

QUESTIONS OF DATE, GENRE, AND STYLE IN VELLEIUS: SOME LITERARY ANSWERS

Introduction. I. Dates and Genre. (1) The Dedication to M. Vinicius (*cos.* A.D. 30). (2) When did Velleius Write? (3) What Genre? II. Style. (1) 'Adulation and Mendacity'. (2) The Panegyric of Tiberius' Reign (Chapter 126). (3) The 'Panegyric' of Sejanus (Chapters 127-8). Conclusions. References: Abbreviations: Select Bibliography.*

INTRODUCTION

THERE has been no major critical edition of Velleius with commentary since that of Kritz in 1840.¹ Kritz, who took into account Sauppe's long essay on Velleius of three years earlier, was preceded by Ruhnken, whose commentary appeared in 1779. During the century which followed Kritz's work several valuable editions without commentary were produced,² the last of which, by Stegmann de Pritzwald (1933), almost coincided with the essay and bibliography devoted to Velleius in Schanz-Hosius (1935).³ These two contributions of the thirties remain standard to the present day.⁴

Since that time forty years have elapsed, during which we have seen the publication of a book by Lana (1952), and important articles by Dihle in Pauly-Wissowa (1955), and by Sumner (1970). None of these, however, is a literary study; and a glance at the bibliographies for the last forty years, although it will register a number of articles on detailed points, will reveal no significant literary contribution to Velleian scholarship. It is thus not only the

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¹ F. E. Rockwood produced a school edition with commentary on chapters 41-131 in 1893; F. Portalupi's commentary of 1967 amounts to little more than a translation. J. C. Silverberg wrote a dissertation entitled 'A Commentary to the Roman History of V.P. (Book II, 1-28)' (Harvard, 1967), which remains unpublished, as does the 'Historisch-antiquarischer Kommentar zur Augustus-Partie des V.P.' (Vienna, 1968) of B. Masbauer, who deals with chapters 90-123. Neither of these dissertations incorporates literary material. I am myself preparing a critical edition with commentary, of which the first volume will (I hope) appear in the not too distant future, and would be glad to receive any criticisms or suggestions relevant

to the points discussed in this essay.

² I am thinking particularly of those by Haase (1884 edn., including Mommsen's emendations), Halm (1876), Ellis (1898), and Shipley (Loeb, 1924). There was also Bolaffi's edition (1930).

³ Schanz-Hosius, 580-7.

⁴ Stegmann's Teubner text remains standard largely because it is the only critical edition still in print (repr. 1965, 1968): Shipley's Loeb, which is also in print and the text of which is in most places superior to Stegmann's, would hardly claim to be a critical edition. The bibliography in Schanz-Hosius of course needs to be brought up to date: see the subsequent bibliographies by Dihle, 655-9, and by H.-D. Blume in the reprint of Stegmann. J. Hellegouarc'h is at present working on a Budé edition of V., and has also written a judicious bibliographical essay entitled 'État présent des travaux sur l'Histoire romaine de V.P.' which is to appear in a volume of *Aufstieg und Niedergang der röm. Welt* (ed. H. Temporini). I am most grateful to Professor Hellegouarc'h for sending me a copy of his essay in advance of publication.

scholastic distinction of Ruhnken and Kritz but also the complete absence of any alternative which makes their commentaries still indispensable for any serious study of Velleius. Yet considerable progress has been made in our knowledge of Latin literature since 1840, and a literary appraisal of Velleius' work is now long overdue.

The neglect of Velleius by literary scholarship has permitted several misapprehensions about his work to survive unchallenged, two of which I should like to take as my points of departure in the present essay: the general agreement on the dates of Velleius' composition, and the general description of his chapters 126-8 as 'panegyrics'. These questions are discussed in parts I and II respectively.¹

I. DATES AND GENRE

1. *The Dedication to M. Vinicius* (cos. A.D. 30)

In the course of his work Velleius frequently addresses Marcus Vinicius and dates events from Vinicius' consulship in A.D. 30, which is the last event to which allusion is made.² Yet our knowledge of the relationship between the two men is restricted to a single fact:³ it was under Vinicius' father, P. Vinicius, that Velleius began his military career (101. 3). For the rest we must simply guess at what might have passed between Velleius and the Vinicii, father and son (Publius was roughly fourteen years Velleius' senior, Marcus roughly fifteen years his junior).⁴ The elder Vinicius was an admirer of Ovid and, as Sumner noted, 'it is significant (as well as remarkable) that Ovid finds a place in Velleius' list of the greatest writers of the past generation'.⁵ The younger Vinicius was 'mitis ingenio' (Tac. 6. 15. 1), a man of ἡσυχία who kept himself to himself (Dio 60. 27. 4): these are qualities which Velleius consistently praises throughout his work.⁶ Though it may be fanciful to deduce friendships from such tenuous evidence, that is not to say that friendships did not exist. In view of the proposal put forward in the next section (pp. 280-2), it is likely that Velleius kept in contact at least with M. Vinicius during the twenties A.D.

¹ The issues seem to me to be sufficiently important to justify the publication of this essay here and now; but in some places, particularly in part II, I have reserved for my commentary details which might inappropriately distract the reader of this essay. For illustration of V.'s neglect by literary scholars see my paper in *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II* (ed. T. A. Dorey, 1975), 1 with nn. 2 and 4.

² Addresses or apostrophes to Vinicius at 1. 13. 5, 101. 3, 113. 1, 130. 4; cf. also 96. 2, 103. 1, 104. 2. Dating from Vinicius' consulship usually takes the form *ante annos quam tu, M. Vinici, consulatum inires* followed by a numeral: see 1. 8. 1, 1. 8. 4, 1. 12. 6, 2. 7. 5, 49. 1, 65. 2. For the relevance of these allusions in determining the dates of V.'s composition see the next section.

³ At 104. 3 V. describes himself as 'successor officii patris mei', from which Sumner

(264-5) deduces that his father had been serving in Germany under the elder M. Vinicius (cos. 19 B.C.), the younger Marcus' grandfather. That is a possible but not inevitable interpretation of the text. It is reasonable to assume that V. elaborated on his relationship with M. Vinicius junior or his family in the lost preface (so, e.g., M. Brožek, 'De V.P. opusculo mutilato', *Eos* lii [1962], 125).

⁴ For the ages of the two Vinicii see *R.E.* ix A. 1. 119-20 and 116-17 respectively.

⁵ Sumner, 288. For Vinicius' admiration of Ovid cf. *Sen. Contr.* 10. 4. 25; for V.'s cf. 36. 3. Previous scholars had naturally attempted to see political significances behind V.'s literary predilections, cf. F. della Corte, *R.F.C.* xv (1937), 154-9; Lana, 280 ff.

⁶ I hope to deal with this subject in a future essay to appear elsewhere.

Despite the lack of evidence, scholars frequently refer to Marcus Vinicius as Velleius' 'patron'.¹ The description is not unreasonable provided we are aware of what it means.² Patronage in the ancient world is not necessarily to be seen in terms of financial or social dependence but often as a literary convention which brought mutual advantages to author and patron alike. Velleius for his part is able to dignify his work by constant references to an illustrious consul whose relative youth allows Velleius' narrative to assume at the same time an authoritative tone, much as in the case of Lucretius' address to Memmius. To a politician like Vinicius it would clearly be advantageous if he were regularly mentioned in a history which gave such strong support to Tiberius.

Besides, it was a mark of honour for a consul to be addressed during his term of office by an author. Pollio is thus honoured by Virgil in *Eclogue* 4, Sestius by Horace in *Odes* 1. 4, and the tradition is continued through Martial and Statius to Claudian, whose panegyric poems can take as their subject the actual consulships of Honorius and Stilicho.³ Pollio is further honoured because Virgil represents his consulship as the beginning of an age: 'teque adeo decus hoc aevi, te consule, inibit' (line 11).⁴ A less unusual honour consisted in an author's representing a consul's term of office as the end, and therefore as the climax, of an age: thus Dio brings his long history to its conclusion in A.D. 229 when he himself was consul (for the second time) in partnership with the emperor, Alexander Severus. Stilicho's consulship in A.D. 400 was doubly honoured: not only did Claudian write a poem about it, addressing Stilicho, but Sulpicius Severus brought his *Chronica* to its conclusion in that year. These two honours, which it had taken Claudian and Sulpicius respectively to

¹ So, e.g., Dodwell, cxiii; Kritz, xxi; Syme (1933), 147 = *DP* 32, and most other places in his writings. At *RR* 384, however, Syme curiously describes the elder M. Vinicius as V.'s patron. If this is not a slip, it is certainly incapable of proof. We know that V. himself went to Germany in A.D. 4 with Tiberius (104. 3), but we do not know the exact dates of the elder Vinicius' command there. Syme himself is most uncertain: at *DP* 31 he is tentative, 'A.D. 1-4?', but at *DP* 55 more convinced, 'A.D. 1-4'; then at *DP* 71 he suggests that the command did not begin till A.D. 2, while in *Hist.* xi (1962), 148, he is properly dubious, 'Vinicius' war in Germany c. A.D. 2'. Even if we assume the longest period possible, A.D. 1-4, that would leave little time for V. to acquaint himself with Vinicius who was at once replaced by Sentius Saturninus (105. 1). Sentius may in fact have taken over in the previous year, as Syme hesitatingly suggests in *Hist.* xiii (1964), 165; but this suggestion is probably based on a common misunderstanding of V.'s text (see the end of this note), and Syme is probably correct at *DP* 55 when he sees no reason for Vinicius' replacement until Tiberius' return to public life. But to return to the elder M. Vinicius' patronage of V.: Syme anyway contradicts himself since elsewhere in the same work he says that this Vinicius is treated

coolly by V. (*RR* 431, repeated *DP* 33). It must be said that Sumner rejects this last point and accuses Syme of 'malice' in his reading of the passage in question, 104. 2 (268 n. 75). There is, paradoxically, some truth in each interpretation. I conclude by explaining V.'s text at 105. 1 since it has misled not only Syme (see above) but also Ruhnken, Groag (*R.E.* ii A. 2, 1521-2) and Lana (157 n. 685). The text reads: 'Sentium Saturninum qui tum legatus patris eius in Germania fuerat', and means: 'who at that time was a legate of his father [i.e. of Augustus] in Germany'—the reason being that Latin idiom permits the use of the pluperf. instead of the imperf., especially with *fueram* and *habueram* (see Kühner-Stegmann, i. 140. 4).

² Excellent remarks on patronage in Williams, 44-5.

³ On this whole tradition see esp. Dodwell, cxiv; cf. also Syme, *Tac.* 672. On Claudian note in particular A. Cameron, *Claudian* (1970), 30-45. Cicero of course not only asked his friend Lucceius to commemorate his consulship (*Fam.* 5. 12), but also wrote a poem about it himself!

⁴ See G. Williams in *Quality and Pleasure in Latin Poetry* (ed. Tony Woodman and David West, 1974), 35-6.

render to Stilicho, are accorded to Vinicius by Velleius: he not only addresses Vinicius but concludes his history with the year of Vinicius' consulship. The tradition within which Velleius is working is clear, and its openly encomiastic nature could bring nothing but advantage to Vinicius.¹

From the frequency of Velleius' apostrophes it is reasonable to deduce that he dedicated his work to Vinicius.² A dedication would be unusual if seen against the great tradition of Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus, none of whom dedicated their works. But dedications are found in the lesser historians Coelius Antipater, Lutatius Catulus, Cornelius Sulla, and Hirtius.³ Of these four, Hirtius certainly (*B.G.* 8 *init.*) and Sulla possibly (cf. fr. 1) wrote formal dedicatory letters;⁴ but we naturally have no means of knowing whether Velleius' preface, which is lost, also took this form. The elder Seneca's *Controversiae*, admittedly not a historical work, shows that the epistolary practice was current at the time when Velleius was writing; and in fact its popularity increased with later writers, including historians.⁵

Whether or not Velleius' apostrophes were introduced by a formal letter of dedication, they yet constitute a stylistic feature in themselves, giving the work an informal tone which balances, but does not counteract, the authoritative tone mentioned above. It is interesting to note that the later historian C. Fannius wrote works which, although they have not survived, were described by Pliny as 'inter sermonem historiamque medios' (*Ep.* 5. 5. 3). They may well have exhibited the same informality as Velleius' history.

2. *When did Velleius Write?*

It is traditionally assumed that Velleius began composing his work in the summer of A.D. 29. The reason for this assumption has recently and conveniently been restated by Sumner, who says that in Velleius' work 'Events are dated so many years from Marcus Vinicius' entry on the consulship. Vinicius began his consulship on 1 January A.D. 30 . . . The *terminus post quem* for commencement of composition should be Vinicius' designation to the office in A.D. 29, probably during the early summer.'⁶

It is generally assumed that Velleius had stopped composing by the time Vinicius entered upon his consulship in January A.D. 30. This assumption seems undeniable.⁷ In view of the encomiastic nature of the dedication to Vinicius discussed in the previous section, Velleius would surely have availed

¹ The advantage would not, of course, be such as to jeopardize his political career. Tiberius remains the unmistakable hero of V.'s final chapters. Failure to appreciate this point leads Kritz into difficulties (xxiii).

² So, e.g., Sauppe, 4 and 9; Dihle, 640.

³ Cf. H. Peter, *Der Brief in der röm. Literatur* (1901), 242 ff.

⁴ Cf. R. Graefenhain, *De more libros dedicandi apud scriptores Graecos et Romanos obvio* (1892), 33, 24.

⁵ See Janson, 106–12, 116. I have not seen J. Ruppert, *Quaest. ad historiam dedicationis librorum pertinentes* (1911). Val. Max. dedicated his contemporary collection of *exempla* to Tiberius, though not in epistolary form.

⁶ Sumner, 284. For the formulae with which V. dates events from Vinicius' consulship see above, p. 273 n. 2.

⁷ Some scholars (e.g. Sauppe, 9) have seen no reason why V. should not have continued writing until the end of June A.D. 30, since that was the moment at which Vinicius relinquished the consulship; thus Syme, presumably as a consequence, more than once states that V. 'was writing in 29 or 30' (e.g. *Tac.* 368), a view found repeated by others also. But the arguments which I give in this paragraph tell against such a view. For a refutation of Sumner's view see below, p. 276 n. 3.

himself of some final words of appreciation had he still been writing.¹ His silence about a period first heralded 1,323 years earlier (1. 8. 1) is striking proof that he had stopped writing by the time Vinicius took up office. Besides, with the single exception of his formulaic allusions to Vinicius' consulship, the last events to which his history makes reference are the disgrace of Agrippina and Nero and, finally, the death of Livia (130. 3-4). Since these events are firmly dated to A.D. 29,² and since, as Sumner says, Vinicius' consulship will have been common knowledge from the time of his election in the summer of A.D. 29, there is no evidence that Velleius continued writing beyond that year.³

Thus, it is assumed, Velleius composed his history in the five or six months which separated the election and the inauguration of Marcus Vinicius as consul,⁴ i.e. between summer of 29 and January of 30.

This hypothesis will be found in the major editions of Velleius by Ruhnken and Kritz, and in those standard works of reference which mention the date of Velleius' history, for example the *Römische Literaturgeschichte* of Schanz-Hosius and Pauly's *Realencyclopädie*.⁵ The hypothesis has never seriously been challenged.⁶ Yet we should reflect upon its implications. These are that in the space of six months or less Velleius wrote down 48,400 words, dealing with over 1,000 years of ancient history, with all the collation and evaluation which that process demands.⁷ On the calculations which are usually put forward, it would have taken Livy on average between eleven and thirteen months to write down a comparable amount of history.⁸

¹ Such words of appreciation could hardly have occurred in the lacuna at the very end of the work since the text breaks off in the middle of a prayer for the emperor. Clearly no reference to a consul could follow that.

² Cf. Tac. 5. 1-5.

³ Sumner (284-8) follows Lana (299) and some others (see above, p. 275 n. 7) in believing that V. continued writing until the late summer of A.D. 30. His evidence falls into two categories. (1) Dates given in V.'s text as 'abhinc annos xxvii' (103. 3) and 'horum xvi annorum' (126. 1). But no reliance can be placed upon this evidence. It is clear from the dedication to Vinicius that V. assumed in advance that his work would be *published* in A.D. 30. Therefore he would naturally date events from that year. This satisfactorily explains the numeral at 126. 1 (Tiberius' accession in A.D. 14 is 16 years from A.D. 30) but not that at 103. 3 (Tiberius' adoption in A.D. 4 is *not* 27 years from A.D. 30). The latter figure would require a notional publication date of A.D. 31, which is impossible. The numeral, like another in the same sentence, is clearly corrupt: Aldus' 'xxvi' should be read. (2) At 127-8 V. refers to Sejanus' elevation to high office, which Sumner interprets as the consulship of A.D. 31. This is a stronger argument since, if Sumner's interpretation is correct, V. could not have known about Sejanus' elevation before the

election in the summer of A.D. 30. But since the vocabulary of chapters 127-8 strongly suggests that a totally different honour is being referred to (see below, pp. 301-2), Sumner's theory must be rejected.

⁴ I say 'five or six months' here because Kritz, one of the most eloquent exponents of this hypothesis, only allows 'vix quinque menses' (xxiii). Steffen is prepared to consider even four months (2).

⁵ Thus Dodwell, cxiii-cxv; Kritz, xxi-xxiii, lxx sqq.; Schanz-Hosius, 581-2, 585-6; Dihle, 640. So too Massauer, i.

⁶ Full credit should be given to the four scholars whose perceptive comments are quoted below (p. 279 n. 1, p. 282 n. 2, p. 286 n. 1, p. 287 n. 1); but the incidental nature of their remarks, which I shall quote in full, precludes them from constituting a serious challenge.

⁷ Since most of Book 1 is lost we can only guess at the total number of words written by V. It is reasonable to assume that Book 1 would be comparable in length to Book 2, which contains roughly 24,200 words. Book 1 as it stands contains about 3,900 words.

⁸ Thus Schanz-Hosius, ii. 299; cf. Syme (1959), 39 n. 51, 41. To be fair, I should point out that Cicero appears to have written the *De Divinatione*, a work of roughly 27,000 words, in two and a half months (see Pease's edn., pp. 13-15). But I think it is also

This remarkable conclusion, that Velleius wrote twice as fast as Livy, is seemingly corroborated by four pieces of evidence which scholars have conventionally adduced from Velleius' own work. The *first* is that on a few occasions Velleius refers to the speed with which he is writing: 1. 16. 1 'in hac tam praecipiti festinatione', 41. 1 'quamlibet festinantem', 108. 2 'nulla festinatio huius viri mentionem transgredi debet', 124. 1 'neque mihi tam festinanti exprimere vacat'. The *second* is that on several occasions he refers to the brevity or restricted form of his work: 1. 16. 1 'cum haec particula operis velut formam propositi excesserit', 66. 3 'cogit enim excedere propositi formam operis', 96. 3 'hoc opus servet formam suam', 29. 2 'operis modus paucis eum narrari iubet', 52. 3 'non recipit enarranda hic scripturae modus', 55. 1 'admonet promissae brevitatis fides quanto omnia transcursu dicenda sint', 86. 1 'quis in hoc transcursu tam artati operis exprimere audeat?', 99. 4 'illud etiam in hoc transcursu dicendum est', cf. 38. 1 'haud absurdum videtur propositi operis regulae paucis percurrere', 89. 1 'nedum huius tam recisi (operis)', 103. 4 'nedum hic'. The *third* is that on still further occasions he refers to his intention of writing a major history: 48. 5 'harum praeteritarumque rerum ordo cum iustis aliorum voluminibus promatur, tum, uti spero, nostris explicabitur', 89. 1 'ne in operis quidem iusti materia', 96. 3 'alio loco explicabimus', 99. 3 'iusto servemus operi', 103. 4 'vix in illo iusto opere abunde persequi poterimus', 114. 4 'iustis voluminibus ordine narrabimus, ut spero', 119. 1 'iustis voluminibus ut alii ita nos conabimur exponere'. The *fourth* is that Velleius' style exhibits several 'faults' such as poor sentence structure, unusual word-order, and regular repetitions of the same word in close proximity.

From this fourfold evidence a reconstruction is made. Velleius had been collecting material for a major work when Vinicius' election was announced; this news prompted him to signal his friendship for Vinicius by tossing off a dedicated volume using material which he had been collecting with a different intention; even so he naturally, as he himself says, had to write quickly—as is clear both from the brevity of his work and from the stylistic faults into which he lapses.¹

Perhaps this is the truth. But the comparison with Livy, if it is allowed some weight, induces reservations and prompts us to see whether the above evidence admits of a different interpretation.

We may begin by considering, in reverse order, the four pieces of evidence just mentioned. It is of course true that Velleius can write ungainly sentences; he also composes sentences with exemplary precision and balance.² It is

fair to regard the comparison with Livy as a more realistic reflection of a historian's work-rate. Cicero himself would possibly have agreed: 'Neque enim occupata opera neque impedito animo res tanta suscipi potest... historia vero nec institui potest nisi praeparato otio nec exiguo tempore absolvi' (*Leg.* 1. 8-9).

¹ So Kritz xxi-xxiii; Schanz-Hosius, 585-6: 'Velleius öfters sein beabsichtigtes grösseres Werk in Gegensatz zu dem Abriss stellt, wird man sich die Entstehung des letzteren kaum anders denken können, als dass die Designation des M. Vinicius zum Konsul den Autor veranlasste, auf Grund

seines gesammelten Materials einen flüchtigen Abriss der römischen Geschichte zu geben. Damit steht im Einklang die häufige Wiederholung derselben Wörter und Wortverbindungen; auch die Nachlässigkeit in der Periodenbildung wird nur zum Teil ihre Rechtfertigung durch den veränderten Geschmack der Zeit finden.' The 'collected material' for a major work has become an essential part of the hypothesis: cf. Kritz, xvi-xvii; F. Burmeister, *De Fontibus V.P.* (1894), 14; Sumner, 284 n. 143.

² See E. A. de Stefani, 'De V.P. periodis', *S.I.F.C.* xviii (1910), 19-31; A. J. Woodman, *Latomus* xxv (1966), 564-6.

equally true that his writing is full of unusual instances of word-order; but such hyperbata belong to the *novandi studium* illustrated so frequently by other contemporary writers.¹ It is also true that Velleius repeats the same word or phrase in close proximity;² so do many other authors, among them some of the giants of classical literature.³ There is no force in this 'stylistic' argument.

Second, Velleius' intention of writing a major history. Now this evidence would support the traditional hypothesis only if the intended work had been planned before the present work and were to have a scope identical to it; for only under these circumstances would Velleius have collected the appropriate material which scholars are required to assume for their argument. Unfortunately there is no evidence that the major work had been previously planned; and even those scholars who assume previous planning are agreed that Velleius' major work would not at all have an identical scope, but would take as its starting-point the civil wars.⁴ They are therefore contradicting themselves,⁵ and this argument too can be dismissed.

The third and fourth pieces of evidence may be considered together. Scholars have consistently seen the restricted form of Velleius' work in terms of the haste with which he was writing: speed, therefore brevity.⁶ Yet Milkau long ago suggested that perhaps the truth was the other way round and that Velleius' haste should be seen in terms of the restricted form of his work: brevity,

¹ Milkau, 9–10. See now J. N. Adams, *P.C.P.S.* xvii (1971), 6–10.

² A long list of examples in Kritiz, lxvii–lxx.

³ e.g. Cicero, cf. E. Laughton, *C.P.* xlv (1950), 73 ff.; Livy, cf. K. Gries, *C.P.* xlv (1951), 36 f.; Curtius, cf. H. Lindgren, *Studia Curtiana* (1935), 1–35; Florus, cf. S. Lilliedahl, *Florustudien* (1928), 57–61. Repetitions of various kinds have attracted an enormous amount of attention: to the refs. given by E. J. Kenney, *C.Q.* ix (1959), 248 n. 1, add D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Proper-tiana* (1956), 9; id., *Towards a Text...* (1959), 28; N. I. Herescu, *La poésie latine* (1960), 181–203; M. von Albrecht, *Meister röm. Prosa* (1971), 231 (index); Diggle on Eur. *Phaeth.* 56; Hofmann-Szantyr, 820–2.

⁴ So Kritiz, xv–xvi; Schanz–Hosius, 581–2; Dihle, 641; Sumner, 282. Scholars make this deduction since the first occasion on which V. mentions his major work is at the outbreak of civil war in 49 B.C. (48. 5): 'harum praeteritarumque rerum ordo cum iustis aliorum voluminibus promatur, tum uti spero, nostris explicabitur.' In fact, they do not do their case justice since (1) V. could have mentioned his major work in the large portion of his history now lost, (2) at 48. 5 he says 'harum praeteritarumque rerum', where *praeteritarum* would seem to imply at least some pre-49 B.C. history (but see next note). As it is, however, there is too much (fruitless) speculation about V.'s future work to justify basing any argument

on it. Kritiz, e.g., thinks it would conclude with the reign of Tiberius, Sumner that it would exclude the reign of Tiberius. Cludius (edn. xx), and M. Manitius (*Rh. Mus.* xlvii [1892], 467) think that V. intended to write four further works; Sauppe toyed with two (11); Schanz–Hosius and Sumner envisage only one; Sauppe (11), Teuffel (17), and Peter (*WK* 366) doubted whether V. intended seriously to write another work at all. In view of the evidence presented below (pp. 287–8), these last three scholars may well have been right, in which case the present argument is even less soundly based.

⁵ Why did V. not simply present Vinicius with a history ranging from the civil wars to Tiberius? It is hardly possible to argue that everything which precedes 48. 5 is an inferior summary 'stitched on' to the 'serious' history which begins at that point and for which V. is assumed to have collected proper material. It is true that E. Gabba suggested that a similarly modest introduction was 'stitched on' to Pollio's history of the civil wars (*Appiano* [1956], 207 ff., esp. 232 ff.), but his suggestion has not been generally accepted. Besides, Gabba's hypothesis envisages only 80 years' introduction, whereas we should have to credit V. with more than 1,000 years!

⁶ So, e.g., Dihle, 640: 'Die Schrift wäre dann in wenigen Monaten zusammengestellt worden. Dazu passt die flüchtige und summarische Erzählung'.

therefore speed.¹ Since it was beyond Milkau's terms of reference to elaborate upon this thesis, we may do so here.

Those scholars who accept the traditional explanation of Velleius' speed and brevity have failed to realise that these same two features are well-attested qualities of many types of writing, including history. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, at one place praises Thucydides for his 'speed' (τὸ τάχος, *Ep. Amm.* 2. 2, p. 425Us.-Rad.) and at another for his 'brevity' (τὸ σύντομον, *Imit.* 3. 1, p. 207Us.-Rad.). Quintilian at one place praises 'immortalem Sallusti velocitatem' (10. 1. 102), and at another 'illa Sallustiana brevis' (4. 2. 45). The two terms are interchangeable in ancient literary criticism,² and it is tempting to suggest that Velleius is claiming for himself the quality which these two critics see in Thucydides and Sallust. But caution is needed. The brevity of Sallust was thought to consist in his ability to say everything he required but in as few words as possible:³ 'est vero pulcherrima (brevis) cum plura paucis complectitur, quale Sallusti est', says Quintilian (8. 3. 82); and it is clear that the same applied to Thucydides whom Quintilian regarded as Sallust's model (10. 1. 101). Now it is obviously unlikely that Velleius would be claiming for himself a quality which his pleonastic and fulsome style manifestly fails to exhibit.⁴

Yet Quintilian's definition of brevity, quoted above, was not the only definition current among ancient literary critics. Cicero carefully distinguishes this type of brevity from a second type which consisted in pruning down one's subject-matter (*Inv.* 1. 28): 'multos imitatio brevitatis decipit ut, cum se breves putent esse, longissimi sint, cum dent operam ut res multas brevi dicant, non ut omnino paucas res dicant et non plures quam necesse sit.'⁵ In his *Ars Poetica* Horace makes an identical distinction between the first (lines 335-7) and second (148-50 'semper ad eventum festinat et in medias res...') types of brevity,⁶ and it will be noticed that he describes the latter in terms of speed.

¹ Milkau, 10: 'festinatio illa totiens commemorata magis de operis tenuitate et brevitate quam de tempore urgente accipienda sit.' He presented no evidence for this view.

² Further examples of this are given below and in the following section. For brevity coupled with speed cf. also Arist. *Rhet.* 3. 11. 9 (1412^b), Cic. *De Or.* 1. 17, 3. 202, Hor. *Sat.* 1. 10. 9. Interesting is Sen. *Ep.* 40, which deals with oratorical delivery rather than style, but (as Summers in his commentary observes) Seneca 'does not keep the two things quite distinct': 'oratio illa apud Homerum concitata' (2), 'istam vim dicendi rapidam' (3), 'quemadmodum per proclive currentium non... gradus sistitur... sic ista dicendi celeritas' (7), 'talem dicendi velocitatem... tantum festinet' (8), etc.

³ This is made clear not only by Quintilian (quoted) but also by Sen. *Contr.* 9. 1. 13 'cum sit praecipua in Thucydide virtus brevis, hac eum Sallustius vicit; nam in sententia Graeca tam brevi habes quae salvo sensu detrahas... at ex Sallusti sententia nihil demi sine detrimento sensus potest'.

⁴ For this cf. P. Freitag, *Stilistische Beiträge zu V.P.: Pleonasmus und Parenthese* (1942).

⁵ Cicero's sentence describes the point most aptly, but Quint. also makes a similar distinction himself between the two types (cf. 4. 2. 41, with a reference to 'speed', *celerius*). The distinction is appreciated by such modern scholars as C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry* (1963), i. 262, 'As a stylistic feature it (brevity) could be discussed under the heading of style; as a selective principle of subject-matter under the heading of unity, order or content', and H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (1960), i. 173, who refers to the *brevis* of *verba* and the *brevis* of *res*. Brevity is an extremely complicated subject and it is surprising that (to my knowledge) no full-scale treatment exists apart from J. Stroux, *De Theophrasti virtutibus dicendi* (1912), which I have not seen. However, Lausberg's collection of usages of *brevis* and related terms is most helpful (pp. 169 ff.), and cf. Brink on Hor. *A.P.* 25-6.

⁶ Brink's excellent note on 148 points out

Lucian too, writing on the art of historiography, makes the same distinction between the first (*Hist. Conscr.* 43) and second (ib. 56) types, and his technical description of the latter is also 'speed', *τάχος*:¹ *τάχος ἐπὶ πᾶσι χρήσιμον, καὶ μάλιστα εἰ μὴ ἀπορία τῶν λεκτέων εἴη· καὶ τοῦτο πορίζεσθαι χρή μὴ τοσοῦτον ἀπὸ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἢ ῥημάτων, ὅσον ἀπὸ τῶν πραγμάτων· λέγω δέ, εἰ παραθείς μὲν τὰ μικρὰ καὶ ἤττον ἀναγκαῖα, λέγοις δ' ἱκανῶς τὰ μεγάλα· μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ παραλείπτειν πολλά.* ('Speed is always useful, especially when there is a lot of available material—which is where you should pursue this virtue, rather than in wording or phraseology. That is, pass over the trivia and less essential topics, but give adequate treatment to important matters. You can actually omit a great deal.')

Thus 'speed' and 'brevity' are simply technical ways of describing the selection of material or the pruning down of subject-matter, and Velleius' references to precisely these two features of his work need not imply fast writing in the literal sense at all. He might very well be claiming for his work a quality which was recommended in the handbooks of historiography. (This matter is elaborated in the next section.)

Therefore the four pieces of evidence adduced by traditional scholarship for the dates of Velleius' composition need not, on closer inspection, corroborate the hypothesis that he composed his work in the space of six months or less. The only solid basis for assuming that he began composing in the summer of 29 is the dedication to M. Vinicius, and it is to this that we must now return.

Anyone with any conception of the workings of patronage and politics, especially at Rome, will concede the likelihood that privately the emperor would give a conditional promise of nomination to a suitable candidate long

that 'This way of looking at poetry is Alexandrian and is perpetuated in the Homeric and Virgilian scholia': that is, critics of an Alexandrian affiliation had to reconcile the poetry of Homer and Virgil (which by definition had to display all virtues) with brevity (which was an Alexandrian virtue). This paradoxical situation is perpetuated in any age where brevity is popular: see below, p. 286 and n. 2, and the reference to Pliny. Pliny, as it happens, is another author who distinguishes between brevity of style and brevity of content: in *Ep.* 1. 20. 11–17 he discusses the latter (using the terms *brevitas* and *τάχος*), then later in the letter (19–21) discusses the former. Between these two passages, however, at 18 he confusingly says 'brevitate vel velocitate vel utraque (differunt enim)'. Yet we should not take his terminological differentiation too seriously: all Pliny means is that he prefers to use a separate term for each type. All the other evidence shows that *both* terms (i.e. brevity and speed) can be used to describe *both* sorts of brevity. Such looseness is of course typical of ancient literary critical terminology.

¹ See Avenarius, 62–3 and 127–30 respectively on Lucian's distinction. In her

commentary on *Hist. Conscr.* H. Homeyer is wrong at § 56 when she compares Quintilian's description of Sallust at 10. 1. 102 (*velocitas*) since, as I have shown, Quint. there means the other type of brevity. Interestingly Cicero did not approve of *brevitas in rebus* (Lucian's *τάχος*) in historiography: he demanded 'exaedicatio in rebus et in verbis' (*De Or.* 2. 63), scorning those old annalists who 'unam dicendi laudem putant esse brevitem' (ib. 2. 53). Cicero is not inconsistent when he praises Caesar's works for their *brevitas* (*Brut.* 262) since *brevitas* was an indigenous quality of the *commentarius* genre within which Caesar was working (see P. T. Eden, *Glotta* xl [1962], 75–8). Nevertheless it is well known that Cicero characteristically eschewed brevity in his own *commentarii* (cf. *Att.* 2. 1. 1)! It is also interesting that when the third-century rhetorician Aquila illustrates *percursorio* (which is hardly different from *τάχος*) with the sentence 'Caesar in Italiam evolavit, Corfinium Domitio delecto ceperat, Urbe potiebatur, Pompeium persequabatur', this reads just like the *commentarius* style as written by Cicero in, e.g., *Att.* 5. 20. 3 (*Aq.* 6, p. 24 Halm).

before the appropriate election.¹ The vital question is 'How long before?' Some idea of the period involved is afforded by Tacitus' account of a debate in the senate in A.D. 16, during which Asinius Gallus proposed that magistrates should be elected five years in advance.² 'There was no doubt', remarks Tacitus, 'that this proposal struck too deeply, and put at risk the *arcana imperii*.' What Tacitus means by this allusive remark is not immediately clear; but it may indicate that Gallus wished to bring out into the open a practice which already flourished in secret.³ Tiberius' instant rejection of the proposal seems to confirm this. For, as Seager has said, 'it would have robbed Tiberius' patronage in this sphere of all its flexibility and so of much of its value. If a man knew well in advance that his place was secure, he might grow not merely arrogant but dangerously independent, and it would be odious, if not impossible, to remove his name once the list had been compiled.'⁴

Now it would of course be wrong to deduce from this episode that Tiberius, whose control over the elections was almost absolute,⁵ issued private promises precisely five years before the appropriate election; but it is not unreasonable to deduce that a period of several years was involved. Indeed E. Birley's study of senators in the emperors' service has shown that 'grading for posts in the vigintivirate, when candidates were still *in their teens*, took into account their aptitude for service in key appointments in another *ten or twenty years' time*'.⁶

It remains to be asked whether Marcus Vinicius was a likely candidate to be singled out for the emperor's favour in this way. Unfortunately nothing is known of his early career, not even the dates of his quaestorship and praetorship, but his later career was such that inferences about the earlier years can safely be drawn. His consulship in A.D. 30 at the age of thirty-five was seven years earlier than the standard consular age during the empire:⁷ he had without doubt been a highly promising young man. Within three further years he had married Tiberius' granddaughter, the princess Julia Livilla, a considerable honour.⁸ After the assassination of Caligula, his brother-in-law, he was recognized as a potential successor to the throne, although it was Claudius who actually succeeded (cf. Jos. *A.J.* 19. 251). In 43 he is thought to have accompanied Claudius to Britain, receiving the *ornamenta triumphalia*;⁹ in 45 he was singularly honoured by being made *consul ordinarius* for a second time; and when he died in the following year, he was given a state funeral (Dio 60. 27. 4). It would indeed be surprising if this conspicuously successful politician had not been singled out at an early age for advancement and encouragement by Tiberius.¹⁰

¹ Tac. 1. 81 deals only with the actual electoral process which took place each summer and is thus no evidence for a private arrangement of the kind here envisaged.

² Tac. 2. 36.

³ So Shotter, 326-7, and Seager (next n.).

⁴ Seager, 126.

⁵ This point, which is important for my argument, is confirmed by an analysis of the *fasti* for Tiberius' reign: see Seager, 124 ff., esp. 126-8.

⁶ *P.B.A.* xxxix (1953), 202. The italics are mine.

⁷ For the standard age see Syme, *Tac.* 653-6.

⁸ Tac. 6. 15. 1. A number of scholars (e.g. Z. Stewart, *A.J.P.* lxxiv [1953], 74 f.; Syme, *Tac.* 384; R. Sealey, *Phoenix* xv [1961], 102 ff.) have imagined that Vinicius was a supporter of Sejanus; but his elevation to a 'royal' marriage after Sejanus' downfall would seem to discredit this view: cf. Dihle, 640, and esp. Steffen, 194.

⁹ So Syme (1933), 143 = *DP* 27-8.

¹⁰ Even regardless of specific hints or promises from Tiberius, one could be reasonably sure that Vinicius, in view of his background, would get to be consul sooner rather than later.

Our conclusions are these. Which is the more likely? That Velleius composed his history with great rapidity during the five or six months which separated the election and inauguration of Vinicius as consul? Or that Vinicius' praetorship (say) in the mid twenties was accompanied by a conditional promise of the consulship for A.D. 30,¹ allowing both Velleius and Vinicius himself ample opportunity to prepare for the honorific event? I believe the latter is the more realistic assumption, particularly in view of the evidence collected in the following section.

Thus, on this interpretation, Velleius began composing in the mid twenties and had stopped by January of A.D. 30.²

3. *What Genre?*

In the previous section it was suggested that Velleius' references to 'speed' and 'brevity' are allusions to the selectivity of his material, a quality appropriate to several genres including historiography. No writer wishes to appear long-winded, and even those historians whose works have the widest scope and greatest length claim that they are recounting only the most important material. Thus Ammianus Marcellinus in his 31-book continuation of Tacitus writes: 'praeter haec alia multa narratu minus digna conserta sunt proelia . . . quae superfluum est explicare, cum neque operae pretium aliquod eorum habuere proventus, nec historiam producere per minutias ignobiles decet' (27. 2. 11, cf. 23. 1. 1, 26. 1. 1, 31. 5. 10). Naturally therefore, when Ammianus enters upon digressions which have strictly little relevance to his main theme, he will excuse such discursive material by promising brevity (as in his digression on Egypt, 22. 32. 1, '*pauca* super provinciis narraturi') or else bring such material to a conclusion by pleading speed (as in the digression on rainbows, 20. 11. 30, 'suppetunt aliae multae opiniones et variae, quas dinumerare nunc est supervacuum, narratione redire unde digressa est *festinante*').³

These three quotations from Ammianus clearly show that he would claim to be following Lucian's prescriptions for *τάχος* (56 *εἰ παραθείς μὲν τὰ μικρὰ καὶ*

¹ The promise need not of course have mentioned a precise date, merely some general date in the future. That would have been enough to prompt V. to start writing. He could always have changed or, if the worst happened, deleted the references to Vinicius altogether. Changing or deleting references is quite different from adding them. The hypothesis that the completion of V.'s history luckily happened to *coincide* with the announcement of Vinicius' election in 29 is at first sight attractive (and apparently hinted at by Steffen, 1-2): V. would then have gone through inserting references to Vinicius' consulship into his finished text. But Sumner has pointed out (284 n. 145) that the references at 1. 8. 1 and 2. 7. 5 are most unlikely to be late additions.

² Jodry (271) stated that in his opinion V. began writing in A.D. 14/15 as soon as he had left the army (see below, p. 287 n. 1). He is followed in this by Portalupi (edn. xvi),

who quotes his article in a different connection three pages earlier.

³ I have chosen Ammianus because he happens to illustrate best the points which I wish to make, especially in terminology. But what I say about him could be said with equal truth about any full-blooded historian writing in the rhetorical or 'Ciceronian' tradition, almost all of whom (e.g. Livy, Tacitus) claim to be recounting only the most important material: see Avenarius, 128-9. Sallust is another particularly good example (with the proviso mentioned in p. 283 n. 2). He says that his work is 'in primis . . . memorabile' (Cat. 4. 4), and elsewhere he excuses discursive material with phraseology such as: 'res postulare videtur . . . paucis exponere . . . cetera quam paucissimis absolvam' (Iug. 17. 1-2), 'de Carthagine silere melius puto quam parum dicere, quoniam alio *properare* tempus monet' (ib. 19. 2), 'si singillatim aut pro magnitudine parem disserere, tempus quam res *maturius* me deseret' (42. 5).

ἥττον ἀναγκαῖα, λέγοις δ' ἱκανῶς τὰ μεγάλα· μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ παραλείπτεον πολλά), and that he can express his claim in terms either of speed or brevity, which clearly are little more than conventional formulae.¹ But we should note carefully that such *brevitas* is restricted to discursive material; Ammianus elsewhere makes it quite plain that he disapproves of brevity in general (15. 1. 1): 'residua quae secuturus aperiet textus, pro virium captu *limatius* absolvemus, nihil obtrectatores *longi* (ut putant) *operis* formidantes. tunc enim laudanda est brevis cum, moras rumpens intempestivas, nihil subtrahit cognitioni gestorum'.²

Now claims that one is dealing with only the most important material, as seen in the first quotation from Ammianus above, are found most of all in writers whose works are of their very nature compendious.³ I mean such writers as Vitruvius in his handbook of architecture (5 *praef.* 2 'ut *memoriae* tradantur, *breviter* exponam: . . . (3) *paucis* iudicavi scribendum, uti angusto spatio vacuitatis ea legentes *breviter* percipere possent. . . . (5) quo facilius ad sensus legentium pervenire possint, *brevibus* voluminibus iudicavi scribere'); Valerius Maximus in his selection of *exempla* (*praef.* 'Urbis Romae . . . facta simul ac dicta *memoratu digna*, quae apud alios latius diffusa sunt quam ut *breviter* cognosci possint, ab illustribus *electa* auctoribus digerere constitui. . . . quis enim omnis aevi gesta *modico voluminum numero* comprehenderit . . . ? . . . *summatim* disseram', 4. 1. 12 'sed cum magna * multa *breviter* dicenda sint', 6. 4 *init.* 'quorum ex abundanti copia nec parca nimis nec rursus avida manu quod magis desiderio satisfaciatur quam satietati abundet hauriamus'); Gellius in the self-styled *commentarii* excerpted from his notebooks (*praef.* 11–12 'omnes . . . solam copiam sectati . . . ; *sola* accepi quae aut ingenia prompta expeditaque ad honestae eruditionis cupidinem utiliumque artium contemplationem *celeri* facilique *compendio* ducerent'); and Justin in his epitome of Pompeius Trogus (*praef.* 4 'horum igitur xlv voluminum . . . quaeque *dignissima* excerpti et, *omissis his quae* nec cognoscendi voluptate iucunda nec exemplo erant necessaria, *breve* veluti florum corpusculum feci'). Since it is the very essence of such works that they should contain only the most important material, it is hardly surprising that their authors should echo, with far more justice, the claim already familiar from Ammianus 27. 2. 11 quoted above. Nor is it surprising that, again like Ammianus, these authors should express the selectivity of their material in the conventional terms of brevity and speed.

Despite these points of contact, however, we should note the complete difference of emphasis. Whereas Ammianus could and did include almost everything in his capacious work, being compelled to treat briefly only that material which was excessively discursive, these compendious authors claim—albeit in similar language—to treat the *whole* of their material with brevity. They have pruned or selected their material so rigorously that they are able to claim brevity as a primary feature of their works in a manner which Ammianus himself specifically condemned (15. 1. 1, quoted above).

¹ For similar formulae cf., e.g., Nep. *praef.* 8 'sed hic plura persequi cum magnitudo voluminis prohibet tum *festinatio* ut ea explicem quae exorsus sum', Sen. *N.Q.* 3 *praef.* 4 '*festinemus* et opus nescio an insuperabile . . . tractemus', Plin. *N.H.* 28. 87 'ut *festinet* oratio', Min. Fel. *Oct.* 11. 5. These are by no means the only instances where *festinatio* is used thus.

² Sallust (see p. 282 n. 3) would seem to differ from Amm. on this last point since at *Hist.* 1. 4 he appears to be claiming brevity for the whole of his work; but this is probably due either to the monographical nature of the work (cf. *Cat.* 4. 3) or to the fact that he means the *brevitas in verbis* for which he was pre-eminently famous (see above, pp. 279 f.).

³ See Janson, 154.

Velleius' references to brevity and speed seem no different from those in both Ammianus and the other writers.¹ But since he uses such formulae to relegate not only discursive material but also, in varying degrees, material as important as Pompey the Great (29. 2 '*operis modus paucis eum narrari iubet*') and the battle of Pharsalus (52. 3 '*non recipit enarranda hic scripturae modus*'), he clearly shares with the compendious writers their extreme concern for total brevity. In this he is quite unlike Ammianus. Yet in his subject matter he is also quite unlike the compendious writers, none of whom had treated the history of Rome from its earliest origins down to their own day: none of them, that is, had written a universal history.²

The precise combination of elements which is found in Velleius' work—a universal history written with a total emphasis on brevity—is only found in such authors as Orosius and Festus. Orosius, who wrote a universal history from the creation of the world down to A.D. 417, could hardly have enunciated his historiographical principle better than at 1. 12. 1: '*praeterire plurima, cuncta breuiare*'. Like Festus,³ Orosius had already explained this principle in his preface (1 *praef.* 10 '*ut . . . ordinato breuiter voluminis textu explicarem*'); and like Velleius he repeats it throughout his work (e.g. 1. 1. 4 '*paucis dumtaxat isdemque breuiter delibatis*', 1. 1. 7 '*quapropter res ipsa exigit ex his libris quam breuissime vel pauca contingere*', 2. 2. 11 '*ne diutius verbis morer*', 7. 43. 19 '*quam breuissime*'). The suggestion that Velleius is a universal summarist like Orosius may be corroborated by a consideration of three further summarists in particular.⁴

Florus, who wrote a universal history down to Augustus' reign in two books, said in his preface (3) : '*in breui quasi tabella totam eius imaginem amplectar*'.

¹ Some of his references are particularly interesting. E.g. in the discussion of provincialization at 38–9 (which is clearly marked as a digression, cf. 39. 3 '*sed reuertamur ad ordinem*') his introduction is: '*haud absurdum videtur propositi operis regulae paucis percurrere . . .*', where *percurrere* seems to be an allusion to the technical *percursorio* which is defined by Aquila as '*distantia plura inter se percurrunt velocitate ipsa circumponit*' (6, p. 24 Halm: see above, p. 280 n. 1). For a similar allusion see Brink on Hor. *A.P.* 18. There may be a less obvious allusion in V. at 117. 1 '*persona moram exigit*': *mora* is a natural word to use in a context of a 'speedy' narrative, but it may also be a quasi-technical term = 'digression': cf. Amm. 15. 1. 1 (quoted above, p. 283), Gran. Licin. 36a–b (p. 59 Camozzi) '*morae et non urgentia*' (in a ref. to Sallust's insertions into his narrative of '*contiones loca montes flumina et hoc genus alia*'), Pallad. 1. 1. 1 '*sed nos recidamus praefationis moram*', and Geoffrey de Vinsauf in C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (1964), 192.

² Justin's work of course covers events from the origins of Rome, but he is an epitomator, by which I mean an author who has digested one single work only: i.e. he is

not 'original'. By the same token V. is not an epitomator, though often described as such, e.g. recently by S. Usher, *Historians of Greece and Rome* (1969), 242. See n. 5 below.

³ Fest. 1 '*brevem fieri clementia tua praecipit . . . ac morem secutus calculonum, qui . . . brevioribus expriment, res gestas signabo, non eloquar. accipe ergo quod breuiter dictis breuius computetur*'.

⁴ Most of the works mentioned in this and the following paragraphs are usually known as *breviaria* or *chronica* (there seems little difference between the two terms): these differ fundamentally from epitomes inasmuch as they draw their material from more than one source, and they generally make use of their authors' personal experience: i.e. they are 'original'. There is something to be said, however, for avoiding these terms and employing the more appropriate 'summary' (for which cf. Sen. *Ep.* 39. 1): for *breviarium* is conventionally reserved for late (usually fourth-century) works, while *chronicon* implies a concern for chronology (cf. Gell. 17. 21. 1) which is not always justified. See also next n.

⁵ P. Jal has rightly stressed that Florus' work is in no way an epitome (*R.E.L.* xliii [1965], 358 ff., and in his edn. [1967], xxi sqq.), though often described as such—e.g. by J. W. Eadie in his edn. of Festus (1967),

Velleius describes his own account of Augustus' reign with identical phraseology (89. 6): 'nos memores professionis *universam imaginem* principatus eius . . . subiecimus.' Another phrase in that same sentence, 'memores *professionis*', indicates that Velleius, like Florus, had promised in his lost preface to write only an *imago* of Roman history. Indeed from another key sentence (55. 1 'admonet *promissae brevitatis* fides quanto omnia transcurso dicenda sint') we may conclude that Velleius, like Florus and most of the other compendious writers mentioned, made a programmatic announcement of brevity in his lost preface. That would be hardly surprising, in view of the frequency with which he refers to brevity elsewhere in his work.

Sulpicius Severus, whose *Chronica* in two books is a Christian universal history to A.D. 400, said in his preface (1. 1-2): 'res a mundi exordio . . . *breviter* constringere et cum distinctione temporum usque ad nostram memoriam *carptim* dicere aggressus sum, multis id a me et studiose efflagitantibus, qui divina *compendiosa* lectione cognoscere *properabant*,¹ . . . non peperci labori meo quin ea quae permultis voluminibus perscripta continebantur, duobus *libellis* concluderem, ita *brevitati* studens . . .', cf. 1. 5 '*breviata* digessimus'). And the body of his work contains phraseology which invites instant comparison with the Velleian formulae listed above, p. 277 (e.g. Sulp. 1. 20. 1 'operis modum' and 2. 32. 6 'modum operis' with 29. 1 'operis modus', cf. 52. 3 'scripturae modus'; Sulp. 2. 27. 3 'forma . . . operis' with 1. 16. 1 'operis . . . formam', 66. 3 'formam operis', cf. 48. 6 'operi sua forma reddatur', 96. 3 'opus servet formam suam').² It is interesting to recall that this is the second link we have observed between Velleius and Sulpicius Severus (see above, p. 274).

Finally Eutropius, who wrote a universal summary down to A.D. 364, concludes his work with these words (10. 18. 3): 'interim *operi modum* dabimus. nam reliqua stilo maiore dicenda sunt. quae nunc non tam praetermittimus quam ad maiorem scribendi diligentiam reservamus.' Such promises of future works are a useful variation of the *brevitas* formula, and call into question the whole problem of Velleius' own future work. (See further below, pp. 287 f.)

This evidence strongly suggests that these authors represent a tradition and genre to which Velleius also belongs. It is true that, with the exception of Florus, these authors are comparatively late and belong to a period in which universal summaries were the rule.³ Yet brevity seems to have been equally popular at the time when Velleius himself was writing. We have already noted his contemporaries Vitruvius and Valerius Maximus, both of whom wrote

11, an error which leads Eadie to state (13) that we have no evidence of a *breviarium* between the end of the Republic and Eutropius. Yet Florus' work, not to mention V.'s, is essentially no different from that of Orosius, Sulpicius, or any other *breviarium*-writer. That his work is never described as such is due to the restricting conventions of terminology mentioned in the preceding note.

¹ For this motif, of the reader 'hurrying', cf. Liv. *praef.* 4 'legentium plerisque . . . festinantibus ad haec nova'.

² Further parallels in E. Klebs, *Philol.* xlix (1890), 289. One of the purposes of Klebs's article was to attempt to show that Sulpicius' phraseology is modelled directly

on that of V. This would not, however, necessarily disprove my point: it merely shows that Sulpicius realized the nature of such phraseology in V.'s text and thus was able to use it for a similar purpose in his own universal summary. Similarly with 'carptim' at *Chron.* 1. 1. 1, which echoes Sall. *Cat.* 4. 2.

³ For the currency of summaries in the fourth century cf. A. Momigliano, *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (1963), 82 ff.; also R. Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (1968), 104-5. There did of course already exist a tradition of summary histories at Rome when V. came to write: see below, p. 286 n. 4.

compendious works and referred explicitly to brevity. Wight Duff¹ also pointed to Phaedrus, another contemporary, whose references to brevity are even more obsessive than Velleius': e.g. 2 *prol.* 11 ff. 'bonas in partes lector accipias velim, / ita si rependet . . . *brevitas* gratiam', 3. 7. 1 'breviter proloquar', 3. 10. 2 'breviter exponam', ib. 59-60 (!) 'haec exsecutus sum propterea pluribus; / *brevitate* nimia quoniam quosdam offendimus', 3 *epil.* 8 'brevitati nostrae praemium ut reddas peto', ib. 14 'si *celerius* coepero', 4 *epil.* 7 'si non ingenium, certe *brevitatem* adproba'. The trend may well have continued through the first century, for we find Pliny, hardly a lover of brevity, being compelled to attribute brevity to Homer and Virgil in a manner which would have done credit to the exigent Alexandrianism of Horace.²

Besides, what alternative but brevity was left to a universal historian writing in the twenties A.D.? If we look back over the earlier tradition of universal historians, we see that they had required an ever increasing number of books for their task.³ Cato's *Origines* came out in seven books, the universal history of C. Aelius Tubero in at least fourteen, that of C. Licinius Macer in sixteen, that of Q. Claudius Quadrigarius in twenty-three, that of Valerius Antias in seventy-five, that of Pompeius Trogus in forty-four, and finally that of Livy in one hundred and forty-two. There was no point, indeed it was scarcely possible, to improve upon a tradition which by the end of Augustus' reign had clearly exhausted itself. By contrast, the last summarist had been Cornelius Nepos around 54 B.C., about eighty years or more earlier.⁴ It was the moment for brevity.⁵

¹ J. Wight Duff, *Lit. Hist. of Rome in the Silver Age* (3rd edn., 1964), 71, 'This brevity was a kind of literary fashion, comparable with that to which Phaedrus lays claim at the same period.' (Vitruvius is not, of course, as exactly coeval with V. as is Val. Max.)

² Plin. *Ep.* 5. 6. 42 'primum ego officium scriptoris existimo, titulum suum legat atque identidem interroget se quid coeperit scribere, sciatque si materiae immoratur non esse longum, longissimum si aliquid accersit atque attrahit. vides quot versibus Homerus, quot Vergilius arma hic Aeneae Achillis ille describat; brevis tamen uterque est quia facit quod instituit': cf. Hor. *A.P.* 148 ff., quoted above, p. 279 n. 6. It is true that none of this evidence comes from historians, but of course almost no first-century historian has survived. We do know that Sallustian *brevitas in verbis* became popular with the historian L. Arruntius (cf. Sen. *Ep.* 114. 17). Scholars have detected a rise in the popularity of *brevitas*, of one sort or another, from about the first century, reaching its climax in the Middle Ages: see Curtius, 487 ff.

³ On book totals see E. Badian, 'The Early Historians', in *Latin Historians* (ed. T. A. Dorey, 1966), 11 n. 51. His scepticism does not contradict what is a clear trend.

⁴ Cf. Catull. 1. 5-6 'ausus es unus Itolorum / omne aevum tribus explicare cartis', a description of Nepos' *Chronica* which indicates

that he was doing something as new in historiography as Catullus himself was in lyric (cf. F. Cairns, *Mnem.* xxii [1969], 153-4): see *HRR* ii². xxxxi sqq., 25-6. Nepos had been preceded by Cicero's friend Atticus, who had 'omnem rerum memoriam breviter . . . complexus' (*Brut.* 14) in one book apparently entitled *Annalis* (*HRR* ii². xxiii sqq., 6-8). The polymath Varro had also written a short work in three books called *Annales* (*HRR* ii². xxxviii, 24), but we do not know when. We know that Ateius Philologus had provided Sallust with a 'breviarium rerum omnium Romanarum' (Suet. *Gramm.* 10), but this may have been little more than a private notebook not unlike the epitomes which Brutus made, apparently for his own private use (cf. Cic. *Att.* 12. 5b). I cannot see that Wölfflin (335) has any evidence that Brutus' epitomes were published; but he is right to stress (342) that Suet. *Gramm.* 10 is no evidence for the use of the term *breviarium* in Sallust's time.

⁵ The apparently recent popularity in epitomes is a useful parallel. Dionysius had epitomized his own *Ant. Rom.* (20 books) into possibly three books (*RAC* 5. 948); Martial tells us (14. 190) that Livy had been epitomized by the end of the first century, although it has been generally thought that the epitome is to be dated earlier—possibly (so Wölfflin) as early as V. himself (see

This accumulation of evidence leaves little doubt about the nature of Velleius' references to speed and brevity. They constitute repeated assertions of the total emphasis on brevity which he, in common with the other summarists mentioned earlier, brought to his universal history.¹ Velleius therefore belongs to the genre of the universal summary, as do Florus and Sulpicius Severus, and the only possible evidence against this view—the dedication to M. Vinicius—can be satisfactorily explained on other grounds (above, pp. 280–2).

What follows is by way of an appendix to the foregoing section. We have seen that references to speed and brevity, in other writers no less than in Velleius, are conventional methods of relegating or omitting material which is unwanted for one reason or another.² We have also seen that Velleius has another method, namely promising that such material will be treated in a future work or future works (above, p. 277). These promises take different forms, each of which may be paralleled in later prose writers. (a) Velleius himself will treat the relevant material in another work (96. 3 'alio loco explicabimus'): so too Tac. *H.* 1. 1. 4 'principatum divi Nervae et imperium Traiani, uberiorem securioremque materiam, senectuti seposui'. (b) Velleius himself will treat the material in a *iustum opus* (89. 1, 99. 3, 103. 4) or *iusta volumina* (48. 5, 114. 4, 119. 1), phraseology which implies that the present work is of only slight pretensions: so too Eutrop. 10. 18. 3 (cited above, p. 285), *H.A. Firm.* 15. 10 'qui sequuntur stilo maiore dicendi sunt', Jer. *Chron.* 2 *praef.* 4 'reliquum tempus Gratiani et Theodosii latioris historiae stilo reservavi'. (c) Others (*alii*) will treat the material in *iusta volumina* (48. 5, 119. 1): so too Amm. 31. 16. 9 'scribant reliqua potiores, aetate doctrinisque florentes. quos id (si libuerit) adgressuros, procudere linguas ad maiores moneo stilos.'

Most of these forms may also be paralleled in the Augustan poets. Thus Virgil in the *Georgics* announces that he will write of the achievements of Augustus (3. 8–9, 16–39, 46–8: he means of course in the high style of epic poetry), but meanwhile he will continue with his agricultural themes (these were by definition in a less pretentious genre: 40–1). Similarly Horace in his *Odes* declares that neither his limited ability nor his humble genre is able to describe the achievements of Agrippa and Augustus (1. 6. 5–12), great themes which will instead be treated in the epic poetry of Varius (line 1).

Such formulae have long been recognized as literary conventions which either panegyrize the present régime (Tacitus) or couple such panegyric with

C. M. Begbie, *C.Q.* xvii [1967], 332 ff. for discussion); Vibius Maximus, a contemporary of Statius, produced what seems to have been a short work based on Sallust and Livy (cf. Stat. *Silv.* 4. 7. 54–6); Fenestella's *Annales* (21 books) were epitomized (*HRR* ii². 87) but we do not know when. A valuable list and discussion of epitomes are provided by I. Opelt, *RAC* 5. 944–50; cf. also Wölfflin. I do not wish to imply that the production of large-scale works dried up in the first century A.D., which is quite clearly not the case (see Syme 1959, 64 ff., J. Wilkes, 'Julio-Claudian Historians', *C.W.* lxx [1972], 177–203). Yet V. has survived and they have not. Is this an indication that he sensed the

literary mood of the time better than they? He was certainly in tune with the mood of later antiquity.

¹ To his great credit Jodry had also come to this conclusion (274): 'La "festinatio" qu'allègue V.P. n'est pas la hâte avec laquelle il rédige, pressé par le temps, son Histoire, mais la compression du récit commandée par les lois du genre de l'abrégé.' But he unfortunately produced no argument whatsoever to substantiate his thesis.

² The reason is often panegyric: the events to be described are so great, magnificent, etc., that they cannot be done justice in the present work: see further below, p. 290 n. 3.

an assertion of the modesty of the author's genre (so Eutropius, Virgil, Horace).¹ For this reason no one really believes that any of these authors themselves intended actually to write such future works,² and the question must be asked: 'Does the same reasoning apply to Velleius?'

Since the majority of Velleius' references are panegyric (89. 1, 96. 3, 99. 3, 103. 4, 114. 4, 119. 1),³ they may to this extent be considered conventional and not to be taken seriously. Yet the reference at 48. 5, which is clearly not panegyric, suggests that perhaps Velleius did intend to write another work (cf. Tac. *Agr.* 3. 3 'non tamen pigebit vel incondita ac rudi voce *memoriam prioris servitutis* ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse. hic interim liber . . .').⁴ However, at 48. 5 Velleius follows the reference to a future work by a reference to the modesty of his present undertaking in a manner which might well indicate that these are both simply conventional allusions to brevity (48. 6 'nunc proposito operi sua forma reddatur', so too at 89. 1, 96. 3, 99. 3, 103. 4, 119. 1, but not 114. 4).

The majority of Velleius' references employ the terms *iusta volumina* or *iustum opus*, to which identical phraseology is found in Plin. *N.H.* in a panegyric allusion to a work of history which Pliny did actually write (*praef.* 20 'vos quidem omnes, patrem te fratremque, diximus *opere iusto*, temporum nostrorum historiam orsi a fine Aufidii. ubi sit ea, quaeres. iam pridem peracta sancitur . . .'). Yet whereas Velleius and all the other writers use verbs which are either in the future tense or imply future activity, Pliny uses the past tense. Pliny had in fact already finished his history, and is thus not decisive evidence for the seriousness of Velleius' promises, despite the similarity of phraseology.

Thus the weight of the majority of the parallels indicates that Velleius' references to a future work are not to be taken seriously. But there are doubts as mentioned above, and Sumner has voiced what is probably the most considerable doubt of all: 'There is nothing casual or perfunctory about the way Velleius announces the project. He advertises it repeatedly and emphatically.'⁵ We must, I think, leave the whole matter *in medio*.⁶

II. STYLE

1. 'Adulation and Mendacity'

One of the central problems of Velleius' history is his treatment of Tiberius in general and of Sejanus in particular, which seems to contrast so sharply with the grim picture we derive from other sources, especially Tacitus. Are

¹ On the poets see W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom* (1960), Doblhofer, Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Odes* 1. 6, Janson, 75-6; on Tacitus see Syme, *Tac.* 219 ff.; on the later authors see Peter, *WK* 414 and n. 2. It should be noted that assertions of the modesty, or even of the incapacity, of one's present style or work imply no insult to the subject under discussion but rather the opposite: see, e.g., Janson, 124 ff.

² The *Aeneid* is an awkward case: although it undeniably glorifies Augustus, it is hardly the poem foreshadowed in *Georgics* 3.

³ The ref. at 119. 1 does not at first sight appear panegyric (the context is the

Variana clades); but there is evidence that V. used his treatment of the disaster to bring out the military qualities of Tiberius.

⁴ *prior servitus* is an allusion to Domitian's reign, which occupied a part, presumably, of the *Histories* when published.

⁵ Sumner, 283.

⁶ Prof. D. A. West has pointed out to me a very interesting parallel. In the last chapter of *Pantagruel* Rabelais 'promises another book after this one, even adding a summary of what it will contain. This is a normal fifteenth-century convention for ending a book' (D. G. Coleman, *Rabelais* [1971], 55).

we to agree with Norden that Velleius is 'a most important corrective to the Tacitean account'?¹ Or with Teuffel that he was a 'toady' of Tiberius and Sejanus?²

The issue has been generally avoided by those scholars who have devoted their attention to Velleius during the last forty years. Paladini made some cogent points but they were rendered less effective by the generalized nature of her study.³ The perceptive dissertation by Steffen remains unpublished and largely, I suspect, unread.⁴ Dihle's article, which of its nature was required to cover a wide range of different aspects, is brief and lacking in enthusiasm on this matter.⁵ Only Sumner has published a 'serious and percipient reappraisal' of Velleius' attitude towards Tiberius and Sejanus.⁶

What of historians of Tiberius' reign? Marsh at the beginning of our period (1931) says that Velleius is 'valuable as showing the official view of various events', but never mentions him again in the whole of his book;⁷ similarly when Bengtson brought out Kornemann's study of Tiberius towards the end of this period (1960), Velleius is again conspicuous mainly by his absence.⁸ It is as if these historians have taken seriously a pronouncement made more than once by Syme: 'The Roman historians subsequent to Livy have perished utterly.'⁹ Syme himself, the products of whose distinguished and influential career exactly span our period, has consistently and emphatically come down on the side of Teuffel. 'Mendacious as well as misleading' (1933), 'incoherent' (1934), 'fraudulent' (1939), 'obsequious' (1956), 'voluble and unscrupulous' (1958), 'an uneasy amalgam of adulation and mendacity' (1959), 'adulatory and dishonest' (1970).¹⁰ The eloquence and authority of these verdicts are such that few scholars have ventured to disagree with them. Balsdon has attempted sporadic counter-attacks,¹¹ and Seager concludes his recent study of Tiberius with a judicious evaluation of Velleius as a historian of the reign.¹² But such attempts are always liable to be shot down by those¹³ who have rejected the warning behind Balsdon's description of Velleius—'a historian whom it is now the fashion to dismiss rather than to give oneself the bother of reading'.¹⁴

It is clear that Syme's opinions represent, if they have not informed, the majority verdict of scholars during the last forty years. For this reason they demand careful consideration, and this part of my essay will focus upon two of the most serious criticisms which are commonly levelled against Velleius' treatment of Tiberius' reign. These are, in the words of Syme, that chapter 126

¹ *Die röm. Literatur* (6th edn., 1961), 91.

² Teuffel, 17.

³ Paladini, 469–78.

⁴ Steffen's work is mentioned only by Koestermann, whose pupil he was, of those scholars I have read.

⁵ 'So darf man dem Tiberius-Bild des V.P. einen unverächtlichen historischen Wert beimessen, sobald man nur berücksichtigt, was für ein Mann es ist, der es zeichnet' (647).

⁶ Sumner, *passim*.

⁷ To be strictly accurate Marsh's book, which contains 335 pages, makes one further ref. in a footnote on p. 152. (The quotation is from p. 5 n. 2.)

⁸ E. Kornemann, *Tiberius* (ed. H. Bengtson,

1960), does refer to V. less infrequently than Marsh, but without conviction, and certainly far less than one would expect from a historian with a sympathetic attitude towards Tiberius.

⁹ Syme, *Tac.* 358, cf. 200, 271.

¹⁰ Respectively (1933), 147 n. 3; (1934), 121; *RR* 393 n. 1; (1956), 262; *Tac.* 367; (1959), 69; *TST* 47.

¹¹ J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Rome: the Story of an Empire* (1970), 12–13, is one such example.

¹² Seager, 266–9.

¹³ e.g. M. A. R. Colledge reviewing Balsdon's book: 'Why is Velleius Paterculus, of all people, given an outside blurb?' (*C.R.* n.s. xxiii [1973], 243.)

¹⁴ *J.R.S.* lvii (1967), 275.

is 'a general panegyric of the new reign' and that chapters 127-8 are a 'panegyric' of Sejanus.¹

2. *The Panegyric of Tiberius' Reign (Chapter 126)*

Velleius opens his account of Tiberius' reign with a rhetorical question which implies that he is unable to set down the details of the reign (126. 1): 'horum xvi annorum opera quis cum inhaereant oculis animisque omnium, [in] partibus eloquatur?' Yet three chapters later he contradicts himself by announcing that he will now give a detailed account of the reign (129. 1): 'sed proposita quasi universa principatus Ti. Caesaris <imagine>, singula recenseamus.'² Why the contradiction? It was a convention of the panegyric style to confess one's inability to deal properly with the subject under discussion;³ and one of the subtler methods of expressing this *topos* is to declare that a person's achievements are so many as to defy even enumeration.⁴ Cicero employs this formula on at least two occasions (*Red. Sen.* 1 'quae tanta enim potest exsistere ubertas ingenii, quae tanta dicendi copia, quod tam divinum atque incredibile genus orationis quo quisquam possit vestra in nos universa promerita non dicam complecti orando, sed percensere enumerando?', *Marc.* 4 'nullius dicendi aut scribendi tanta vis, tanta copia, quae non dicam exornare, sed enarrare, C. Caesar, res tuas gestas possit'). The *topos* recurs in the *Panegyrici Latini* (e.g. 8. 1. 3 'patris ac patrui tui merita, licet dicendo aequare non possem, possem tamen vel censere enumerando?') and in the epistolary panegyric found at *H.A. Max. Balb.* 17 (3 'nulla vox tam fortis, nulla oratio tam felix, nullum ingenium tam fecundum umquam fuerit quod possit publicam felicitatem digne exprimere. . . . (5) haec enumerare difficile est, nedum prosequi consentanea dicendi dignitate'). Velleius, in other words, is more concerned to place Tiberius' achievements in a eulogistic light by means of a recognized panegyric motif than to concern himself with strict logic. It will be noticed, however, that he avoids the excessive language of some of the other examples.

The next section of the chapter lists various good qualities which Tiberius has restored (126. 2): 'revocata in forum fides . . . sepultraeque ac situ obsitae iustitia, aequitas, industria civitati redditae; accessit magistratibus auctoritas, senatui maiestas, iudicii gravitas.' 'Restoration' is the key note. Now exactly similar statements were used by Velleius to describe Augustus' achievements at

¹ *Tac.* 759 n. 2 and 368 respectively. My analysis of these chapters will be stylistic, hence the title of part II of this essay. But it should not be thought that this is a full account or evaluation of V.'s style as a whole: see, e.g., next n.

² *imagine* was plausibly placed here by T. Sinko, *Eos* xx (1914-15), 113, having already been suggested elsewhere in the sentence by Friebl in 1837. Casaubon ad loc. had noticed that Suet. *Aug.* 9 ('proposita vitae eius velut summa, partes singulatim neque per tempora sed per species exsequar') closely resembles V.'s sentence. See the excellent remarks of Leo, 241, who explains the difference between the two authors—although he is only one of many scholars to note the importance which biography plays in V.'s history. But this is

unfortunately one of several subjects outside the scope of the present essay.

³ See, e.g., Curtius, 83-5, 159 ff., 411 ff.; also above, p. 287 n. 2.

⁴ I have assigned V.'s rhetorical question at 126. 1 to this *topos* on account of the word *partibus*. It could perhaps be argued, by stressing the *cum*-clause, that V. has a different idea in mind; but panegyric apologies often hide behind apologies of a quite different nature (thus the Augustan poets by means of Callimachean apologies: see Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Odes* 1. 6 intro.). Besides, the notion 'everyone knows' lies behind such formulae of the *praeteritio* as 'quid loquar?' or 'quid memorem?' and these are also very common in panegyric writing (for examples, cf. W. S. Maguinness, *Hermath.* xlviii [1933], 131-2).

the beginning of *his* reign (89. 3-4): 'revocata pax . . . restituta vis legibus, iudiciis auctoritas, senatui maiestas, imperium magistratuum ad primum redactum modum. . . . prisca illa et antiqua rei publicae forma revocata rediit cultus agris . . .' Some scholars have been puzzled by the similarity of the two passages—'Why Tiberius should have had to do the same things (as Augustus) is not explained', says Seager.¹ One explanation might be that at 126. 2 Velleius is implicitly criticizing the last years of Augustus' reign,² which we know to have been unhappy.³ Yet it is hardly likely that Velleius would wish to criticize the man upon whom Tiberius consistently and emphatically modelled himself.⁴ Another explanation is required. The panegyric motif with which the chapter began, and which was discussed above, indicates how we should read the rest of the chapter. It was conventional, as Pliny and Menander rhetor tell us,⁵ to praise the present ruler by comparison with his predecessor; it was also conventional to express this comparison by means of the 'language of restoration'.⁶ This is a conventional method of emphasizing the happy present, rather than inviting consideration of a troubled past.

Thus two apparent difficulties in chapter 126 have been satisfactorily resolved by recourse to the conventions of panegyric.⁷ Such parallels between Velleius' chapter and panegyric writings could in fact be multiplied almost endlessly,⁸ but it is necessary here to be rigorously selective. Thus for the motif of electoral procedure (126. 2 'summota e foro seditio, ambitio campo, discordia curia') cf. Plin. *Pan.* 29. 1 'pulsus ambitus campo' and 69-75. For the restoration of the senate's authority (2 'accessit . . . senatui maiestas') cf. Plin. 66. 2-3 'tu curiam ingressus nunc singulos, nunc universos adhortatus es resumere libertatem, capessere quasi communis imperii curas, invigilare publicis utilitatibus et insurgere. omnes ante te eadem ista dixerunt, nemini tamen ante te creditum est', *H.A. Max. Balb.* 17. 2 'senatui . . . reddidistis pristinam dignitatem'. For the restoration of justice (2 'iudiciis gravitas') cf. Menand. rhet. 375. 24 ff., Plin. 60. 2, 80. 1 ff., Claud. *IV Honor.* 489-91, Sidon. *Pan. Mai.* 296 f., Prisc. *Laud. Anast.* 182, 194 f., 200. For *munificentia* towards men and cities, the restoration of ruined cities, and enlightened provincial policy (4 'fortuita non civium tantummodo sed urbium damna principis munificentia vindicat: restitutae urbes Asiae, vindicatae ab iniuriis magistratuum provinciae') cf. Plin. 25. 5, 50. 4 'magnum hoc tuum non erga homines modo sed erga tecta ipsa meritum, sistere ruinas, solitudinem pellere, ingentia

¹ Seager, 269, who at least is fair. Contrast Syme, *Tac.* 367, '... no more meriting credence than what [V.] has to relate about the phenomenal virtues of the Tiberian régime, instantaneously apparent in total contrast to all that went before'.

² So Schäfer, 24.

³ Cf. Plin. *N.H.* 7. 149 f.; Syme, *Tac.* 427.

⁴ So, rightly, Steffen, 90. For Tiberius' devotion to Augustus cf., out of many examples, Tac. 1. 77. 3, 4. 37. 3; Grant, *Aspects*, 39-40.

⁵ Plin. *Pan.* 53. 1 'nihil non parum grate sine comparatione laudatur' (cf. 53. 6), Menand. rhet. 376. 31-377. 2.

⁶ See Fraenkel, 450 f.

⁷ Another quasi-difficulty is the deifica-

tion of Augustus at 126. 1, which had already been mentioned at 124. 3. Yet the deification of one's predecessor was to become one of the conventional introductory motifs of panegyric: cf. Plin. *Pan.* 11, and Durry, 31.

⁸ Instructive for comparison are: J. Mesk, *W.S.* xxxii (1910), xxxiv (1912), *Rh.M.* lxvii (1912), 569 ff.; A. Klotz, *Rh.M.* lxvi (1911), 513 ff.; L. K. Born, *A.J.P.* lv (1934), 20 ff.; Doblhofer, and review by R. G. M. Nisbet, *C.R.* n.s. xix (1969), 173-5; H. Gärtner, *Einige Überlegungen zur kaiserzeitlichen Panegyrik* . . . (1968); Cairns, 105 ff. One of the virtues of Nisbet-Hubbard's commentary on Hor. *Odes* 1 is the use they make of comparisons with V.

opera eodem quo exstructa sunt animo ab interitu vindicare', *Pan. Lat.* 5. 2. 2 'nam cum omnes homines etiam non indigentes iuvare boni sit principis, tum praecipue bene meritis et graviter adfectis subvenire sapientis est', Prisc. *Laud. Anast.* 184 'prostratas recreasti funditus urbes', *H.A. Max. Balb.* 17. 2 'provinciis quae inexplabili avaritia tyrannorum laceratas ad spem salutis reducit', Menand. rhet. 375-6. For the emperor being an example to his citizens (5 'cumque sit imperio maximus, exemplo maior est'), an idea of great antiquity,¹ cf. Plin. 45. 6 'nec tam imperio nobis opus est quam exemplo',² *Pan. Lat.* 2. 14. 4, 4. 29. 3, Claud. *IV Honor.* 269-74, 299-302, *Stil.* 1. 168, Paul. Petr. *Vit. Mart.* 2 (Migne 61. 1018D).

Some of Velleius' adaptations of panegyric motifs are extremely subtle. Thus at 126. 4 he says of Tiberius: 'poena in malos sera sed aliqua'. Now it was proverbial throughout Greek and Latin literature that *divine* vengeance works slowly but surely:³ Velleius is here describing Tiberius' penology in terms usually reserved for a god, a recognized panegyric technique.⁴ In this way he hints at the divinity of an emperor whose attitude towards such matters was one of well-attested contempt.⁵ Similarly at 126. 3 Velleius says of Tiberius' foreign policy: 'diffusa in orientis occidentisque tractus et quidquid meridiano aut septentrione finitur pax augusta'. Now it was conventional in panegyric to stress the ruler's *power* by claiming that it stretched from east to west;⁶ it was also conventional to claim that the ruler has brought widespread *peace*.⁷ Velleius has here combined the two ideas, describing the imperial peace in terms which are usually reserved for the imperial power.⁸

These parallels are sufficiently convincing for us to conclude that when Velleius wrote chapter 126 he deliberately exploited the motifs of panegyric. It is true that many of the parallels quoted are later than Velleius, but this does not mean that the conventions or motifs did not exist earlier. It is clear from the studies of Doblhofer and Nisbet-Hubbard on Horace that the poet was extremely familiar with a tradition of court poetry which is very similar to panegyric. Cicero too was familiar with this tradition, the motifs of which he used liberally in the *Pro Marcello*, for example. Indeed, just as Cicero provided the model for many of the ideas which are found in the later panegyrists,⁹ so he did the same for Velleius. We have already seen one example at 126. 1

¹ e.g. Solon fr. 5, Democr. B39, 79, Plato, *Laws* 711, Xen. *Cyr.* 6. 13, 8. 1. 12, 21 ff., 8. 5, Ages. 7. 2, Isocr. *Areop.* 21-2, *Nicochl.* 37; Cic. *Leg.* 3. 31, *Rep.* 1. 47, 2. 69, *Fam.* 1. 9. 12, *Res Gest.* 8, Ov. *Met.* 15. 834, Plin. *Ep.* 3. 18. 2-3, Sen. *Clem.* 1. 1. 6, 1. 9. 1, *Ep.* 11. 8.

² The contrast between *exemplum* and *imperium* is found elsewhere (Tac. *G.* 7. 1, Plin. *N.H.* 35. 86), but in view of the similarity of context and the close resemblance of Plin. *Pan.* 50. 4 to Vell. 126. 4 (quoted above), it would seem that Pliny here echoes V. See below, p. 295 and n. 6.

³ See Dodds on Eur. *Bacch.* 882-7, Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Odes* 1. 15. 19, Orelli on ib. 3. 2. 31 f., Ogilvie on Liv. *J.* 56. 7, Smith on Tib. 1. 9. 4, Mayor on *Juv.* 13. 100; Otto, *Sprichwörter*, 111.

⁴ For which cf. Cairns, 218.

⁵ Cf., e.g., Seager, 144 ff.

⁶ Cf., e.g., Tib. 2. 5. 59-60 (and Smith's n.), Hor. *Odes* 4. 15. 14 ff., *Anth. Pal.* 16. 61, Curt. 7. 8. 12 (and Wilhelm 41), *Pan. Lat.* 2. 23. 1; esp. Fraenkel 451 n. 4.

⁷ e.g. Hor. *Odes* 4. 5, Tac. *D.* 38, *Inscr. Brit. Mus.* 894.

⁸ The literary conceit has its roots in the attitude which persuaded Romans to see the *pax augusta* in terms of the power which made that *pax* possible. Cicero voiced the attitude (*Off.* 1. 34-5) but it blossomed under the empire, cf. Virg. *Aen.* 1. 286 ff., Val. Max. 2. 7 *init.*: see further H. Fuchs, *M.H.* xii (1955), 203-4; Fraenkel, 376; S. Weinstock, *J.R.S.* 1 (1960), 45 f., 49 f.; Williams, 435-8.

⁹ Cf. W. S. Maguinness, *Hermath.* xlvii (1932), 42-61; xlviii (1933), 117-38.

(p. 290 above): there is another at 126. 2, where Velleius' *revocata fides* is a direct verbal reminiscence of *revocanda fides* at *Marc.* 23. Besides, we know that from at least as early as A.D. 8 a *senatus consultum* required that newly elected consuls should render thanks to the gods and to the emperor in a public speech.¹ These *gratiarum actiones* presumably had much in common with panegyric proper, and will have employed similar motifs. The 'authority of the senate', for example, which I paralleled from Pliny and the *H.A.* (above, p. 291), would have been most appropriate in all such speeches of gratitude long before A.D. 100.

Thus when Syme describes this chapter as 'a general panegyric of the new reign', he is not only correct, but far more correct than he himself appears to believe. Whereas he used the word 'panegyric' as a general term of disparagement, however, it should in fact be applied to this chapter as a precise term of literary criticism. As J. Mesk was the first fully to realize,² Velleius has (as it were) written a panegyric proper.

The distinction between general disparagement and accurate description is most important. Once we know that Velleius set out to write a miniature panegyric, we should not be surprised that he has expressed himself in a manner appropriate to panegyric. We must not be annoyed that he issues a rhetorical question of the kind at 126. 1 or praises Tiberius for being an example to his subjects at 126. 5. These are the rules of the game. But our knowledge of panegyric conventions has a further, more important, advantage: it enables us to distinguish what is conventional in this chapter from what is actual.³ Once we are aware that convention has prescribed the manner of Velleius' statements, we are in a far better position to consider whether the statements themselves are true or false.

As it happens, each of the statements listed above (pp. 291-2) as being 'panegyric' can be corroborated in other ancient authorities,⁴ a particularly instructive parallel being the comparable survey of the years A.D. 14-23 given by Tac. 4. 6.

Elections at Rome were traditionally opportunities for *ambitio* and *seditio* (rioting), which during Augustus' reign occasionally became so serious (e.g. in 19 B.C. and A.D. 7, cf. Dio 54. 10. 1-3, 55. 34. 2) that the emperor was compelled to elect the magistrates himself. We know that Augustus, in whose reign both greater and lesser magistracies were elected by the electoral assemblies (i.e. by the *comitia centuriata* and *comitia tributa* respectively), had been intending to rationalize electoral procedure;⁵ and we know from Tacitus that Tiberius carried out his predecessor's intentions (1. 15. 1): 'tum primum e campo comitia ad patres translata sunt: nam ad eam diem, etsi potissima arbitrio principis, quaedam tamen studiis tribuum fiebant, neque populus ademptum ius questus

¹ The evidence for this practice is assembled by Durry, 3-5.

² 'Zur Quellenanalyse des Plinianischen Panegyricus', *W.S.* xxxiii (1911), 85-7. Earlier scholars who had described V.'s final pages as 'panegyric' (e.g. Peter, *GL* i. 388, Leo 241 f.) were speaking no more specifically than Syme.

³ Several scholars have naturally pleaded

that we should distinguish what V. says from the manner in which he says it: e.g. M. L. W. Laistner, *Greater Roman Historians* (1947), 110; Paladini, 477.

⁴ So too Paladini, 476, and others.

⁵ Cf. Vell. 124. 3. There is no reason to doubt V.'s statement, as does Frei-Stolba, 145-6 and n. 31.

est.' Now in view of Tacitus' double contrast between *campo* and *tribus* and between *potissima* and *quaedam*, it looks at first sight as if Tacitus is referring to the elections of both greater and lesser magistracies, i.e. to those of the *comitia centuriata* (which met on the Campus) and of the *comitia tributa* (which met in the Forum).¹ But since it has been shown that this interpretation of Tacitus' sentence is untenable,² the passage is no evidence at all for the election procedure of lesser magistrates in A.D. 14: it merely describes the change which took place in elections to the praetorship. In our passage of Velleius, however, we read: 'summota e foro seditio, ambitio campo.' By the figure metonymy Velleius is referring to the *comitia tributa* and the *comitia centuriata* respectively,³ a statement which clearly implies a change in the roles of *both* electoral assemblies. That we are right in seeing this implication is confirmed by Dio's account of electoral procedure in A.D. 32.⁴ Thus Velleius is here not only telling the truth; he is the only historian to record fully and accurately what happened to electoral procedure as a whole in A.D. 14, a point which seems to have escaped the many historians who have discussed these problems.⁵ Tacitus tells us that the senate naturally welcomed the change (1. 15. 1 'senatus largitionibus ac precibus sordidis exsolutus libens tenuit')—so does Velleius, a senator himself ('summota . . . discordia curia').

The same is true of the restoration of the senate's authority. Other sources echo what Velleius says (Tac. 4. 6. 3, Suet. *Tib.* 30, Dio 57. 7. 2 ff., 11. 3), and the matter has been summed up by Syme himself:⁶ 'The accession of Tiberius marked a restoration of the Republic more genuine in many respects than that proclaimed and enacted by his predecessor—if behaviour be valued higher than legal formula.' Tiberius' attitudes towards the judicial system, mentioned by Velleius in the same sentence, can be similarly corroborated.⁷ Tacitus in several places testifies to Tiberius' *munificentia* (1. 46. 2 'principem . . . munificentiae summum', 2. 26. 1 'addidit munificentiam Caesar . . .', 4. 64. 2 'ignotos etiam et ultro accitos munificentia iuverat', 6. 45. 1), and Dio confirms Velleius' point that Tiberius aided individuals and cities alike (57. 10. 3):⁸ *πολλὰ δὲ καὶ πόλεσι καὶ ἰδιώταις ἐπαρκῶν*. Velleius' example of the cities of Asia is accurate: we know that in A.D. 17 an earthquake had destroyed several cities there, and Tacitus tells us that Tiberius assisted in the relief by financial contributions and tax remissions (2. 47 'magnificam in publicum largitionem', 48. 1, cf. Dio 57. 17. 7 etc.).⁹ Tiberius' enlightened provincial policy is confirmed both by Tacitus (4. 6. 4 'et ne provinciae novis oneribus turbarentur atque vetera sine avaritia aut crudelitate magistratuum tolerarent, providebat') and by Suetonius (*Tib.* 32. 2 'boni pastoris esse tondere pecus non deglubere'). Tiberius' penology is to be seen in terms of his *clementia* and *moderatio*, virtues which modern scholarship agrees in seeing in at least the first part of

¹ So Canesi in his commentary (1955), ad loc.; Lacey, 171–2.

² Cf. Shotter, 323 and n. 3.

³ A similar metonymy at Liv. 9. 46. 11; cf. Cic. *De Or.* 3. 167.

⁴ Dio 58. 20. 3–4 τῶν δὲ τὰς ἄλλας ἀρχὰς αἰτούντων [i.e. other than the consulship] ἐξελέγετο ὅσους ᾗθελε, καὶ σφας ἐς τὸ συνέδριον ἐσέπεμπε . . . καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐς τε τὸν δῆμον καὶ ἐς τὸ πλῆθος [i.e. the *com. centuriata* and *com. tributa* respectively] οἱ

προήκοντες ἐκατέρῳ . . . ἐσίοντες ἀπεδείκνυντο.

⁵ e.g. Lacey, 172; Frei-Stolba, 139. Tiberius' electoral reforms have caused a large amount of discussion, for which cf. Goodyear on Tac. 1. 14. 4–15. 1, and Seager, 124 nn. 2–3.

⁶ Tac. 427.

⁷ e.g. Seager, 123 ff., with references.

⁸ Further confirmation in Rogers, 3 ff., 14 ff.; Lana, 183 ff.

⁹ See also *RIC* 1. 105; Lana, 185 f.; Rogers, 15 ff.; Koestermann on Tac. 2. 47. 2.

the reign;¹ and his non-expansionist attitude towards foreign policy is equally well documented, not least by Tacitus himself (2. 64. 1–2 ‘laetiore Tiberio quia pacem sapientia firmaverat quam si bellum per acies confecisset’, 4. 32. 2 ‘immota quippe aut modice lacescita pax, . . . et princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus erat’, 6. 32. 1 ‘destinata retinens, consiliis et astu res externas moliri, arma procul habere’).

It is thus beyond dispute that Velleius’ statements of appreciation in this chapter are historically true. This is hardly surprising since it is well known that Tiberius’ reign falls into two contrasting halves, a dichotomy which, as Syme himself admits, ‘reflects facts’.² Is Velleius to be arraigned for having truly described the first of these halves? Syme, who is quite content himself to follow Velleius when ‘there is hardly any other evidence’³ and who will chide others for not so following him,⁴ gives himself away when on another occasion he produces this statement: ‘Though Velleius is an adulatory and dishonest writer, *he yet turns out to have told the truth*’!⁵ In chapter 126 Velleius has done no more than to combine factual accuracy with literary convention in a manner which is entirely characteristic of his work as a whole.⁶

¹ For *clementia* cf. Rogers, 35 ff.; Grant, *RAI* 47–51; Béranger, 271, all with further refs.; for *moderatio* see Goodyear on Tac. 1. 8. 5.

² Tac. 420 n. 2. Tacitus places the dividing line in A.D. 23 (4. 6), Suetonius in 26 when Tiberius retired to Capri (*Tib.* 26 ff., 39–41). The real trouble, however, did not start until the conviction and execution of Sejanus in 31, by which time V. had stopped writing. This fact, always brought up by those who wish to defend V. (e.g. Paladini, 477), is always discounted out of hand by those who wish to condemn him (e.g. Teuffel, 17: ‘It will not do to excuse this unworthy attitude by the plea that Velleius wrote his work before (Tiberius’) last . . . years’). But why not?

³ *Camb. Anc. Hist.* x. 369 ff., on the Pannonian Revolt (the quotation from p. 369 n. 1), an attitude also found, e.g., in H. J. Rose, *Handbook of Lat. Lit.* (1936), 355, ‘[V.] is at times of use . . . when the fuller and better historians fail us’. In an article on the Pannonian Revolt, however, J. J. Wilkes goes one better (*Acta Ant. Hung.* xiii [1965], 112–14). Modern students of ancient history are constantly lamenting the paucity of ancient historians who comply with Polybius’ conditions for being ‘pragmatic’ historians, i.e. who actually took part in the events which they relate. V.’s account of the Revolt, however, *is* pragmatic, being based on his own experiences as a soldier on the western front. Wilkes complains that this ‘produces a serious lack of balance’ because V. gives no details of the eastern front!

⁴ Cf. *DP* 68.

⁵ *J.R.S.* xlv (1955), 25 = *TST* 47 (my

italics). The context of Syme’s statement (a discussion of M. Lepidus, *cos.* A.D. 6) is interesting for those concerned with the technique of some modern historians. Syme there states that in A.D. 14 Lepidus ‘held Hispania Tarraconensis with three legions’ (*TST* 35), a statement which he had already made in *RR* 438 and which he subsequently repeated also in *Tac.* 382 n. 9: the same statement occurs in *P.I.R.*² i. 61 no. 369 (1933); G. Alföldy, *Fasti Hispanienses* (1969), 12–13 (who quotes Syme’s statements); and L. Hayne, ‘The Last of the Aem. Lepidi’, *A.C.* xlii (1973), 500. Now the only evidence which these scholars are able to quote in order to substantiate their assertions is Vell. 125. 5. Yet the paradox of that passage reads as follows: ‘†ad Hispanias exercitumque† virtutibus celeberrimae in Illyrico militia praediximus, cum imperio obtineret, in summa pace <et> quiete continuit, cum . . .’—which is pure nonsense, hence the daggers. It is perfectly true that Madvig suggested a supplement which contained Lepidus’ name, but that is no reason for his suggestion to be universally accepted as if it were a fact. A glance at Kritz’s long note will show that the whole textual problem is far more complicated than these scholars have allowed. Only if Lepidus’ position in A.D. 14 were to be confirmed by other evidence would we be able to contemplate inserting his name here. As it is, there are arguments in favour of L. Aelius Lamia (Sauppe); and other arguments that the passage does not refer to A.D. 14 at all (as every ed. before Haase believed).

⁶ ‘Velleius avait eu le mérite d’inaugurer sur le mode des rhéteurs des thèmes d’actualité propres au régime alors récent, des

It could of course be argued that Velleius had no business to write history like this, and that panegyric is quite distinct from history—as even Cicero was aware.¹ The charge against Velleius of ‘panegyrist’ implies a naiveté of judgement, a lack of critical awareness: in his work ‘the successes of others have no place . . . , save when they illustrate or enhance those of Tiberius’.² Although this is not the place to put Velleius’ work in a wider perspective, thereby replying to these charges in general,³ we may consider the most notorious instance of Velleius’ supposedly uncritical and biased treatment of contemporary figures—his treatment of Sejanus.

Syme has described Velleius’ treatment of Sejanus as a ‘panegyric’, an ‘encomium’ which the summarist was able ‘to concoct . . . without discomfort’.⁴ The following section of this essay will suggest that Syme has been deceived because he forgot a simple law of imperial historiography which he formulated himself:⁵ ‘It is the mark of political literature under the Empire . . . that it should not carry its meaning on its face.’

3. The ‘Panegyric’ of Sejanus (Chapters 127–8)

It is unnecessary to retell here the story of Sejanus’ spectacular rise to power during the twenties A.D.,⁶ with the exception of one item upon which our ancient authorities agree. Tacitus, Dio, and Velleius state that at some point early in this period (the date will be discussed below, pp. 301–2) Tiberius began referring to Sejanus as his *adiutor* (Tac. 4. 2. 3 ‘facili Tiberio atque ita prono ut *socium laborum* non modo in sermonibus sed apud patres et populum celebraret’, 4. 7. 1 ‘set crebro querens (Drusus) incolumi filio *adiutorem imperii* alium vocari’, Dio 57. 19. 7 καὶ σύμβουλον καὶ ὑπηρέτην πρὸς πάντα ἐποιεῖτο, 58. 4. 3 κοινωνῶν τῶν φροντῖδων ὠνόμαζε, Vell. 127. 3 ‘singularem *principalem*

thèmes romains et impériaux (Durry, 31, who proceeds to remark: ‘Pline n’a pas manqué de s’en inspirer’; ‘Velleius enrichit le genre d’éléments neufs que Pline s’est empressé de faire siens’). I shall provide two further examples of V.’s characteristic blending of rhetoric and fact. (1) At 129. 4 he says of the defeat of Sacrovir and Florus, ‘ante populus Romanus vicisse se quam bellare cognosceret nuntiosque periculi victoriae praecederet nuntius’. The sentiment owes much to panegyric formulae found in many authors (e.g. Liv. 44. 32. 5, Curt. 3. 5. 6, 7. 4. 14, Sen. Ben. 6. 31. 9, Flor. 1. 18. 6, 1. 29. 2, 2. 13. 63, Just. 11. 2. 10, Pan. Lat. 10. 5. 4; C. v. Morawski, *Eos* v [1898–9], 5; Wilhelm, 7 Anm. 2; D. Korzeniewski, *Die Zeit des Curtius Rufus* [1959], 61 f.). Yet, as Ruhnken saw, Tiberius himself had in fact used a similar formula when announcing the defeat in the senate (cf. Tac. 3. 47. 1 ‘Tiberius ortum patratumque bellum senatu scripsit’). (2) At 130. 5 V. records the death of Livia, ‘cuius potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis’. This is a *topos* of the *consolatio* (e.g. Sen. Cons. Pol. 3. 2 ‘nemo potentiam eius iniuria sensit’, 13. 1 ‘nec in isto potentiam tuam nisi in ea

parte qua prodes ostenderis’, id. Anth. Lat. li. 405. 3 ‘Crispe, potens numquam, nisi cum prodesse volebas’, *Eleg. Maec.* 1. 15 f., *Cons. Liv.* 47 etc.; J. Esteve-Forriol, *Die Trauer- und Trostgedichte in der röm. Lit.* [1962], 136). Yet Livia had, e.g., saved C. Corn. Cinna Magnus from the wrath of Augustus (Sen. Clem. 1. 9, Dio 55. 14 ff.), and had used her influence to gain senatorial rank for M. Salvius Otho, grandfather of the emperor (Suet. Otho 1. 1).

¹ *Att.* 1. 19. 10; cf. Kroll, *R.E.* Suppl. vii. 1128–9.

² Syme, *DP* 33, describing what is admittedly a characteristic of panegyrics. Yet two recent historians, Sumner (265 ff.) and Seager (268–9), are undistressed by V.’s treatment of others.

³ Such a perspective might take into account writers like Cicero (*Leg.* 1. 5 ‘ut ea (patria) . . . per te eundem sit ornata’), Livy (cf. *praef.* 11), and Florus (1 *praef.* 3 ‘non nihil, ut spero, ad admirationem principis populi conlaturus’).

⁴ Tac. 368, 571.

⁵ Tac. 29.

⁶ The most recent account is Seager, 178–223, with further references.

onerum adiutorem in omnia habuit atque habet'). From the remarkably similar phraseology used by each historian it is reasonable to conclude that Sejanus was known as Tiberius' *adiutor*.¹ Whether this was ever an official appointment, as has been suggested,² is perhaps doubtful; but Tac. 4. 2. 3 and a further passage of Dio (58. 8. 4 *τῇ τε γερονσίᾳ . . . γράφων Σεϊανὸν ἀπλῶς αὐτὸν ὠνόμαζε, μηδὲν ὥνπερ εἴθιστο προσθεῖς*) leave us in no doubt that Tiberius' references to Sejanus were frequent, were made in front of both the senate and the people, and used the same formula.³

The effect of this honorific nomenclature upon the senate may easily be imagined. Whatever the actual structure of political factions within the senate during this period,⁴ we may safely assume that for as many influential senators who followed Sejanus' lead, there would be at least a similar number committed to opposing him.⁵ Such opposition will have been intensified by Sejanus' equestrian status. He was an upstart, a *novus homo*, who had been catapulted to a position of almost unprecedented authority over the heads of many experienced, distinguished, and aristocratic senators. Even Drusus, Tiberius' own son and hitherto the most illustrious person in the state (*cos.* A.D. 15, 21; *trib. pot.* 22), felt cheated and insecure (Tac. 4. 3. 2, 7. 1).

It is also important to realize that such opposition had started at least as early as A.D. 20, and was not confined to the senatorial order but extended to the people also. In that year Sejanus' daughter was betrothed to Claudius' son Drusus, and Tacitus comments (3. 29. 4): '*adversis animis acceptum. . . polluisse nobilitatem familiae videbatur suspectumque iam nimiae spei Seianum ultra extulisse.*' Similarly in 29, after Tiberius had written to the senate with accusations against Agrippina and Nero, '*populus . . . circumstitt curiam festisque in Caesarem omnibus falsas litteras et principe invito exitium domui eius intendi clamitat. . . ferebantur etiam sub nominibus consularium fictae in Seianum sententiae*' (ib. 5. 4. 2-3). It is not difficult to imagine opposition of this kind existing throughout the twenties. Sejanus' unique position and his equestrian status were two sides of the same coin: these were the two issues which combined to alienate loyalist support at Rome.

The political atmosphere of the mid-twenties is perhaps best illustrated by an interchange of letters between Sejanus and Tiberius (the correspondence is attributed by Tacitus to A.D. 25).⁶ Sejanus had written to the emperor requesting the hand of the princess Julia Livilla in marriage (Tac. 4. 39). Tiberius replied, isolating exactly the two causes of discontent against Sejanus, his equestrian status and great power (ib. 40. 4-5): '*falleris enim, Seiane, si te mansurum in eodem ordine putas, et Liviam, quae C. Caesari, mox Druso nupta fuerit, ea mente acturam ut cum equite Romano senescat. ego ut sinam,*

¹ Dio's *ὑπηρέτην πρὸς πάντα* is very close to V.'s '*adiutorem in omnia*'. There are further correspondences. Tac. 4. 2. 3 '*ut socium laborum non modo in sermonibus sed apud patres et populum celebraret*' is very close to Vell. 128. 4 '*ad iuvanda vero onera principis . . . senatumque et populum Romanum eo perduxit ut . . .*'; and Tac. 4. 40. 7 '*nihil esse tam excelsum quod non virtutes istae (i.e. of Sejanus) tuusque in me animus mereantur, datoque tempore vel in senatu vel in contione non reticebo*' is very close to Vell. 128. 1 '*in huius virtutum aestimatione . . .*

iudicia civitatis cum iudiciis principis certant'.

² Thus Abraham, 8; Rogers, 139; Steffen, 188; Koestermann on Tac. 4. 2. 3.

³ V. was himself a senator and would have heard such references on innumerable occasions.

⁴ A subject much discussed, cf. the excellent analysis of A. Ferrill, *Hist.* xx (1971), 718-31.

⁵ Senatorial opposition is rightly given great stress by Steffen, 186-7.

⁶ On the sources of the correspondence see Koestermann on Tac. 4. 39. 1.

credisne passuros qui fratrem eius, qui patrem maioresque nostros in summis imperiis videre? vis tu quidem istum intra locum sistere; sed illi magistratus et primores, qui te invito perrumpunt omnibusque de rebus consulunt, excessisse iam pridem equestre fastigium longeque antisse patris mei amicitias non occulti ferunt'. Moreover, Tiberius goes on to say that opposition towards Sejanus means criticism of himself: 'perque invidiam tui me quoque incusant.' For it is essential to remember that Sejanus' elevation was, and was seen to be, the personal responsibility of Tiberius. Sejanus could not have risen to such heights or maintained his supremacy without the emperor's continual blessing.¹

With this background in mind we may now turn to Velleius' chapters on Sejanus, 127-8.²

Velleius begins at once with a general statement (127. 1): 'raro eminentes viri non *magnis adiutoribus* . . . usi sunt.' On other occasions when he expands his rapid narrative to deal with a single large topic, as here, Velleius commences either with some temporal or logical connective linking it with the preceding narrative,³ or else with an apologetic formula.⁴ Only here is no such introduction used, the opening statement being completely divorced from anything in chapter 126. The statement itself is illustrated by four examples from past history, after which, having proved his point, Velleius repeats the opening statement in slightly different form (127. 2): 'etenim magna negotia *magnis adiutoribus* egent.' The circular movement of the argument, made clear by the repetition of the phrase *magnis adiutoribus*, indicates that we have come to the end of a section. The section has undeniably dealt with political *adiutores*, who are defended on the grounds of public expediency and political necessity (see the accumulation of such words as *usu*, *utilitatem*); but by introducing, with apparent casualness, the names of two famous *novi homines* from recent history (Agrippa and Statilius Taurus), Velleius is already preparing us for what will be the main debating-point in chapter 128.

It is clear from the phraseology with which the next section begins, 'sub his *exemplis*', that the preceding section has been a calculated introduction to it. The remainder of this sentence confirms the fact (127. 3): 'sub his exemplis Ti. Caesar Seianum Aelium . . . singularem principalium onerum *adiutorem* in omnia habuit atque habet.' The new section is taken up with a character sketch of Sejanus which clearly owes much to 'die offiziöse Propaganda'⁵ and which comes to an abrupt end at the close of the chapter. In fact the break seems so abrupt that scholars have thought the following chapter to be a digression.⁶ Yet there are links between the two chapters. Since 128 begins by discussing the role of moral worth in political life, we come to realize that the character sketch of Sejanus, which lists his qualities, has been a preparation for this discussion. Also, the last sentence of 127, and the first sentence of 128, both contain the word *aestimatio*. This is no careless repetition; it establishes

¹ This aspect is well brought out in Tac. 6. 8. 3-4, and rightly stressed by Marsh, 189 f.

² I should say that my analysis, which is similar in some respects, was written before I had been able to see Steffen's dissertation. His work, and that of Sumner, are by far the best guides to chapters 127-8.

³ e.g. 2. 9. 1 'eodem tractu temporum',

90. 2 'in quas provincias . . . '.

⁴ e.g. 1. 14. 1, 1. 16. 1, 36. 2, 66. 3.

⁵ Koestermann on Tac. 4. 39. 2: see esp. Steffen, 186 f., 194; Grenade, 466 ff. For example, V. stresses Sejanus' *labor*, cf. Tac. 3. 72. 3, 4. 39. 2 where also his *vigilantia*, for which cf. Vell. 127. 4; for his indifference to success cf. 127. 4, Tac. 4. 39. 2, 40. 5.

⁶ So Rockwood, *ad loc.*, and others.

a close logical connection between two chapters which have often been thought quite separate.¹ That is, 128. 1-3 follows 127. 3-4 no less relentlessly than 127. 3-4 followed 127. 1-2.

The new chapter begins with a general statement (128. 1): 'quod *optimum* sit, esse nobilissimum'. The language instantly recalls the propaganda of *novi homines* during the late Republic,² and no reader would doubt that Velleius is about to discuss *novi homines*—a topic which, we remember, he had already prepared for at 127. 1-2. The statement itself is illustrated by seven examples from past history, after which, having proved his point, Velleius repeats the opening statement in slightly different form (128. 3): 'in cuiuscumque animo *virtus* inesset, ei plurimum esse tribuendum'. The circular movement of the argument again indicates that we have come to the end of the section. The section has manifestly exhibited an identical method of argument to that in the first section, 127. 1-2; but whereas there the accent was on public expediency and political necessity, here the emphasis has been on moral worth in political life (see the words *virtutum*, *optimum*, *virtus*).

It is clear from the phraseology with which the fourth and final section begins, 'haec naturalis *exempli* imitatio', that the preceding section has been an introduction to it, in exactly the same way as 127. 1-2 introduced 127. 3-4. Similarly, just as 127. 3-4 owed much to official propaganda, so does the present section with its slogans like *tutela* and *securitas*.³

The present section also performs an additional function by drawing together, at the end of the whole discussion, the strands of the two main arguments which have been advanced. In 127 the stress was upon public expediency, in 128 upon morality and politics: Velleius now concludes by saying 'ut quod *usu optimum* intelligit, id in tutelam securitatis suae libenter advocet', where *usu* clearly refers back to the argument of the first chapter and *optimum* to the second. Thus, just as 127. 1-2 and 128. 1-3 were miniature examples of circular composition, so now we realize that the entire discussion has come round in a circular movement, assisted by the repetition of two key words. The ring composition helps to unify the discussion and at the same time to make it detachable from the following narrative. Indeed, if we look at the opening sentence of the next chapter, which is where the main narrative resumes, we see exactly how detached the discussion of Sejanus is. Chapter 129 begins: 'sed proposita quasi universa principatus Ti. Caesaris <image>, singula recenseamus', where *proposita imagine* refers not to the discussion of Sejanus but to the panegyric of Tiberius' reign in 126, three chapters previously.⁴ Chapters

¹ The sense is: 'Sejanus always reckoned himself below the *aestimatio* of others (127. 4), BUT there was no doubt about the *aestimatio* others made of his true worth (128. 1).'

² e.g. Sall. *Iug.* 85. 15 'fortissimum quemque generosissimum' (where *generosus* = *nobilis*, as often, cf. Gelzer, *Roman Nobility*, 38), 85. 17 'ex virtute nobilitas coepit', Cic. *Ep. Hirt.* fr. 3P 'nobilitas nihil aliud sit quam cognita virtus', *Sest.* 136, Liv. 1. 34. 6 'ex virtute nobilitas sit', 4. 3. 13. There is a vast literature about this; cf. most recently T. P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate* (1971), 107 ff. on 'the ideology of *novitas*'.

³ For *tutela* cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2. 51, Hor. *Odes*

4. 14. 43-4, *Epist.* 2. 1. 2, Strabo 17. 25 (p. 1172 Meineke), Vell. 105. 3, Tac. 1. 2. 1, 12. 1, Val. Max. 9. 11 ext. 4 (!), Suet. *Aug.* 94. 8, *Tit.* 6. 1, Sen. *Clem.* 1. 1. 5, Plin. *Ep.* 10. 52, 10. 102; A. von Premerstein, *Vom Werden und Wesen des Prinzipats* (1937), 117 ff.; Béranger, 204, 257-60, 266 ff.; Grenade, 446 ff.; M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas* (1946), 452-3; *RAI* 89-90. For *securitas* cf. H. Instinsky, *Sicherheit als politisches Problem des röm. Kaisertums* (1952), 15 ff.

⁴ Steffen (193) notes the inconsistency of 129. 1, concluding (194-5) that chapters 127-8 are a later addition to the main

127–8 are isolated from the surrounding narrative in a way which is unique in Velleius' work.

There are other oddities. In stark contrast to chapter 126, already analysed, and also to chapters 129–31, where elegant reminiscences of Cicero are found in profusion, the language here is utterly prosaic (esp. 127. 1–2), and heavily indebted to officialese, political slogans, and propaganda.¹

If the language is different, so is the method. The careful structure and close argumentation are nothing like narrative history. In fact Velleius' method at both 127. 1–2 and 128. 1–3—where he moves with dexterity from initial *sententiae*, to illustrations from past history (*exempla*), then back to subtle restatements of the original propositions—is directly comparable to the method seen in many of the elder Seneca's *Controversiae*.² Indeed the very theme of 128. 1–3 (men of humble birth who have risen to success) is one of the most familiar commonplaces of rhetorical writings.³

Clearly those scholars are mistaken who have described these chapters as a 'panegyric' or 'eulogy' or 'encomium' of Sejanus. Velleius is, as it were, arguing to defend one side of a *controversia*—but a *controversia* which has contemporary political relevance. The preceding analysis leaves us in little doubt that Velleius has addressed himself to precisely the two areas of complaint which were aimed at Sejanus during the twenties and which were singled out in the passage of Tacitus quoted above (pp. 297f.): the minister's uniquely prestigious position and his equestrian status.⁴ It is to this end that he has deployed his careful argumentation and illustrative material, some of which, as Syme himself has shown, is exceedingly subtle.⁵

narrative, inserted for the reasons given below, p. 301 n. 1.

¹ See refs. above. The only Ciceronian echoes in these chapters are 127. 3 'compagae corporis', cf. *Senec.* 77 'compagibus corporis'; 128. 4 'exempli imitatio', cf. *Flacc.* 24 'imitationem exempli'. This is not the place to illustrate the many Ciceronianisms in 129–31. An abrupt change of style may be an indication of discomfort or stress. An interviewer of Stangl, the Nazi war criminal, has recorded that he 'had a curious habit of changing from the semi-formal German he usually speaks, to the popular vernacular of his childhood whenever he had to deal with questions he found difficult to answer' (*Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 8 October 1971).

² For which cf. S. F. Bonner, *Roman Declamation* (1949), 51 ff.

³ e.g. *Hor. Sat.* 1. 6, *Sen. Contr.* 1. 6. 3 ff., 7. 6. 18, *Val. Max.* 3. 4. 3. 5, 4. 4. 11, *Sen. Ben.* 4. 30, 44; A. Oltramare, *Les Origines de la diatribe romaine* (1926), 266.

⁴ His prestigious position is discussed below; the idea of humble status is insisted on throughout 128. 1–3: 'hominem novum', 'equestri loco natum', 'novum', 'ignotae originis'. Steffen gets it right in general terms (187: 'Diesen Vorwurf, den man in manchen Kreisen gegen Sejan erhob, zu entwerfen, ist das eigentliche Anliegen des

Velleius'); but his interpretation of chapters 127–8 (for which see below, p. 301 and nn. 1–2) prevents him from realizing that V. has isolated these *two* areas of complaint in 127 and 128 respectively.

⁵ Syme (1956), 257–66, esp. 262–5, has ingeniously suggested that V. chose Carvilius as one of his *exempla* because the man had built a shrine to 'the most patently plebeian of the Roman deities' Fors Fortuna (*Liv.* 10. 46. 14), a goddess who had especial significance in Tiberius' reign (*Tac.* 2. 41. 1), particularly for Sejanus himself (*Dio* 58. 7. 2–3). V.'s practice in this section seems to be to mingle conventional *exempla* of the 'humble birth *topos*' (e.g. Cato, cf. H. W. Litchfield, *H.S.C.P.* xxv [1914], 33) with more subtle instances such as Carvilius and others (see below, p. 301 n. 4). The same is true of the *exempla* at 127. 1: *Val. Max.* 4. 7. 7. compares the *amicitia* of C. Laelius and Scipio Africanus with that of Agrippa and Augustus in much the same way as V., attributing to both Laelius and Agrippa many of the standard virtues to be expected from those who devote their lives to the welfare of the state. Sure enough, in A.D. 28 the senate voted for the erection of an *ara amicitiae*, to be flanked by statues of Tiberius and Sejanus (*Tac.* 4. 74. 2; cf. Grant, *Aspects* 54). The astuteness of V.'s reference

When would such a defence have been appropriate? Steffen has argued that these chapters, taken in conjunction with the *votum* in chapter 131, belong to A.D. 29/30 and anticipate the nomination of Sejanus as Tiberius' successor.¹ But Sumner has rightly shown that such an interpretation of the *votum* is impossible.² Sumner himself proposed a different moment, the late summer of A.D. 30. Referring to 128. 4 ('haec naturalis exempli imitatio ad experiendum Seianum Caesarem, ad iuvanda vero onera principis Seianum propulit, senatumque et populum Romanum eo perduxit ut quod usu optimum intelligit, id in tutelam securitatis suae libenter advocet'), he has argued that 'in the context the latter part of the statement undoubtedly refers to the promotion of the Praetorian Prefect to the consulship, which he was to come from Capri to assume at Rome on 1 January A.D. 31'.³ Sumner supports his theory by observing that each of the precedents mentioned in 128. 1-3 were consuls.⁴ But is he right?

I find it hard to believe that at 128. 4 Velleius is defending a different moment in Sejanus' career from the one defended at 127. 1-4.⁵ In view of the close internal connection of the whole discussion, analysed above, it must surely be the same honour which is referred to at each place, though treated from the two different angles mentioned above (viz. Sejanus' actual position and equestrian status: p. 300). The language too is the same in both places (127. 3 'principalium onerum adiutorem', 128. 4 'ad iuvanda onera principis'). Now since we know from the independent evidence of Tacitus and Dio that Tiberius regularly referred to Sejanus as his *adiutor* (see above, p. 296), and since *adiutor* is the term upon which Velleius insists throughout chapter 127 (the word occurs three times), it is reasonable to assume that it is this honour which Velleius is defending.

Regrettably the evidence will not take us much beyond this point. Dio (57. 19. 7) firmly states that Tiberius began calling Sejanus his *adiutor* as early as A.D. 20, the year in which Sejanus was granted praetorian rank. Confusingly, however, Dio later (58. 4. 3) links the same title with Sejanus' nomination for the consulship which took place in A.D. 30. But there is still Tacitus, who associates Sejanus' appellation as *adiutor* with the year A.D. 23. This date is more

to Agrippa has long been recognized: e.g. L. Levy, *Quomodo Tiberius se gesserit* (1901), 78; Syme, *Tac.* 402 f.; Grenade, 168 f., 466 ff.

¹ Steffen, 191 ff.

² Sumner, 291 ff., refuting not Steffen (whom he had been unable to see) but Syme, *Tac.* 368, to whom a similar notion had occurred independently. My analysis in the next paragraph, if it is accepted, shows that Steffen's interpretation of 127-8 is also unlikely.

³ Sumner, 286.

⁴ His actual observation is (286 n. 157): 'It could be held that Velleius manages to hint at more than the consulship for Sejanus, but it will not be denied that he alludes to the consulship specifically.' Well, does he? V. alludes to the office of Pont. Max., consulships, censorships, triumphs, and the six consulships of Marius—hardly a specific reference to the consulship. He then men-

tions Cicero, of whom he says 'ut paene adsentatione sua quibus vellet principatus conciliaret'; then Pollio, to whom the Roman people 'nihil negaverunt'; then the section concludes 'plurimum esse tribuendum'. These three statements, none of which makes any reference to the consulship, are particularly apt descriptions of the unusual power wielded by Sejanus throughout the twenties A.D. (cf. esp. Tac. 4. 2. 3 'neque senatorio ambitu abstinebat clientes suos honoribus aut provinciis ornandi', 6. 8. 4 'ut quisque Sciano intimus, ita ad Caesaris amicitiam validus'). I thus deny the latter part of Sumner's observation, but readily accept the former part. Steffen (191) also sees chapter 128 as defending 'unusual' power, but he of course sees this as foreshadowing Sejanus' appointment as Tiberius' successor.

⁵ Denied by Steffen, 191.

convincing than it may seem at first sight. We know from Strabo, who was writing about A.D. 18, that Tiberius' own sons Drusus and Germanicus were at that time 'assisting their father' in the government.¹ Although Germanicus died in 19, Drusus presumably continued with this role, since he was granted *tribunicia potestas* in 22 (Tac. 3. 56. 1), thereby becoming Tiberius' official co-regent and heir. Yet Tiberius was suddenly deprived of Drusus' assistance when he died on 14 September 23.² It was perhaps during the earlier months of that same year, when Drusus was at his most powerful and thus most likely to object to a rival (cf. Tac. 4. 3. 2, 7. 1), that Tiberius, whose reliance on assistants was almost obsessive,³ began to refer to Sejanus as his *adiutor*.⁴

Most scholars have deduced from chapters 127–8 that Velleius was himself an ardent supporter of Sejanus, a view which is completely without foundation.⁵ We know from Tacitus (1. 24. 1–2) and Dio (57. 19. 6) that when the army in Illyricum revolted in A.D. 14, Tiberius sent out Drusus and Sejanus to deal with the revolt. Velleius' account of the revolt is given in chapter 125. Now if he were the enthusiastic supporter of Sejanus which, on the basis of 127–8, he is usually claimed to be, he would surely have referred to Sejanus' presence in Illyricum. As it is, we are indeed told of Drusus' mission (125. 4), but there is no mention of Sejanus.⁶

Again, we know from Tacitus (3. 72. 2–3) and Seneca (*Marc.* 22. 4) that when Pompey's theatre caught fire in A.D. 22 it was Sejanus who played a major part in controlling the blaze, as a result of which the senate voted that his statue should be erected on the site. The fire was clearly a famous incident, and it is naturally mentioned by Velleius in his detailed survey of Tiberius' reign (130. 1); yet he makes no reference either to Sejanus' sterling work or his subsequent honour.

Now these are both occasions on which it would have been more than natural for Velleius to introduce the name of Sejanus into his narrative, yet each time he declines the opportunity.⁷ Instead we are given the present discussion which in its style, structure, method, and position is completely awkward and incongruous. Such evidence hardly adds up to enthusiasm for the emperor's minister. It would seem, with far more probability, that Velleius

¹ Strabo 6. 4. 2 (p. 396 Meineke) ὑποπ-
γούντες τῷ πατρί.

² For the date cf. V. Ehrenberg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents illustrating the Reign of Augustus and Tiberius* (ed. 2, 1955), 52.

³ We may accept the evidence put forward by E. Kornemann, *Doppelprinzipat und Reichsteilung im Imperium Romanum* (1930), 35 ff., without accepting the interpretation he places upon it.

⁴ I am not saying that chapters 127–8 were written in A.D. 23; but I do believe that they would have been appropriate at any moment in the twenties from then on.

⁵ The view is particularly common among those who, like Syme (*Tac.* 368), believe that V. perished in the aftermath of Sejanus' execution. Notable exceptions to this view are Abraham, 13 f.; Dihle, 640. Steffen and

Sumner both argue, in my opinion rightly, that V. was actually antagonistic towards Sejanus: see below.

⁶ Steffen (194 f.) also makes this point.

⁷ There may have been a similar opportunity for V. at 101–2. We know from these chapters that V. was on the staff of Gaius Caesar in the East at the turn of the century, and it is likely (though not provable, cf. Sumner 292 n. 197 on Tac. 4. 1. 2) that Sejanus was there too. It is usually assumed (e.g. by Syme 1956, 265) that the acquaintance of the two men must date from this period; yet V. makes no mention of it at any point during his elaborate account of Gaius' oriental activities, even though this is the kind of personal detail he usually delights to include (cf. e.g. 101. 3). But the reason for this 'omission' may simply be that Sejanus was not in fact there at the time.

belonged with those senators who were antagonized by Sejanus (see above, pp. 297-8).¹

We must remember that it was not only Sejanus who incurred senatorial criticism but also the emperor himself, by whose favour Sejanus operated (above, p. 298). Velleius, whose loyalty to Tiberius is unquestioned, is here defending not Sejanus but the emperor's treatment of him.² Syme's opinion that these chapters are 'an encomium of Sejanus concocted without discomfort' could hardly be further from the truth.

CONCLUSIONS

When the final books of Livy's universal history were published, probably after the death of Augustus in A.D. 14, they marked a watershed in Latin historiography. Yet if the bulk of Livy's work was a deterrent to those in Tiberius' reign who aspired to be universal historians, so it was too to his own readers, who were becoming accustomed to the practical charms of brevity which other writers in other genres had started to proclaim with some frequency. Velleius made literary capital out of this situation by composing a universal history in summary form. The work thus belongs to a genre which had not been represented since Varro, Atticus, and Cornelius Nepos; it exhibits the mannerisms which we see in contemporary exponents of brevity; above all it foreshadows, both in genre and technique, the summary historians of a later age—Florus, Eutropius, and Sulpicius Severus.

Although the evidence indicates that Velleius had stopped writing by the beginning of A.D. 30, the moment at which he began to compose is uncertain. But since he dedicated his work to M. Vinicius on the latter's assumption of the consulship in A.D. 30, we may assume that he commenced his project not later than the time when Vinicius was first informed of the impending honour. This may well have been in the mid twenties A.D., from the lips of Tiberius himself. The work is thus not the parergon of a few months' hasty activity, but more likely the product of several years' careful consideration. It is a fitting tribute to the illustrious consular friend whom Velleius addresses with such an appropriate blend of informality and dignity.

Velleius' terms of reference required that he deal with Tiberius' reign from his accession to the beginning of Vinicius' consulship. This was a period in

¹ So too Steffen, 195, who avoids inconsistency in his argument by assuming that V. pays to Sejanus merely 'eine konventionelle Reverenz'. He rightly avoids using words like 'eulogy' or 'panegyric' throughout his careful discussion, preferring instead the term 'Charakteristik'.

² This is, after all, a natural conclusion since Tiberius was held to be responsible for Sejanus' promotion (above, p. 298), and it is Tiberius who as hero occupies the final pages of V.'s work. There are further indications. Sejanus is mentioned remarkably infrequently (only twice) in a discussion which has generally been regarded as his panegyric; and when he is mentioned, it is in officialese (see above), and as the recipient of honours either from Tiberius (127. 3) or

from Tiberius acting with the senate and people (128. 4). Kritz mistakenly described these chapters as 'Seiani laudes, vilissimae et abiectae', but added 'paene excusationem Tiberii suscepisse videatur' (xvii sq.). He was followed by Sumner, who called the passage a 'long eulogy', but also said: 'Vell. is not so much concerned to praise Sejanus as to justify Tiberius' treatment of him. . . . The idea that the historian was enthusiastic about Sejanus' prospective ascendancy is based on an insufficiently attentive reading of his words. . . . An unprepossessed reading of Vell.'s work will reveal that he was devoted to Tiberius, not Sejanus' (292-6). Sumner comes to this conclusion on evidence which is different from both mine and Steffen's, some of it (I believe) dubious.

which the achievements of the emperor himself, well attested in other sources, were counterbalanced by the rise to prominence of his minister Sejanus. Velleius reacted to the situation first by enhancing the emperor's achievements: he set them in a framework which contemporaries would recognise as panegyric. Chapter 126 is to be seen in terms of a literary genre which may be illustrated by supporting evidence, rather than as a distortion of the truth which may not. We should agree with Norden that Velleius gives 'a most important corrective to the Tacitean account', rather than expostulate about the style prescribed by that genre.

Velleius' reaction to Sejanus was altogether different. This man had risen from an equestrian background to a position of such influence that, from about A.D. 23, Tiberius habitually referred to him as his *adiutor*. These twin features of Sejanus' career, his non-senatorial origins and unique authority, combined to produce criticism among senatorial ranks both of himself and of the emperor, without whose continual support he could not operate. Those who still backed Tiberius were faced with a dilemma: how to maintain their stance without showing favour to Sejanus. In chapters 127–8 Velleius defends the emperor's treatment of Sejanus by addressing himself to precisely the two areas of complaint which were current during the twenties. Yet the position of these chapters, their artificial and defensive structure, their prosaic and propagandist style—all these elements produce an awkwardness and incongruity which testify to their author's discomfort. Indeed, Velleius' active distaste for Sejanus may be deduced from the pointed absence of the *adiutor* from certain other portions of the narrative.

These conclusions are of considerable importance. By categorizing chapters 126–8 indistinguishably and superficially as 'panegyrics', scholars have persuaded themselves that Velleius has falsified Tiberius and responded with sympathy to the monster Sejanus. It is primarily for these reasons that they proceed to indict the rest of his work as a whole.¹ A careful reading of these

¹ I here give two final examples of the way in which scholars assume that V. is falsifying evidence because they are predisposed to believe in his 'adulation and mendacity'. It does not occur to them how ludicrous it would have been for V. to repeat lies which his contemporaries would have dismissed out of hand. It is more realistic, not to say fair, to work from the assumption that V. is telling the truth. (1) At 106. 2 V. writes: 'denique—quod numquam antea spe conceptum, nedom opere temptatum erat—ad quadringentesimum miliarium a Rheno usque ad flumen Albim, qui Semnonum Hermondurorumque fines praeterfluit, Romanus cum signis perductus exercitus, et eodem, mira felicitate et cura ducis, temporum quoque observantia, classis, quae Oceani circumnavigaverat sinus, ab inaudito atque incognito ante mari flumine Albi subvecta, <cum> plurimarum gentium victoria, cum abundantissima rerum omnium copia exercitui Caesarique se iunxit.' Now Syme (1933, 147 n. = *DP* 33 n. 23) and C. M. Wells

(*German Policy of Augustus* [1972], 159, 218–19), understanding V. to claim for Tiberius the honour of being the first to penetrate to the Elbe, have accused him of deliberate falsification since we know that Drusus and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus had reached the Elbe in 9 B.C. and A.D. 1 respectively. Yet the much criticized parenthesis (*quod numquam antea . . .*) refers not simply to the clause which ends *perductus exercitus* but to the following clause as well, i.e. to the rest of the chapter. It is clear from the words which link the two clauses, *et eodem*, that V. thought of the passage as a single sentence describing a single operation. V.'s admiration is directed not at Tiberius' reaching the Elbe but at the *joint* military and naval operation which turned out so successfully. As nominal commander-in-chief of the expedition (Plin. *N.H.* 2. 167 'auspiciis divi Aug.') Augustus was equally delighted, but since (as Syme himself has remarked, *Camb. Anc. Hist.* x. 340) he did not have 'the instincts of a soldier', his delight is restricted to the more spectacular

chapters, however, which takes due account of the styles in which they are written, shows up these superficial judgements to be based not on reason but on prejudice. It is to be hoped that they will collapse once their foundation has been removed.

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naval part of the campaign (cf. *Res Gest.* 26. 4). V., on the other hand, the professional soldier, sees the joint operation as a whole, and is impressed as much by the technical expertise of his immediate commander (*temporum quoque observantia*) as by his success (*mira felicitate et cura ducis*). When we consider what such an operation must have involved in A.D. 5, we can appreciate that not only V.'s account but also his admiration are fully justified. (The alleged lie in *ab inaudito atque incognito mari* was explained long ago by Ruhnken, q.v.) (2) At 112. 7 V. writes: 'hoc fere tempore . . . crescentibus in dies vitiis dignum furore suo habuit exitum' of Agrippa Postumus. Now W. Allen ('The Death of Ag. Post.', *T.A.P.A.* lxxviii [1947], 139) and Syme (*Tac.* 367 and n. 9) accuse V. of implying that Postumus 'died some time before the end of Augustus' reign'. Yet they forget that the Latin word *exitus* is no less ambiguous than the English word 'fate':

it can of course mean 'death', but it can also mean 'the final state of a person' (*O.L.D.* s.v. 4)—as, e.g., in sentences very similar to V.'s, Cic. *Verr.* 2. 5. 189 'Verrem . . . dignus exitus eiusmodi vita atque factis vestro iudicio consequatur', *Fam.* 15. 11. 2 'tibi velim ei sint exitus quos mereris et quos fore confido', Sen. *Ira* 3. 16. 4 'habuit itaque quem debuit exitum'. Since Postumus' 'final state' was exile, and since this took place in A.D. 7, the precise year which V. is discussing at 112. 7, it is surely the man's exile, not his death, to which reference is being made. (Syme may perhaps be excused a little because he mistakenly attributes V.'s account to A.D. 6, thus missing the significance of the year of Postumus' exile.) Seager (268) has recently described these two items as 'perhaps (the) only two major instances of dishonesty' in V.'s account of Tiberius. Now even these must go.

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