not “fear” giving special commands, but to others, like Pompey, one does: “men dread extraordinary powers in those men who seem likely to either give them up or retain them on their own accord and yield it according to their own restrictions” (*contra in iis homines extraordinaria reformidant qui ea suo arbitrio aut deposituri aut retenturi videntur et modum in voluntate habent*, 2.31.4). Therefore, as Pompey returned from his command against Mithridates, Velleius reports that Romans did not know what to expect. “The majority” (*plerique*, 2.40.2) believed that he would march on Rome and “establish a limit to public freedom according to his own will” (*libertati publicae staturum arbitrio suo modum*).

At first glance, it may seem that Velleius is just reporting the general talk of the period. Yet the content of his narrative suggests otherwise. He notes that the *optimates*, with whom he usually sides,³³ advised against Pompey's eastern commands but that the people were “conquered by impulse” (*dissuadebant optimates, sed consilia impetu victa sunt*, 2.31.4). He agrees with L. Lucullus who charged Pompey with a “never ending

32 This idea may also be present regarding Marius. At 2.12.5, Velleius writes that Marius, with his victory over the Teutones during his fifth consulship, had seemed to balance his good deeds with his bad deeds (*ac bonis mala repensasse*). As we saw in Ch. 1.5, two themes of Velleius' introduction (2.11.1) and *epitaphion* (2.23.1) to the character are the frequent trouble Marius caused and his insatiable desire for honour and power. Yet 2.12 is mostly dedicated to the beneficial deeds of his first six consulships, so there is balance. 2.16.4 again mentions that he was a key figure in Rome's triumph over the Italians, but 2.19 notes his humiliation at the hands of Sulla and P. Sulpicius and, thus, the consequences of his vainglory. One message in this all seems to be that the quest for power produces unpredictable and often negative results.

33 Hellegouarc'h 1964: 672; 1984: 425; Cizek 1972: 85. Velleius, for example, attacks the Gracchi (2.2; 2.6) while praising the patrician P. Scipio Nasica who led the opposition against Tiberius (2.3.1). He also mentions the *optimates*, senate, “the greater and better part” of the equestrians and those of plebs, “untouched by the [Gracchi's] pernicious plans,” joining Nasica (*optimates, senatus, atque equestris ordinis pars melior et maior, et intacta perniciosi consiliis plebs*, 2.3.2).

desire for power” (*interminatam cupiditatem . . . imperii*, 2.33.2). And he makes sure to point out that Pompey did not stop with the pirates, but moved onto the Cretan war (2.34.2) and the Mithridatic war (2.37), though they already had generals, performed many other feats in the east (2.40.1), and even dared to wear a crown and triumphal garb to the theatre (2.40.4). Velleius does say that he “exceeded” both his own and Rome’s hopes in all his endeavours and even “man’s lot” (*Pompeius suoque et civium voto maior et per omnia fortunam hominis egressus*, 2.40.2), but his meaning is vague and it is hard not to sense a touch of sarcasm.³⁴ It is just by chance that Pompey was “most temperate, loyal to his friends, easily appeased regarding insults, most compliant in the acceptance of apologies, and never or rarely employed his power violently” (*modestissimus, amicitiarum tenax, in offensis exorabilis, in reconcilianda gratia fidelissimus, in accipienda satisfactione facillimus, potentia sua numquam aut raro ad impotentiam usus*, 2.29.3).³⁵ He dismissed his troops and entered only “with the entourage of a private man” (*cum privato comitatu*, 2.40.3). Our author seems conscious that Pompey could have been another Marius, Cinna or Sulla.

2.3 Caesar and the Tribunes, Clemency and Moderation

Velleius presents Pompey, like Tiberius, as having (in the end) a balanced approach to the use of power, but there is also the suggestion that this balance is difficult

³⁴ See my comments in the concluding chapter.

³⁵ See also 2.33.3 and 2.40.3 where he repeats or illustrates many of these qualities.

to achieve. This point comes across well in his discussion of Caesar's tense dispute with the tribunes C. Epidius Marullus and L. Flavius Caesetius. The actual chain of events in January of 44 BC cannot be confidently recovered. Nonetheless, the stories focus on two key issues: Caesar's forceful efforts to dispel rumours (whether true or not) that he sought kingship and his wrath at the two tribunes, whom he saw as the source of his embarrassment. That January the two tribunes began to prosecute vigorously those who had placed a laurel crown on a statue of Caesar as a sign of kingship and others who addressed him as king. The motivations attributed to them range from innocent prosecution of a public wrong and respect for Caesar, to flagrant opposition to the dictator. But all accounts agree that their actions were popular with the people and that Caesar, as a result, became "violently angry" (ἰσχυρῶς ἐχάλεπνε, περιοργῆς, Dio Cass. 44.9.3, 10.2; cf. παροξυνθεῖς, Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 61.5)³⁶ and went as far as to call for their deaths, but settled with depriving Marullus and Caesetius of their office and perhaps banning them from the senate (Dio Cass. 44.10.2; App. *B. Civ.* 2.108).³⁷

Most of our sources take these events as sure signs of Caesar's tyranny and a motivation for his assassination two months later.³⁸ Suetonius says that his actions here were "greater insolence by far" than his "insult" of not rising from his seat before the temple of Venus Genetrix at the senate's approach (*contumeliam multo arrogantius factum*, *Iul.* 79.1). Plutarch argues that his "foul abuse" (προσκρούσμασιν, *Vit. Caes.*

36 Suetonius' account (*Iul.* 79.1) is briefer, yet he still says that Caesar was pained (*dolens*) and "heavily deprived" them of their positions (*graviter . . . privavit*).

37 Suetonius (*Iul.* 79) and Plutarch (*Vit. Caes.* 61.5) only report that Caesar impeached them from their office.

38 Gelzer 1968: 319-320.

61.1) directly caused the people to turn to Brutus (*Vit. Caes.* 61-62). Dio reports that Marullus and Caesetius issued an edict proclaiming that “they could no longer freely or safely exercise their freedom of speech on behalf of the public” (ὥς οὐτε ἐλευθέραν οὐτ’ ἀσφαλῆ τὴν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινοῦ παρρησίαν, 44.10.2). And Appian concluded with shock that “his tyranny was complete” (τυραννικὸν ὅλως γεγόνота, *B. Civ.* 2.108).³⁹ There was thus a concerted negative historical tradition towards Caesar that assuredly went back as far as the liberators themselves.⁴⁰

Velleius is much kinder to Caesar. He introduces the episode by decrying the “unrestrained and inopportune liberty” of the tribunes (*immodica et intempestiva libertate usos*, 2.68.4). He unconditionally states that Marullus and Caesetius were charging Caesar with seeking kingship and that Caesar was “often provoked” (*saepe lacessiti principis*, 2.68.5). He does note that his “anger was in excess” (*ira excessit*) and that the tribunes “almost experienced the force of his supremacy” (*paene vim dominationis expertos*), but also Caesar's final leniency. He “was content” (*contentus*) to give them a “censorial censure” instead of a “dictatorial censure” which would have sent them into exile (*animadversione dictatoria summoheret eos a re publica*, 2.68.5). Velleius notes, however, that Caesar “declared” that even this caused him to be “most miserable” (*testareturque esse sibi miserrimum*). In indirect discourse, Caesar explains that he was

39 Appian (*B. Civ.* 2.108) goes on to explain that “the office of tribune was sacred and inviolate due to custom and ancient oath. [Caesar] induced keen anger [from the people] by not even waiting out the remainder of their term in office” (ἢ τε γὰρ πρόφασις τῆς κολάσεως περὶ τῆς βασιλικῆς ἐπωνυμίας ἦν, ἢ τε τῶν δημάρχων ἀρχὴ ἱερά καὶ ἄσυλος ἦν ἐκ νόμου καὶ ὅρκου παλαιοῦ τὴν τε ὀργὴν ὀξεῖαν ἐποίει τὸ μὴδ’ ἀναμείναι τῆς ἀρχῆς τὸ ὑπόλοιπον).

40 Suetonius records (*Iul.* 80) that at the elections to replace Marullus and Caesetius in 44 BC some tablets were inscribed with their names in silent protest to Caesar's actions. Gelzer 1968: 320.

“going to have to either depart from his natural tendency [i.e. clemency] or have his dignity diminished” (*aut natura sua ei excedendum foret aut minuenda dignitas*). In other words, he did depart from his normal clemency and was therefore most sad.⁴¹

Before we discuss the significance of the passage, we must put it in its textual context. Coupled with Caesar's dispute are accounts of the sedition and deaths of M. Caelius and Annius Milo (2.68.1-3). The whole chapter is a neatly marked digression from the main narrative. Digressions often function as pauses within the narrative and mark the end of one theme and the start of another. Moreover, as Woodman points out,⁴² it was normal for a historian to have to backtrack and fill in points which he had to overlook in their proper chronological place for the sake of his main themes. In this case, the deaths of Caelius and Milo occurred in the same year as the battle of Pharsalus (2.52), which was recorded sixteen chapters earlier, and Caesar's feud was just two months before his death narrated twelve chapters earlier (2.56.3). That being said, Woodman rightly observes that Velleius carefully chose and presented these stories, suggesting that the author's specific point was to emphasise Caesar's *clementia* and “to demonstrate that the actions of a dictator or princeps need be no different from those of the consuls and

41 The Latin here is tricky, especially regarding *foret*. Due to the manner by which Velleius reports Caesar's speech, he does not actually state that Caesar departed from his tradition of clemency. What we have here are Caesar's two choices: to not be clement and punish the tribunes in order to prevent their disparagement of him or to be clement (i.e. to ignore the actions of Marullus and Caesetius) and to let them continue to cast his actions in a bad light. Since he is “most miserable” and he did punish them, the message is that he did depart from his normally clement nature. This is Woodman's interpretation (1983: 162) and, seemingly, Shipley's (1924), judging by his translation: “he expressed his great regret that he had no alternative but to depart from his customary clemency or suffer loss of dignity.” This interpretation of Velleius' words also corresponds with Appian, who comments that Caesar “repented” (μετανοῶν, *B. Civ.* 2.109) because “this was his first act as a leader without military authority [and] in peace time that he committed which was heavy-handed and ill-tempered” (τόδε πρῶτον ἡγούμενος ἂν νευ πολεμικῆς ἀρχῆς ἐν εἰρήνῃ βαρὺ καὶ δυσχερὲς διαπεπράχθαι).

42 Woodman 1983: 155-156; Elefante 1997: 372.

senate.”⁴³ However, due to the textual and philological goals of the commentary, he does not explore the matter and it is worth taking a closer look.

The entire digression comes in the context of the brutalities of the second triumvirate. Civil war was about to start again (2.65.1-2). The proscriptions revisited the “evil” of Sulla (2.66.1). Velleius notes in particular that Cicero and Ti. Cannutius the tribune were murdered for their defence of liberty (2.64.3-4). Loyalty too was at an all time low. Soldiers and whole legions were switching allegiances (2.61.2; 63.1) and brothers were proscribing brothers (2.67.2).⁴⁴ The “city languished under the oppression of Antony” (*torpebat oppressa dominatione Antonii civitas*, 2.61.1), the historian generalises. “No one mourns this entire period with enough justice” (*huius totius temporis fortunam ne deflere quidem quisquam satis digne potuit*, 2.67.1).

With this context in mind, we can return to the digression. At the start, Velleius states that Caelius was worse than the tribune C. Curio, on whom he had earlier placed much of the blame for the civil wars and other tragedies of the last twenty years (2.48.3). Velleius highlights Caelius' notorious money problems, his self-serving financial legislation as praetor and the civic violence he helped to stir up. He “could not even be deterred by the authority of the senate and consul” (*nequique senatus et consulis auctoritate deterreri*, 2.68.2). Velleius next chastises Milo, though he had earlier suggested praise for his efforts to recall Cicero from exile and had only called his civic

43 Woodman 1983: 156-157. These points are largely followed by Elefante (1997: 372, 374), who states that the episode falls under the “*rubrica clementia Caesaris*.”

44 See also 2.60.3-5 where Antony subjects Octavian to *cotidianae insidiae*, 2.62.5 where Brutus and Cassius break their promises to live in peaceful retirement in the provinces, 2.62.5 where the senate tries to steal Octavian's troops and 2.63.3 where Plancus with his *dubia fides* betrays Antony for the senate.

violence and the slaying of P. Clodius “disadvantageous as a precedent” (*exemplo inutili[ter]*, 2.47.4). Here Velleius is more negative. He notes that Milo was “hostile to the Julian faction” (*Iulianis partibus infestus erat*, 2.68.2), that he had stirred up “discord in the city” (*in urbe seditionem*) and in the country “war-like insurrection” (*bellicum tumultum movens*). In this light, Velleius expresses satisfaction in his death: “a man restless, more rash than was brave, he paid the penalty to P. Clodius and his fatherland, which he assailed with arms” (*cum P. Clodio tum patriae, quam armis petebat, poenas dedit, vir iniquus et ultra fortem temerarius*, 2.68.3).⁴⁵

Woven through all three stories is the thread of bounds and limits and the lack thereof. He mentions either Caelius’ “boundless money” or “modest debts.”⁴⁶ The text is corrupt, but it is clear that either the former were unable to help him or he was unable to free himself from the latter (*servari posset*, 2.68.1). Hereafter the text improves. Milo is portrayed as being excessively rash and an inciter of violence, while Marullus and Caesetius acted with “boundless and inopportune liberty” (*immodica et intempestiva libertate*, 2.68.4). Velleius links these examples directly to excessive civic violence and

45 There seems to be some contradiction regarding P. Clodius. Velleius approves of his death as a service to the state (2.47.5), but here suggests that Milo was in the wrong for having killed him. In the end, it seems that Velleius believes that every act of civil violence is wrong, even if the act is helpful. Clodius’ death was done *inutiliter* (2.47.4) and those of the Gracchi are expressed in similar ways. Their lives were a blight to the state and so their deaths a benefit but, nonetheless, Velleius criticises the methods and the precedents thereby set (2.4.3; 2.6.7).

46 The manuscripts read *cum †in modica† quidem servari posset*. This, as it stands, does not make much sense. Watt (1998) prefers to emend as *cum <ne> immodica quidem <pecunia> servari posset*, which Woodman says is likely, given the repetition of *immodica* below (2.68.4). Still Woodman prefers to obelise as above, arguing that certainty cannot be reached. Elefante (1997) has *cum <ne> immodica quidem <re> servari posset*. Whatever Velleius actually wrote, it is clear that it was about money and Caelius’ inability to use it properly. The issue is clarified by the historian’s next comment that Caelius stood for the praetorship on a platform of cancelling all debts (*in praetura novarum tabularum auctor extitit*).

civil war. The state could not impose control. This is specifically mentioned for Caelius (*nequittque senatus et consulis auctoritate deterreri*), but when Milo's efforts are said to have been “put down” by consular arms and the senate, he is next seen besieging Campsa. He has to be killed by a rock. It is not until we come to Caesar that such violence comes to an end. As we saw, Velleius puts the blame particularly on the two tribunes. Yet Caesar does not prevent their disingenuous actions by force, as Velleius says of the state (*senatus et consulis auctoritate; consularibus armis auctore senatu*, 2.68.2), but by a mere censorial censure, depriving them of their positions and senatorial rights. No blood was spilt.

It is thus a triumph of moderation over force and sole rule over the *res publica*. This point is made stronger by Velleius' observation that Caelius and Milo's actions occurred “while Caesar was contending for the greatest matters in the open fields of Pharsalus” (*dum in acie Pharsalica . . . de summa rerum Caesar dimicat*, 2.68.1). The notice both excuses Caesar for having not interfered earlier and suggests that the events would never have occurred if he had been present. Woodman then, in a rare instance, seems to be in error. Velleius is not showing that Caesar can act just like a consul or senator, but that one man can do it and do it better than them. Moreover, Caesar did not display *clementia*, but *moderatio*.⁴⁷ This last point does depend on a fine distinction between the two values, but it is a necessary one as Velleius himself seems to make it.⁴⁸

47 Elefante largely follows Woodman in arguing that this episode is a celebration of Caesar's *clementia* (1997: 374). However, she does note that it also highlights his “self-control.” Yet she subordinates this last point to being an aspect of *clementia*. Moreover, as Rogers (1943: 62, 87) and Levick (1976: 89) both note, *moderatio* is also much broader, seen in all aspects of the princeps' life, speech, domestic issues, government and honours.

48 See the discussion below (Ch. 2.5) on why clemency is not mentioned in the context of the Principate.

The two virtues approach one another in meaning because both suggest that harsher punishments could be imposed, but are not. The basis, however, from which *clementia* is employed differs greatly from *moderatio*. Seneca's study of *clementia* (*de clementia*) is key to the debate, in part because it was published just twenty-five years after Velleius' history. He explains that clemency is concerned with the one receiving clemency as much as the one giving it, as the giver takes into account the perpetrator's motivations and circumstances. It does not strictly apply the law, but what is "fair and good" (*ex aequo et bono iudicat*, *Clem.* 2.7.3).⁴⁹ Thus he admits that a clement ruler always gives the most lenient punishment possible, sometimes contrary to the wishes of the people (*Clem.* 2.3.2).⁵⁰ *Moderatio*, on the other hand, is the princeps restricting himself. It describes his civil and unpretentious demeanour towards his fellow Romans (senators).⁵¹ It describes a ruler who never assumes more honours than necessary (which would thus distance him from his fellow senators) and who applies his authority justly, in accordance with the accepted norms.⁵² It is thus inward looking, focussed on the motivations of the one with power, not the guilty. The concept is not concerned with mildness alone, but striking a balance. A moderate leader is neither too soft nor too harsh in his punishments.⁵³

49 Wallace-Hadrill 1982b: 31-32.

50 Griffin 2003: 172, 175.

51 Wallace-Hadrill 1982a: 41-42.

52 Rogers 1943: 75-77; Levick 1976: 89.

53 Thus here the evidence from Velleius contradicts Wallace-Hadrill's argument (1982a: 42) that "imperial *moderatio* centres on gestures, not on actions." Wallace-Hadrill argues that the virtue only describes the emperor's comportment and conduct towards others and so cannot refer to the limitation of his power for he has it all. But this argument seems strained and artificial. He is thinking only constitutionally, as his own examples show, despite the fact that his whole argument is based on the idea that the emperor occupies a place outside of the constitution (1982a: 32-33). If one possesses all power then it is very much everyone's concern that he does set a limit to it. As I hope to show, Velleius is very much concerned with the limiting of power and that he calls this *moderatio*.

Velleius himself comments frequently on Caesar and Octavian's clemency during the civil wars. He details the causes and (frequently good) characters of their opponents, often expressing sympathy and admiration. Pompey, Cato, Brutus and Cassius are excellent examples (2.49.3-4; 2.52.3-5; 2.54.2-3; 2.58.3-4; 2.62; 2.69.6; 2.70.3-4; 2.72).⁵⁴ As we saw in Ch. 1.5, this was an abhorrent period to Velleius and he naturally wanted to see the two sides come together in harmony. Thus Caesar is praised for always having acted with *clementia* after his victories (*tam clementer omnibus victoriis*, 2.56.3).⁵⁵ After Philippi, there was nothing “more joyous” for Octavian (*Caesari . . . fuit laetius*, 2.71.1) than sparing the life of Valerius Messala Corvinus. And his victory at Actium is said to have been “truly” (*vero*, 2.86.2) the “most clement” (*clementissima*) ever. Velleius even goes as far as to claim that no one died by his own hand or on his orders and that this proves how merciful he would have been under the triumvirate if his colleagues had allowed him (2.86.2; cf. 2.87.2). Iullus Antonius is held up as an especial example of Augustus' clemency (*singulare exemplum clementiae Caesaris*, 2.100.4). Despite being the son of Marc Antony, Augustus had elevated him to Rome's highest office (cos. 10 BC).

In contrast, *moderatio* and its synonyms, as we saw in Chapter 1, are employed to describe Tiberius' rejection of honours and self-restraint in the application of his powers. Tiberius' moderation during the Pannonian and Dalmatian War (2.114.3) is an interesting

54 Notice how Velleius sympathetically attributes fortune to the defeats of Pompey, Scipio and Cato, and Cassius and Brutus (2.53.2; 2.53.3; 2.55.1-2; 2.69.6; 2.70.2; 2.72.1), assigning the gods some responsibility. Burdeau 1964: 28.

55 See also 2.55.2 where Velleius claims that Caesar's *clementia* was always available to the conquered, and 2.52.6 where his *misericordia* is rejected.

case study. As may be recalled, Velleius praises Tiberius for his own stern discipline, and for having ignored (*ignovit*) the officers who could not live up to such a high standard, as long as their own examples were not harmful (*exemplo non nocebatur*). He repeats this statement, saying that the general disregarded most cases and checked some (*plurima dissimulantis, aliqua inhibentis*). But he also notes that he frequently gave reminders, “sometimes” censures and “very rarely” serious punishments (*admonitio frequens, infrequens castigatio, vindicta rarissima*). Eriksen argues that this is an example of *clementia*, but she does not notice that Velleius ignores the reasoning of the officers. They are simply said to be in the wrong.⁵⁶ His focus, as elsewhere, is on Tiberius. Furthermore, there is an apparent contradiction here. Tiberius ignores and disregards, which does suggest mercy, but he also gives reminders, corrections or even punishments for most (it seems) lapses. In other words, he “ignores” the majority only in comparison with the full potential of his power with which he could address them. He restrains himself. Thus the emphasis is squarely set on *moderatio*. He does not forgive but judiciously selects the method that fits the situation. He is operating within a logical framework that limits his power. As Velleius concludes, he took the “middle course” (*agebatque medium*) or, as Woodman translates it, “the moderate course.”⁵⁷

Coming back to Caesar and the tribunes, it seems plausible then to assert that Velleius saw the situation as an example of *moderatio*, not *clementia*. Indeed, the historian even reports Caesar's lament that he had to depart from his normal, clement

⁵⁶ Eriksen 2002: 115.

⁵⁷ Woodman 1977: 177.

nature (2.68.5). His attention is not on the tribunes and their motivations; he gives only a brief mention of them. His focus is on Caesar's thoughts and treatment of the tribunes. Caesar did not forgive nor did he employ the dictatorial powers. He struck a balance, using his censorial authority. In the context of the second triumvirate's "evil" then, the digression at 2.68 is a message, in part, on the merits of moderation and benefits of sole rule.

2.4 Caesar and the Violence of the Second Triumvirate

However, the messages do not end here. Marullus and Caesetius had not been stirring up armed sedition or threatening the state in any physical way. The proper role of the tribune was to be a check on the powers of the magistrates. As we saw, the later historians certainly presented this as another step in Caesar's move to tyranny. Some Romans in 44 BC apparently felt the same way for Suetonius records (*Iul.* 80) that at the elections to replace Marullus and Caesetius, some tablets were inscribed with their names in silent protest to Caesar's actions.⁵⁸ Velleius certainly tapped into this tradition. Earlier he criticises Caesar for his ambition, vainglory and inability to unite – characteristic failings that had pushed the late Republic into chaos. He even floats the word "tyrannus" (2.58.2).⁵⁹ And indeed, Caesar almost did act the part of a Sulla. "His rage was in excess"

⁵⁸ Gelzer 1968: 320.

⁵⁹ I thus consider Velleius' portrait of Caesar to be more negative than Wolverton (1964: 84), who argues that Velleius considered Caesar, "in short, *tantus vir*." It is true that Velleius says this (2.42.1; 2.56.3), but this does not take into account the subtleties mentioned above, many of which Wolverton mentions as well.

(*ira excessit*) and the tribunes “almost experienced the force of his domination” (*paene vim dominationis expertos*). By mentioning his censorial and dictatorial powers, and above all his special *dignitas*, which recalls the *maiestas* of a princeps, Velleius is setting the episode into his discussion on the dangers of sole rule, as seen with Sulla and Pompey's extraordinary commands. There, as argued, Velleius expresses reservations. Autocracy can be positive or negative, depending on the possessor's personality. It is a roll of the dice. Thus our author presents Caesar as having other options. He was satisfied with the censorial censure “rather than the dictatorial censure.” In other words, he could have banished them from the *res publica*, as Velleius expressly says (*summoveret eos a re publica*), and which he says “nearly” (*paene*) did happen. He is thus alluding to that very fine line between the acceptable use of power and its abuse. Caesar achieved some order and without bloodshed, but he just as easily could have reopened the Republic's deep and old wounds.

Furthermore, the mention of Caesar's domination parallels the remark on Antony's oppressive domination a few chapters beforehand (2.61.1), which serves to create a direct link with the main narrative of the second triumvirate. Also Octavian, having been named as Caesar's heir, is now constantly referred to as “Caesar” (and twice as “Gaius Caesar;” 2.60.5; 2.61.1) and this too blurs the lines between main narrative and digression. An inattentive reader, who does not immediately pick up on the names of the tribunes, can be forgiven for thinking that this was the *divi filius*. Given its late placement in the narrative, I would suggest that the audience is being invited to take this episode as a metaphor for

the second triumvirate, Augustus and the Principate.

The second triumvirate certainly did not follow a policy of moderation and Velleius is forced several times to apologise for Octavian's role in it. He defends "Caesar" saying that he "resisted" (*repugnante*) the proscriptions, but that it was "in vain, he being against two" (*sed frustra adversus duos*, 2.66.1). After Actium, Velleius extols his great acts of clemency and even offers this as proof that he would have stopped the proscriptions if he had been able (2.86.2). Velleius is not being completely disingenuous here, but he is, nonetheless, associating him with the tragedies of the age. He may say that there was nothing more despicable than that Octavian was "forced to proscribed anyone," but he nonetheless in the same sentence begins an indignant eulogy of Cicero (*nihil tam indignum illo tempore fuit quam quod aut Caesar aliquem proscribere coactus est aut ab ullo Cicero proscriptus est*, 2.66.2). He may offer praise for his clemency after Philippi (2.71.1), but then immediately afterwards he bemoans the "slaughter of very illustrious men" (*caede clarissimorum virorum*, 2.71.2) and that "no other war was more blood-stained" (*non aliud bellum cruentius*). He may note that L. Antonius was released unharmed after he had captured him at Perusia, but he is forced to explain the massacre of the citizens committed by Octavian's troops (2.74.4). Moreover, it was the "scoundrel" Sextus Pompeius, a man "without education" and "barbarous in speech" (*studiis rudis, sermone barbarus*, 2.73.1), who had to secure the safe return of "most illustrious men" (*clarissimos*, 2.77.3), whom the proscriptions had sent into exile. When Octavian finally made war on him, the only reasons given are the size of his fleet and his growing

popularity (2.79.1). Furthermore, he inserts an awkward scene that follows the flight of Livia, Octavian's future wife, clutching the infant Tiberius as they fled from "the arms of Caesar" (*fugiens . . . Caesaris arma*, 2.75.3) and evaded "the soldiers' swords" (*vitatis militum gladiis*). Velleius emphasises her high birth, sincerity and the extreme measures that she had to take in order to save their lives. Woodman rightly points to the "pathos" and "drama" of the scene, and I would add that there is a touch of comedy to it, for it reads like a "you-never-would-have-believed-it" story.⁶⁰ The first goal of this scene is probably not to critique Octavian's conduct, but he does express astonishment at the episode and he does hold it up as an example of the fickleness of fate (2.75.2). Long after Caesar's example of moderation against the tribunes, Octavian is still participating in violence against his fellow citizens and is a key instigator of the chaos of his time.

The digression then, highlighting the bloodless peace of Caesar, looks forward to the golden age of Augustus. However, it also betrays a painful awareness of the frailty of such restraint. Caesar, after the civil wars were supposedly over and his position secure, barely restrained the power available to him. His heir could not in the first thirteen years of his public career. Could he as princeps and the princeps after him restrain themselves? Velleius was well aware of the violent antecedents of the Principate. He frequently expresses gratitude for all the benefits that the Principate brought Rome, but he also seems worried about a potential fall back into turmoil. We find this idea expressed again at 2.86.2. In the middle of trumpeting Octavian's "most clement" victory (*clementissima*) at Actium and his natural inclination to clemency in general (*qua lenitate ducis*), Velleius

⁶⁰ Woodman 1983: 184.

pauses to note that L. Arruntius had to intercede to secure the life of C. Sosius. Octavian was hesitating; he finally did agree, but only “after having wrestled with his clemency for a long time” (*diu <cum> clementia luctatus sua Caesar*).⁶¹ Even after winning sole leadership of the state, violent tendencies bubbled just below the surface.

2.5 Is the Principate Clement?

This discussion of Caesar's departure from his normal clemency and Augustus' near departure from his own, brings us to an interesting question: why is the concept of *clementia* as an independent value nearly absent from Velleius' narrative of the Principate? As we have seen, Velleius is fearful of the violent potential that rests in absolute power. Before that we saw that he was careful to convey Tiberius' *humanitas*, his *conscientia*, *cura*, *pietas* and *moderatio*. These are compassionate values. Does not mercy deserve an equal place among them? Velleius' contemporary, Valerius Maximus (5.1 *praef.*), certainly links *clementia* to *liberalitas* and even more closely to *humanitas*.⁶² Its absence is made more surprising when one considers that *clementia* is a keynote virtue of imperial panegyric, a genre to which Velleius' history shows so many parallels.⁶³ The one mention in the Principate narrative is of Iullus Antonius (2.100.4), but the instance

61 Dio (51.2) does not mention this story concerning Sosius. In fact, he asserts that many of those who fought against Octavian were fined or even killed, suggesting that only a minority were pardoned. This further indicates the stress that Velleius put on *clementia*, which makes its near disappearance in the Principate narrative all the more curious.

62 The title of 5.1 is *de humanitate et clementia* and throughout the section he uses clemency as sign of *humanitas*. The two virtues are further said to be *liberalitati quas aptiores comites* (5.1 *praef.*).

63 Burdeau 1964: 35, 41.

referred to is an example from the aftermath of Actium. The historian seems to be limiting clemency's usage to civil war. But this is contrary to the practice of his own day. Sixty years after the last such war, clemency was regularly employed to describe the emperor's leniency in domestic issues, most notably in the treason trials, but really with any offence, no matter how minor (Sen. *clem.* 1.20.1; 1.2.1). It is, Seneca claims, the quality in a ruler that keeps a state prosperous, free from violence and fraud and that engenders love in its citizens (*Clem.* 1.1.2, 1.1.5-6). Tiberius, in fact, is recorded as having referred to his clemency regarding several judicial trials (Tac. *Ann.* 2.31; 3.50-51; 6.25), and others as well discussed this quality of the emperor (Tac. *Ann.* 3.68; 5.6). Moreover, a series of *dupondii* celebrating Tiberius' clemency was minted c. 22/23.⁶⁴ The *Senatus Consultum de Pisone Patre* lauds this virtue as well in the princeps (ll. 90-92) and the senate raised an altar to it and to the emperor's *amicitia* for the same purpose in 28 (Tac. *Ann.* 4.74).⁶⁵ Thus it is important to ask: since clemency holds such a prominent place in Velleius' late Republican narrative and since the virtue was a key aspect to the political rhetoric of his age, why it is not found to any significant degree in his narrative of the Principate?⁶⁶

Perhaps the reason is what M. P. Charlesworth argued seventy years ago. He

64 Sutherland 1938: 132, 137, 139-140. Levick (1975: 132), however, argues for the year of 16, but Sutherland's evidence, backed by Downey (1975: 100), seems firm – his primary point being that the coins were stamped with *imp.* VIII, which correspond to the years 18-37.

65 Rogers 1943: 59.

66 The synonyms (such as *lenitas*, *miser cordia* and their adjectival and adverbial equivalents) too are largely absent and when present, as we shall see, they are augmented and qualified. Velleius employs *venia*, pardon, to describe the Romans' pardons of German offences. But he is generalising here and, more importantly, this is an example from a foreign context. Levick is probably right that Romans were much more concerned with clemency within the empire (1976: 88). And to this notice Velleius certainly does not give the fanfare that he normally would for a display of Tiberius' virtues in domestic settings.

observed that after Augustus *clementia* did not reappear in the coinage until the civil wars of 69 and that it was only emphasised in literature or monuments for the “bad” emperors: Tiberius, Caligula and Nero. The inference Charlesworth draws from this is that *clementia* had “become too much a despotic quality,” carrying a “ring of civil war.” It betrayed the fact that the emperor held his subjects' lives in his hands and thus “it was wisely laid aside.”⁶⁷ He is closely followed by Levick, who adds that clemency spotlights opposition to the Principate and Tiberius' own hypocrisy in not living up to his values.⁶⁸ But as we have seen from the start, Velleius is not adverse to autocracy; in fact he celebrates it. It is what saved Rome from the chaos of the late Republic. These explanations then really do not apply. Perhaps it is best to not be cynical. *Concordia* too, the harmony of the state, is not expressly mentioned for Tiberius, and it definitely was an important value to both men.⁶⁹ We need not look for ulterior motives here nor with *clementia*. Still, as clemency is a key theme of the Republican narrative, it seems odd that it is hardly mentioned, let alone stressed in the Principate narrative.

There seem to be two main reasons. First the author believed that *clementia* alone was too mild and an inefficient tool for maintaining peace. This idea stems from the experience of Caesar. Cicero reports in May of 44 BC that Caesarian loyalists were

67 Charlesworth 1937: 112-113. See also Allen (1941: 16), Levick (1975: 126) and Shotter (1978: 243-244), who have largely followed Charlesworth. Sutherland, however, writing in 1938, was already casting doubt on this theory, suggesting that Charlesworth relies too much on Tacitus to provide information (1938: 129, 140). Rogers also vigorously disputes his claims, counting almost forty cases of *clementia* (1943: 49).

68 Levick 1975: 130, 133; 1976: 87-88.

69 For *concordia* in Velleius see 2.47.2; 2.48.5; 2.62.3; 2.65.1. For Tiberius' Temple to Concordia and his use of the term in the coinage see Pekáry 1966-1967; Levick 1976: 86; 1978; Fears 1981: 891-893. Furthermore, Velleius' chapters (2.103-2.104, 2.107) describing the three-fold celebration of Tiberius' return from Rhodes are, in fact, one large encomium to the *concordia* that Tiberius can establish.

proclaiming that clemency had been his downfall (*clementiam illi malo fuisse*, *Att.* 376.1 = 14.22.1). “Jealousy overcame the clemency of the princeps,” as Florus put it many years later (*clementiam principis vicit invidia*, 2.13.92). Velleius seems to be in agreement, explaining that the dictator had been caught off guard by the conspirators because he was expecting gratitude for his earlier clemency (*dum clementiam quam praestiterat expectat, incautus ab ingratis occupatus est*, 2.57.1).⁷⁰ For both Caesar and Augustus he produces a specific example where *clementia* did not work: Brutus for the former and Iullus Antonius for the latter. Carthage too had to be destroyed in the Third Punic War, after Africanus' *clementia* towards it in the Second failed to remove its power (1.12.5).⁷¹ If we come back to Seneca's *de clementia*, we find him vaunting a world where “men are rarely punished” (*raro homines puniuntur*, *Clem.* 1.23.2) and where, even if the emperor cannot find an excuse to forgive even those of the “basest blood” (*vilissimi sanguinis*, *Clem.* 1.1.3), he spares anyway to assuage his own conscience. It is a mythical world where leniency alone fosters uprightness among the citizenry (*Clem.* 2.2.1-2). But Seneca was being tongue-in-cheek. He was well aware that people criticised clemency as too mild (*Clem.* 1.2.1, 2.3.2) and acknowledges in this work and others its difficulties in securing the pardoned's goodwill (*Clem.* 1.11.1; *Ira* 3.30.4; *Ben.* 2.20.3).⁷² He recommends to the young Nero to be “moderate” (*modum; moderatio*, *Clem.* 1.2.2) in his application of mercy. A proper balance must be struck between severity and leniency (*temperamentum*), or else, he warns, too much leniency will cause an “eruption of vices”

⁷⁰ Pliny (*NH* 7.93) also repeats this argument. Griffin 2003: 165.

⁷¹ Velleius states that jealousy (*invidia*) was Rome's major reason for the war, but it is “jealousy of its power” (*invidia imperii*), power which Africanus' clemency obviously had not addressed.

⁷² Griffin 2003: 167.

(*vitiorum eruptio*, *Clem.* 1.2.2, 2.2.3).

Velleius, I believe, whose career was based on the practical application of power as soldier, praetor and senator, shared this conviction of balance. We just saw that he positively presents Caesar's departure from clemency while subtly warning that one can become too harsh. Another example may be found with L. Calpurnius Piso, who is given an extended character sketch in the Tiberian narrative for his efforts in the East (13-11 BC). Our author praises him as a “most mild guardian” of Rome (*lenissimum . . . custodem*, 2.98.1), which sounds suspiciously similar to *clementia*, but his character is also said to have been an excellent blend of “vigour and mildness” (*mores . . . vigore ac lenitate mixtissimos*, 2.98.3). He had thus achieved a balance between the soft and the hard. Aelius Lamia is another. Velleius praises this legate of Augustus for “tempering” his “most antique” morals and dignity (i.e. austerity and severity), with *humanitas* (*vir antiquissimi moris et priscam gravitatem semper humanitate temperans*, 2.116.3). The mutinies of the Rhine legions in AD 14 provide more evidence. Staying in Rome, Tiberius sent his two sons at the head of senatorial envoys to gain control over the situation. Velleius applauds Drusus for having “employed the ancient severity of old” (*prisca antiquaque severitate usus*, 2.125.4)⁷³ and turned the soldiers' own swords against

⁷³ I do not believe that this comment is negative as Sage does (1982-1983: 316). Velleius regularly associates *severitas* with the upright morals of the past and the proper ordering of society (1.6.3; 1.1.15.3; 2.5.3; 2.8.1; 2.10.1). The only exception is Scipio Aemilianus who made Carthage a *severitatis monumentum* (1.12.5), destroying it more from jealousy than from any real threat. Thus though *severitas* forms a part of Sejanus' character sketch (2.127.4) and though Augustus is praised for having reformed the senate list *sine severitate* (2.89.4), Velleius (2.92.2) still praises Sentius Saturninus twice for conducting his consulship with *severitas* (along with *asperitas*) and he admires the *severitas* which Augustus reintroduced into the army (2.81.1). According to Griffin (2003: 177), *severitas* is not the opposite to *clementia* and therefore automatically bad, but just at the other end of acceptable justice. It imposes the harshest deserved punishment. Thus in Velleius' history there is a contradiction between his praise of Drusus and his greater praise of Tiberius, who blends the approaches of his two sons, but it

themselves (*iis ipsis militum gladiis quibus obsessus erat obsidentes coercuit*, 2.125.4).

Germanicus' methods on the other hand are implied to have been too mild. From Tacitus and Dio we know that Drusus eventually made the troops kill the ring leaders (Tac. *Ann.* 1.26, 28-30; Dio Cass. 57.4.5), while Germanicus followed a policy of appeasement,

granting (or claiming to grant) many of the demands for increased pay and bonuses and

shorter terms of service (Tac. *Ann.* 1.36-37, 40; Dio Cass. 57.5.3-4).⁷⁴ For the historian,

the fact that the soldiers would even dare to dictate terms is deplorable (*quin etiam ausi*

sunt minari daturos senatui, daturos principi leges, 2.125.2) and he calls Germanicus' methods “perils harmful by their precedent” (*ancipitia . . . exemplo perniciose*, 2.125.4).⁷⁵

Velleius' preference is clear, yet the two brothers are definitely presented as being at the

ends of two extremes. On one side is violence, on the other leniency to which *clementia* would be a close parallel. Between them was the “ripe experience of the veteran

commander” (*veteris imperatoris maturitas*). As we saw in Ch. 1.4, it was Tiberius who

“quickly” settled the crisis (*brevi sopiit ac sustulit*). He denied most of the soldiers' demands but promised some (*multa inhibentis, aliqua cum gravitate pollicentis*). As for

punishment, the historian vaunts the mildness with which he treated the majority and the severity meted out to the ring leaders (*inter severam praecipue noxiorum ultionem mitis*

aliorum castigatio, 2.125.3). Tiberius had thus found an ideal balance between firmness

is a minor one. If one thing, it tells us that he believed in strong justice as a means to peace and order (*contra Sen. Clem.* 1.2.2).

74 The final solution for Germanicus was, of course, the execution of the ring leaders, but both Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.48-49) and Dio (57.5.6) suggest that this was the soldiers' idea and that Germanicus never had control over the situation.

75 Tacitus reports (*Ann.* 1.40) that (nameless) contemporaries also criticised Germanicus for his approach to the crisis.

and leniency. It is a situation similar to the “middle course” (*modum*), which the general followed regarding the conduct of his officers, where he most often gave reminders, sometimes censures and only rarely, in the worst cases, harsh punishments (2.114.3). Kelly, in his study of imperial riot control, has found that the expectation of this balance was typical in ancient authors.⁷⁶ All in all, it seems that Velleius expected the emperor to apply his power, but moderately. Not to do so at all would be overly mild.

As argued in Ch 1.1, Velleius establishes clemency as the method by which Augustus concluded the civil wars and established social harmony (2.86.2-3). It may seem odd that Velleius praises it here, only to drop it later. But the message seems to be that clemency, the forgiving of past offences, wipes the slate clean.⁷⁷ It establishes peace; moderation maintains it. In this light, the second reason for clemency's absence may be that it was not of great interest to him after Actium. As we saw, Seneca states that clemency involves considering the motivations and circumstances of perpetrators. The virtue assumes a certain amount of reason and justice behind their actions. Yet throughout the Principate narrative, the author's mind is on Tiberius. He is interested in men with power and their use of it. Thus why he does not try to rationalise the actions of those who plot against the *domus Augusta*. They are simply treasonous.⁷⁸ The structure and themes of this later section then are also not well suited for a discussion of mercy. Take Velleius' praise of Tiberius' conduct in trials, for example. This would be the perfect occasion to praise his clemency. Instead, he highlights how Tiberius moderates his power and works

⁷⁶ Kelly 2007: 160-167, 172.

⁷⁷ As Levick (1976: 88) puts it, in a political sense *clementia* can be “an invitation to forgive and forget.”

⁷⁸ See my discussion of their portrayal below, Ch. 2.6.

within the legal system and not the trials themselves: “with what great seriousness did he intently hear cases, not as a princeps, but as senator and judge!” (*cum quanta gravitate ut senator et iudex, non ut princeps et *** causas pressius audit!*, 2.129.2).⁷⁹

2.6 The Avocation of Power

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that Velleius is concerned with the use of power, especially martial power. In part, it seems, he is concerned that it actually is used. One problem with *clementia* may be that it can entail no application of power at all. But if an emperor is to have absolute power, he must use it for the betterment of the *res publica*. We see this idea early on with Caesar. Where the historian explains that *clementia* was the source of the dictator's downfall, he vaguely applauds C. Vibius Pansa and A. Hirtius who had advised Caesar “to hold with arms what he had won with arms” (*armis quaesitum armis teneret*, 2.57.1). This point extends to the most extreme use of power, the capitol punishment of a citizen. This too Velleius advocates in a few cases. Marius, for example, receives praise for having convinced the Curia Hostilia to impose the death penalty on Servilius Glaucia and Saturninus Apuleius because they were “mangling the *res publica* with swords and also slaughter (*rem publicam lacerantium et gladiis quoque et caede*, 2.12.6). And we saw that the historian favoured Tiberius' harsh tactics against the lead mutineers in the year 14. Other excellent examples are his

⁷⁹ Woodman (1977: 266) tentatively argues that *pressius* is comparative instead of positive. He suggests that the original text may have contained the following: *cum quanta gravitate ut senator et iudex, non ut princeps <et dux quaestionibus praeest>, causas pressius audit quam <severius! quam> celeriter.*

accounts of the various conspirators against the Principate: L. Murena and Fannius Caepio (2.91.2; 2.93.1), Egnatius Rufus (2.91.3-4; 2.93.4), Marcus Lollius (2.102.1) and Drusus Libo, C. Silius and L. Calpurnius Piso (2.129.3). In each case, Velleius makes clear the threat that they posed to the state and also that he approves of their deaths. He does not attempt to describe their trials (if there were any) nor to rationalise their actions as his attention is on the reactions of Tiberius and his close associates. They are simply said “to have loathed this most fortunate state of affairs” (*hunc felicissimum statum odisset*, 2.91.2), meaning the new golden age established by the Principate, and their acts are vilified as a *scelus* (heinous act, sin), *facinores* (outrages, crimes), *flagitia* (shameful acts, outrages), *coniurationes* (conspiracies) or *perfidia* (treachery, treason).⁸⁰

Velleius' description of Egnatius Rufus is an excellent example. He reports that for his conspiracy against Augustus, Egnatius was thrust into jail and executed. It was “a death very much deserved” (*mortem dignissimam*, 2.91.4). The historian does not supply any of the incidental details such as Egnatius' actual plans, chronology, trial or even who his prosecutors were (surely a consul of 18 BC at the behest of Augustus).⁸¹ The only reasons given for his “outrages and sins” (*flagitiorum scelerumque*, 2.91.3) are a vague allusion to the poverty of his estate and mind, and that he was barred from standing for the consulship by Saturninus, the close ally of the principes (2.93.3; 2.94.4). Velleius remarks, however, that his plan, if he had carried it through, would have caused all to

⁸⁰ Murena's act is called a *facinus* (2.91.2), both his and Capio's a *coniuratio* (2.93.1). Egnatius' actions are said to be *flagitia*, *scelera* (2.91.3) and a *facinus* (2.91.4). Marcus Lollius performed *perfida* (2.102.1) and Drusus Libo, C. Silius and L. Calpurnius Piso formed *scelerata consilia* (2.130.2). Velleius (2.100.2-3) describes Julia's many affairs as *tempestas*, *foeda dictu* and *memoria horrenda* all done *turpiter*.

⁸¹ Bauman 1967: 191-193.

“perish in a public disaster” (*publica . . . ruina . . . occidere*, 2.91.4). The “public disaster,” of course, would have been the death of Augustus. Saturninus, a little later on, receives special praise for his part, among other things, and is suggested as a model to follow (2.92.5). Thus the focus of the story is on the threat and necessity of the execution. From time to time, the princeps (and those who share in his power) must use his ultimate authority and execute a citizen, but only, it seems, if a genuine threat is posed to the *res publica*. The emperor's *moderatio*, buttressed by his *humanitas*, *cura* and *conscientia*, will ensure that he never does so unjustly. They further ensure that he will remain vigilant for the next crisis. Velleius thus preferred a princeps with a firm grip on the *res publica*. It is by this method that he saves Rome from sinking back into the chaos of the late Republic.

2.7 The End of Liberty

Thus we find ourselves with a puzzle. Velleius is apprehensive about concentrating power into the hands of one man; one never knows how he will employ it. But it seems that this is not an issue under the Principate, for Tiberius exemplifies moderation, as well as many other, humane virtues. Besides, Velleius approves of autocracy and the use of power for the maintenance of order. Yet running through the Principate narrative is the moot theme of liberty lost. Marullus and Caesetius are said to have been acting with “unrestrained and inopportune liberty” (*immodica et intempestiva*

libertate, 2.68.4). In 44 BC, the two were acting as tribunes of the people should, as checks on the powers of the magistrates, but now opposition to the princeps is not permitted. Throughout the republican narrative Velleius praises those who defend the liberty of the state and castigates those who threaten it. Sulpicius, the Marian tribune, proposed legislation “not to be tolerated by a free state” (*neque tolerandas liberae civitati tulit*, 2.18.6) and Cicero and Cannutius died “in defence of liberty” (*utrique vindicta libertatis morte stetit*, 2.64.4). Crete finally came to “the end of its long tradition of liberty” (*longissimae libertatis fine multata*, 2.38.6) and Pompey “was becoming too great for a free state” (*sed nimium iam liberae rei publicae*, 2.32.1). The last mention of liberty is fittingly with a certain Varro.⁸² On the side of the liberators, Velleius recounts that as he lay dying at Philippi he prophesied Antony's doom “with great liberty” (*magna cum libertate*, 2.71.3). Of course, one who must wait until he is dying to speak out is not free. Liberty met its end with Brutus and Cassius. For the rest of his narrative, which includes the narrative of the principate, *libertas* is never even whispered. It is not found in nounal, verbal, adjectival or adverbial form.⁸³ As we just saw, those who oppose the *principes*, like L. Murena, Fannius Caepio and Egnatius Rufus, are not cast in the same mould as Cicero and Varro. But they are now simply said “to have loathed this most

82 It is unclear who this Varro is. Watt (with a question mark, 1998: 103) suggests M. Terrentius Varro Gibba (*tr. pl.* 43 BC), but this cannot be. Along with a list of other men who died at or right after Philippi, Velleius says that he was *moriturus*, which almost certainly means that he did die. Yet Dio claims that M. Terrentius Varro Gibba enjoyed a successful career under Augustus (Dio Cass. 53.25).

83 According to Elefante's concordance (1992), the adjective *liber* is last seen at 2.32.1, fittingly with *liberae rei publicae*. *Libero* is last seen at 2.61.4: *D. Brutus obsidione liberatus*. *Liberalis* appears for the last time at 2.59.4 and the adverb *libere* is never used in the work. A few times other derivatives are found in the Principate narrative, such as *liberi* (2.94.4; 2.96.1; 2.103.5), *libertinus* (2.111.1), *liberaliter* (2.105.2) and the verb *libere* (2.100.3), but then their usage have long since moved away from the root meaning.

fortunate state of affairs” (*hunc felicissimum statum odisset*, 2.91.2) and their acts are described as nothing but crimes and treachery.

In his omission of *libertas* under the Principate, Velleius seems to be rejecting the redefinition of liberty that started to take place under Augustus. From the literature of the period, it seems that senators, exhausted by the long series of civil wars, began to associate *libertas* not with independence of action for the individual, magistrates and senate, but with what a good princeps provided: order, security and particular rights, which involved freedom of speech, but never freedom of action.⁸⁴ *Libertas* was now in the hands of a man with absolute power, a power based on military might, and it was what he made it. In his study of *libertas* under the early Principate, Wirszubski rightly emphasised that the great authority of the princeps was fundamental to the new conceptualisation of liberty. He argues that there were no effective legal or constitutional checks on his behaviour. There was, in other words, little to distinguish his power from a tyrant or dictator, except his personality and the proclaimed source of his power – the senate and people.⁸⁵ What maintained *libertas*, he asserts, were the emperor's values, which were summed up by the term *optimus princeps*.⁸⁶ Wirszubski explains that this compliment refers to the perfect blend of civilised virtues that form a “moral safeguard”

84 Wirszubski 1950: 122, 159, 168-171; Benario 1975: 77, 84; Gabba 1984: 67-68. Burdeau (1964: 48-49) argues that *libertas* as *securitas* was a consistent theme of later imperial panegyrics. See also Wallace-Hadrill's brief comments (1982a: 38). Virgil's first *Eclogue* is an excellent example, written in the context of the second triumvirate's proscriptions. Meliboeus questions how Tityrus can be so relaxed, as he, exhausted (*aeger*, *Ecl.* 13), goes into exile. Tityrus explains that *libertas* has returned to him (*Ecl.* 27). He elaborates saying that before the “god” (Octavian), he neither hoped for liberty nor wasted time increasing his property (*nec spes libertatis nec cura peculi*, *Ecl.* 32) and that he could not get his house returned to him (*Ecl.* 35).

85 Wirszubski 1950: 111.

86 Wirszubski 1950: 154.

and ensures that the emperor can “withstand temptations of power.”⁸⁷ Velleius, as we saw, refers to Tiberius in the same way (2.126.5). Shotter, who builds upon Wirszubski's work, adds that the value particularly important in this case was *moderatio*.⁸⁸

These ideas find their parallels in imperial panegyric (Pl. *Pan.* 55.6; *Pan. Lat.* 9.2.4; 11.4.4, 13.3, 30.3; 12.20.5). There too the emperor is addressed as *optimus* and portrayed as “the defender of liberty” (*vindex libertatis*, *Pan. Lat.* 11.6.1; cf. 4.19.1). Burdeau argues that panegyricists frequently emphasise the emperor's virtues as a counter balance to the blunt realities of his power. These humane qualities maintain the universal consensus of his powers and distinguishes him from a tyrant.⁸⁹ Thus he is the defender of citizens' freedom for he alone guards against foreign oppression and internal tyranny. It is by this link that panegyricists typically rationalise the emperor's dominance within the empire, for without him there may, perhaps, still be liberty, but, as Burdeau puts it, it is *libertas discors*.⁹⁰ Velleius, as we have seen, employs many of the same motifs as imperial panegyrics, such as the emperor's virtues and just use of power. It is all the more surprising then that he does not, like them, laud the liberty of Tiberius' principate.

Closer to Velleius' time, similar ideas can be found in the works of Nicolaus of Damascus,⁹¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus,⁹² Virgil⁹³ and in Augustus' *Res Gestae*.⁹⁴ We will

⁸⁷ Wirszubski 1950: 154; Levick 1976: 85.

⁸⁸ Shotter 1978: 254.

⁸⁹ Burdeau 1964: 52-54.

⁹⁰ Burdeau 1964: 49-50.

⁹¹ Gabba 1984: 61-62.

⁹² Gabba 1984: 65-68.

⁹³ Noonan (2003: 35) argues that Aeneas “embodies” a stricter “Caesarian notion” of freedom, which he defines as the “freedom from subjugation by force, but no explicit freedom other than that which assures they are not themselves *subiecti*.”

⁹⁴ Benario 1975: 83-84.

concentrate on the *Res Gestae* for the sake of expedience and because Velleius' own work reveals a knowledge of the document.⁹⁵ At the start, Augustus as a man of 19 claims to have freed the *res publica* as it was “oppressed” by Brutus and Cassius' “domination” (*dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem vindicavi*, 1.1). Throughout he claims to have restored order, security and the proper working of the state. And at the end, he expresses great pride in the honours presented to him by the senate and people. One was the *corona civica* for saving Rome's citizens (34.2), another the *clupeus aureus*, which proclaimed his courage, clemency, justice and sense of duty (*virtutis clementiaeque et iustitiae et pietatis*, 34.2). He suggests that it is from these values that he is predominant in the state (*post id tempus auctoritate omnibus praestiti*, 34.3) and why the senate, equestrians and the “entire” population of Rome (*populusque Romanus universus*, 35.1) consider him the father of the country. In other words, his position as princeps in the *res publica* (*me principe*, RG 13, 30.1, 32.3) stems from the universal recognition of his values, such as liberty, and his implied promise to maintain them.⁹⁶

The parallels to Velleius' portrait of Tiberius are striking; he also describes an upright father figure, who enjoys his position due to almost the same facts. The one exception is that nowhere does the historian state or even imply that *libertas* exists under the Principate. With his focus on Tiberius' unique position and authority in the *res*

95 Hellegouarc'h and Jodry 1980: 815-816. Moreover, as briefly discussed at the end of Ch. 1.6, Potter's excellent political analysis of the *SCPP* (1999) highlights many of the themes discussed here that are shared between that work, Augustus' *Res Gestae* and Velleius' history.

96 Suetonius (*Aug.* 28) refers to an edict where Augustus prays that he may keep the state safe and that, after he dies, the Principate remain solidly in place: *ita mihi salvam ac sospitem rem p. sistere in sua sede liceat atque eius rei fructum percipere, quem peto, ut optimi status auctor dicar et moriens ut feram mecum spem, mansura in vestigio suo fundamenta rei p. quae iecero*.

publica and overall discomfort with absolute power, this absence can only suggest anxiety. Tiberius somehow was not guaranteeing the peace, tranquillity, calm and safety, which Velleius says are the hope of “all men” (2.103.5). The source of the anxiety is probably not independence of action as it had been in Republic,⁹⁷ for, as we saw, Velleius believed that such actions only led to Rome's moral decline and civic violence. Besides, they are not alluded to in his final negative chapters; the three treason trials he mentions at the end are favourably presented. Instead the problems, as seen in the final negative chapters, are Sejanus and the great power which Tiberius was allowing him to yield, Tiberius' own absence from Rome, which was detrimental to the good order and working of the senate and *res publica*, and the lack of Julio-Claudian successors who alone could maintain Augustus' golden age. In this light, his many praises of Tiberius' virtues – his care for those in his charge, his humanity, generosity, sense of duty to Augustus' vision, his good conscience and moderation – do not seem fully celebratory but also prescriptive.

⁹⁷ Ovid seems to deny the existence of *libertas* under the Principate too, especially with respect to free speech, as seen most clearly in his *Fasti* (Feeney 1992: 9, 18-19). Due to his exile, he may be a special case.

Chapter 3: Sejanus, *Singularis Principalium Onerum Adiutor* (2.127.3)

In Ch. 1 it was argued that Velleius abhorred the violence of the late Republic and was thus preoccupied with peace and harmony within the empire. It was also argued that Tiberius was presented as the one person capable of preserving Rome's new golden age. He alone possessed the skills, divine favour and humane virtues necessary for her defence. The chapter further asserted that the virtues are particularly emphasised and that Velleius was trying to establish them as the foundation for the universal support of the *domus Augusta*. Ch. 2, meanwhile, attempted to illustrate the historian's focus on Tiberius' unique authority. It showed that the author approves of the great power his princeps yields, because he alone can find that proper balance. Tiberius is stern regarding the maintenance of the *res publica*'s harmony, but controlled. In other words, he himself does not become the problem. Yet, Ch. 2 further averred that Velleius was well aware of the precariousness of this balance and the dangers of violence when power is concentrated in one person. In the end, it seems that Velleius did not believe that liberty existed under the Principate, or at least, while he was writing. For some reason, he did not have a sense of security, peace, calm and tranquillity, which he states is the hope for "all

men” (2.103.5).

In the comparison of these two chapters, it is clear that there is conflict. If Tiberius is as excellent as Velleius claims, how can he not feel secure? This question leads to more. What does insecurity mean for a Principate which enjoys its great support by providing security? More specifically, what is the exact source of the historian's discomfort? From the discussions of his fear of absolute power and the digression featuring Caesar and the two tribunes, it would seem to be the princeps himself. As we saw in Ch. 2, Velleius constructed his whole argument of the problems of power around the actions of Rome's great men. Yet it is not necessarily so or, at least, absolutely so that Velleius' main issue was with the princeps. Velleius demonstrates again and again that Tiberius knows how to yield power. No answers can be found with the evidence already discussed. We must turn to Velleius' final, negative chapters (2.127-128; 2.130.3-131) to come to any (tentative) conclusions. It is here that Velleius' concerns and hopes clear somewhat, though never completely. Nonetheless, much information can be gleaned.

3.1 Sejanus, the Background

A pressing issue for Velleius was Sejanus, Tiberius' powerful praetorian prefect and *adiutor*. Between a two chapter panegyric to Tiberius (2.126, 129-130.2) we find another two (2.127-128) ostensibly praising Sejanus and defending Tiberius' reliance on him and the powers he gave him. The author's praise is ostensible for, as Sumner and

Woodman both argue, these chapters betray a high level of discomfort and reservation with the subject.¹ The main sticking point for Velleius seems to have been Sejanus' unprecedented powers with regard to his status.² Simply put, his official position as praetorian prefect did not warrant the influence that Tiberius let him wield in Roman politics. Sejanus was an equestrian from Volsinii, occupying an equestrian post and the first ever to possess the *ornamenta praetoria* (Dio Cass. 57.19.7), which gave him the honours of the praetorian rank but not the responsibilities, such as the right to sit in the senate. Voted by the senate, they were at the emperor's behest.³ He had never held any of the magistracies, except the consulship after the publication of Velleius' work in 31. Thus his imposing presence in the senate and in politics in general was an irregularity and an affront to the *dignitas* of senators, who had achieved their positions through traditional means.⁴

Nonetheless, Tiberius had long called him his *adiutor*, his assistant (2.127.3; Tac. *Ann.* 4.2; 4.71; Dio Cass. 57.19.7; 58.8.4),⁵ and even began to refer to him in intimate terms (Σείανός τε ὁ ἐμός, Dio Cass. 58.4.3).⁶ The sexagenarian emperor was tiring and had always expressed his desire for rest and to share his “burdens” (Vell. Pat. 2.99.2; Tac. *Ann.* 1.11, 4.41; Suet. *Tib.* 24; Dio Cass. 57.2.4; cf. 56.33.4).⁷ In this context, he always

1 Sumner 1970: 293-294, 296; Woodman 1975a: 302.

2 For how Sejanus relates to Velleius specifically I am thankful for Woodman's analysis (1975a: 296-298), though I have sometimes reached conclusions that conflict with his.

3 Talbert 1984: 368-369; Levick 1977: 160. Bird (1969: 87) argues that the *ornamenta* did give him the right to sit in the senate, but I agree with Talbert: we never hear of Sejanus actually speaking, just being present.

4 Bird 1969: 94-95. Traditional means would be provenance from a noble family and/or an excellent career in the military and ascending the *cursus honorum* to at least the praetorship.

5 Woodman 1975a: 296-297.

6 Levick 1976: 160, n. 63.

7 Velleius' language reflects this: *ad levanda vero onera principis Seianum propulit*, repeated more

mentioned his sons or the senate as possible supports (Tac. *Ann.* 1.11, 3.31, 4.8-9; Dio Cass. 57.2.4).⁸ Yet having trusted Sejanus since the start of his principate, he increasingly relied on him to dispatch official duties, first after the death of his son in 23, then with his withdrawal to Capri in 26.⁹ As praetorian prefect, Sejanus controlled the Guard, which was now concentrated at Rome, as well as access to the island – both of people and information (Tac. *Ann.* 4.41; Dio Cass. 57.19.6).¹⁰ Dio reports (58.4.1-2, 5.1-5, cf. 58.2.7; 58.19.3-4) that by 31 Sejanus' powers rivalled the princeps' own, especially in his powers of patronage (meaning his ability to secure plum positions and favours for others),¹¹ and from the early twenties on he seems to have personally commanded a large following in the increasingly fractious senate (Dio Cass. 57.21.4; 58.4.1, 14.1-4).¹²

To a man like Velleius who boasts of his long military service and real praetorian

generally at 2.127.2 (*etenim magna negotia magnis adiutoribus egent [principes]*) and at 2.127.3 (*singularem principalium onerum adiutorem*). Seager (1972: 194) describes the emperor as tiring, but I would not go so far as to say that Tiberius was “constantly brooding.” Seager's picture of him is almost of one losing his mind. He rightly stresses, though, (1972: 203, along with Tac. *Ann.* 4.59; Suet. *Tib.* 39) that the cave-in at the cavern Villa Spelunca in 26, where Sejanus personally shielded Tiberius from the rocks, was an event that sealed the princeps' trust in him.

8 Kampff 1963: 30-35, 39, 43, 47, 51.

9 Bird 1969: 65, 68-72.

10 Seager 1972: 178.

11 Levick 1976: 173-174; Seager 1972: 203, 213. Tacitus notes “continual crowds” coming to see Sejanus like a powerful patron of the Republic (*adsidios . . . coetus*, *Ann.* 4.41) and that stopping them would “weaken his power” (*infringeret potentiam*). See also Tac. *Ann.* 2.4. Boddington (1963: 13-14) mitigates his importance, however, and places him on the level of an “ally, to be tolerated, as other *novi homines*.” She admits herself though that she is going against the evidence of Tacitus, Velleius and Suetonius. Moreover, she does not recognise another problem, which is that Sejanus was not even a *novus homo*, at least in the strict sense of a man who gained entry into the senate by holding high curial office.

12 The comments made by the knight Marcus Terentius (Tac. *Ann.* 6.8; Dio Cass. 58.19.3-4) when explaining why he was “very happy” (*laetatum*) to have sought out Sejanus' friendship are most illuminating. He recounts the rapid rise of Sejanus' career, the great honours he enjoyed and that the *adiutor* was “engaging in the functions of the city and military” (*urbis et militiae munia simul obeuntem*). He further relates his powers of patronage. See also Tac. *Ann.* 2.43, 4.2, 4.17, 4.68. Furthermore, Allen (1941) and Bird's articles (1969: 75-81) are very helpful on this issue. I would agree with Allen (1941: 4-5) that there were no “factions” as we would think of them today, but opposition based on ideals and self-interest. See also Levick (1976: 171-172), and Boddington (1963: 14-16), who downplays Sejanus' importance.

status, the ascendancy of this man must have been unsettling. What exactly was his official capacity and what were the limits of his powers? Could he be trusted to moderate himself? According to Tacitus, numerous senators and plebs held these fears (Tac. *Ann.* 3.29, 4.3, 5.4) and Tiberius, in a letter, admitted as much (Tac. *Ann.* 4.40).¹³ Sejanus' daring request to Tiberius in 25 asking for the hand of Drusus' widow makes it clear that he was ambitious (Tac. *Ann.* 4.39-40). Before his death, even Drusus, the recognised heir, had felt threatened by Sejanus (Tac. *Ann.* 3.31).¹⁴ After it, Sejanus is rumoured to have orchestrated numerous *maiestas* trials of prominent Romans (Dio Cass. 57.24.2; 58.1.1, 4.5-7; Suet. *Tib.* 55, 61-62) and to have had a hand in the banishment of Germanicus' widow and eldest son in 29, Agrippina and Nero, and the incarceration of the second son Drusus in 30 (Tac. *Ann.* 4.8, 4.60, 5.4, 6.23-24; Suet. *Tib.* 55, 61-62; Dio Cass. 58.3.8).¹⁵

Here we must pause for it is through the treason trials that Tiberius' *adiutor* has especially gained his malicious reputation. Bauman, for example, in his influential study of *impietas* against the emperor, argues that starting in 24 Sejanus began “logically and systematically” to exploit the trend, which had been occurring since the end of Augustus' rule, of treating personal insults against the emperor as grounds for a charge of treason, such as verbal comments and the desecration of images (intentional or not).¹⁶ Tiberius himself had judiciously separated such charges from traditional treason (misconduct in

13 Seager 1972: 196-198; Woodman 1975a: 297-298; Levick 1976: 165.

14 A point well made by Seager (1972: 181-182) and Woodman (1975a: 297). See also Tac. *Ann.* 4.3, 4.7 (cf. Dio Cass. 57.14.9) and Levick 1976: 160, n.63.

15 Seager 1972: 204, 206, 209-210, 212-213; Levick 1976: 163, 173, 178-179.

16 Bauman 1974: 119. He further argues that “one of the most striking features of Sejanus' ministry is its sophisticated employment of the defamation category of *maiestas* as an instrument of government” (1974: 113).

public affairs, conspiracy against magistrates, treachery in the field, etc.),¹⁷ but Sejanus, if we are to trust the combined testimonies of Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio and from time to time other authors, actively pursued leading Romans, particularly those associated with Germanicus' family, and either unearthed their past comments or manipulated them into incriminating themselves in order to incite the emperor's condemnation of them and to encourage their suicide or secure their exile or execution. Sejanus, for example, is said to have encouraged L. Latiaris and three other men of praetorian rank to secure the execution of the equestrian Titus Sabinus, who, Tacitus says, was especially devoted to Germanicus' family. To accomplish this, Latiarus allegedly won Sabinus' confidence and incited him into defaming Sejanus and Tiberius, while the others eavesdropped from the attic. After detailing their evidence to Tiberius, the emperor condemned Sabinus by letter in the senate and he was subsequently executed. (Tac. *Ann.* 4.68-70; Dio Cass. 58.1.1-3).¹⁸ Such actions, even if our sources exaggerate them, would seem to conflict with Velleius' beliefs in a just and very controlled use of power that was for the good of the *res publica*. As we saw in Ch. 2.6, he does advocate execution as a proper punishment, but only in the most serious cases, which are those of traditional treason: actual acts of treachery, conspiracy and sedition. We will discuss Velleius' opinion on Tiberius' role when we come to his allusions to a few treason trials.

Sejanus' exact motives must remain speculative, but with just two young heirs left

17 For a few examples, see Tac. *Ann.* 1.74, 3.12, 3.24; Suet. *Tib.* 28. Bauman (1974: 108-113) well argues that Tacitus preferred to use *renuntiatio amicitiae*, which was a traditional and private method for dealing with personal offence.

18 Bauman (1974: 121) asserts that with Sabinus' trial "Sejanianism came of age." Levick 1976: 168; Seager 1972: 207-208.

to the aged princeps, a greater share in imperial power must have been his goal.¹⁹

Velleius, whose final chapters betray anxiety about the future and specifically the succession, could not have been optimistic. I will argue then that his veiled criticisms do not concern just Sejanus, but also the man who allowed Sejanus to yield this amount of influence and who alone could remove him, Tiberius.²⁰ Sejanus' abuse of power then may be the main reason why the historian does not believe that *libertas* currently existed.

3.2 Velleius' Sejanian Chapters

Traditionally, scholars have held the view that Velleius was a supporter of Sejanus due to his outward praise of the *adiutor*.²¹ The most recent and compelling argument is made by Hellegouarc'h who asserts that as both were of equestrian origin and had risen to prominence, our author was "proud" of the *adiutor*.²² He maintains that Sejanus represented to Velleius the best of what the equestrian order offered Rome, explaining that Velleius' two Sejanian chapters contain typical keywords that promoted the class: "vigour" (*vigor*), "hard work" (*labor*), "bravery" (*virtus*), cheerfulness (*hilaritas*) and

19 Most scholars agree (e.g. Bird 1969: 65, 68; Seager 1972: 180-181; Levick 1976: 159) that as an equestrian he could only realistically have aimed for a powerful regency over probably Ti. Gemellus (ten years old), as Gaius (at eighteen years of age) would have been a bit too old. Boddington (1963: 10) does not even go this far, arguing that he just "hoped to stand in relation to one of the young Caesars as Macro stood to Gaius and Burrus to Nero."

20 At Tac. *Ann.* 6.8 the knight M. Terentius emphasises that it was Tiberius who had elevated Sejanus. Dio says the same (58.3.9). Woodman (1975a: 298) makes the same point, though here I am extending the conclusions he draws. As will be seen, he suggests that Velleius is defending Tiberius and critiquing only Sejanus.

21 For example, see Shipley 1924: x; Cizek 1972: 91-92; Bauman 1974: 123; Gabba 1984: 81.

22 Hellegouarc'h 1980: 147-148, 152. Quotation from 148.

“loyalty” (*fides*).²³ But Sumner points out that Velleius' portrait of the equestrian betrays similarities to Livy's Hannibal and Sallust's Catiline.²⁴ Thus already we have an indication that the historian's picture of the man is not favourable. He does defend his ancestry noting that though his father was equestrian, his mother came from a senatorial family, and that he has consular brothers, cousins and an uncle. But he is only “very capable” of work and loyalty (*laboris ac fidei capacissimum*, 2.127.3). He is only “sufficient” in the vigour of his mind (*sufficiente . . . vigori animi*). Also, he is full of contradictions. We are told that he is a man “of ancient severity” but the “happiest gaiety” (*priscae severitatis, laetissimae hilaritatis*), that he is “very similar in action and leisure” (*actu otiosis simillimum*),²⁵ that he “lays claim to nothing for himself and in this way gains everything” (*nihil sibi vindicantem eoque adsequentem omnia*, 2.127.4) and that “in his countenance and life he is tranquil [and] in spirit sleeplessly awake” (*vultu vitae tranquillum, animo exsomnem*). This is certainly an odd way to laud someone whom you supposedly respect.²⁶ As noted in the introduction (0.4), Velleius could not have safely been explicit in his disapproval of Sejanus.²⁷ He had to be careful and extremely indirect. Thus we

23 Hellegouarc'h 1980: 149-151; cf. Hellegouarc'h 1964: 674-675; André 1965: 310-312.

24 Sumner 1970: 294. Woodman agrees (1977: 253) that Velleius' words do not add up to support for the *adiutor*, but he asserts that the allusions to Sallust and Livy do not exist. He does not go into detail but he suggests that the latter historians' descriptions belong to a different tradition of historical writing. This is somewhat inexplicable as Woodman himself (1969; 1977: 30-53, esp. 40, 42-43, 46-47) has pointed out on numerous occasions the many links between Velleius' work and these two predecessors, even “perhaps” with Livy at just 2.128.1 (1977: 256).

25 Woodman argues (1977: 255) that Velleius attributes *otium* to those whom he approves, such as Maecenas, as it suggests lack of ambition for the purple. I argue against this just below. Noting *simillimum*, however, Woodman states that Velleius “refrains” from actually attributing *otium* and that this is a subtle critique on Velleius' part. So in the end we agree. Velleius is painting a picture of a man who never rests, but sleeplessly pursues his own agenda.

26 Sumner (1970: 293) further points out that this description is missing the idea of straightforwardness (*simplex, simplicitas*), which is typical of Velleius' praise of new men. 1970: 293. See 2.10.2, 2.72.3, 2.116.4, 2.125.5 and 2.129.1.

27 Sumner 1972: 297; Woodman 1977: 46.

have praise but praise belaboured. Furthermore, as Woodman notes, he is never mentioned elsewhere in the narrative despite other excellent opportunities such as Drusus' mission to the rebelling Rhine legions (2.125) and the fire at Pompey's theatre (2.130.1), events in which we know Sejanus played large roles (Tac. *Ann.* 1.24, 3.72).²⁸

Hellegouarc'h points to Maecenas' portrait as a parallel.²⁹ This is valid, but it is not a positive confirmation of Sejanus' position as he would have it. Similar to Sejanus, Maecenas is introduced into the narrative just once when he had “spied” (*speculatus est*, 2.88.3) and “oppressed” (*oppresso*) a plot against Augustus by M. Lepidus with “the greatest calm and concealment” (*per summam quietem ac dissimulationem*). He too is *exsominis* and vigilant “when matters demand it” (*ubi res vigiliam exigeret, sane exsominis*). Velleius even defends his equestrian origin (*equestri sed splendido genere natus*, 2.88.2) and goes on to praise his “foresight” (*providens*) and “knowledge of how to act” (*agendi sciens*). Interestingly, the actual careers of Maecenas and Sejanus shared much in common, as Maecenas too was an equestrian whose princeps entrusted him with responsibilities and powers that were constitutionally unrecognised (Dio Cass. 51.3; Tac. *Ann.* 3.30, 6.11, 14.53).³⁰ Velleius is not entirely negative and from certain points of view he is quite laudatory, but taken together it is also not the most flattering manner to present

28 Woodman 1975a: 302. In reply to Woodman, Hellegouarc'h simply asserts (1980: 145), without actually discussing (let alone naming) the two instances, that Velleius, due to his professed need for speed and concision, simply does not have room to describe events where Sejanus played “un rôle tout à fait accessoire et mineur.” This, however, does not explain the 117 other people he pauses to name in the Principate narrative and the many occasions where he actually gives extended narration of their actions and characters. See the appendix.

29 Hellegouarc'h 1980: 150.

30 While holding no official position, he also represented Augustus on envoys to Antony (40, 37 BC) and was left in control of Rome for extended periods of time while Augustus conducted business abroad (36-33 BC, 31-29 BC).

a person, especially one as diverse as the patron of poets. He gets vital work done on behalf of the Principate but, as the historian presents it, it is dirty work and clandestine. Thus we find here some subtle critiques, similar to those which Velleius had to make against Sejanus. Fortunately for our author, Maecenas had died almost forty years earlier. He can also say that Maecenas was “flowing into leisure and delicacies almost beyond feminine,” when “truly anything” permitted him to leave his duties (*vero aliquid ex negotio remitti posset, otio ac mollitiis paene ultra feminam fluens*). And most curiously, he can complain that Maecenas could have achieved all the offices and other honours of Agrippa, but did not desire it (*non tam concupivit*). He was “content” to remain an equestrian (*quippe vixit angusti clavi †paene† contentus*).³¹ He had great powers, enough to get rid of someone of note quietly, but none were official. The unease Velleius shows here is very similar to the unease which later historians record that senators felt with regards to Sejanus. In all, Velleius' character sketch of Sejanus seems to be expressing serious anxiety about the *adiutor's* position in Roman politics.

Both Woodman and Sumner stress that Velleius is instead “defending” Tiberius'

31 Woodman (1983: 244), however, asserts that Velleius “defends” Maecenas along the new ideals of the Roman elite under the Principate. Displaying qualities such as *virtus* that had won men fame in the Republic was now dangerous. A man signalled his acceptance of the Principate by a preference for *otium* and *luxuria* over *vigor* and *ambitio*. This theory certainly seems to fit the picture Velleius provides for Maecenas, but there are some problems with Woodman's thesis. First of all, why would Velleius feel a need to defend Maecenas in such terms? He had died almost four decades before the publication of his history and most certainly never knew him. More seriously, however, such a theory cannot explain Velleius' praise for the assertive Agrippa (2.79.1; 2.85.2; 2.88.2; 2.90.1) and Sentius Saturninus (2.92). Woodman's main source is Tacitus (along with Dio, Pliny the Elder, Sallust and other authors) who was writing much later under very different conditions. His cynical perspective on the Principate is well known. Further, Woodman's argument is suggesting that there was a firm dividing line in mentality and procedures between the Republic and early Principate. Augustus' claim of *res publica restituta* (a phrase closely mirrored by Velleius, 2.89.4), however, should warn us from such an assumption. Velleius' history is full of men from start to finish who demonstrate leadership and capability, such as himself. His sentiments are with them.

support of Sejanus.³² This point is unassailable. To introduce the subject he writes, “rarely do eminent men not employ great *adiutores* to guide their fortune” (*raro eminentes viri non magnis adiutoribus ad gubernandam fortunam suam usi sunt*, 2.127.1). His examples are the Laelii for the Scipios and Agrippa and Statilius Taurus for Augustus, commenting that “the newness of their families was hardly an obstacle so much the less that they were elevated to multiple consulships, triumphs and several priestly offices” (*quibus novitas familiae haud obstitit quo minus ad multiplices consulatus triumphosque et complura eveherentur sacerdotia*). “By these examples,” he continues, “Tiberius held and does hold [Sejanus] in all matters as his singular assistant in all the burdens that come with being princeps” (*sub his exemplis Ti. Caesar . . . singularem principalium onerum adiutorem in omnia habuit atque habet*, 2.127.3). Next he moves on to new men in general (2.128.1-3), to whom, he says, Romans saw fit to grant the state's highest honours: the consulship, censorship, triumphs, the pontificatus maximus and the like. His examples are a “who's who” of Roman history: Ti. Coruncanius, Sp. Carvilius, the elder Cato, Marius, L. Mummius Achaicus, Cicero and Asinius Pollio. The “natural imitation of examples” (*naturalis exempli imitatio*, 2.128.4), he says, “drove” (*propulit*) both Caesar to “test” Sejanus and Sejanus to lighten the princeps' burdens. These examples then “induced” (*perduxit*) the senate and Roman people “to willingly summon forth what they think is best to the guardianship of its security” (*quod usu optimum intellegit, id in tutelam securitatis suae libenter advocet*). There is no way around it; Velleius is reacting to criticism of Sejanus and specifically Tiberius' use of him. That being said, however, this

32 Sumner 1970: 292; Woodman 1975a: 300-301; 1977: 247-248.

“defence” does not seem to be the end of Velleius' intentions with these two chapters. Tiberius was the one responsible for Sejanus' exalted position and the one person who could remove him. There may be other messages.

3.3 *Adiutores* and *Novi Homines*: a Not so Favourable Comparison

So far, any further interpretation along these lines has hinged upon the date of composition and the question of whether Velleius was referring to Sejanus' consulship or not. I would like to suggest that this has proven to be more a hurdle to our understanding of the chapters than a boon. Sumner, arguing that Velleius did know of Sejanus' impending consulship, points out that all of the examples in these two chapters were consuls. Moreover, he points to Velleius' *sententia* where he states: “it concerns the *res publica* since in practice it is necessary that one be prominent due to rank and that his utility be fortified with the authority” (*interestque rei publicae quod usu necessarium est dignitate eminere utilitatemque auctoritate muniri*, 2.127.2). Though his words leave room for interpretation, it seems clear that he prefers official ranks that bestow real authority (i.e. *imperium*) over unofficial powers, even if those powers prove useful. Immediately afterwards, he says that Tiberius employs Sejanus “by these examples.” Thus since Sejanus' consulship was probably announced in the summer of 30, Velleius must have been writing until then. And because the work is dedicated to M. Vinicius, *consul ordinarius* for 30, he must have started when he was elected in the summer of

29.³³ Woodman, however, puts the date completion for the work at the end of 29, as there are no references to events beyond this point, and the date of inception as early as the mid-twenties, arguing that emperors often gave assurances of a consulship to promising individuals years in advance.³⁴ With regards to Sejanus, Woodman counters Sumner by arguing that Velleius here “insists” upon using the word *adiutor* (three times) as well as *onera* (twice) and thus he is only defending Tiberius' reliance on him and the unofficial responsibilities.³⁵ He further notes that Cicero here is described purely in terms of ability to procure leading positions for men, which suggests that our author was thinking of his extra-constitutional authority, while the people are said to have denied Asinius Pollio nothing simply because of his great merit.³⁶

Overall, Sumner's argument seems stronger. Velleius mentions on numerous occasions exact honours that these men received, including the consulship. I agree with Woodman that *in tutelam securitatis* is too vague to point exactly to the consulship, but Velleius' *sententia* (in context of the consulship and other honours) concerning the need for *adiutores* to possess real rank (*dignitate*) and authority (*auctoritate*) seems quite clear, even if the language is not specific. Woodman can only curtly dismiss it.³⁷ And while Cicero and Asinius Pollio are mentioned for their unofficial influence and honours, Coruncanius, Carvilius, Cato and Mummius are specifically mentioned in the context of

33 Sumner 1972: 287-288.

34 Woodman 1975a: 281-282. Woodman does not expressly link the date of composition with his arguments concerning Sejanus, as Sumner does. I make Woodman's two arguments appear more integrated here because, as I hope to have shown, the two together betray a weakness in his argument.

35 Woodman 1975a: 301; Woodman 1977: 246-248.

36 Woodman 1975a: 301 n. 4; Woodman 1977: 260.

37 “But that need by no means imply a reference to the consulship,” Woodman 1977: 251.

the offices they held. In the end, there is no reason why Velleius cannot be thinking on both levels. 2.127 may be dedicated more to *adiutores* raised to the consulship and 2.128 to *novi homines* in general who have enjoyed great influence both officially and unofficially. But in the end, this focus on date and the consulship is too narrow and hinders our understanding of the significance that these two chapters hold in the narrative. We are looking for exactitude and categories where they obviously do not exist. The debate could go on indefinitely for Woodman does make some further good points in his response to Sumner. One year does seem too short to write a history as polished as this one,³⁸ and, moreover, would Velleius really have dedicated a work to a consul only to publish it at the end of his term? But then we could come back to Woodman, and argue that Velleius may have also known about Sejanus' consulship years in advance, as he may have with Vinicius. I suggest that we step back from the text a bit. For Velleius' overall argument the exact questions of consulship and date may not matter much. There may be other themes more pertinent to the history overall. For the moment, let us look at those examples which Velleius provides, the *adiutores* and *novi homines* that are supposed to reaffirm Sejanus' position.

As noted above (Ch. 3.2), Hellegouarc'h argues that Velleius' history demonstrates great pride in his own equestrian roots and "new man" status and in those of other senators. They achieved their positions not through heredity, but their own skills, virtues, hard work and their resulting accomplishments on behalf of the *domus Augusta* and *res publica*. As we will see from the examples to come this is true. But contrary to

³⁸ Woodman 1975a: 281-282.

Hellegouarc'h, this pride does not extend to Sejanus. As noted above, this equestrian was not a *novus homo* in a strict sense. He possessed only the “ornaments” of the praetorian rank on the recommendation of the emperor and the vote of the senate. Thus whatever Velleius' precise thoughts, the examples he provides in the Sejanian chapters do not match his current subject. To validate the *adiutor*'s position in the state he writes only on his family, and specifically his senatorial relations and his virtues. In fact, the explicit reason given for Sejanus' position is only his virtues, or more accurately the city and princeps' “estimation of his virtues” (*in huius virtutum aestimatione*, 2.128.1) and their “judgements” (*iudicia*). The author is pinning his position not on concrete deeds and offices, nor even personal qualities so much, which he leaves open to interpretation anyway, but on the perception of these virtues. We are again left to wonder if they are true or not. In comparison to Velleius' precedents, Sejanus appears second rate.

It is unfortunate that Velleius' comments on the Laelii, Coruncanus and Carvilius in Book I do not survive as well as the principal character sketch of the elder Cato, which certainly must have existed for such an important personage.³⁹ Nonetheless, Agrippa's career, as Velleius presents it, is especially illuminating. He prosecuted Cassius the assassin (2.69.5), won great naval victories (2.79.1; 2.81.3; 2.84.2), was crucial in the defeat of Antony (2.84.2; 2.85.2), campaigned against the Spaniards and Germans (2.90.1), and enjoyed three consulships and the tribunate (2.85.2; 2.90.1). He was not just capable but efficient (*per omnia extra dilationes*, 2.79.1), “unconquerable by toil,

39 Statilius Taurus is only briefly mentioned one other time as the commander of Octavian's army at Actium (2.85.2).

wakefulness and danger” (*labore vigilia periculo invictus*) and above all he was successful (*consultisque facta coniugens*). Velleius further says that Agrippa was “the most knowledgeable” (*scientissimus*), but only after Augustus (*sed uni*), and he marks him as ambitious (*imperandi cupidus*), but “sensibly” (*sane*, 2.79.1)⁴⁰ and later he makes it clear that it was for official positions (*honoratus . . . tam concupivit*, 2.88.2).⁴¹ When Augustus presented to him the *corona classica*, Velleius states that he “earned” it by his “remarkable virtue” (*singulari virtute meruit*, 2.81.3). Thus in his description of Agrippa, the historian has inserted themes of skill, merit, honour, patriotism and self-restraint, which are not found in his portrait of Sejanus and are contrary even more so to the picture of Sejanus which has come down to us from the other, later sources, which were freer to speak their minds.

Cicero is another excellent example. Velleius lauds him more than any person except Augustus and Tiberius. He stands at the pinnacle of Latin oratory (1.17.4). “His divine mouth sparkles brightly” (*fulgentissimo et caelesti ore*, 2.64.3)⁴² and his head is “very illustrious” (*clarissimi capitis*, 2.66.3).⁴³ Velleius stresses his fame and the glory of his deeds (*famam vero gloriamque*, 2.66.4). As a consul he was “great” (*tantique*

40 This is of course translating *sane* literally which is not clear from the context of the sentence.

Something like “certainly” or “of course” can also work, but Woodman seems to agree noting in his commentary (1983: 199) that Velleius is repeating Agrippa's well known disinclination to compete with Augustus. The sentiment is seen again at 2.93 when Agrippa goes to the east to make way for M. Marcellus.

41 These words are said in the context of Maecenas' desire to remain an equestrian and not achieve the same distinctions as Agrippa, which elsewhere are said to have been three consulships and the *tribunicia potestas* (2.90.1). This indicates that we should take the adjective *honoratus* more specifically as “honoured or distinguished by a public office” (*OLD* 2 s. v. *honoratus*).

42 It is also a *caelestissimi oris* at 2.66.3.

43 See below (Ch. 3.4) where I argue that Velleius' use of *clarus* and similar words to describes some *legati* who work under Tiberius is an attempt to demonstrate the genuineness of their virtues and successes.

consulis, 2.66.3) and against Catiline he displayed “remarkable virtue, steadfastness, vigilance and sense of responsibility” (*singulari virtute constantia vigilia curaque*, 2.34.3). Moreover, the historian mentions his famous attempts to preserve “public harmony” (*concordiae publicae*) between Pompey and Caesar and again after Caesar's death (2.48.5; 2.58.4). He is said to have died defending liberty and is accordingly eulogised three times as the defender of the state (2.45.2; 2.64.3; 2.66.2-5). Velleius pronounces that Cicero will live on “through the memory of all ages” (*vivit vivetque per omnem saeculorum memoriam*, 2.66.5), that he almost alone could understand and explain the universe, and that, in return, the universe will carry his glory as long as it exists (*dumque hoc vel forte vel providentia vel utcumque constitutum rerum naturae corpus, quod ille paene solus Romanorum animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentia inluminavit, manebit incolume, comitem aevi sui laudem Ciceronis trahet*). Velleius certainly knows how to praise when he means it. This seems to be the language which Hellegouarc'h claims is typical of *encomia* to new men:⁴⁴ great skill, practical virtues and the desire to use them for the benefit of the *res publica*.

Next to Cicero and Agrippa, Sejanus, as Velleius presents him, is a sorry comparison. For him all we have is description, which, even if it were not ambiguous, would not completely impress. Words without the proof to back them up are never a solid way to make a case. The person to whom Sejanus' portrait has the greatest similarities, Maecenas, instead is chastised for his feminine desires and unofficial career. It could be

44 See above, Ch. 3.2. Hellegouarc'h 1980: 149-151; cf. Hellegouarc'h 1964: 674-675;

that in putting Sejanus beside such men, Velleius is trying to ask “why him?”⁴⁵

Still these arguments outlined above are subjective in many ways. Admittedly there is nothing concrete to suggest that Velleius meant these *novi homines* to be taken in contrast and not as reaffirming comparisons. Yet as I argued in Ch. 2.2, Velleius frequently expresses discomfort with irregular careers and the concentration of power. As will be recalled, when discussing Pompey's command against the pirates, Velleius reports that “men dread extraordinary powers in those men who seem to lay aside or retain them according to their own judgement and have limits [only] according to their own will” (*homines extraordinaria reformidant qui ea suo arbitrio aut deposituri aut retenturi videntur et modum in voluntate habent*, 2.31.4). Marius is another interesting parallel. Velleius chastises him because even though he was “past the age of seventy, he was coveting all powers and all offices” (*post LXX annum omnia imperia et omnes provincias*, 2.18.6).⁴⁶ His seventh consulship was a “disgrace” (*dedecus*, 2.23.1) and Velleius sums up his character as follows: “as much as he was the best in war, he was the worst in peace, uncontrolled [in his search] for glory, insatiable, violent and always causing trouble” (*quantum bello optimus, tantum pace pessimus, immodicus gloriae, insatiabilis, impotens, semperque inquietus*, 2.11.1.).⁴⁷ In this light, Velleius' comparison of Marius to Sejanus

45 L. Mummius Achaicus' contributions to Rome also reflect badly on Sejanus. He was a consul (1.12.5) and Corinth's destroyer (1.13.1). Velleius relates that he was the first new man to have won a cognomen by military glory (1.13.2). He in fact pokes fun at Mummius for his lack of education, which suggests how straightforward the consular was. He does critique Mummius for having helped to introduce *luxuria* to Rome by transporting Corinth's riches to Rome (1.13.5), but this does not invalidate Mummius as a corrective to Sejanus, for the historian is also frankly praiseworthy of the man. Velleius is never blind in his praise, but attempts to weave a variety of themes around his characters. Even Cicero receives mild censure for his politicking before the onset of the civil wars (2.45.2).

46 At 2.19.2 he repeats that he was past seventy and had six consulships.

47 Also: *vir in bello hostibus, in otio civibus infestissimus quietisque impatientissimus* 2.23.1.

hardly seems favourable. It may be that the historian feared that through Sejanus' ambitions Rome could slip back into the chaos of the late Republic, which in his narrative unbounded leaders, like Marius, represented.

3.4: Just One *Adiutor*?

It may be that Velleius wished that, if Tiberius were to share his responsibilities and powers, he should do so with a variety of people. As we saw in Ch. 3.1, Tiberius indicated since the start of his principate his desire for rest, to delegate his authority and eventually to pass it on completely to both other individuals and the senate as a collective. He eventually settled upon Sejanus, much to the consternation of many. Velleius in return seems to be pointing out that there are a variety of men (or should have been from the *domus Augusta*) upon whom he could rely. This may be indicated in the employment of the word *adiutor*, “assistant.” As noted above, Velleius employs the word three times in the Sejanian chapters, a fact to which Woodman attaches great significance.⁴⁸ This unofficial position, with its powers and responsibilities, was a point upon which the historian was dwelling. Yet it is also a word which he used to describe the aid of other men to their princeps. The historian points out elsewhere that his own grandfather was an *adiutor* to Tiberius' father (2.76.1) and that his brother, Magius Celer Velleianus, Junius Blaesus and the two Drusi, the brother and son of the emperor, were *adiutores* to Tiberius (2.115.1; 2.125.5; 2.97.2; 2.129.3). In Velleius' history, Sejanus does

⁴⁸ Woodman 1975a: 301; 1977: 246-248.

not hold a monopoly on the adjutorship.

Indeed, in the chapter immediately after the two dedicated to Sejanus (2.129), our author lauds the efforts of the brothers Germanicus and Drusus, as well as the consular L. Pomponius Flaccus. Most telling, his emphasis is not so much on them, but on Tiberius' reliance on them and what he achieved through them. For Germanicus, Velleius mentions the great education which Tiberius gave him, especially in military affairs, and then how he received Germanicus back as “the ruler of Germany” (*domitorem recepit Germaniae!*, 2.129.2). A few sentences later (2.129.3), we again hear about the fanfare with which Tiberius sent him to the eastern provinces. As for Drusus, the historian announces “the great strength of [Tiberius'] plans” (*qua vi consiliorum suorum*, 2.129.3), by which the emperor “employed” Drusus as his “aid and assistant” (*ministro et adiutore usus Druso filio suo*). This wise move, Velleius explains, allowed the young man to employ “health-giving remedies” (*salubribus . . . medicamentis*) and to put an end finally to the “snake like” (*velut serpentem*) Maroboduus, the leader of the Pannonians. This is the man whose careful preparations for war had been so threatening to Rome that they made even Augustus' experienced soul quake and feel terror (2.110.6). Thus Drusus here is receiving high praise. It should be noted that medical terminology such as *salubribus medicamentis* was typical language in imperial ideology.⁴⁹ A good princeps sees to the health of the empire and applies remedies to the madness of men like Maroboduus.

More to the point, however, is the praise for Pomponius Flaccus (2.129.1), for though of consular rank, he is closer to Sejanus' station than Tiberius' two sons. After

⁴⁹ Woodman 2006: 320, 325; Wallace-Hadrill 1981: 309.

praising Tiberius' great foresight (*qua . . . prudentia*) in the handling of the Thracian king Rhascupolis' treachery, Velleius moves on to Pomponius' role in the affair. Tacitus tells us that the king had murdered his brother Cotys and seized his kingdom, thus ending Augustus' careful division of that powerful land (*Ann.* 2.65-67). Pomponius, a friend of both Rhascupolis and Tiberius, travelled to Thrace and encouraged him to come to Rome, thus bringing a bloodless end to the situation (*Tac. Ann.* 2.66; *Suet. Tib.* 42, 37). Velleius' attention is on Tiberius' "use" of Pomponius' "remarkable services" (*singulari . . . usus opera Flacci Pomponii*) and also his upstanding character. He trumpets that he is "a man born for everything that must be done uprightly" (*virī nati ad omnia quae recte facienda sunt*) and that he was "always meriting more glory than he took due to his straightforward virtue" (*simplicique virtute <magis> merentis semper quam captantis gloriam!*). In other words, this is the right type of man that Tiberius should be relying on: skilled and selfishly dedicated to the *res publica*. He does not rock the boat, but helps to steady it.

As the first topic of chapter 2.129, this episode is in apposition to Sejanus' chapters and so begs comparison. But with the examples of all three men, it seems clear that the historian wished Tiberius to use a variety of men both from his family and from the senate. Velleius spotlights both Tiberius' use of them and their successes. For Sejanus, he only does the former; he does not mention a single activity of his, let alone an accomplishment, not even where the narrative provides an occasion. Furthermore, this constant praise of Germanicus and Drusus also serves to spotlight the void which their deaths have left the empire. It reinforces the anxiety in his plea for successors at the end

of the history.

3.5 The *Legati*: Velleius' Ideal *Adiutores*

That Velleius wanted Tiberius to lean on a plurality of eminent men may be further detected in his many praises of *legati*. They form an indirect but, I believe, intentional critique of Sejanus. As we saw in Ch. 2.1 with M. Lepidus and Sentius Saturninus, and just above with Pomponius Flaccus (Ch. 3.4), Velleius regularly shows them interacting with their princeps. He gives the commands and they execute them with admirable skill and loyalty. Our author presents them, in other words, as models for the proper way to act under the Principate. Outside of Sejanus, Agrippa and Maecenas, and the other ten *novi homines* in the Sejanus chapters, our author favourably comments on twenty-two Roman men in the Tiberian narrative.⁵⁰ The majority are *legati*, former consuls and praetors, all of whose ranks Velleius makes a point to name or at least strongly suggest. They are shown labouring at their posts for the princeps and *res publica*. Velleius praises their virtue, care, sense of duty, faith, ancient morals or their straightforwardness. Many he indicates by specific word choices as examples to follow.⁵¹

⁵⁰ This is in addition to just naming them. In total he gives 118 names in the Principate narrative (see the appendix) outside of Augustus and Tiberius. Thirteen are members of the *domus Augusta*, eighteen are princes and kings, either enemies or clients of Rome. Of the remaining eighty-seven Romans, eighty-four are men, almost all of high rank. Twenty-eight people of all backgrounds from Rome's past are mentioned as temporal markers, to provide lineage or to provide a (often moral) comparison to present events. And not including Maecenas, Sejanus, Agrippina or Nero Caesar, fifteen are Roman men who receive some type of moral condemnation from Velleius in addition to the twenty-two positive evaluations (see the appendix).

⁵¹ Velleius favourably calls eight personages or their actions admirable (*mirus*), renowned (*celeber*) or an example (*exemplum*, 2.88.3; 2.92.5; 2.104.2 [*bis*]; 2.112.2; 2.114.5; 2.116.2; 2.119.4; 2.125.5). Two further examples are Calpurnius Caelius who is reported to have performed a *facinus praeclarum* (2.120.6)

In other words, similar to Agrippa, they follow normal careers, are dedicated to the *res publica* and are skilled.

One example is chapter 2.116, which is dedicated to extolling six *legati* who have commanded men in war, especially the Pannonian and Dalmatian War. It lauds their virtues, their service on behalf of the *res publica*, the honours they received or would have received if they had the opportunity, especially the *ornamenta triumphalia*. It reads like a list. At the head is a brief commendation of Germanicus' efforts in the war (2.116.1). As Tiberius' son and a commander in his own right, I suggest that his presence at the top of the list is supposed to indicate the ideal relationship between the *domus Augusta* and the senatorial class. The whole chapter concludes the narrative of the war started in 2.110. Almost sixty percent of this section is dedicated to the description of Tiberius' virtues and successes.⁵² Thus even Germanicus is signalled as fulfilling a leading role, but one subordinate to that of Tiberius. He is the princeps' (step) son and in 2.116 we also hear of a father of one *legatus* and a son of another. There is, therefore, an idea of generation and perpetuation. The ideal relationship will go on. Tiberius himself is mentioned at the end of the chapter with a reference to his great friendship with one *legatus*. The *domus Augusta* is thus present at the start and end, as if embracing these men. Velleius seems to be suggesting that the Principate both supports and needs them. It is worth quoting the chapter in full, for only in this way do we get a sense of the enthusiasm of the historian's description and the points upon which he lays stress. By

and Cossus Cornelius Lentulus who is not only said to be *celeber* but to have "a name as a testament of his victory" (*victoriae testimonium cognomen*, 2.116.2). See the appendix for additional examples.

⁵² The percentage is roughly 58.2%. There are 141 lines in total for these six chapters. Tiberius controls the narrative of 82. The percentage includes 2.116 (twenty-one lines) and its many *legati*.

highlighting their names, ranks, achievements and honours, it is probable that Velleius wished to demonstrate the influence that one can still wield in the *res publica* through a more normal and structured career under Tiberius.

*Magna in bello Delmatico experimenta virtutis in multos ac difficiles locos praemissus Germanicus dedit; celebri etiam opera diligentique Vibius Postumus, vir consularis, praepositus Delmatiae ornamenta meruit triumphalia; quem honorem ante paucos annos Passienus et Cossus, viri quibusdam *** diversis virtutibus celebres, in Africa meruerant; sed Cossus victoriae testimonium etiam in cognomen filii contulit, adulescentis in omnium virtutum exempla geniti. at Postumi operum L. Apronius particeps illa quoque militia eos quos mox consecutus est honores excellenti virtute meruit.*

Utinam non maioribus experimentis testatum esset quantum in omni re Fortuna posset! sed in hoc quoque genere abunde adnosci vis eius potest. nam et Aelius Lamia, vir antiquissimi moris et priscam gravitatem semper humanitate temperans, in Germania Illyricoque et mox in Africa splendidissimis functus ministeriis, non merito sed materia adipiscendi triumphalia defectus est, et A. Licinius Nerva Silianus, P. Sili filius, quem virum ne qui intellexit quidem abunde miratus est, [ne]⁵³ nihil <quod> non optimo civi, simplicissimo duci superesset praeferens, immatura <morte> et fructu amplissimae principis amicitiae et consummatione evectae in altissimum paternumque fastigium imaginis defectus est. horum virorum mentioni si quis quaesisse me dicet locum, fatentem arguet; neque enim iustus sine mendacio candor apud bonos crimini est.

Having been sent first into many dangerous situations, Germanicus gave great proof of his virtue in the Dalmatian War. Likewise, Vibius Postumus, a consular man, having been placed in charge of Dalmatia, merited the *ornamenta triumphalia*, through his renowned and industrious labour, an honour which a few years earlier Passienus and Cossus had merited in Africa, renowned men due to certain opposite virtues . . . , and Cossus even applied the testament of his victory to the cognomen of his son, a

53 The text is very corrupt from *ne* to <morte> *et*. I am here following Woodman's suggested reading (1977: 185-186), who combines the ideas of several earlier editors. Watt, following earlier editors as well, obelises from *ne* to *perisset* (= *superesset*) as if every word is corrupt, but this seems excessive. I have taken *superesset* over the text's *perisset* on Woodman's argument (1977: 186) and also because it would be redundant with what must be *morte*. Elefante (1997: 493) also follows Woodman's emendations.

young man born [to be] the representative of all virtues. For his part, L. Apronius, a participant in Postumus' deeds, merited in that military campaign the honours, which he did soon obtain by his excellent virtue.

Would that it had not been shown by great proofs, how much influence Fortune has in every affair. But on this level also her force can be amply recognised. For Aelius Lamia even, a man of the most ancient character and who always tempers venerable dignity with kindness, though he performed the most splendid works in Germany, Illyrium and afterwards in Africa, fell short of achieving the *ornamenta triumphalia*, not by merit but by opportunity. And A. Licinius Nerva Silianus, the son of P. Silius, whom someone who does not even know him admires abundantly, who did not prefer anything had it not even been sufficient for the most upright citizen and most straightforward general, by a premature death failed [to enjoy] both the fruit of a very great friendship with the princeps and the consummation of a grandeur raised to the most high pinnacle of his father.

If someone should say that I have sought out the opportunity [to] mention these great men, that person will be disclosing [what I freely] acknowledge. For justified candour without lies about upright men is not a crime.

Woodman explains that the last sentence addresses the historical *topos* that it is dangerous to praise one's contemporaries. It may incite *invidia* amongst the audience.⁵⁴ Velleius is making it clear that he chooses to ignore this possibility, which at the same time indicates the importance he gives to this chapter. His profession of “justified candour without lies” only furthers this point. He seems to be marking this passage as one the reader should carefully consider. But what does he want us to consider? An obvious answer is the many mentioned virtues, successes and honours, but this does not quite seem to be everything. Specifically, it appears that he wants to underscore that these virtues, successes and honours are well recognised and thus genuine. Notice the repetition

⁵⁴ Woodman 1977: 187.

of the words “proofs” (*experimenta* x 2), “examples” (*exempla*), “renowned” (*celeber* x 2), “merited” (*meruit* x 4), “admired” (*miratus*) and “testimony” (*testimonium*). He is not just content this time to relate attributes or even achievements, but seems earnest to underscore that everyone acknowledges them as true. Another point of emphasis is that concerning A. Licinius Nerva Silianus (cos. AD 7, 2.116.4). He receives the most space and he is only one of two characters whose four names Velleius gives in the surviving text, P. Scipio Africanus Aemilianus being the other (2.4.2).⁵⁵ Moreover, this is the third time that his father, P. Silius, is mentioned. Earlier he (along with C. Antistius) is named for having brought an end to brigandage in the Spanish provinces after Augustus had paved the way by ending the major wars there (2.90.4; cf. 2.83.3). The son, Silianus, thus already had a family history of working in tandem with his princeps. Back at 2.116.4, our author tells us that as a citizen he was “the most upright” and as a leader he was “the most straightforward.” As with Cicero, Velleius' admiration is clear. It is a character sketch that cannot be more opposite to Sejanus'. But similar to Sejanus, Silianus would have achieved eminence in the state like his father due to his close relationship with Tiberius, had he not died. This is the type of man on whom Tiberius could have relied. He, along with the five other *legati*, was already a senator and successful leader. When we place this chapter beside the Sejanian ones, one cannot help but notice where Velleius' sympathies rest.

Therefore, as Hellegouarc'h avers, it seems clear that Velleius preferred those who were selflessly devoted to the *res publica* and who worked in a system and progressed by

⁵⁵ Woodman 1977: 185.

that system. Specifically, he preferred those who fulfilled official civic offices and held important military commands. The system then could be trusted restrain them, for there were many such *legati*. Power and personal influence within the senatorial class would be dispersed and thus Rome's illustrious men would act as checks on each other. It is a theory of government somewhat close to that of the Republic, with its multiple magistrates and different political institutions (Polyb. 6.11-18).⁵⁶ As Velleius relates it, however, that system failed due to the immorality and infighting of its leaders (Ch. 1.5). So if we try to read into his words, the system of the Principate works because not only do Rome's many influential families check each other, but Tiberius and the *domus Augusta* are outside the system and above it. They regulate it. When we take into account Velleius' comments in the Sejanian chapters that "it concerns the *res publica* since in practice it is necessary that one be prominent due to rank and that his utility be fortified with the authority" (2.127.2), then a major source of Velleius' anxiety seems clear. As commander of the Praetorian Guard and Tiberius' trusted *adiutor* Sejanus wielded enormous power. His use of power was unpredictable, and, if we can trust the later historians, violent. Velleius concentrated on Tiberius' virtues as a check to his powers, but with the aged emperor on Capri, what was checking Sejanus?⁵⁷ In this light,

56 Millar 1984b: esp. 2, 8-9; Wirszubski 1950: 111, 114.

57 This theory is compatible with Newbold's idea that Velleius' history betrays a "need for achievement" in the author. He finds that the historian has a concern for rank, originality, honours earned by toil, practical efficiency and especially new men who have had to rise through the ranks on their own merits (1988:95-97). He concludes (1988: 97-98) that Velleius "appreciated the stability of the system that checked the domination of the old aristocracy or the power hungry and yet permitted elevation via merit." How this works with Newbold's argument that Velleius respected "trailblazers" (1988: 97), which would seem like a destabilising force, is unclear. Nonetheless, the basic statement above certainly seems applicable to what has been discussed here concerning the Sejanian chapters.

Hellegouarc'h's thesis that Velleius was a supporter and indeed proud of Sejanus is just not tenable. As he himself avers, Velleius had great respect for the traditional hierarchy.⁵⁸

I would suggest that Velleius feared that Sejanus' powers were growing to be too much like the princeps' own, a point which Dio claims Tiberius shared at this time (58.4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 13.1). Our author makes it clear how closely aligned their powers were when he comments that Tiberius holds Sejanus "in all matters" (*in omnia*, 2.127.3) as his "singular" (*singularem*) assistant "for all the burdens that come with being princeps" (*principalium onerum adiutorem*). The word *singularis* is one of those malleable words that can be read in several ways depending on one's perspective. It can suggest that Sejanus is uniquely suited for the job, but it also shines a spotlight on the fact that he is the one person on whom Tiberius is relying. And this spotlight corresponds with the many princeps-like honours which Sejanus increasingly enjoyed throughout the Twenties,⁵⁹ and, if Velleius knew of them when writing, with the *adiutor's* betrothal to a niece of Tiberius and his impending co-consulship with the princeps in 31 (Tac. *Ann.* 6.8, 6.27; Suet. *Tib.* 65; Dio Cass. 57.20.2; 58.3.9, 4.3, 6.2, 7.4, 8.3). As emperor, Tiberius had only shared the consulship beforehand with recognised heirs, Germanicus and Drusus.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Hellegouarc'h 1980: 153.

⁵⁹ Many imperial like honours were voted to Sejanus in 30 and 31. If we can trust the later historians, his birthday was publicly celebrated, the senate had voted to greet him as he entered Rome, gilded chairs were set up in the theatres for both men and bronze or golden images of him were honoured in many places, "as with those of Tiberius," Dio says (ὡςπερ καὶ ταῖς τοῦ Τιβερίου, 58.4.3-4, 11.2; Suet. *Tib.* 65; Tac. *Ann.* 5.6). All of these rumours do not have to be accurate nor did Velleius need to have known of them all when writing to be concerned, as the trend had been developing since the early twenties (Dio Cass. 57.21.3-4; Tac. *Ann.* 3.29).

⁶⁰ *EJ* 53 = *ILS* 6044; *EJ* 50a; Seager 1972: 213; Levick 1976: 170.

3.5 *Princeps Seianus?*

That the historian was anxious about this situation may perhaps be seen in his use of the words *onus*, *tutela* and *experire* in the Sejanian chapters. At the end of 2.128.4, Velleius refers to Tiberius as “testing” Sejanus (*ad experiendum Seianum*), to Sejanus lightening the princeps' “burdens” (*ad levanda . . . onera principis*, a point repeated from 2.127.3) and also to the *adiutor* taking over the “guardianship” of the empire's security (*in tutelam securitatis*). These are ideas which beforehand Velleius had associated with Tiberius and other members of the *domus Augusta*. As we saw in Ch. 1.1, early on he had established the young Tiberius' place in the narrative and indeed the empire by noting that Augustus had “resolved to test him” with the war against the Raeti and the Vindelici (2.95.1). The point helped to mark the general as Augustus' natural successor. As for *onus*, we had earlier heard that Augustus assigned to Drusus, Tiberius' brother, the *onus* and *cura* of the German war (2.97.2) and that Tiberius was praised for seeing to the *cura* of his troops, on top of all his other “great burdens” (*tantorum onerum*, 2.114.1). Similarly, the *tutela imperii* is said to be Tiberius' charge, when it “led him back” (*reduxit*) to fight a later German war (2.105.3).

It will be recalled too that Velleius titles Tiberius the *vindex*, *custos*, *patronus* and *princeps optimus* of the empire (2.75.3; 2.104.2; 2.120.1), which again implies the princeps' ideal role in the empire. The historian presents Tiberius alone as having these responsibilities and, as we have seen, the one person capable of managing them. With the

awkward and mixed review that he gives Sejanus, Velleius then just may have been hinting at the dangers of allowing this *eques* to gain control of what are imperial prerogatives. He does not even relate a single achievement of the *adiutor*'s that would warrant such a position. If we compare these inferences to Velleius' picture of the universal consensus of Tiberius' principate, a picture that is based on belief in his virtues and in the safety and peace that he alone can bring, then it would seem that the historian feared that Sejanus could be in fact undercutting the foundation of the *domus Augusta*'s popular support.

Woodman has expertly demonstrated that these two chapters are completely separate from the rest of the narrative in that Velleius offers no segue from 2.126 to 2.127 nor from 2.128 to 2.129. Instead 2.129 picks up immediately from where 2.126 left off.⁶¹ This does not mean, however, that we should treat these two chapters in isolation.⁶² They are buttressed on either side by a panegyric to Tiberius after all. The princeps surrounds his *adiutor* and thus they are still closely connected. We should see these two chapters instead as a silent commentary on the emperor as well as on Sejanus. The lack of conjunctions would suggest the space Velleius desires to see between them.⁶³

61 Woodman 1975a: 299; 1977: 234, 247, 249. As Woodman observes, *sed proposita quasi universa principatus Ti. Caesaris <imagine>* (2.129.1) refers back to the first half of the Tiberian panegyric (2.126).

62 Woodman, however, seems to suggest that the Sejanian chapters were quick and ill thought out additions ("The section is clearly inserted to meet an immediate need, to counter contemporary criticisms of Tiberius. But both style and structure suffer;" 1977: 247, see also 1975a: 299-300). He adds that the ring composition of the two chapters further isolates them from the narrative. But these ideas seem to go against his own thesis of a work well written over a long period of time and published before 30. Also Sejanus had possessed great influence since the early twenties, so Velleius could have become concerned at any point in this period. Moreover, he could have placed these two chapters at many different points in the Tiberian narrative, but he chose this place presumably for specific reasons.

63 Hellegouarc'h agrees with Woodman that the two chapters are detached and inserted but asserts that this is meant to draw attention to them and not to betray anxiety (1980: 152, cf. 144-145). This

interpretation is dependent upon his other arguments regarding the two chapters which I hope to have proven untenable.

Chapter 4: Velleius' Anxieties: the Negative Conclusion

4.1 The Last Chapter and a Half

That Velleius desired increased distance between *adiutor* and princeps, and indeed that Tiberius reassert his authority, may be seen in the final chapter and a half of the history (2.130.3-131). In the middle of an extended laudation of Tiberius' rule (2.129-2.130.2), he suddenly turns melancholic: “if either nature suffers it or the mediocrity of men allow it, I dare to complain to the gods” (*si aut natura patitur aut mediocritas recipit hominum, audeo cum deis queri*, 2.130.3). In an allusion to the treason trials, he asks what Tiberius did to “merit” the crimes of Drusus Libo, C. Silius and Cn. Calpurnius Piso, despite his efforts on the behalf of the latter two (*alterius dignitatem constituit, auxit alterius*). He asks what he did to merit the loss of his son Drusus and step-son Germanicus. Passing from the lamentable to the shameful (*dolenda adhuc . . . veniendum ad erubescenda*, 2.130.4), Agrippina, he says, caused Tiberius' heart to burn and Nero, her son, “forced him to grieve, be offended and to redden” (*pectus eius flagravit incendio quod ex nuru, quod ex nepote dolere indignari erubescere*

coactus est!). Coming to the death of his mother Livia that same year, Velleius eulogises her eminence (*eminentissima*, 2.130.5) and moderation: “No one sensed her power unless either it was in the alleviation of danger or the increase of rank” (*cuius potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis*). Finally, he concludes the work with a prayer to the gods (*voto finiendum volumen est*, 2.131.1). He invokes Jupiter, Mars, Vesta and the other deities who have been responsible for Rome's rise. He begs them to “guard, watch over and protect this constitution, peace and emperor (*custodite servate protegite hunc statum, hanc pacem, <hunc principem>*). Finally, once Tiberius has completed his “very long” mortal post, successors are sought, as far into the future as possible of course, but “whose shoulders are as sufficient at powerfully sustaining the command of the world, as we have found his to have been sufficient” (*eique functo longissima statione mortali destinate successores quam serissimos, sed eos quorum cervices tam fortiter sustinendo terrarum orbis imperio sufficiant quam huius suffecisse sensimus*, 2.131.2).

The problem with interpreting this last chapter and a half is of course that Velleius is so succinct. He does specify his subjects, but he only briefly describes them in subjective terms. We are receiving his official position but not the thoughts and motivations that led him to choose the topics he did. One's first inclination is to dive into the works of Tacitus, Dio and Suetonius to help reconstruct the context within which our author may have been writing. A stack of modern studies, particularly on the development of Roman law, may be advisable too. This I do, but only to a limited extent,

for a danger is present. With Velleius' words being so veiled and emotional, one can twist them to fit the interpretations of whichever authors upon whom one decides to rely. To get an idea of his intentions – and an “idea” is all one can get – it seems best to remain mostly within the world he has created. The text has a running logic and the conclusion is its fulfilment. Thus I will compare how he presents Tiberius here with his earlier portrait, focussing on the shift in tone and how he works with the expectations, motifs and *topoi* that he has led his reader to expect and encouraged to believe. The Rhodian retreat will be an especial point of comparison.

4.2 The Shift in Tone

The first thing that strikes the reader is the negativity. The change from the narrative's previous positivity, indeed enthusiasm, is abrupt. Chapters 2.129-130.2 continue the panegyric to Tiberius from 2.126. The first sentence of 2.129 announces that these chapters form an overview of Tiberius' “principate” (*universa principatus Tiberii Caesaris <imagine>*, 2.129.1). He trumpets the emperor's foresight against the Thracian enemy Rhascupolis (2.129.1), his diligent conduct as senator and judge (2.129.1), the education he gave to Germanicus and the victories he enjoyed through the agency of both Germanicus and Drusus (2.129.2-3). He vaunts his careful and prudent generosity to senators, the plebs and to the eastern provinces (2.129.3; 2.130.2). He acclaims the magnificence of the buildings he erected (2.130.1) and, finally, the foresight and calm

with which he handles the conscription of troops (2.130.2). Then suddenly at 2.130.3 Velleius becomes grave and pessimistic. The transition is brief. He mentions the “nature” and “mediocrity” of men (*natura . . . mediocritas . . . hominum*), two words whose senses are not necessarily pessimistic, but the tone is confirmed by the subsequent announcement that he “dares to complain to the gods” (*audeo cum deis queri*). Indeed, he labels 2.130.3 as “things to be lamented” (*dolenda*), 2.130.4 as “things to blush over” (*erubescenda*), and he introduces 2.130.5 as the “sickness of his [Tiberius] time” (*cuius temporis aegritudinem*). The scandals of Agrippina and Nero broke in 29, as well as the death of Livia. But the treason trials of Libo, Piso and Silius concluded in 16, 20 and 28 respectively. Thus the pessimism that Velleius feels does not stem just from the last few years but, it seems, almost the whole principate of Tiberius. That being said, he signals that he is concentrating on the last three years when he moans: “with what great griefs, M. Vinicius, have these last three years lashed his soul!” (*quantis hoc triennium, M. Vinici, doloribus laceravit animum eius!*, 2.130.4).

The complaints to the gods, as Woodman observes, serve to introduce the *votum* of 2.131.¹ The concluding prayer is a natural development from the depressing subject matter of the previous half chapter.² It is unique in extant Latin historiography, a fact which alone implies the amount of anxiety that Velleius was feeling. But we must be careful, as concluding *vota* are not totally unknown in imperial panegyrics, though they are found in but a small minority.³ Velleius' prayer has a dual origin from emergency *vota*

1 Woodman 1977: 272.

2 Woodman 1977: 275-276.

3 I know of three and one is not even a proper panegyric. The first is in Pliny's panegyric to Trajan, where he calls upon Jupiter Capitolinus (*Pan.* 94.1) as in Velleius. The second is at the end of the twelfth

made in times of crisis and stress⁴ and from those annually offered at Rome on 3 January to the health of the *res publica* and emperor.⁵ The structure of the prayer at 2.131 accentuates the author's urgent tone. Right at the start, the gerundive accompanied by the verb *esse* implies urgency: the work “must” be finished with a prayer (*voto finiendum volumen est*, 2.131.1). The gods whom he beseeches are among the most fundamental to the identity of the Roman state and *domus Augusta*, Jupiter, Mars and Vesta and the other deities who have raised Rome “to the greatest summit of the world.” His concern for the state can be seen in the epithets he gives.⁶ Specifically, he beseeches Jupiter “Capitolinus,” who recalls the temple and state religion at the heart of Roman society and who was responsible for both the emperor's and the *res publica*'s sovereignty.⁷ He calls upon Mars Gradivus⁸ “the founder and stay of the Roman name” (*et auctor ac stator Romani Nominis*), which recalls both his paternal role in the beginning of Rome's history and his current role in the imperial ideology of victory. Mars may have even symbolised the border between the chaos of the external world and the order of the internal.⁹ Finally, he invokes Vesta “the guardian of the perpetual flame,” an epithet that recalls her central

panegyric (*Pan. Lat.* 26.1-4). And the third is in a consular letter to the emperors Pupienus and Balbinus quoted in the *Historiae Augustae* (*Max.* 17.8-9). It is not an official panegyric, but it does utilise the language and *topoi* of that genre.

4 van Straten 1981: 81, 88-102, esp. 96-97; Versnel 1980: 562-567; Fowler 1911: 204-205; Daly 1950: 164; for some Republican examples see Livy 7.40.5, 8.9, 22.10, 36.23.

5 Daly 1950: 164-168; Reynolds 1962: 33-35.

6 Woodman 1977: 277-280.

7 *RE* 6.1112-1114 (Brill's English trans.); *LTUR* 3.144-148; Richardson, *Topog.* 68-70, 221-224.

8 The epithet Gradivus is of disputed origin. Scullard (1981: 85) relates that it may be derived from *gradus* and thus means “the marching god,” but he observes that scholars often do not accept the explanation.

9 *RE* 8. 398-400 (Brill's English trans.). The cult of Mars Ultor, so essential to Augustus' ideology and victories could not have been far from Velleius' mind. Rich 1998: 79-97.

role in preserving Rome's security and permanency.¹⁰ The historian implores their help not once but three times to “guard, watch over and protect this state, this peace” and, presumably, “this princeps.” The text is corrupt, but “princeps” seems to be the natural conclusion since the phrase that follows – *functo longissima statione mortali* – would seem to demand a preceding noun describing a human male. Three nouns, according to Woodman, would also provide balance to the three gods and is typical of Velleius' style.¹¹

Repetitions such as this one are common to the panegyric and *votum* traditions, but I have not been able to find an example that applies it so densely.¹² The demonstrative adjectives, meanwhile, clarify his fears somewhat. *Hunc statum* refers to the current form of government and thus the *principatus* and *statio* created by Augustus (2.124.2) and maintained by Tiberius (2.129.1 for *principatus* and 2.131.2 for *statio*). This would be confirmed if the emendation of *hunc principem* is correct. “This peace” (*hanc pacem*) is the peace, calm, tranquillity and security which he wrote were the hopes of all men as the Romans celebrated Tiberius' return from Rhodes (2.103.5). As will be recalled, these hopes, along with the hopes for children, the sanctity of marriage and the security of patrimonies, are what the historian implies form the basis for the Principate's universal

¹⁰ RE 16.130-131.

¹¹ Woodman 1977: 281. Moreover, the twelfth panegyric “begs and asks” that that an unnamed god (Jupiter or God?) “watch over this princeps [Constantine]” (*oramus et quaesumus ut hunc . . . principem serves*, 26.1)”

¹² The best parallel which I have found is the conclusion to Cicero's prosecution of Verres. There he beseeches thirteen gods whose temples Verres had impiously robbed. The relevance to Velleius, however, is not so much in the list of gods for they were predetermined by Verres' actions, but by the fact that Cicero decided to end this important prosecution with a prayer. He calls upon the gods to take their revenge on the man, to testify to the sincerity of his prosecution and to help ensure that the jurors reach the right verdict (*Verr.* 2.5.72.184-189). It is a dramatic and impressive conclusion, which greatly adds to the impact to the entire oration. The connection between these two works has not been made, as far as I know, and I hope to explore this matter in my future work.

support in the empire. By begging the gods' intervention, he definitely seems to be hinting that something is wrong with the very fabric of Roman society and government. As suggested in the introduction (0.2), he inserted this negativity and final prayer at risk to himself, for an influential person may take offence. The risk then is highly suggestive of the degree of anxiety he felt. One specific reason he notes at the end of the prayer: the succession problem.

The final *votum*, however, may not only betray Velleius' anxieties, but its very existence may also help us to narrow in on the source. We may do this by taking into account the three prior *vota* mentioned in the Principate narrative. In his panegyric, Augustus is said to be equal to any *votum* to the gods in the benefactions that he can grant: “there was nothing that men could hope for from the gods, nothing men could prefer from the gods, nothing that could be conceived in a *votum*, nor accomplished by luck, which Augustus did not realise” (*nihil deinde optare a diis homines, nihil dii hominibus praestare possunt, nihil voto concipi, nihil felicitate consummari, quod non Augustus post reditum in urbem rei publicae populoque Romano terrarumque orbi repraesentaverit*, 2.89.2). At 2.103.5 the people lift their hands into the air and pronounce prayers in thanksgiving for Tiberius' return from Rhodes to lead the empire. As noted just above, now all their hopes are secured.

The third mention is more complicated. The context is the anxiety of the senate and people at Augustus' death, their struggle to have the hesitating Tiberius succeed him and his subsequent display of skill and moderation during the mutinies of the lower Rhine

and Pannonian legions. To introduce the crisis, the historian proclaims: “the *res publica* got at once the reward of its *votum* and plan” (*tulit protinus et voti et consilii sui pretium res publica*, 2.125.1). The *votum* and plan of the *res publica* plainly refer to the succession and the word *pretium* nails down the sense which we are to take from this phrase. Tiberius is being called a “reward,” “profit,” a sort of windfall that the people reaped from their investment in him (the prayer and plan). Their *votum* thus occurred before he agreed and due to the great fear Velleius describes after Augustus' passing, it can only be an emergency *votum*. The historian begins the episode with the remark: “we come to the time in which there was the greatest fear” (*venitur ad tempus in quo fuit plurimum metus*, 2.123.1). He relates that “men were scared” (*homines timuerint*, 2.124.1), that the senate suffered from “anxiety (*senatus trepidatio*), the people “confusion” (*populi confusio*), and the whole city “fear” (*urbis*¹³ *metus*). “We were at the border between salvation and destruction. . . . We had feared the ruin of the world” (*in quam arto salutis exitiique fuerimus confinio . . . cuius orbis ruinam timueramus*).

The shared themes of negativity and apprehension serve to link this prayer to the final one. The connection is aided by the repeated phrase *publice voce*. In both cases Velleius, in the first person, is claiming to speak on behalf of the *res publica* (*voce publica dixisse* <*satis*> *habeo*, 2.123.1; *publica voce obtestor atque precor*, 2.131.1).

13 There is debate here over whether the word is *urbis* or *orbis*. The *Editio Princeps* records *orbis*, which can make sense as the populace and senate would seem to cover Rome herself, while *Codice M*, the copy of the copy of the manuscript, records *urbis*. I here follow Watt, who prefers *urbis*, over Woodman and Elefante. I find *urbis* a satisfying and dramatic conclusion to the sentence. Velleius first deals with the two groups separately and now with *urbis* he brings them together and comments on their collective fear. Moreover, the word *orbis* is used in a similar manner later in that very section (*orbis ruinam timueramus*, 2.124.1). *Orbis* would be repetitive even if we take into account Velleius' style. He does tend to repeat words, but not with such similar meanings and imagery.

These points encourage the reader to compare the final *votum* to this earlier one and perhaps the others before it. The question that must arise then is, if the hopes he secured upon his return from Rhodes were an occasion for prayer, and if his succession was the answer to the prayer of the people and senate, why do we find another *votum* amidst seemingly renewed fear? As the *vota* are only associated with him and Augustus, the reason must have something to do with Tiberius.

If we return to the *dolenda* of 2.130.3, we can see that this point is indicated again. He demands from the gods “what he [Tiberius] did to merit” (*quid hic meruit*) the conspiracies of Libo, Piso and Silius and “what he did [to merit]” (*quid*) the deaths of his sons. The pleas are pathetic. The historian is not merely sympathising with his princeps, but taking his point of view. He conveys to the audience bewilderment, confusion and frustration at the turn Fate has given Tiberius. In the context of the Tiberian narrative overall, the message seems to be that Tiberius' conduct as general and princeps warranted something better. His unmatched skills, divine favour and virtues, which have secured Rome's peace, should have merited the loyalty of the former and the survival of the latter – the new generation of principes. At the end of the work he is thus contradicting, if subtly, the whole narrative of the Principate. After the long list of virtues and achievements in 2.126 and 2.129-130.2, the naming of Libo, Piso and Drusus is a reminder that he in fact does not enjoy universal support. Moreover, there is an implication in these words that his virtues are not working as Velleius suggested that they should earlier in the narrative. Whereas before they overcame the irrational “madness” of

the enemy (Ch. 1.4), now Velleius is lamenting the unmerited and thus irrational events that Tiberius is suffering. Furthermore, the historian's announced complaints to the gods, his very questioning, locates the responsibility with them. It is as if he is intimating that the good fortune which Tiberius, and Augustus before him, had so long enjoyed, has abandoned him. Fortuna and the gods' divine favour in general were an important aspect to imperial ideology. It demonstrated that the gods' beneficent plans were centred around the emperor. If our author was only interested in extolling the Principate, it is doubtful that he would have inserted these ideas.

So the question is, just as Velleius asks, what did Tiberius do to merit these tragedies?

4.3 The Nature of Velleius' Critique

I do not believe that this negative conclusion is an attack on Tiberius personally or the Principate – far from it. Rather, I see this last chapter and a half as a switch that turns the history into an act of encouragement or a correction, so that the *domus Augusta* may continue its leadership of the empire far into the future. His loyalty, in other words, rests firmly with the emperor and his family. This is a point that needs emphasis. In the first three sets of tragedies – the conspiracies, deaths of his sons and the shame brought on by Agrippina and Nero – the author unwaveringly takes Tiberius' position in these matters. The subject matter is extremely delicate. They touch on political issues and internal

matters of the princeps' family that could easily cause offence if handled tactlessly. In all three cases, the later historians find reason to lampoon Tiberius and even, in some cases, charge him with misconduct. But Velleius steers clear of all controversy.

When Tiberius condemned Agrippina and Nero in the senate by letter, for instance, which led to their exiles, Tacitus describes the plebs as incensed (*Ann.* 5.3). They continued to cheer Tiberius but they demonstrated outside the senate house and pronounced the letter a fake and Sejanus as the true author. The implication is that Tiberius had been manipulated (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 53-54). Meanwhile, the senators, he says, sat in “great fear and silence” (*magno senatus pavore ac silentio*) due to the implications of the letter. They hesitated to act, not wanting to deprive the emperor of a possible heir. Despite all this, Velleius, who was likely present, conforms his language to the reported content of the letter. As Velleius notes the misery (*miserrimum*) Agrippina caused Tiberius with her “hidden fire” (*abstruso . . . incendio*), Tiberius' letter, as reported indirectly by Tacitus, charges her with “an insubordinate mouth and an insolent spirit” (*adrogantiam oris et contumacem animum*). And where Velleius notes Nero forcing Tiberius to feel grief, indignation and to blush, the letter alleges “youthful [male] lovers and shamelessness” (*amores iuvenum et impudicitiam*).

The deaths of his sons hardly require further discussion. For Germanicus and Drusus, Velleius is expressing the sentiments normal for a parent who loses a child, despite the fact that the later authors occasionally do find room to allege that Tiberius was unmoved by Drusus' passing (Suet. *Tib.* 52, Tac. *Ann.* 4.7-8, cf. Dio Cass. 57.22.3) and

delighted or even behind Germanicus' (Tac. *Ann.* 3.2, 3.4-5, 3.9, 3.16; Suet. *Tib.* 52; Dio Cass. 57.6.2). His careful choice of expression and topic, however, is most evident with the *scelerata consilia* of Drusus Libo, Piso and Silius. They represent the gravest treason trials of Tiberius' principate up to AD 31. Again the later historians find ample room to blame Tiberius, as well as Sejanus, for a variety of crimes and vices. But let us take a step back and look at some of the facts. These are three cases that qualified under the traditional definition of treason.¹⁴ For Libo it was conspiracy “against the health of Tiberius Caesar, his freedmen and other chief men of the state and the *res publica*.”¹⁵ For Silius it was collusion with the enemy, cognizance of seditious actions and extortion of his province (Tac. *Ann.* 4.19), and for Piso it was disobeying a superior, bribery of troops, and incitement of mutiny and civil war (Tac. *Ann.* 3.12; *SCPP* II. 30-39, 45-46, 52-57).

These are cases that were safe to handle, for the trials involved well established definitions of treason (as opposed to defamation of the emperor) and, as we will see, guilt had been well established or, at least, was widely believed. Libo could not even find someone to defend him (Tac. *Ann.* 2.29). With (perhaps) all three a threat of armed conflict existed. Suetonius (*Tib.* 25) perhaps links Libo to “a force not to be disregarded,” which Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.40) reports did not only comprise slaves and Italians but Roman equestrians, senators and even members of the *domus Augusta*.¹⁶ (It should be noted,

¹⁴ Bauman 1967: 19-23. See Bauman (1974: 1-13, esp. 1) for a succinct definition of the difference between the traditional grounds for treason and the new grounds added during the Principate.

¹⁵ *de salute Ti. Caes. liberorumque eius et aliorum principum civitatis de(que) r.p.*, *EJ* p. 52 = *CIL* 1, p. 243. For an account of the trial see Tac. *Ann.* 2.27-32; Suet. *Tib.* 25; Dio Cass. 57.15.4-5.

¹⁶ The literary sources are unclear about the nature of Libo's conspiracy. Suetonius is the only one who hints at a link between Libo and a force that Agrippa Postumus' former slave, Clemens, was able to attract in AD 15 and early in 16. But Levick (1976: 150-151), following Rogers (1935: 22), lays out a convincing case for joining the two plots. For Clemens' actions see also Seager (1972: 93). Besides, this

however, that Tacitus in no way connects Libo to this force, but see the comments in n.

16.) Silius had recently completed a seven year term with a major victory as *praefectus* of the powerful Upper Rhine legions (Tac. *Ann.* 3.45-46) and must still have had great influence among them. As well, Tacitus reports that Tiberius was particularly upset at Silius' boast that he was the one who had secured the Principate for Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* 4.18).¹⁷ How this fits into the trial is unclear, but again it points to the idea that he held power over the princeps.¹⁸ Piso's crimes are the best known. Before Germanicus' death, he disobeyed his orders (Tac. *Ann.* 2.55, 2.57, 2.69; *SCPP* ll. 38-45) and seems to have tried to win the troops' loyalty away from Tiberius with largesses in his own name (Tac. *Ann.* 2.55, 2.80, 3.12, 3.14; *SCPP* ll. 53-56). After Germanicus' death, knowing that he was suspected, he attempted to reassert his claim over his former province of Syria and in particular, the legions, even causing Roman soldiers to fight Roman soldiers (Tac. *Ann.* 2.76, 2.78-81, 3.12; *SCPP* ll. 45-49). It is no wonder that the *senatus consultum* expresses a fear of renewed civil war (ll. 45).

These three cases stand out in other ways. All three committed suicide when their convictions seemed assured and, contrary to custom, Tiberius and the senate continued the trials to their conclusions anyway, at least for Libo and Piso (Tacitus leaves it unclear for Silius). Furthermore, in all three cases the seizure of at least a part of their estates was authorised, which again was contrary to tradition, as the self-inflicted penalty usually

would explain the *Fasti Anni Amiternini*'s otherwise exaggerated claims that Libo had threatened Tiberius, his household, leading men and the entire *res publica* (see above n. 15).

¹⁷ Seager 1972: 189-190.

¹⁸ A point well made by Bauman (1974: 116-118), but he gives it too much stress, wanting to make the case about defamation and not traditional treason.

protected the heirs' rights to the estate (Tac. *Ann.* 6.29; Dio Cass. 58.15.4; *Dig.* 48.2.20, 48.16.15.3, 48.4.11).¹⁹ But in addition to confiscation, senators proposed several days of thanksgiving and a public holiday for the conviction of Libo and further proposed that the name Drusus be forbidden to his family and that his image be barred from their future funerals (Tac. *Ann.* 2.32).²⁰ Piso too did not escape posthumous punishments. The *SCPP* records that women of his family were not to mourn him (ll. 73-75), that all statues and portraits of Piso were to be removed (ll. 75-76), that his family be urged to exclude his portrait from future funerals (ll. 76-82), that his name be erased from a statue of Germanicus (ll. 82-84), that the structure over the Porta Fontinalis connecting his two houses be torn down (ll. 105-108) and that Piso's property, except for an estate given by Augustus, was to be declared public and then returned to his sons and daughter, if his eldest son should change the *cognomen* he shared with his father (ll. 84-105).²¹ Bodel explains that in Piso's case such additional penalties are symbolic and aimed at reputation.²² The confiscation of property was primarily ceremonial; the heirs received most of it back. That Tiberius and the senate would take these extra steps beyond the death of the perpetrators reflects the sincere grief and stress which they felt. It was a way for order to reassert itself over the chaos created.²³

19 Griffin 1997: 261-263; Levick 1976: 189; Bauman 1974: 116-117. For a discussion of the fine legal points concerning the confiscation of goods see Chilton 1955: 79-81.

20 It is unknown if any of these motions were ever passed.

21 I use the convenient list compiled by Bodel (1999: 43). See Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.17-18), who only gives two posthumous punishments: the confiscation of property and the erasure of his name from public records.

22 Bodel 1999: 44, 59-60.

23 I tentatively argue that such actions are the legal versions of the "extreme *sympatheia*" outlined by Versnel (1980: 575) regarding the plebs' reaction to Germanicus' death. He argues that the stoning of temples, the exposure of babies and rejection of Lares recorded by Suetonius (*Calig.* 5) are indicative of the stress, alienation and despair that the people were feeling (1980: 575-577, 603-604, 609-612). For his evidence he relies too much on one passage in Suetonius, but comments in Tacitus (Tac. *Ann.* 2.82,

Due to some good fortune, inscriptions concerning the trials of Libo and Piso have survived. The fact that the time and expense was made to record the convictions permanently again reflects the seriousness with which the emperor and senate treated these cases and how seriously they wanted other people to take them.²⁴ Libo's is found in a brief inscription on the *Fasti Anni Amiternini*, so its impact is limited to Rome.²⁵ The *SCPP*, meanwhile, expressly states the senate and princeps' wish to have its findings transmitted to future generations and it orders that a copy in bronze be set up in the most frequented city of each province and in all winter quarters of the army (ll. 170-172). By inserting their names into his history, Velleius himself is taking part in the ritual. His language too is reminiscent of the inscriptions. The historian, as noted in Ch. 2.6, vilifies their crimes as *scelerata consilia*, "heinous plans." The *Fasti Anni Amiternini* similarly calls them *nefaria consilia*, or "abominable plans," while the *SCPP* characterises his plans as *nefaria* (l. 13, cf. l. 62) and his actions thrice as *scelera*, or "heinous acts" (ll. 18, 160, 167).

4.4 Livia and Tiberius: Like Mother Like Son

It may be worthwhile to recapitulate the points made so far. This chapter has

3.6, 3.14) and the *SCPP* (ll. 156-158) suggest that there is truth behind these extreme expressions of mourning.

24 Ando (2001: 97, 123-124) argues that the bronze medium increases an inscription's impact on viewers. Marble and especially bronze were the most official media for inscriptions because of their expense, the difficulty of inscribing and forgery and their sense of heaviness and permanency. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate a description of the *Fasti Anni Amiternini*.

25 *EJ* 52 = *CIL* 1, 243.

argued that 2.130.3-131 marks a sudden shift from positivity to negativity, that Velleius is anxious about the future, especially concerning the succession and Principate, and that he felt the problem to be centred around Tiberius somehow. Finally, the chapter has argued that the negative subjects represent serious issues about the welfare of the state and *domus Augusta* and that they are presented in a way that conforms to the official stance of the princeps and senate. It is a confusing situation. He expresses some doubt about the Principate and even Tiberius but strictly follows the official stances on issues, which indicates his profound loyalty to them. We still do not have an “idea” of his intentions.

We may detect a hint from Velleius' description of Livia. Earlier in the history, the author had acclaimed her beauty, eminence, sincerity, bravery and loyalty to the *domus Augusta* (2.75.3). He was obviously a great admirer,²⁶ so much so, it seems, that when he comes to mourn her passing at 2.130.5, his focus suddenly shifts. Tiberius is no longer the subject, but is only referred to at the very start of the section by means of a relative pronoun: the historian announces that Livia's passing “increased the sickness of his time” (*cuius temporis aegritudinem*). Next Livia becomes the subject and then the general Roman who must suffer the effects of her death. Tiberius is nowhere to be seen at this point. The full sentence reads: “The loss of [his] mother increased the sickness of his time; she [was] the most eminent woman, in everything more like the gods than men, whose power no one sensed unless either in the alleviation of danger or in the increase of rank” (*cuius temporis aegritudinem auxit amissa mater, eminentissima et per omnia deis quam hominibus similior femina, cuius potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi*

²⁶ Woodman 1977: 274.

aut accessione dignitatis).²⁷ The pronoun *nemo* thus becomes the final subject of the sentence. Its indefinite sense serves as an invitation to the reader to take this “no one’s” place. The historian, in fact, is asking his audience to ponder the impact of Livia’s loss, most specifically the void left by her beneficial influence. The use of power, for better or for worse, has been a consistent theme of Velleius’ entire narrative, especially with the princeps. So close to the end, it is brought up in a negative context of an absence. If her presence had lowered danger then her absence can only increase it. With the parallel enthusiasm of their portrayals, I suggest that the audience is supposed to see her as a metaphor for Tiberius.

4.5 The Rhodian Retreat Revisited

With that Velleius launches into his *votum* for the gods’ protection of the state, peace and, possibly, princeps. With the focus on Livia’s absence, I suggest that Velleius wants his readers to think of another absence, that of Tiberius. By the time the historian had published his history, Tiberius had been retired to the island of Capri off the Campanian coast at least three full years (depending on when the work was published). The princeps returned to the mainland occasionally, but he would never enter Rome again. Nowhere does Velleius directly address this retreat, but he does allude to it with

27 Again the language is similar to the *SCPP*. When discussing her intervention to have the charges waived against Piso’s wife, Plancina, the inscription praises “her many great favours towards men of every rank” (*multis magnisq(ue) erga cuiusq(ue) ordinis homines beneficis*, ll. 116-117) and for using her authority “most sparingly” (*parcissime*, l. 118), even though she does possess great influence and can get whatever she wants from the senate (*plurimum posse in eo, quod a senatu petere*<*t*>, ll. 117-118). Unsurprisingly, the monument also praises her *moderatio* (l. 133).

hoc triennium. As will be recalled, when he is about to describe the shameful deeds of Agrippina and Nero, Velleius proclaims: “with what great griefs, M. Vinicius, have these [last] three years lashed his soul!” (*quantis hoc triennium, M. Vinici, doloribus laceravit animum eius!*, 2.130.4). So far this comment on “three years” has piqued little interest with modern commentators,²⁸ but it can only be referring to the three years since he left for Capri in 26. Naturally, one would first think that it refers to the events that surround it in the chapter. Yet the treason trials for the conspirators were in 16, 20 and 24 respectively. Germanicus died in 19, Drusus in 23. Meanwhile, the events surrounding Agrippina, Nero and Livia all occurred in 29. There is nothing that fits the time frame of 27-29. The reference to three years then is inexplicable unless we take it as an oblique allusion to Tiberius' retreat.

Hoc triennium comes close to the middle of Velleius' various complaints to the gods.²⁹ It is surrounded by *scelerata consilia*, *dolenda*, *erubescenda*, *abstrusum incendium* and *aegritudo*. The historian is thus associating his pessimism with Tiberius' retreat. The association may be circumstantial, but I venture that it is not as weak as it may first appear. As was noticed in Ch. 1.6, Velleius discussed at length Tiberius' earlier retreat to Rhodes from 6 BC to AD 2, putting special emphasis on the problems which his

28 Woodman argues (1977: 272) that this chapter of woes is “more revealing in what it omits (e.g. Tiberius' departure to Capri in A.D. 26).” He does comment on *hoc triennium* (1977: 273), but only to say that it refers to the years 27-29. Similarly Elefante 1997: 541. Levick, meanwhile, (1976: 168-169) suggests that the “starting point” of the three years is the alleged conspiracy of Titius Sabinus, who was condemned by the senate on January 1, 28, but if true, he would have said so explicitly with the other treason trials. Also, this still leaves the better part of a year to account for. Textually the words are uncontested, so they are securely Velleian.

29 In the section 2.130.3-5 more than sixty-one words precede the *hoc triennium* (there is a small lacuna) and fifty-four words follow it.

withdrawal into private life caused the empire: the Parthians seized Armenia, Germany revolted (“after the eyes of their conqueror had turned away”), the young successors Gaius and Lucius Caesar died, Julia was caught in various, dangerous affairs, and M. Lollius proved himself to be a treacherous *legatus*. “The inhabited world,” the historian said, “sensed his departure from his guardianship of the city” (*sensit terrarum orbis digressum a custodia Neronem urbis*, 2.100.1). Increasing the link between these two points in the narrative is the similarity of the tragedies. Admittedly foreign wars are not mentioned in the final chapter and a half, but this period in Tiberius' principate was relatively quiet and, as argued in several places, Velleius seems more interested in domestic issues, particular social harmony, even when discussing Rome's wars against barbarians. Unsurprising then, between the two retreats we have three sets of matching internal problems. The *scelerata consilia* of Drusus Libo, Piso and Silius resemble the “treacherous acts” (*perfida*, 2.102.1) and cunning “plans” of M. Lollius (*subdoli ac versuti animi consilia*). The deaths of Drusus, Germanicus and Livia correspond to those of Gaius and Lucius, while the scandals of Agrippina and Nero equal those of Julia. This last connection is the strongest, for it is only at these two points in the history that our author dares to discuss the domestic embarrassments of the *domus Augusta*. Therefore, it seems certain that Velleius is connecting the current problems facing the empire with the princeps' Caprian retreat.

According to the historian, the only remedy in AD 2 was for Fortuna to “return to the *res publica* her protection” (*Fortuna . . . iam tum rei publicae sua praesidia*

reddiderat, 2.103.1). Only then, he suggested, were the people's hopes for security, peace and other basic necessities assured (2.103.5). At that point, the historian triumphantly announced that Tiberius' return from Rhodes occurred in the consulship of P. Vinicius (2.103.1). Now in AD 30, as he prepared to celebrate the consulship of Vinicius' son, M. Vinicius, with the dedication of this history, Velleius must have been hoping for the same stroke of fortune. This point is strengthened by the address in the second person to M. Vinicius in the same sentence as *hoc triennium*. This not only heightens the rapprochement between the two episodes, but as argued earlier (Ch. 1.4), such addresses in literature can serve as an invitation for the general reader to engage the text more personally, much like the *nemo* a few lines below. If the analysis of Livia's *epitaphion* is apt, then our author seems insistent that his audience carefully consider how these last three years had an impact on Rome. And if we accept the theory discussed in the introduction (0.1) that he is envisioning Tiberius as a reader, then this statement takes on even more import. He is attempting to get the emperor to reconsider his current place of residence for the health of the empire and *domus Augusta*. However, with his complaints to the gods one has to wonder how optimistic Velleius was.

Conclusion

To put it plainly, it seems that Velleius wished for Tiberius to return to Rome and active politics. We may be able to detect this point again with the *vota*. We find one in response to Tiberius' return from Rhodes celebrating the fulfilment of the people's hopes for peace and security, and at the end of the history we find another praying for the preservation of the state, peace and, possibly, princeps. The former suggests what would fulfil the latter. But beyond this fine point, the *vota* bring us to a broader observation: the fact that the Tiberius of Velleius' history does not match the Tiberius of AD 29/30. The *vota* which the historian notes for AD 2, as well as the one in 14, are connected to the many skills and virtues of the princeps and the benefits which his presence brings to the empire. As we have seen, from the start of the Tiberian narrative (Ch. 1.1) Velleius presents Tiberius as alone possessing the skills and divine support necessary to rule the empire.¹ But in particular he focuses on Tiberius' virtues: his *humanitas* which signifies

1 Pompey, meanwhile, is said to have “exceeded both his own *votum* and that of the people” in the war against Mithridates (*Pompeius suoque et civium voto maior*, 2.40.2). He not only defeated Mithridates, as was his charge, but invaded many other lands (Ch. 2.2). Beforehand, Velleius wonders “whether this was of greater glory or hardship” for the empire (*gloriae laborisne maioris incertum est*, 2.40.1) and immediately afterwards he reports the dread sweeping Rome at Pompey's return. Next we hear of Pompey's kingly actions and soon his great responsibility for the civil war (2.40.4). Thus here the historian is using the *votum* theme to intimate how Pompey could not properly apply his great authority.

his deep concern for his fellow human beings, his *conscientia*, the sense of right and wrong that guides his decisions, his *prudentia* and *providentia* which permit him to always make the right call, his *liberalitas* which aids those in need, his *pietas* which ensures that he lives up to Augustus' goals and standards, his *cura* that denotes his compassion, diligence and sense of responsibility, and his *moderatio* that makes him uniquely able to wield justly the power entrusted to him. These virtues explain why Tiberius is so effective in the field against barbarians, why he is so quick to react to any crisis and why he is so attentive to the needs of the individual citizen and the empire as a whole. It is for these, the historian suggests, that everyone enjoys peace, stability and the other benefits of a civilised state. They thus validate the titles which Velleius gives to him – “the perpetual patron of the Roman Empire” (2.120.1), “the guardian and protector of the empire” (2.104.2), the *princeps optimus* (2.126.5) – and why he says that the “safe keeping” of the empire is his charge (2.105.3).

Yet in 29/30, Tiberius had been on an island for three years in semi-retirement, communicating with the senate by letter only. For face-to-face contact, one seemingly had to write ahead of time and ask for permission to visit.² He was no longer at the head of the empire and he was no longer showing himself to be energetic and attentive to all of his duties. He was thus giving up on important ties of *amicitia* and patronage, which Velleius shows as being so important to Tiberius through the acclamations of his largesses to the people, senators and provincials, and of the care of his troops. The

2 Houston 1985: 184-185. Houston cites a story from Josephus (*AJ* 18.161-162) which records that Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great, had to travel to Puteoli, write a letter to Tiberius and receive one back granting permission before he could return to the island. Cf. Dio Cass. 58.7.5.

emotional impact that this break had on all levels of society Tacitus emphatically relates (*Ann.* 4.74, 58; cf. Dio Cass. 58.13.2-3). Velleius himself makes it clear regarding Tiberius' Rhodian retreat, when he comments on “the tears of every person” (*omnium lacrimae*, 2.99.3) at Tiberius' departure, the “state of the city” (*civitatis habitus*) and the “feelings of each individual” (*singulorum animi*). Further, whereas he proclaims how attentive Tiberius was as senator and judge, business in the senate now slowed as senators had to wait for the princeps' wishes to be read out.³ The management of the empire also suffered for few new appointees were being assigned to administrative posts (Suet. *Tib.* 41, 63; Dio Cass. 58.20.5; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 4.74),⁴ and decorum and participation in the senate deteriorated as well, since senators no longer had his stern example (Dio Cass. 58.21.2).⁵ This must have thrown his many proclaimed virtues into doubt and it may be that Velleius' emphasis on them and the many titles are not meant to celebrate the man so much as to remind Tiberius of his responsibilities and perhaps more fundamentally to remind him of why he is so necessary to the survival of the empire. As its regulator, he alone can command the great support necessary to ensure its smooth running. If he does not live up to his responsibilities, then the implication seems to be a gradual evaporation

3 C. Asinius Gallus had won a debate prior to Capri wherein he argued that the senate should not conduct business without the emperor's presence, for it was beneath national dignity (Tac. *Ann.* 2.35). Tiberius himself said in the senate that it was advisable in many matters that it consult him first, which of course now had to be done by letter (Tac. *Ann.* 3.53). Seager 1972: 205-206; Levick 1976: 113-114.

4 Suetonius claims, for example, that vacancies in equestrian juries were left unfilled and military tribunes, prefects and governors were left in their posts for extraordinarily long periods of time. It is hard, however, to know whether these events occurred before 30. See also Tac. *Ann.* 4.67: *quanto intentus olim publicas ad curas tanto occultiores in luxus et malum otium resolutus*. Cf. Dio Cass. 58.1^a.

5 Levick 1976: 113-114. Tacitus alludes to this point as well with Tiberius' visit to Campania in 21. He notes that Tiberius sent a letter requesting commanders for a war in Africa (*Ann.* 3.32). Disputes broke out and Tiberius had to send another letter (*Ann.* 3.35) chastising the senators for putting all the responsibility on him. Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.75) also notes the positive effects that his presence had at the praetorian courts.

of his support, which Dio suggests (58.4.1, 6.2; cf. Suet. *Tib.* 62) Tiberius actually feared. Rome would slide back into the chaos of the late Republic. One then can read the entire Tiberian narrative as an argument for Tiberius' permanent return to Rome.

Sejanus complicates matters considerably. As argued in Ch. 3.1-5, the two chapters dedicated to him betray apprehension concerning his great but unofficial power. The historian does not mention and actual office or deed that would justify the princeps' great trust in him. There seems to be some fear that his position was becoming too similar to the princeps' own. It is probable that it was due to Sejanus and the violence with which he wielded his influence that Velleius believed that *libertas* did not exist at Rome. Interestingly, after the *adiutor's* death in 31, the Senate voted to erect a statue of Liberty in the forum (Dio Cass. 58.12.4). Yet due to Velleius' careful selection of the topics – his sympathetic portrayal of Tiberius *vis-à-vis* the deaths of his sons, and the Agrippina and Nero affair – it is impossible to detect his views on the roles that Sejanus is rumoured to have played by later histories. Our author, probably wisely, just does not address the issue. Yet at the very end of the work, he does bring up the succession problem. Here one can make a plausible connection. With his alarm at the *adiutor's* powers, he may have been afraid that Sejanus would become the next successor or a powerful regent, a point which Dio strongly suggests that Sejanus and other senators felt was a possibility (58.8.1, 9.2, 9.5, 10.3). By the start of AD 30, the three eldest successors were already out of the way and Velleius may have known about Sejanus' probable machinations against the fourth eldest, Drusus, which began in 29 (Tac. *Ann.* 4.60, 6.23-24; Suet. *Tib.* 55, 61-62; Dio Cass. 58.3.8), and perhaps even of his incarceration in

the first half of 30 (Dio Cass. 58.3.8; Suet. *Tib.* 54; *Calig.* 7; Tac. *Ann.* 6.23-24).⁶ The two heirs left were the eighteen year old Gaius, who was inexperienced and had yet to don the *toga virilis* (Suet. *Calig.* 10), and the ten year old Tiberius Gemellus.⁷

Whatever Velleius was specifically reacting to, it is safe to say that he did not want Sejanus to become emperor or regent. Perhaps one can stretch the evidence even farther to say that he wished that Tiberius would remove him from politics altogether or at least significantly curb his influence. At the end of Ch. 3.5, I argued that how the Sejanian chapters fit into the narrative suggests the space which the historian wanted to see between emperor and *adiutor*. Tiberius' panegyric surrounds the chapters, which suggests their close relationship, but there are no conjunctions linking the two. The transition from praise of Tiberius to the ambiguity of Sejanus is even more abrupt than the shift from praise of Tiberius' achievements to *dolenda* and *erubescenda*. The latter at least had a brief introduction. A further piece of evidence may be added from the chapters describing the disasters that occurred during Tiberius' absence on Rhodes. In 2.102, the historian reports the treason and cunning of M. Lollius who was an "aid" (*moderatorem*, 2.102.1) to the doomed Gaius Caesar. Later in the same chapter, he describes the events that led to Gaius' death. He reports that Gaius was "gravely wounded" (*graviter* . . . *volneratus*, 2.102.2) on his tour of the East by a man named Adduus after "rashly" (*temere*) exposing himself. As a result, "his body became less workable [and] likewise his

⁶ Levick 1976: 170.

⁷ Levick 1976: 175-176; Seager 1972: 215-217. Levick argues (1976: 178-179) that Sejanus' eventual downfall in 31 was due to the dynastic catastrophe he caused Tiberius, by plotting against Nero, Drusus and then Gaius. Tiberius, she argues, was not aware until 30 or 31 and there seems to be much truth behind this, though admittedly it is speculation.

mind less useful to the *res publica*” (*ut corpus minus habile, ita animum minus utilem rei publicae*). The historian then pronounces that “there was not lacking the frequent association of men feeding his vices with flattery, by which he had been influenced to prefer to waste away in the farthest and most remote corner of the world than return to Rome” (*nec defuit conversatio hominum vitia eius adsentatione alentium . . . per quae eo ductus erat ut in ultimo ac remotissimo terrarum orbis angulo consenescere quam Romam regredi mallet*, 2.102.3).

As this chapter is situated between Tiberius' departure to Rhodes and his return, the comments here are highly suggestive, especially since Tacitus reports that Sejanus' encouragements were generally considered to be the main force behind his withdrawal to Capri (*Ann.* 4.57, 4.41).⁸ 2.102 then may be a general warning to leaders about trusting too freely those close to them. The unnamed flatterers of Gaius in particular who encouraged a member of the *domus Augusta* to stay in a remote part of the world, may represent Sejanus. This suggestion is made more likely if one considers the choice of verb, *consenescere*. For the young and wounded Gaius it is best translated as “waste away,” but its more literal and somewhat more common meaning is “to grow old,”⁹ which fits the aged Tiberius of 29/30. This is not to mention that the entire situation of sojourning in a remote area must have made readers recall the princeps' own extended retreats. The note on Gaius' mind and body becoming less workable and useful for the *res publica* further recalls Velleius' constant moral message that a good man works tirelessly

⁸ Tacitus though rightly argues that Sejanus could not have been the only reason for Tiberius' retreat (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 51, 68; Dio Cass. 57.12.6). Seager 1972: 202; Levick 1976: 167.

⁹ For “grow old” see *TLL* 1b s. v. *consenesco* and *OLD* 1. For “waste away” see *TLL* 3a and *OLD* 3, cf. 4.

for the welfare of the state and it too fits the general situation of a man withdrawn to an island.

It is evident that Velleius conceives of these unnamed advisers as being in the same class as Maecenas and Sejanus. He does not describe their actual roles, just their negative influence on the empire. The historian clearly had little patience for such men. With his frequent praise of many able *legati* and the good work they do, it is safe to assume whom he wanted as Sejanus' replacements. These men work in the field and, as he consistently emphasises, earn their honours and rank. Their simple virtues would ensure that they use their authority to enhance the *domus Augusta* and not threaten it. The Principate's reliance on men chosen for both ability and achievements had, after all, allowed Velleius' own family to rise through the ranks. The removal or weakening of Sejanus would go hand-in-hand with Tiberius' return to the head of the empire. The historian is well aware of the hardship that the renewed responsibilities would cause the princeps. In the final prayer, he calls the empire a "bulk" (*molem*, 2.131.1). He refers twice to the great expanse which Rome controls (*amplissimum terrarum orbis fastigium*, 2.131.1; *terrarum orbis imperio*, 2.131.2). And he describes Tiberius as a modern Atlas, needing shoulders powerful enough to support the world (*cervices tam fortiter sustinendo terrarum orbis imperio sufficient quam huius suffecisse sensimus*, 2.131.2). But if Tiberius did return, as before he would be carrying with him the remedies for an ailing empire. The *princeps optimus* would then be worthy of the virtues and many titles which Velleius ascribes to him.

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Appendix

This appendix is a list in order of appearance of the named individuals (or, in a few cases, those referred to in such a way that their identification is assured), who populate the Principate narrative (2.88-131). This excludes Augustus and Tiberius. My intentions here are to help demonstrate Velleius' focus on people of high rank and morality, to indicate how he emphasises certain people as models to follow and also how he interweaves past and present in his narrative. Thus after individuals' names in the *Nomina* column, I have included their highest known achieved office and in the *Gradus Dicti* column the titles or other words (if one's title is missing) which Velleius uses to suggest their place in society. In the *Nomina* category, I also place an asterisk by names to signal that they are personages from Rome's past (i.e. who were not active during the time in which their name was brought up; see Ch. 3.5 n. 50).

Velleius' judgements on individuals are often clear (see Introduction 0.4) and thus I have put the characters into four categories. Romans who are not members of the *domus Augusta* I categorise as either “good” (*Boni Romani*) or “bad” (*Mali Romani*). Maecenas and Sejanus I have labelled here as “*boni*” for their character sketches are ostensibly good and an appendix is not the place for a fine interpretation. I have isolated foreigners

(*Advenae*) and members of the *domus Augusta* from those two categories to help bring out any patterns in Velleius' treatment of Rome's leading men under the principate. The word "extra" beside peoples' citations means that Velleius has paused to give some type of description of their characters. This determination on my part is admittedly subjective, but the point is to indicate where Velleius does not just name or recount their activities but gives a direct appraisal of their *mores*. The historian's long comments on Sejanus (2.127.4, 2.128.4) or L. Calpurnius Piso (2.98.1-3) are clear examples. I draw the line with his comments regarding Drusus Libo, Cn. Calpurnius Piso and C. Silius. Velleius only discusses their actions and while his tone is strongly moralistic (*scelerata consilia*, 2.130.3), they are not descriptions of the men themselves. An "extra" in brackets followed by a reference number indicates that the author's extended comments were made before the start of the Principate narrative. Sometimes I have included a reference number from before 2.88 in brackets after an "extra" without brackets. This indicates that he makes comments on one's character both during and before the Principate narrative. I have added these to help show that when he refers to a character from Rome's past in the Principate narrative, even if it is just by name, he is subtly weaving in critical comments from an earlier point in the history. The *Exempla* column attempts to demonstrate how Velleius may hint beyond his tone and moralistic comments that his readers should take certain people as models to follow or, sometimes, not to follow. See my comments in Ch. 3.5 for arguments on this matter.

Dawson Nomina	Gradus Dicti	Boni Romani	Mali Romani	Domus Augusta	Advenae	Exempla	Appendix
M. Aemilius Lepidus	iuvenis, triumviri filius		88.1, 3 extra				
Junia*	soror Bruti mater superioris Lepidi	88.1					
M. Iunius Brutus* pr. 44 BC		88.1					
C. Maecenas	custos urbis, eques	88.2-3 extra				mira celeritate	
M. Vipsanius Agrippa cos. 37, 28, 27 BC	consul, Trib. Potestas	88.2-3, 90.1, 93-1-2, 96.1, 127.1 extra (79.1)					
Servilia	uxor Lepidi	88.3				immortalem nominis memoriam	
Calpurnia*	Uxor Antistii	88.3 (extra 26.3)					
P. Antistius* tr. pl. 88 BC		88.3					
Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus* cos. 147, 134 BC	consul	90.2, 127.1 (extra 1.12. 3, 5, 1.13.3, 4.2-6)					
Ti. Sempronius Longus* cos. 218 BC	consul	90.2					
Cn. Cornelius Scipio Calvus Scipio* cos. 218 BC	dux, consul	90.2					
P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus* cos. 205, 194 BC	consul	90.2, 127.1					
Variathus*					90.3		
Quintus Pompeius* cos. 141 BC	consul		90.3				
C. Hostilius Mancinus* cos. 137 BC	consul		90.3				
Q. Sertorius* pr. 83 BC	praetor, senator	90.3					
C. Antistius Vetus cos. 30 BC	legatus	90.4					
P. Silius Nerva cos. 20 BC	legatus	90.4					
Rex Parthiae	rex				91.1, 101.1-3, 101		
Orodes rex Parthiae					91.1		
Phraates rex Parthiae	filius Orodidis				91.1		

Dawson Nomina	Gradus Dieti	Boni Romani	Mali Romani	Domus Augusta	Advenae	Exempla
M. Licinius Crassus cos. 70, 55 BC		91.1, 119.1 (extra 46.2-3)				
M. Antonius* cos. 44 BC	pater Iuli		91.1, 100.4			
L. Munatius Plancus cos. 42 BC, cen. 22	consul, censor		91.1, 95.3 extra (63.3)			
L. Murena			91.2, 93.1 extra			
Fannius Caepio			91.2, 93.1 extra			
M. Egnatius Rufus pr. 21 BC	aedile, praetor		91.3, 92.4, 93.1 extra			favore populi, favore publico
C. Sentius Saturninus cos. 19 BC	consul, legatus eius patris	92.1, 105.1-2, 109.5, 110.2 extra				praeclarum factum, gloria, celebri consulatu, viri claro
M. Claudius Marcellus	aedile, filius Octaviae			93.1 extra		
Octavia	soror Augusti			93.1		
Julia, Augusti filia	Augusti filia, uxor Tiberii			93.2, 96.1, 100.3-5 extra		
Livia Drusilla, Julia Augusta				94.1, 95.1, 130.5 extra (75.3)		
Tiberius Claudius Nero* pr. 42 BC		94.1 (extra 75.1)				
Nero Claudius Drusus cos. 9 BC	consul			94.1, 95.1, 97.2 extra		
Artavasdes rex Parthiae	regnum Artavasdi				94.4	
Aemilius Lepidus Paulus cos. 34 BC, cen. 22 BC	censor		95.3 extra			
C. Iulius Caesar	toga virilis			96.1, 99.2, 101.1-3, 102.1-3, 103.3		laudatorum magna materia
L. Iulius Caesar	paene idem superioris			96.1, 99.2, 102.3, 103.3		
M. Vinicius cos. 19 BC	consul	96.2, 104.2 extra				clarissimo viro, speciosissima inscriptione operum
M. Vinicius cos. AD 30	consul	96.2, 101.3, 113.1, 130.4				
M. Lollius cos. 21 BC	legatus, moderator		97.1, 102.1 extra			
L. Calpurnius Piso cos. 15 BC	custos urbis, legatus	98.1-3'				
L. Gallus Caninius cos. suff. 2BC	consul	100.2				

Dawson							Appendix
Nomina	Gradus Dicti	Boni Romani	Mali Romani	Domus Augusta	Advenae	Exempla	
Iullus Antonius cos. 10 BC	sacerdos, praetor, consul		100.4 extra				
Marcella Maior	filia sororis Augusti, filia Octaviae			100.4			
Quintius Crispinus Sulpicianus cos. 9 BC			100.5 extra				
Ap. Claudius			100.5				
Ti. Sempronius Gracchus			100.5				
Cornelius Scipio			100.5				
Scribonia	mater Juliae			100.5			
Velleius Paterculus pr.	Trib. Militaris, praefectus, legatus, praetor, senator	101.3, 104.3, 111.3-4, 113.3, 114.2, 115.5, 120.3, 124.1					
P. Vinicius cos. AD 2	consul	101.3, 103.1					
P. Silius cos. suff. AD 3		101.3					
Marcus Censorinus cos. 8 BC		102.1 extra					
Aduus					102.2		
Sex. Aelius Catus cos. AD 4	consul	103.3					
Gaius Sentius Saturninus cos. AD 4	consul	103.3					
M. Vipsanius Agrippa Posthumus				104.1, 112.7 extra			
eminens senex barbarus	senior, dignitate, eminens				107.1 extra		
Maroboduus	dux Marcomannorum, nobilis				108.1-2, 109.1-5, 119.5, 129.3 extra		
Fratres Batones	duces, maxima auctoritas, excelsissimi dux				110.4, 114.4		
Pinnes	duces, maxima auctoritas, excelsissimi dux				110.4, 114.4		
M. Valerius Messalla Messalinus cos. 3BC	praefectus Illyrico	112.1-2 extra					opus mandandum memoriae
M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus* cos. 31 BC		112.2					
M. Aurelius Cotta Maximus Messalinus		112.2					

Dawson							
Nomina	Gradus Dicti	Boni Romani	Mali Romani	Domus Augusta	Advenae	Exempla	
cos. AD 20							
A. Caecina Severus cos. suff. 1 BC	consul	112.4					
M. Plautius Silvanus eos. 2 BC	consul	114.4					
Rhoemetalcēs rex Thraciae	rex				112.4		
M. Aemilius Lepidus cos. AD 6	praefectus omnibus copiis	114.5, 115.2-3 extra				miratur, consentiente cum iudicio principum voluntate senatus	
Magius Celer Velleianus pr.	praetor, senator	115.1, 121.3				testatum, signat memoria	
Germanicus Iulius Caesar cos. AD 12, 18	imperio			116.1, 123.1, 125.1, 125.4, 129.3 extra		experimenta virtutis, exemplo pernicioſa	
C. Vibius Postumus cos. suff. AD 5	consul, praepositus	116.1-2 extra				celebri opera,	
L. Passienus Rufus cos. 4 BC		116.2 extra				celeber, omnium virtutum exempla	
Cossus Cornelius Lentulus cos. 1 BC		116.2 extra				celeber, omnium virtutum exempla, victoriae testimonium	
L. Apronius cos. suff. AD 8		116.2 extra					
L. Aelius Lamia cos. AD 3		116.3 extra					
A. Licinius Nerva Silianus cos. AD 7		116.4 extra				abunde miratus	
P. Silius* cos. 20 BC	pater A. Siliani	116.4					
P. Quintilius Varus cos. 3 BC	Praeeset in Germania		117.1-4, 2.118.1, 118.4, 119.3, 119.5, 120.3, 120.5, 122.2 extra				
Arminius	princeps gentis, nobilis, eques Romanus				118.2 extra		
Sigimer	princeps gentis				118.2		
Segestes	clari nominis				118.4	clarique nominis	
L. Eggius	Praefectus Castrorum	119.4 extra				clarum exemplum	
Ceionius	Praefectus Castrorum		119.4 extra			exemplum turpe	
C. (?) Vala Numonius	Legatus Vari		119.4 extra			diri exempli	

Dawson							Appendix
Nomina	Gradus Dieti	Boni Romani	Mali Romani	Domus Augusta	Advenae	Exempla	
Nonius Asprenas	Legatus Vari	120.3 extra					
L. Caedicius	Praefectus Castrorum	120.4 extra					
Caldus Coelius	adulescens	120.6 extra					
Sex. Pompeius cos. AD 14	consul	124.1					
Sex. Apuleius cos. AD 14	consul	124.1					
Drusus Iulius Caesar cos. AD 15, 21	a patre missus erat			125.4, 129.3, 130.3 extra			
Q. Junius Blaesus cos. suff. AD 10	adiutor, consul, proconsul Africae	125.5, 127.3 extra					
Unkown cos.	imperio,	125.5 extra				celeberrima militia	
P. Cornelius Dolabella cos. AD 10	imperio	125.5 extra					
C. Laelius* cos. 190	adiutor, novus homo	127.1 extra					
C. Laelius Sapiens* cos. 140	adiutor, novus homo	127.1 extra					
T. Statilius Taurus* cos. suff. 37 BC	adiutor, novus homo	127.1 extra					
Aelius Seianus cos. AD 31	adiutor, eques	127.3-4, 128.1, 128.4 extra					
L. Seius* Strabo	eques, pater Seiani	127.2					
Tib. Coruncanius* cos. 280 BC	novus homo, pontifex maximus	128.1					
Sp. Carvilius Maximus* cos. 293, 272	consul, censor, eques	128.2					
Marcus Cato* cos. 195 BC, cen. 184 BC	novus homo	128.2					
L. Mummius* cos. 146 BC		128.2 (extra 1.13.3-5)					
C. Marius* cos. 107, 105-100, 86 BC	ignota origo, consul, princeps Romani nominis	128.3 (extra 11.1, 22.1, 23.1)					
M. Tullius Cicero* cos. 63 BC		128.3 (extra 34.3, 46.2-5)					
Asinius Pollio* cos. 40 BC		128.3 (extra 43.3, 87.3)					
Rhascupolis rex Thraciae					129.1		
Cotys frater Rhascupoleos	eius imperii				129.1		

Dawson							Appendix
Nomina	Gradus Dicti	Boni Romani	Mali Romani	Domus Augusta	Advenae	Exempla	
L. Pomponius Flaccus cos. AD 17	consul	129.1 extra					
Drusus Libo pr. AD 15			129.2, 130.3				
Sacrovir	Galliorum princeps				129.3		
Iulius Florus, princeps Galliarum	Galliorum princeps				129.3		
Cn. Pompey* cos. 70, 55, 52 BC			130.1				
M. Scribonius Libo Drusus pr. AD 15			130.3				
Silius A. Caecina Longus cos. AD 13			130.3				
Cn. Calpurnius Piso cos. 7BC			130.3				
Agrippina, uxor Germanici	nurus Tiberii			130.4 extra			
Nero Iulius Caesar	nepos Tiberii			130.4 extra			