VELLEIUS PATERCULUS

Edited by

Eleanor Cowan

Velleius Paterculus: Making History

Editor

Eleanor Cowan

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Edward Bispham, W. Martin Bloomer, Eleanor Cowan, Maria Elefante, Tom Hillard, Barbara Levick, John Alexander Lobur, John Marincola, Victoria Pagán, Christopher Pelling, Luke Pitcher, John Rich, Ulrich Schmitzer, Robin Seager, Catherine Steel, Kathryn Welch, T. P. Wiseman

The Classical Press of Wales

First published in 2011 by
The Classical Press of Wales
15 Rosehill Terrace, Swansea SA1 6JN
Tel: +44 (0)1792 458397
www.classicalpressofwales.co.uk

Distributor in the United States of America
ISD, LLC
70 Enterprise Dr., Suite 2, Bristol, CT 06010
Tel: +1 (860) 584–6546
www.isdistribution.com

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ISBN 978-1-910589-20-5

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset, printed and bound in the UK by Gomer Press, Llandysul, Ceredigion, Wales

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INTRODUCTION

Eleanor Cowan

At a time when democracy is being aggressively championed, the modern reader of Velleius Paterculus will almost inevitably come to his work with an opinion about autocracy. Moreover, even a reader unfamiliar with the narrative of the fall of the Republic will be familiar, in a general way, with the idea that modern democratic and totalitarian states possess the infrastructure to produce propaganda campaigns, spin and cover-ups. Cynicism pervades our response to political statements and the media in general as a consequence. One approach to Velleius' work might therefore be informed by an eagerness to expose mendacity, propaganda and deceit: to look for an official line on the rise of Augustus and Tiberius and to demonstrate Velleius' complicity in propagating or developing these ideas. But this collection of papers is an attempt to do something different.

Helpful modern approaches to ancient authors writing during the Principate have always done much more than expose 'positive' or 'negative' responses to an emperor as an end in themselves. The value of challenging, redefining, nuancing or even abandoning terms like 'propaganda' has long been recognised and, simultaneously, most scholars would agree that even 'propaganda' has enormous value as evidence for contemporary thought and contemporary responses to changing social and political conditions. This volume is, thus, inspired by a sense of adventure: a desire to see *what else* we might do with Velleius' text. The contributions in the volume are of four overlapping but nonetheless distinct types: first, those which explore Velleius' personal background and achievements; second, those which explore Velleius' place in the tradition of Roman historical writing and ask what he tells us about, or contributes to, the *writing* of history in the ancient world; third, those which examine particular ideas, values or concepts as they are used in Velleius, and fourth those papers which, by concentrating on aspects of Velleius' treatment of a particular institution or person, add to our understanding of how that institution or person *could* be presented during Tiberius' principate. All of the contributions share an interest in exploring how Velleius viewed his own project, its themes and key ideas.

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Velleius Paterculus: soldier and statesman

Velleius tells us in some detail about himself and his family. He explains, for instance, that his family are Italian (not Roman) and that his great-grandfather, Minatius Magius of Aeclanum, grandson of Decius Magius, was leader of the Campanians during the Social War (Vell. 2.16.1–3). This great-grandfather captured Herculaneum, fought alongside Sulla in the siege of Pompeii, and took possession of Compsa. Velleius tells us that these deeds were recorded by other historians including an extended account by Hortensius in his *Annals*. It was this great-grandfather who secured citizenship for his family, under a special grant, and it was his sons who continued the family's integration into the cultural and political hierarchies of the capital by holding office as praetors at Rome.

Velleius documents the fortunes of his family during the years of civil war. His grandfather was made a member of the jury panel by Pompey and served as *praefectus fabrum* under Pompey, M. Brutus and Tiberius Nero (the emperor Tiberius' anti-Caesarian father) (2.76.1). His father was a prefect of cavalry (2.104.3) and his brother, Magius Celer Velleius, was a military legate who was highly commended by both Augustus and Tiberius (2.115.1). Velleius himself served as military tribune with Gaius Caesar (Augustus' grandson) in the East (2.101.2) and served with Tiberius as *praefectus equitum* and legate in Germania, Pannonia and Dalmatia (2.104.3). Velleius and his brother participated in Tiberius' triumph over the Pannonians and Dalmatians in AD 13 (2.121.3). His political career began in AD 6 when he was elected quaestor, but it was not until AD 14 that Velleius and his brother were designated as praetors by Augustus. They took up office in AD 15. Velleius is, therefore, in many ways typical of the new nobility at Rome. His ideas are valuable because, unlike the better-known narratives of the fall of the Republic and the rise of the Principate (Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio, Appian, Plutarch), they are contemporary.

Big issues and incidental details

Velleius' short work is the earliest surviving attempt on the part of a post-Augustan historian to survey the history of the *res publica* from its origins. In a period from which no other contemporary historical narrative survives in more than meagre fragments, therefore, Velleius' work is uniquely important. It is a critical counter to the later accounts of Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio, not simply because it offers a different view of Tiberius, but because Velleius saw continuity where later authors saw only radical change which destroyed the Republic and put monarchy in its place. Velleius, who lived through this period and examined it, did not question

the continued existence and relevance of the *res publica*, but neither did he question the supremacy of the Caesars.

In many ways, Velleius' work defies classification into a particular genre. The surviving sections of his work show that he was interested in a wide range of topics including universal history, Roman history, poetry, festivals, viticulture, the establishment of colonies and the characteristics of the good general. The expansion of Rome and her success in wars of conquest under a series of leading men (*principes*) is a dominant theme in the surviving portions of both books. These *principes* pervade the narrative, culminating in Tiberius: the *optimus princeps*. In addition, Velleius observed political changes at Rome. He notes, for instance, that it was the murder of the Gracchi, not their political programmes, which changed the way political life was conducted. Likewise, he observes that Caesar had absolute power (2.68.4) and that Octavian and Antony were fighting for the safety or ruin of the world (2.85.1). Velleius' treatment of individuals and events is peppered with the language and ideas of both the Republic and the emerging Principate. The reader would do well to observe closely his use of terms like *optimates* or *res publica*; *quies* and *tranquillitas*. The alert reader will also find references to, and intertexts with Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and the *Res Gestae*. The *Senatus Consultum de Cn Pisone Patre* and Valerius Maximus' collection of memorable deeds and sayings provide further insights into the language and ideas of the intellectual, cultural and political world Velleius inhabited.

Although it is the 'Augustan' and 'Tiberian' sections of the narrative which are best-known and most widely used, it is important to remember that Velleius' work, even as it survives, is more extensive. It seems to have begun in the very distant past – the earliest surviving sections deal with the return of warriors from Troy. Velleius' work is, therefore, rich in incidental details which offer invaluable insights into the way in which men of his background, education and training viewed not only the events and personalities of the recent past, but also Rome's place in a wider culture and universal history. Some of these details also demonstrate the ways in which individuals from the past *could* be written about under Augustus and Tiberius. At 2.66.2–5, for example, Velleius gives a eulogy of Cicero; elsewhere he praises both Cato (2.35.2) and Pompey (2.48.1; 2.49.1–3; 2.52.3–4; 2.53.2). His depiction of Caesar is especially interesting as an example of how Caesar and his achievements could be represented seventy-odd years after his assassination.

Finally, the careful reader of Velleius' narrative will be struck not only by Velleius' evident desire to celebrate the achievements of Augustus and Tiberius, but also by his consciousness of the precariousness of those

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achievements. Velleius' remarks on the death of Augustus (men feared the ruin of the world); on the revolts of AD 15 (the soldiers wanted a new leader, a new *status*, a new *res publica*) and his closing prayer for the safety of Tiberius and the provision of successors reveal his anxiety about the future of the new dispensation. It is sometimes easy to forget that the Principate was not inevitable, nor did it arrive fully-formed in terms of either its political structures or its ideological or iconographical messages. Velleius' work is an insight into a system which was still evolving and part of this evolution involved the ability to retell, rewrite and re-examine Rome's history.

Where to now?

This volume arose out of a conference held in April, 2008 at the University of Leicester. I am enormously grateful to Leicester's School of Archaeology and Ancient History, the Roman Society, the Classical Association and the British Academy for their substantial and very welcome financial contributions to the conference. Without these, it would have been impossible to have invited so many speakers from around the world (Australia, Chile, Germany, Italy, the United States of America) or to have assisted the post-graduate participants. Thanks must go also to all those who wrote in support of these applications: Rhiannon Ash, Katherine Clarke, and especially to Tony Woodman whose support and encouragement have been unstinting. My colleagues in the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester were tremendously helpful both in encouraging me to initiate the conference and in assisting with all aspects of the preparation and administration. I am particularly grateful to Sharon North for all that she did administering the finances for the conference. More recently, the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry at the University of Sydney has generously helped to fund the translation of Ulrich Schmitzer's paper in this volume.

It has been a privilege to work with all those who attended the conference. Inevitably, one cannot reproduce the discussions and questions which provided so much of the excitement of a conference of this kind, but it is a pleasure to acknowledge the stimulating contributions made by Catalina Balmaceda, Bob Cowan, Marius Gehardt, Trevor Mahy, Ellen O'Gorman, Antonio Pistellato and Andy Stiles. It is also a pleasure to be able to thank Anton Powell and the Classical Press of Wales for their support of this project. To the generosity and scholarly acumen of J. M. Trappes-Lomax are owed the indices of, and many improvements to, this volume.

There is always more that can still be done. One of the aims of the conference, and subsequent volume, has been to build on the interest in

Velleius' work which Lana, Sumner, Syme, Woodman, Hellegouarc'h, Elefante, Schmitzer and Gowing have stimulated and to continue to draw attention to the possibilities for further research. It seems to me that further work might profitably be undertaken on Velleius' depiction of his own times and, in particular, his depiction of leading individuals in Tiberian Rome; on the ancient and modern reception of Velleius' text and ideas and on Velleius' use of the language of the Late Republic (in particular the vocabulary associated with political life). It has been the hope of all of the contributors to the volume that Velleius' work will continue to interest readers committed to making good use of contemporary sources for this crucial period in the history and historiography of the Principate.

The volume is respectfully dedicated to Tony Woodman and Sister Alexis Horsley in gratitude for their encouragement of, and dedication to, all those who learn from them.

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PART I

VELLEIUS

1

VELLEIUS PATERCULUS AS SENATOR: A DREAM WITH FOOTNOTES

Barbara Levick

Seated one day in the Bodleian Library, I found an unpublished MS before me. I have translated it, and should like to share its contents with you.

My brother Lucius has asked me, as the senior of the senatorial family of the Velleii, to undertake this memoir of our father the historian. We of course are ex-consuls, having held the office (admittedly as suffects) in the sixth and seventh years of Nero Caesar, and so we have reached the senatorial heights and ennobled our family. Our father and our uncle Magius Velleianus were not so fortunate, even though they showed the same unswerving loyalty to Tiberius Caesar as we have to Nero Caesar, and through times just as troubled by treachery.[1]

That being so, we thought it right to redress the balance for a man who was not only useful to the Republic *domi militiaeque*, in civil and military life, but penned a work that has been virulently attacked since his death; such is the way of critics of historians as well as those of emperors. His difficulties and the complex loyalties that claimed him all need to be appreciated. For instance, it is not generally understood that he undertook the work at the request of M. Vinicius for him to use as an impeccably slanted source for the speech of thanks that he had to deliver on taking up the consulship of a difficult year, so that Velleius had only six months in which to complete it, and that his enthusiasm for the work carried it far beyond its original limited scope.[2] Just as that consulship was the culmination of Vinicius' career, so my father's history presented the

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foundation of the Principate and especially the reign of Tiberius as the culmination of Roman, even of world history.[3]

What better than beginning with the words of Claudius of blessed memory: 'Of course it was a novelty when my great-uncle Augustus and my uncle Tiberius brought in the entire flower of the colonies and municipalities wherever they were to be found'.[4] Our father and uncle were typical of many senators of the Augustan age: new men of Italian origin. But there were degrees of novelty. The yardsticks included length of time a family had had Roman citizenship; freedom from any taint of slavery in the ancestry; wealth and standing in the home community; the standing of that community itself; and personal merit, especially in the field. Velleius and his brother had a high claim on all counts, and he stresses it in his work. Of course he does not boast of the other qualification, wealth; it was very well for an emperor to mention that the new men had to be *locupletes* as well as *boni*, well-off as well as sound.

As *domi nobilis*, a man distinguished in his home ground, Velleius begins with Decius Magius, of Capua but loyal to Rome in the Hannibalic War. These maternal ancestors were the more distinguished side, and his full treatment of them might serve as modest paradigms:[5] Minatius Magius of Aeclanum receiving Roman citizenship as his reward for loyalty during the Social War and his two sons actually elected to the praetorship before Sulla's victory. With this we pass permanently to a new phase: loyalty to individuals. On his father's side Velleius boasts a juryman selected by Pompey in his third consulship and a C. Velleius who was aide de camp to M. Brutus, passing with the same rank to Ti. Nero. When he killed himself in a supreme act of military loyalty after defeat in the Perusine war he created a bond with the Nerones. This man's son Capito had meanwhile gained credit in quite a different quarter: with Octavian's friend Agrippa by supporting him in the prosecution of another tyrannicide, Cassius. But while Velleius' uncle Capito brought senatorial rank close, his father remained an *eques*, a 'knight', and was still serving as *praefectus equitum*, commander of a troop of cavalry, when Velleius took over from him.

Velleius the historian naturally notes L. Mummius (*cos.* 146) as the first *novus homo* (man new to the senatorial career) to get a military *cognomen*, the surname Achaicus. But C. Marius was the paradigm. Nearer our father's own time were M. Agrippa and P. Ventidius Cumanus. These careers illustrate the circumstances that favoured advancement: the crises of war, foreign or civil. So Velleius was justified in carefully bringing his own more modest but exemplary service into the contemporary historical events he recounts. And although he twice writes of his *mediocritas* (modest position),

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that is not the language of a 'client', as his detractors claim, simply that of a subordinate officer in a great campaign.[6]

Not that our father was a mere soldier: his own work and his proclaimed interest in verse show his education in rhetoric and literature, and he was interested in philosophy.[7] Whatever their merits, though, and however distinguished their families, the origins of such men have always been denigrated by senatorial rivals and in writers that attend to them; some new men defiantly made a merit of newness, as Sallust makes Marius do.[8]

Our father's account of his family history is not only a demonstration of *virtus*, military merit, as a factor in advancement and of the closeness of the senatorial and equestrian orders, but an unashamed *exposé* of conflicting loyalties. Fortunately, his own birth ten years after the fall of Antony[9] made him a child of the developed Augustan Principate; the long periods of military service that took him away from Italy carried no burden of civil guilt. At 17 he began service in the junior equestrian military post as *tribunus militum angusticlavius* (junior commander of legionary troops who does not aspire to enter the Senate and so wears a tunic with only a narrow purple stripe) in Macedonia and Thrace under P. Silius and P. Vinicius.[10] Velleius kept up this connexion and three decades later was to dedicate his history to Vinicius' even more distinguished son. But Augustus' grandson C. Caesar visited the region and he joined Gaius in the east.[11] Perhaps Gaius wanted to win the loyalty of a boy with such strong Tiberian connexions!

This career left my father hardly time to hold one of the minor magistracies that youths take when they intend a senatorial career, as a member of the Vigintivirate, or any local administrative offices, the duovirate or quattuorvirate.[12] On the contrary, after five years he advanced to a cavalry prefecture, taking over from his father on his retirement. From the time of Tiberius' return to command Velleius served under him in Germany and the Balkans, so re-forging his grandfather's connexion.

So my father's first civil post, qualifying him for membership of the Senate, was the quaestorship. He was to hold it at most a year or two older than the most privileged young men – and alongside Germanicus Caesar himself.[13] When Velleius was elected, on the basis of his long military record and with the support of his commander-in-chief Tiberius and his distinguished friend and former commander P. Vinicius, his first feelings would have been of pride at winning a reward that his father might also have earned, if he had aspired to it. Politics were hazardous and acrimonious since C. Caesar died, so it already required some courage to enter the Senate, even with the support of the clearly designated heir of Augustus. But that move alone would enable our father to take higher commands

than that of a squadron of auxiliary cavalry or of a small military district. He would be qualified to command a legion; he was elected in the exact year that Tiberius launched a new and definitive onslaught on Germany, a pincer movement that he led northwards from Bohemia and which C. Sentius Saturninus conducted eastwards over the Rhine. It was to have secured final control of the area between Rhine and Elbe and the provincialization of Germany. The Balkan revolt made that invasion abortive but Velleius was needed all the more. Before he could enter office on 5 December, he was sent to convey reinforcements to Tiberius, embattled in the Pannonian Revolt. Only after that did he return to Rome to serve his term.

Most men hold legateships only after the praetorship, but exceptions were made, as they still are by our present Princeps.[14] Other men did not have Velleius' experience. With that rank he was returned to Tiberius in the Balkans, and continued under his command for two more years (even enjoying the use of his private bathing facilities).[15] Then he passed to that of M. Lepidus, a man who is still universally esteemed.[16] After the Varian disaster he transferred to the Rhine with Tiberius, and reached Rome again only for his Illyrian triumph of October 23 three years later.

With the praetorship I come paradoxically to the first shadow in our father's career. When Pompey the Great was elected to the consulship at the age of 35 he asked for a handbook on senatorial procedure.[17] Pompey was about to undertake the most onerous post that the civil career had to offer. It is often implausibly said as an excuse for Tiberius' ineptitude with the Senate that his time on service abroad deprived him of experience in the House. In fact, Tiberius was at the centre of Roman politics from his adolescence, holding a prestigious quaestorship and a praetorship and consulship five years before the normal age.[18] But when Velleius undertook his praetorship he really was a tiro in senatorial business. His immediate social circle on service abroad consisted in the first place of a kinsman, his brother Magius Velleianus, and of fellow-officers of equestrian rank, equally country worthies. Their talk of the Senate and of senators would have been that of outsiders and in any case conversation will inevitably have centred on imperial politics.

Velleius' absence from Rome, especially during the five years after Tiberius' return to power, must be regarded in one sense as an advantage. He had no chance to become embroiled, even on the loyalist side and however humbly, in the feuding of those years, which saw the exile of Agrippa Postumus, first to Sorrento, then to Elba, and the fall of Julia the Younger and her senatorial friends. Eventually he was able to write of Ovid as a consummate poet, even though his work had been taken off the shelves of public libraries.[19]

The firm commendation of the men I have mentioned, most of all that of Tiberius Caesar, and the military service he had so honourably performed might have made it unnecessary for our father to hold either or both of the tedious posts, tribunate or aedileship, normally occupied by new men between the quaestorship and the praetorship (only the seriously ill-favoured have to hold both – we all remember the ill fortune of the great C. Marius),[20] although there was just time for one of them, before he was elected to the praetorship in the very year that Augustus died. But that would have meant that he was being treated just like a patrician, and it would have caused great offence and was perhaps too much to risk at a crucial time of Tiberius' career.[21] Of course the offence would have been much weaker than it was when Sejanus passed straight from equestrian status to the consulship.[22]

Both Velleius and Magius were candidates supported by Augustus and Tiberius. That support carried them successfully through a poll in which there were two remarkable features.[23] The first was that these were the first praetorian elections to be held in the Senate, according to the scheme drawn up in his political testament by Augustus, what our father described as '*ordinatio comitiorum manu sua scripta*', electoral regulations drawn up by his own hand. This meant that the men chosen for office in the House, the *destinati*, as they were called,[24] were elected unopposed in the People's assembly, the Comitia Centuriata. And Velleius and his brother came near the head of the poll. The recommendation of Augustus and Tiberius was potent indeed. In fact, being commended by the emperor came to mean that a man was sure of election without any need to canvas.[25] So pliable even then was our Senate becoming!

Secondly, however, this election was notably contentious, and when our father writes that one of Tiberius' achievements was removing *discordia* from the House, one wonders if he was thinking of that painful experience; but Tiberius had many other chances to remove discord – in which he failed. There had been strong pressure on the praetorship recently: it was required for advancement to the consulship. Two years before the election of Velleius and Magius twelve men were allowed to hold the office, not the mere eight that Augustus had established as the regular number at the beginning of his Principate; it was soon exceeded again.[26] Now, senators who hoped themselves to qualify or to get friends or relations into high office, pressed the new and they hoped therefore malleable Princeps Tiberius to allow a larger number still. Tiberius had to end the controversy by taking an oath on his decision. I am afraid that the election of Velleius and his brother will have caused resentment among rivals, perhaps men of family, whose candidature failed. When he says in his *History* that they

came second to men of the highest nobility ('*nobilissimis*') and the holders of priestly offices he is already able to use the superlative that implies the subtle degrees of nobility that have come to prevail under the Empire; even descent in the female line has begun to count. So these men had it all.[27] It was one of the things that met with approval in the Principate of Tiberius that he handed out offices having regard first to men of the highest family, then to men of military distinction, and finally to those whose skills were civil, lawyers, that is, or orators.[28]

But in the intense competition for the praetorship at the end of Augustus' reign our father and uncle were imperial cuckoos in the praetorian nest, perhaps not the only military men released from fighting in Germany. And that may have made Velleius' term of office less comfortable than it might have been. However, the competition with other successful candidates is unlikely to have left any strong bad feelings: the separate postings at that level were allocated by the lot and not according to the position of the candidate at the poll.[29] Some will remember another successful candidate when Velleius was elected: Q. Pompeius Macer of Mytilene, descended from Pompey's friend Theophanes, who gets a favourable mention from Velleius. Macer was the first Greek-speaker known to have reached that position. He is likely to have caused even more resentment amongst Italian failed aspirants, and it is no surprise to realize that he must have come in behind Velleius and his brother. Pompeius drew a short straw with his post, his *provincia.* His uncertainty of touch is revealed in the episode in which he asked Tiberius whether he should convene his *maiestas* court when the first cases of the reign involving affronts to the Princeps and his family were being brought before the Senate – and received a curt and famous answer: the law was there to be observed. Macer did not long survive the fall of Sejanus.[30]

My father also describes his senior colleagues as holders of priesthoods ('*sacerdotales*'). These men will have been *pontifices* or augurs, *septemviri epulonum*, or *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, members of the four most distinguished priestly colleges that Rome possessed. It has to be admitted that Velleius and my uncle did not hold priesthoods. There was no reason why they should not have received one of the less prestigious offices, even the revived position of *fetialis,* but the social contacts that went with these offices would have been useless to them as long as they were away from Rome. Even with these humbler positions there were not enough priesthoods to go round the entire Senate, perhaps one in eight.[31] It was only reasonable if they went without, at least until after the praetorship.

Readers of this memoir will want to know who Velleius' and Magius' friends in the Senate were, besides old comrades promoted like him after

military service.[32] But first I should like to deal with the accusation that my father's opinions of politicians of an earlier age were dictated by his relations with their descendants, notably Munatia Plancina and her father or grandfather L. Munatius Plancus, whom Velleius so memorably stigmatized as a chronic traitor.[33] Plancina was not disgraced until two years after Sejanus fell, and there was no lack of hostile material on Plancus in work of C. Asinius Pollio published after his death.[34] Yet my father was only human: given that material, the temptation to use it was particularly strong at a time when Plancina, though not damned, had been thoroughly discredited ten years previously at the trial of the elder Cn. Piso. There were enemies waiting to catch her out.[35]

Obviously M. Vinicius and Velleius will have been on dining terms. The ties went back many years, and Marcus was now taking the family to its heights. But even though he was destined to be betrothed to Tiberius' granddaughter Julia Livilla, the conjecture that the appeal in the last pages of the *History* is intended to direct attention to him and his claims to membership of the imperial house, even to the Principate, rather than those of Sejanus, is wide of the mark. That would have been perilous for author and honorand alike.[36] Rather Velleius is avoiding taking any direction but what Tiberius, to whom he was unflinchingly loyal, ordained. Another family associated with Velleius' earliest career, that of the Silii (still ill-fated in the reign of our late Emperor Claudius!), had suffered a loss six years previously with the suicide of the former governor of Gaul, C. Silius, and Velleius refers to this in a pained way, for the disloyalty of Silius' scheme.[37] His was no longer a mansion to frequent. But another P. Silius was consul a few years before Velleius wrote. In any case, C. Silius fell because of his links with the elder Agrippina and her sons. He and his friends would not have welcomed so whole-heartedly loyal a senator as Velleius. It is noteworthy how lukewarm Velleius' estimate of Germanicus' achievement is, compared with his appreciation of those of Drusus Caesar. Velleius is likely to have known Germanicus personally, when they shared their quaestorships, perhaps at Rome for the election, perhaps later when both were organizing reinforcements for the Illyrian revolt. Velleius has nothing to say about it.

As soon as Germanicus was gone political groups re-formed. Velleius naturally belonged with those rallied unquestioningly behind Drusus Caesar, and when those hopes died with Drusus his followers looked to Sejanus as the man who was defending the interests of Drusus' children against Agrippina and her pushy sons, who finally triumphed in the person of Caligula. After Sejanus' death it was *de rigueur* to deny any relations with him.[38] Of course Velleius and Sejanus knew each other from early youth,

when they were in the retinue of Gaius Caesar. I see no evidence in his history for the allegation that Velleius blamed Sejanus for having a part in making Gaius the dispirited creature that he became before he died. It would be hard to imagine that he could have put any such hint, however guarded, into a work written so near Sejanus' supreme moment.[39] The two young soldiers made the same transition to Tiberius, with Sejanus' father preceding him in command of the Praetorian Guard. One of our kinsmen governed Egypt under Augustus,[40] but there is no comparison between a mere praetorian senator and the commander of the Praetorian Guard. Sejanus was immeasurably more successful, apparently without the hard grafting in the army that Velleius had endured, as Velleius may be hinting when he refers to his consular relations.[41] Invitations from Sejanus will have been acts of condescension.

He does not speak of it, but that is only one more reason to see our father as rather an isolated figure in the decade before his history was completed, isolated precisely because of his loyalty to an emperor who was not only unpopular but fifty-six years old even when he came to power, with a father who died young.[42] Tiberius might have seemed unlikely to survive for long after his accession. He may be seen as a man of the past during his principate: eyes were on his two sons. In twelve years even they were dead, he was a recluse, and all political activity was focused on the struggle for the succession. Posts would go to active participants. The Princeps was no longer visible except to the chosen few, to whom Velleius did not belong. He would have given anything to be able to write (among the Princeps' other virtues) of the *comitas* of an Emperor with whom he was on intimate terms.

The undeserved shadow that I have mentioned descended on my father during and after his year of office. There were many praetorian posts open to him and our uncle, and they contributed to the attractions of the magistracy. Command of a legion or governing a province as legate or proconsul were the possibilities. For a year after the praetorship there was still strenuous activity in Germany, where experience would have made Velleius particularly useful. But the irony was that when his commander Tiberius became Emperor, never to leave Italy again, the direction of operations in the north was left in the hands of young Germanicus Caesar, who had his own staff and political supporters with him: men such as the P. Vitellius who appears as prosecutor in the case of Cn. Piso the Elder. Velleius belonged to the earlier, Augustan-Tiberian, phase of operations in Germany, and in that region he too looks like a man of the past. He ended his service in Germany with Tiberius' triumph, as his account of events there ends with the mutinies two years later. Velleius may have been in two

minds about Germanicus' activities, which continued those of his father and were in conflict with Tiberius' final policy. It was a fine specimen of Tiberius' generosity that he received Germanicus as the 'conqueror of Germania'.

However, Velleius' silence has puzzled earlier writers and they have guessed that a legionary legateship or province in a less high-profile area, lasting one to three years, punctuated the routine duties at Rome until he wrote his history.[43] They have even (instead of asking us!) examined the text of the history where Velleius describes single events of Tiberius' sixteen-year reign to find those that look as if they were witnessed by Velleius. These include the trial of Libo Drusus in the year after Velleius' praetorship, the triumph of Germanicus and his departure for the east in that and the following year, the fire on the Caelian, and the 'dolours' of the last three years before he finished writing.

That leaves a decade unaccounted for, and enquirers have made a lot of what Velleius strangely singles out as the first item to mention among Tiberius' detailed achievements. It is the suppression of a revolt in Thrace and the capture of the troublesome dependant monarch Rhescuporis. Velleius celebrates the special merits of L. Pomponius Flaccus, consul three years after Tiberius became sole ruler, and a contemporary of my father. The idea is that Velleius was Flaccus' praetorian legate. Going further, they have taken my father for the P. Vellaeus who put an end to the disturbances in Thrace.[44] Surely, though, if he had played so distinguished a part in a successful operation that so clearly demonstrated Tiberius' acumen he would hardly have remained silent about it.

There may be other reasons for putting the achievements of Flaccus first. One is formal. Velleius' presentation of Tiberius' individual actions exhibits individual qualities, foresight in the case of the Thracian revolt, dignity in the next item, the trial of Libo Drusus. Next come the wisdom of the counsel offered to Germanicus and the generosity of the gifts presented to the People. The next pair are Germanicus and Drusus, who benefit from honour and advice respectively, and finally the rebellious Gauls and Africans (in reverse chronological order), who are dealt with by means of speed and *virtus* in the first case and signs from the gods and advice in the second.

A second reason for the position of Thracian affairs is L. Pomponius Flaccus himself. He was a friend of Tiberius, in fact, a boon companion.[45] He was also close to my father, who provides details about Gaius Gracchus that evidently derive from the Pomponii: he mentions a knight who followed Gaius and killed himself in the catastrophe (an enthralling theme for the grandson of Ti. Nero's follower): M. Pomponius looks like an

ancestor of the able and brilliant Pomponii of the early Principate, who had MSS of the Gracchi in their possession.[46] Readers of my father's work cannot have failed to notice his ambiguity towards Gaius Gracchus, who, if only he had contained himself, might have become *princeps civitatis*, a leader in the state. Another detail confirms the link with the Pomponii: Velleius' interest in the vintage bottled in the consulship of L. Opimius who slaughtered the Gracchans, which he says the age proves must be exhausted. Ten years later Pomponius Secundus the dramatist offered Caligula some of it. Velleius had been misinformed about the state of Secundus' cellar, or Pomponius was gulling Caligula.[47] Velleius' enthusiasm for Ovid gave him another shared cultural interest with this family: Ovid sent Flaccus and his brother Graecinus letters from exile.[48] There is no need to suppose that Velleius was slavishly following the tastes of Tiberius Caesar, and his ignoring Horace may have more to do with a generation gap than the implausible reasons offered for Tiberian dislike, the panegyric on Lollius and the inadequacy of his recognition of Tiberius' success in the Alps. One wonders what Tiberius had against Plautus, who is also neglected by Velleius.[49]

Velleius' Senate was different from the one that Pompey entered three quarters of a century before. Sulla had assigned it the key position in the State. Under Augustus the Senate was theoretically placed in the same position by his first constitutional settlement. It acquired the right to pass decrees which rarely needed ratification by the popular assemblies, but they were always decrees of which the Princeps approved. In fact it was the survivor of twenty years of Civil War and a purge, and four years after the settlement it had been committed by its champions to a struggle with a newly *popularis* Augustus which it had humiliatingly lost, never again to resume the initiative. Immediately after that defeat it was purged for the second time. Only briefly – and under the consul Q. Pomponius Secundus, brother of the dramatist – did it try for independence, when Caligula was assassinated.[50]

All the same, the reactions of new men to their new status have remained predictable down to our own time. At one extreme new men became, like Cicero after his consulship, champions of the institution that gave them their identity and self-respect. At the other extreme they regarded their status simply as a means of self-advancement, without regard for the institution itself. These were the men who attached themselves unquestioningly to the fortunes of the Princeps without regard for their fellows, making themselves infamous as *delatores*, bringing charges, often fatal, against innocent men for their own enrichment or political advancement. Between these were men who kept their heads down. They

distinguished themselves in whatever way their talents lay, but kept within the conventions. Our father made no secret of his devotion to his Princeps, but he committed no impropriety that survives in the record and does not figure among the *delatores*.

Instead Velleius took to history writing, fourteen years after he held the praetorship that was his highest office. That had always been a respectable occupation, especially for senators at or near the end of their career. Evidently Velleius, now approaching fifty, saw himself in that light. It is a far-fetched suggestion that he thought that the *History* would help him reach the consulship.

How Velleius felt about the '*consilium publicum*', the council of state, as he calls the Senate, readily appears in that work. Its initiative is clear in the republican section of the *History*. It was Senate and People who made L.Aemilius Paulus consul; and when he is writing of the mutineers of Germany and the Balkans and their attempt to intimidate the government, he presents them as thrusting their demands in the face of the Senate even before he mentions the affront to Tiberius. He also adopts a conventional posture of hostility to *populares*, the men who in succession to the Gracchi and L. Appuleius Saturninus sought to benefit the People in despite of the Senate. The circumstances were usually that they had suffered a reverse in their careers and had to seek further advancement by winning support from the People. They were institutionally hostile to senatorial supremacy. It was impossible then for Velleius to admit that Augustus had passed through that *popularis* phase in his career as Princeps.[51] For him, Augustus' benefits to the People were given in full collaboration with the Senate, as indeed they had been after that phase, since it could not resist.

Velleius' standpoint seems conventional for a senatorial author, and suggests that he took his membership of the House with due seriousness. But there was another factor: Velleius was living and writing under a Princeps who was himself unsympathetic towards the Plebs, and did nothing more than his duty by them. These feelings of dislike were reciprocated. That made it easier for the two focuses of loyalty in Velleius to be reconciled: devotion to the Senate and devotion to Tiberius, whose professions made at the beginning of his Principate were those of a perfect optimate politician.

This was fortunate for the historian at the time, but it has not helped his reputation since Tiberius' death:[52] abject towards Augustus and even more so towards a Princeps who narrowly escaped *post mortem* condemnation by the Senate and being dragged to the Tiber by the People. His attitude towards a living emperor has come to be seen as characteristically servile. The political language he uses is that of the public

pronouncements of his age, in particular that of the decree of the Senate passed in the case of Cn. Calpurnius Piso the elder:[53] the Senate now, despite having acquired *maiestas,* the majesty that belonged under the Republic to the people, was being 'taught' by Augustus and Tiberius.

But our father was paradoxically unfortunate in yet another way: Tiberius for his part came to recognize the vast difference in dignity between himself and regular magistrates and priests, whom he did not hesitate to rebuke, and he learned to speak disrespectfully to the men he had described on his accession as his 'masters'.[54] The change will have been a disappointment. The honour that had been conferred on Velleius was perceptibly diminished by Tiberius' altered attitude, though that was itself due to the abject conduct and language of the Senate combined with Tiberius' own fear of cabals in favour of his putative heirs Nero and Drusus Caesars.

A further aggravation of Velleius' discomforts will have been the assumption into intimacy and high status of another person of equestrian origin, though Sejanus, like Velleius himself, already had senatorial relatives in the Senate, in his case cousins of consular rank. And Sejanus' posturing at the consular elections in the year before his death, when he was reaching the pinnacle of his career and hoped for tribunician power and *imperium proconsulare*, military power, to follow, would have been a particular irritation to the loyal adherent of the Tiberius of the accession speeches: Sejanus was about to outbid the disgraced heirs in a *popularis* charade on the plebeian Aventine Hill.[55] That was something that Sejanus would have to explain (as a mere expedient) to the conservative Princeps, who was more inclined to chide than to flatter the *plebs*.

Our father was the victim of inescapable paradoxes, personal and ideological, in his political life and his writing, just as his family was split in its loyalties in the Triumviral period. Personally, for him as for them, loyalty was prime, and he was loyal to a man who was likewise the victim of a paradox and so has acquired the reputation of a hypocrite. Augustus hid his appetite for unrestricted power by manipulating the constitution; Tiberius, genuinely seeking a return to senatorial government, slipped into tyranny. For Velleius, then, there were conflicting loyalties, as there were for the Pomponii, with the dramatist, a friend of Sejanus' son, escaping only with the help of his brother Quintus' dubious methods.[56] With Velleius Tiberius always came first, even after the fatal change that took place in his second decade of supreme power. Ideologically he stood at a turning point, just when the old republican brands of *optimates* and *populares* were drunk to their dregs at Sejanus' election. Populism died there, except for the *princeps'* own, as the Opimian wine was exhausted, and there was only one issue: what powers would the Senate have under any *princeps*?

Velleius conceals distaste for the upstart, not very well, under the ancient precedents he cites for nobles who have taken up men of a lower class in their own support, and with a description of Sejanus' vulpine merits (the traitor is 'fidei capacissimus') that would have suited Maecenas or Catiline as characterized by Sallust. Nothing happened to him in the purges that followed Sejanus' fall, despite the suspicions of some writers that he was a serious adherent of Sejanus.[57] It was sufficient punishment for his enforced applause of such a traitor that he should survive to see a son of Germanicus rather than Drusus Caesar or his son Gemellus take over from Tiberius; and that the outcome of Sejanus' career put it out of the question for him to carry out his intention of writing on a grander scale.[58] But it was in the period after his praetorship that we his two sons were born, and it was on us that he must have founded his hopes for the future. We flatter ourselves that our own success has fulfilled them.

And so I awoke, and found myself still seated in the Bodleian Library, but a little lower in my desk.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank Dr. Geraldine Herbert-Brown for allowing me to read an unpublished paper of her own and for reading this paper before it was delivered; the audience (notably Professor T. P. Wiseman), for their comments afterwards; Dr. Antonio Pistellato for reading the revised paper and enabling me to refine it; and especially the conference organizers and editors.

Notes

[1] The relationship between Velleius and the consuls of 60 and 61 is accepted here. C. Velleius Paterculus was legate of the Legio III Augusta in Africa (*CIL* 8, 10311, after AD 45) and suffect in 60; L. Velleius Paterculus was suffect in 61 (Gallivan 1974, 302). The *praenomen* of the historian is discussed by Sumner 1970, 277 f., n. 124, and by Woodman 1977, 95; Gaius, accepted by Wiseman 1971, 271, is worth a bet. One *cos. ord.* of 61 was P. Petronius Turpilianus, one of Nero's most loyal followers (*PIR*^{2} P 315).

[2] The idea that Velleius' audience was precisely M. Vinicius himself was proposed by J. W. Rich at the Conference; I have added only the use to which it was to be put. The period for completing the work would be from Vinicius' candidature, no doubt as one sure of success, in June–July 29, to his entering office on 1 Jan. 30. Whether this is possible may be doubted, but Rich was prepared to allow it. Two points should be borne in mind: first, tracts of the work are autobiographical or derived from family history and may already have been in existence as part of an autobiography, while M. Elefante suggested at the Conference that the pages on Campania were (had been?) written for Tiberius. Second, the episodes from earlier history are selective, well known, and not skilfully put together. As John Marincola remarked in discussion, it is futile to search for Velleius' sources. His schooldays would have supplied much of the material.

[3] The paper of C. B. R. Pelling rightly warns against stressing 'culmination' against 'restoration' (cf. Vell. 2. 89. 3 f. and 2, 126), but the two are not incompatible, if what was achieved was also stability.

[4] Claudius in 47 on the admission of Gallic nobles to the Senate: *ILS* 212, col. 2, l. 1–4. Osgood (2006a) on new men: 251–97. In his paper E. Bispham remarked that Velleius was not a *novus*; his stemma is problematical. Certainly he had connexions of senatorial rank, but not his father; in part *novitas* ('newness' in senatorial rank) lay in the eye of the beholder.

[5] Magii and Velleii of the republican and Augustan periods are mentioned by Sumner 1970, 261 and 263, as possible connexions, but origins (*e.g.*, C. Velleius of Lanuvium, senator in 77, Cic. *ND* 1. 6. 15; *De Or.* 3. 21, 78; Wiseman 1971, no. 471) keep them conjectural; they are not claimed by Velleius.

[6] '*Mediocritas*' and the language of the client: Syme 1986, 437.

[7] 'Simple soldier': H. Siber: 'etwas primitive Soldatennatur', in *Das Führeramt des Augustus* (Leipzig, 1940, 71) rev. by R. Syme, *JRS* 36 (1946) 158 = *Roman Papers* 1 (1979), 196.

[8] Marius' *novitas*: Sall. *Jug.* 85.

[9] 20 or 19 BC is calculated by Sumner 1970, 275 n. 111; 23 by Syme 1986, 423.

[10] Dates of Silius' and Vinicius' Thracian and Macedonian commands: Woodman 1977, on Vell. 2. 101. 3.

[11] This suggestion is made by Sumner 1970, 265, citing Dio 55. 19. 17 for Gaius Caesar's presence in the Danubian region in 1–2 BC.

[12] Age of *duoviri*: *Lex Malacitana* 54 (J. González, *JRS* 76 [1986] 188).

[13] For ages at which the quaestorship was held, see Sumner 1967, 422 f.

[14] Nero giving legateships to ex-quaestors: Tac. *Ann.* 14. 28. 1.

[15] For a sick Velleius enjoying Tiberius' facilities, see Sumner 1970, 273, on Vell. 2. 114. 1 f.

[16] M. Lepidus: see Syme 1955.

[17] Pompey's handbook: A. Gell. 14. 7. 2 f.

[18] Tiberius politically active as a youth: Suet. *Tib.* 8.

[19] Syme 1986, 402, attributes Velleius' taste for Ovid to his reflecting the taste of Tiberius; Herbert-Brown 1994, 178, is inclined to agree.

[20] Marius, tribune in 119 BC, offended the nobility, went on in 117 to stand for both curule and plebeian aedileships in succession – and failed for both. He came in last for the praetorship in 116 and was promptly prosecuted for *ambitus* (Plut. *Mar.* 4 f.; cf. Cic. *Planc.* 51; Val. Max. 6. 9. 14).

[21] Omitting tribunate and aedileship: Sumner 1976 9,140, 274. T. P. Wiseman (in discussion) was justifiably critical of this idea, given Velleius' status as a *novus homo*. He noted that there was no point in mentioning one of these posts at 2. 121.

[22] As Dr. Pistellato reminds me; cf. Pistellato 2007.

[23] Praetorian election of AD 14: Tac. *Ann.* 1. 14. 6.

[24] *Destinati*: *Tabula Hebana*, in M. H. Crawford *et al.* eds, *Roman Statutes* 1 (1996) 507–47 no.37 f., *Tabula Hebana* l.6 with n.

[25] *Commendati* with no need to canvass: Tac. *Ann.* 1. 15. 2.

[26] More than eight praetors: Dio 53. 32. 2 with Rich 1990 *ad loc.* (ten in 23 BC; a rise from the eight implied by Velleius 2. 89. 3 for the beginning of the Principate, treated by Dio as a reduction); 56. 25. 4 (AD 11). See Bablitz 2007, 14, for the pressure.

[27] Leading praetors of AD 15: the consuls of AD 18 were imperial, of 19 M. Julius

Silanus and L.Norbanus, the latter however the grandson of L. Cornelius Balbus of Gades. But Velleius is noted for his taste for superlatives.

[28] Tiberius' criteria for office: Tac. *Ann.* 4. 6. 2.

[29] Allocation of praetorian posts by lot: Talbert 1984, 348; Brennan 2000.2, 820 n. 52, on Cic. *Verr.* 2. 1. 1. 4; Rich 1990 *ad* Dio 53. 2. 3 notes that Augustus often picked the urban praetor. That was a desirable post: Cic. *Mur.* 41. In his list of colonial foundations Velleius curiously links that of Spoletium (241 BC) with the foundation of the Floralia festival (1. 14. 8; cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 18. 236 [238 BC]), as if this were something in which he had a particular interest (for Velleius and public performances, see the paper of T. P. Wiseman). It may be (as Professor Wiseman has suggested to me) that this festival was allocated to him as a charge during his praetorship (Dio 54. 2. 3); negotiating with the '*meretricia turba*' of Ovid, *Fasti* 5. 349, will have been tough and unprestigious.

[30] First Greek-speaking praetor: Halfmann 1979; cf. Strabo 13, p. 618. His put-down: Tac. *Ann.* 1. 72. 4; Suet. *Tib.* 58; fall: Tac. *Ann.* 6. 18. 4 (AD 33).

[31] Importance of priesthoods available: Wiseman 1971, 169–73.

[32] Syme 1986, 428, mentions the Antistii (consuls in 23 and 28) and C. Sallustius Crispus Passienus (suff. 27).

[33] '*Morbo proditor*': Vell. 2. 83. 1; relation of Plancina to him: Moles 2002, 107 f.

[34] Survey of Velleius' predilections: Syme 1986, 421–38. Velleius and Plancus: 429, but see Sumner 1970, Bosworth 1972 (but see Osgood 2006a, 255), and Wright 2002 (Pollio's work). Velleius had a high regard for Pollio's eloquence. Dr. Pistellato reminds me of the importance of rhetorical elements in Velleius' portrait, perhaps derived from the schools after Plancus' death and influenced by his Antonian past. It may be that the two elements reinforced each other, as Dr. Pistellato suggests.

[35] Plancina's fate in the trial of Cn. Piso: Tac. *Ann.* 3. 15. 1; Eck *et al.* 1996, 46 f., ll. 109–20. Her ultimate fate: Tac. *Ann.* 6. 26. 4.

[36] Sumner 1970, 295, suggests that Velleius was pushing Vinicius towards the Principate; Syme 1986, 436, dates the betrothal to 33: Tac. *Ann.* 6. 15. 1.

[37] Fall of C. Silius in 24: Tac. *Ann.* 4. 18–20.

[38] Friendship with Sejanus honourably admitted: Tac. *Ann.* 6. 8. 1–9.1.

[39] The suggestion that Velleius blamed Sejanus for Gaius' loss of spirit in Vell. 2. 102. 3, is made by Sumner 1970, 267 n. 67 (and may originally have come, as Dr. Pistellato notes, from Professor E. Badian).

[40] M. Magius Maximus, governor of Egypt 11/14: Sumner 1970, 261 f.; *PIR*2 M 85; Brunt 1990, 246.

[41] Sejanus' family: most recently Birley 2007.

[42] Ti. Nero died soon after divorcing Livia: Suet. *Tib.* 4. 3.

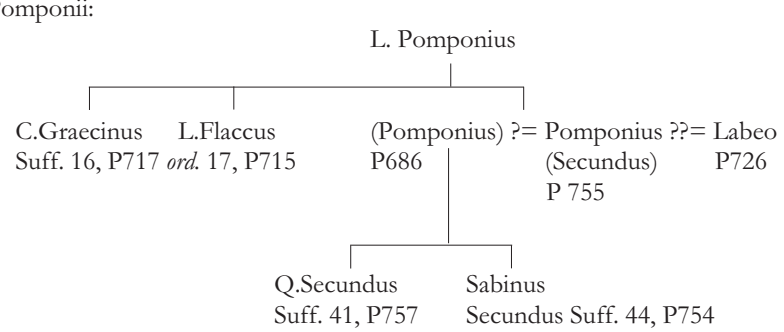
[43] Velleius' occupations after 15 are inferred by Sumner 1970, 275–79.

[44] Campaigns of Pomponius Flaccus and P. Vellaeus, AD 21: Tac. *Ann.* 2, 64 –7 (AD 19); 3. 38 f. (AD 21). Syme, 1956a, 210 (= 1979, 322) ascribes him to Canusium.

[45] Flaccus, *cos.* 17, Tiberius' boon companion: Suet. *Tib.* 42. 1. Syme 1986, 428, regards this connection as sufficient to explain the tone of Velleius' reference. Flaccus was probably also a brother, as L. Vidman, *PIR*2 P 717, proposes, of Pomponius (Secundus?) P 755, cf. P 686.

[46] MSS in the hands of Sabinus Pomponius Secundus, suff. 44 (P 754) the dramatist son of P 686/755: Pliny, *NH* 13.83. For Pomponii and the Gracchi, see Birley 2007.

Note the writer of Atellanae, L. Pomponius of Bononia: Jer. *Chron.* 159H, 89 BC, and other references given by T. P. Wiseman, *JRS* 78 (1988) 2 n. 11.
Pomponii:



[47] Opimian wine exhausted: Vell. 2. 7. 5; offered to Caligula in 39: Pliny *NH* 14. 55 f. For this interest of Velleius, and the connexion with the Pomponii, see Birley 2007. (I first heard of the significance of the Opimian vintage in tutorials with C. E. Stevens.)

[48] Ovid to Flaccus: *ex Ponto* 1. 10; Syme 1978 writes: 'That poem conveyed no personal detail, no sign of ancient friendship or community in polite studies. But Flaccus was the brother of Graecinus, there lies the explanation'. Dr. Herbert-Brown (by letter) sees a closer connexion: 'Surely one does not list the deprivation of all one's personal appetites to someone one hardly knows?'. Graecinus: 1. 6. (Graecinus was probably legate of Tiberius in Illyricum: Syme 1978, 74); 2. 6; 4. 9.

[49] The view that Tiberius' villa, Spelunca, was decorated under Ovidian influence has encountered fierce fire: Andreae 2004 with Hall 2006. Dislike of Horace: Goar 1976. Moles' discussion of Hor. *Odes* 1. 7 (2002) (see also Osgood 2006a, 276–86) gives rise to the idea that Velleius may have objected rather to this ode than to the panegyric on Lollius.

[50] Q. Pomponius Secundus, P 757, champions senatorial government: Jos. *BJ* 2. 575.

[51] Augustus' *popularis* phase: Levick 2003; cf. W. K. Lacey, *Augustus and the Principate. The Evolution of the System*. ARCA Class. and Med. Texts, Papers and Monogr. 35 (Leeds, 1996) 105–8; 116. G. Herbert-Brown, 'Ovid's *Fasti*: The Poet, The Prince, and the Plebs', has a wider perspective.

[52] Syme is particularly virulent; Woodman 1975, 289, documents the attacks and has offered able advocacy (1975, 1977).

[53] Language of *SC de Cn. Pisone patre*: Eck *et al.* 1996, *e.g.*, 44 f., l. 92.

[54] Rebukes to officials: Tac. *Ann.* 3. 54. 10 f.; 6. 12. 2. The Senate as Tiberius' masters: Suet. *Tib.* 29*;* later view: Tac. *Ann.* 3. 65. 2.

[55] Sejanus' election: Syme 1956a.

[56] Danger of Sabinus Secundus: Tac. *Ann.* 5. 8. 1; 6. 18. 2 (accusation of Sancia). The Pomponius Labeo who had to kill himself in 34 (P 726; Tac. *Ann.* 6.29. 1 f.; Dio 58. 24. 3) might be the second brother of Flaccus (Syme 1978, 74 n. 3).

[57] Velleius' survival: Sumner 1970, 296 f. Dr. Pistellato is inclined to believe that Velleius remained a cautious, uncommitted, and low-profile senator until he embarked on his History near the pinnacle of Sejanus' advancement, when he became a keen supporter.

[58] Woodman 1975, 288, thinks that a larger work was genuinely projected.

2

TIME FOR ITALY IN VELLEIUS PATERCULUS[1]

Edward Bispham

Velleius Paterculus has not enjoyed much good press, and despite intermittent efforts in the last forty years, he has found few champions as either historian or stylist.[2] His rhetoric is often tediously predictable, laden with heavy antitheses, such as his description of the enrichment of Quinctilius Varus as governor of Syria.[3] His fondness for pithy summary has often been regretted as a substitute for serious historical judgement. Some have gone further: Syme famously denounced Velleius as simply unreliable, willing to bend the truth or omit part of it when it suited him.[4] Syme's charge sheet dealt with instances in which Velleius was in a position to know the facts, but chose not to give some or all of them, or chose to suggest that the truth was other than he knew it to be (for example: Tiberius' role in Armenia; his visit to Gaius Caesar on Samos; the demise of Agrippa Postumus). My purpose in this chapter is not to rescue Velleius' credibility as a contemporary witness, or as a *littérateur*. Rather, I indulge a two-fold concern with place and time. Firstly, place: Velleius was an example of the Italian *bourgeoisie* which began to play a central role in administration and government under Caesar Augustus. How, then, is Italy presented in the work of an author who is self-consciously Italian as well as Roman? Secondly, and by no means unconnected, time: how does Velleius make time for Italy? Insights in both of these areas ought to reveal how Italy is woven into the overall fabric of the work, and suggest something about the mentality of Velleius, and by extension, the thought worlds of his peers.

Of central importance to the Augustan principate were the *domi nobiles* ('those well-known in their home towns'), the local elites of Italy; it has been well argued this was the group to which the plausibility of an Augustan restoration of the *res publica* (Republic) mattered most in cementing their loyalty to, and attracting their participation in, the new regime.[5] This participation expressed itself through a change in the composition of the Roman governing class. Since Syme scholars have spoken of the 'victory of Italy over Rome', meaning by this that the 'doom of the *nobiles*' – the

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eclipse of old families of the senatorial oligarchy – was counterbalanced by the entry into the Senate of large numbers of new families, mostly from the regions of Italy, and in some cases from those regions which had until then provided few senators, or none at all.[6] Emblematic might be Ventidius, who, in a reversal of fortune made for a Velleian antithesis, first entered Roman history as a prisoner in the triumph of Pompeius Strabo over Asculum in 89 BC, but exited it (via a public funeral) as a consular, having retraced his boyhood steps, this time as *triumphator* ('triumphing general').[7] The *Roman Revolution* identified this phenomenon; Peter Wiseman's *New Men in the Roman Senate* remains, forty years after its publication, a fundamental treatment of the personnel.[8] Our knowledge of these men for the age of Augustus is, lacking a Cicero, largely dependent on epigraphic testimony; an oft-cited example is the dedication by the inhabitants of Apennine Superaequum to their patron, Q. Varius Geminus:

> Q. Vario Q. f. Gemino leg. divi Aug. II procos. pr. tr. pl. q. quaesit. iudic. praef. frum. dand. Xvir. stl. iudic. curatori aedium sacr. monumentor.que public. tuendorum. is primus omnium Paelign. senator factus est et eos honores gessit. Superaequani publice patrono.[9]
>
> To Quintus Varius, the son of Quintus, Geminus, twice legatus of the deified Augustus, proconsul, praetor, tribune of the plebs, quaestor, judicial investigator, prefect for the distribution of corn, decemvir for the judging of disputes, curator for the protection of sacred buildings and public monuments. He, first of all the Paeligni, was made a senator, and held these offices. The Superaequani put this up at public expense to their patron.

Famously, the distinction of being the first senator from his *ethnos* was open to him only because another talented Paelignian, P. Ovidius Naso of Sulmo, had turned his back on a senatorial career for one in the *militia amoris* ('the service of love').

But we do have, in Velleius Paterculus, an exponent of this epochal change in the political sociology of the Roman elite at this season, and one who left first-hand testimony. There is a case for testing the hypothesis that he can be seen as embodiment of the 'victory of Italy over Rome'; someone in whose writings, whatever their quality, reflections of the consequences of that victory might be sought. It is, then, worthwhile to rehearse briefly what can be known of his career and ancestry. These constitute his claim to be bracketed with, and, as it were, to be allowed to speak for, his older contemporary, Varius Geminus and others of the Italian *bourgeoisies*, who began to form in these years a new imperial nobility.[10] He is probably not classifiable as a *novus homo* ('new man'), as his paternal uncle was a senator. More distant senatorial antecedents were the

praetorian sons of the Hirpinate aristocrat Minatius Magius, whom Velleius calls his *atavus* ('great-grandfather'); although the family tree, as Velleius sketches it, has presented scholars with some problems.[11] In any case, Magius' loyalty to Rome in the Social War, when the rest of the Hirpini defected, secured him the citizenship (presumably in 90 BC under the *lex Iulia*, the Julian law on enfranchisement), and election to the praetorship for his sons, between then and 81 BC.[12]

The Hirpinate Magii came originally (or so Velleius claims) from the great Campanian city of Capua, in which Velleius as a consequence had a rather keen interest;[13] the Magii would seem to have fled Capua following the defeat of the pro-Roman party and defection to Hannibal.[14] On the paternal side his grandfather, C. Velleius, was of Transpadane stock. He was not a senator, but had been chosen as a *iudex* ('juror') for the panels for the standing courts (thus of equestrian status) by Pompeius Magnus, of whom Velleius gives a largely positive character sketch at 2.29. Like so many ambitious municipal men at this time, he also served as *praefectus fabrum* (often, but perhaps misleadingly, translated *aide-de-camp*), first under Pompeius, then M. Brutus, and finally, now advanced in age, Ti. Claudius Nero, father of the future *princeps*, at the time of the Perusine War (41/40 BC); republican sympathies are certain. Unable to flee with Nero to Sicily, he took his life, as Velleius notes, in Campania (homeland of the Magii).[15] Velleius Paterculus' uncle, Velleius Capito, was a senator. His political sympathies were not those of *his* father; he supported Agrippa's prosecution of C. Cassius under the *lex Pedia*, which made all the assassins of Caesar liable to banishment.[16] Capito's brother, Velleius' own father, became a *praefectus equitum* ('cavalry commander'), in which capacity he was followed by his son in AD 4.[17] Velleius himself entered the Senate in AD 7 after the best part of a decade as an army officer (*tribunus militum* and *praefectus equitum*).[18] His brother, Magius Celer Velleianus, likewise served with Tiberius in Dalmatia, this time as a *legatus*.[19] Both were named *candidati Caesaris* ('imperially-supported candidates') for the praetorship for AD 15.[20]

The place of Italy in the work

Velleius' history, in two books, ran – at the least – from Troy[21] to Tiberius, concluding with the consulship of M. Vinicius (the dedicatee of the work) in AD 30.[22] Given that Velleius is a Campano-Samnite-Transpadane Roman,[23] socially mobile, proud of his complex descent with its almost epic back-story of the double loyalty of the Magii in the face of treason and revolt, it is worth asking what he thought of Italy, and of Italy's relationship to Rome. The more so as, born around 23 BC,[24] he would have

sat down to construct his history having lived through a period of profound transformation, including among other things Augustus' extensive colonization, with accompanying revolution in architectural and artistic styles which became characteristic of public discourse in visual media;[25] the culture of 'nostalgia' in the Italian towns, as Mario Torelli has described the revival of interest in myth in this period,[26] the creation of the Augustan *regiones* ('regions');[27] and both Augustus' death at Nola, and Tiberius' retirement to Capri.

The obvious place to start such an enquiry is Velleius' presentation of the Social War, which he normally terms *bellum Italicum*[28] ('Italic war', 2.15–17. 1). This is a relatively generous treatment within the economy of the second book as a whole, and relatively strong on detail (*e.g.* the circumstances of the outbreak, the commanders and principal actors on both sides – including of course Minatius Magius). Velleius tells us that 'universa Italia', 'the entirety of Italy' (not in fact true) took up arms against the Romans; it is clear that he has considerable sympathy for the rebels, although the 'right' side clearly won (see below on Minatius' *fides*, 'good faith'). The Italians' cause was 'most just', since 'they were seeking that citizenship, the power of which they were in the habit of protecting by arms'. This military contribution, Velleius goes on, exceeded Rome's own, but was rewarded by the contempt of those whose greatness they underpinned, men who were, moreover, of the same race and blood, but viewed the Italians as if they were foreigners.[29] The citizenship, which he strongly implies that they deserved, is mentioned twice in 2.15.2: its concession, albeit in dribs and drabs (2.17.1), brings closure to the account of the war, and allows the transition to a focus on Sulla.[30]

Following on from the Social War, the episode of Pontius Telesinus at the battle of the Colline Gate is worth noting (2.27.1–3). This 'general of the Samnites'[31] makes a rousing speech to his troops before the battle – one of only three battle speeches in the whole work.[32] He declared 'that the final day was at hand for the Romans, and that their city must be overturned and destroyed, adding that there would never be a shortage of those wolves who ravaged Italic freedom (*Italica libertas*), unless the wood, in which they were accustomed to take refuge, had been cut down'. Pobjoy has made a strong case that both the discourse of *Italica libertas* and Telesinus' recurrence to, and subversion of, the image of the Roman wolf, are inappropriate for what was in effect a Civil War, and that the focalization may be that of Sulla, the passage probably deriving from his *Memoirs*.[33] Velleius is the only source for this incident; in his haste he has not clearly separated out, perhaps, the Social and Civil wars; and beside Marian and Sullan appeals to different sorts of Roman *libertas* being made

in those years, it would make sense for a Samnite leader, given that the Samnites were still in a state of semi-independence,[34] to appeal to another strand of *libertas*, that of the Italians, fought for in the Social War, but now threatened by the return of Sulla.

But there is more to Velleius' interest in Italy than the Social War, and his own family history within that conflict. Italy occupies a significant space in Velleius' mental geography. Passing from the death of Ti. Gracchus to the revolt of Aristonikos in Asia, he says 'dum haec in Italia geruntur',[35] where the reader would naturally expect 'in Roma'. Italy, rather than Rome, thus serves as the space for *res internae*, 'domestic events' (contrasted, as normal in 'annalistic' history, with *res externae*, 'foreign affairs').[36]

Ti. Gracchus himself invites further consideration, since Velleius' account of his tribunate presents some unorthodox features. Velleius begins his narrative with a short character sketch, and then moves to an account of his 'disastrous' policies. The turn for the worst is fixed by a piece of 'double dating', that is, both by consular year and expressed as a number of years counting back from the time of writing (notionally, but not always, the consulship of M. Vinicius in AD 30). In the rest of this chapter I shall refer to the latter as 'before present' (or BP) dating; I shall also distinguish between what I shall call 'heavy marking', where an event is allocated two or more different chronological referents, and 'light marking', where general terms such as 'later' and 'at this time' suffice. In this case 'heavy marking' is used: 'P. Mucio Scaevola L. Calpurnio consulibus abhinc annos centum sexaginta duos descivit a bonis...'.[37] Velleius' description of Gracchus' tribunate begins not with an account of the famous agrarian law, nor with the deposition of Octavius, nor yet the acceptance of the Pergamene legacy, but with the claim that he 'promised to the whole of Italy the citizenship'.[38]

This claim is highly heterodox, and not found in other sources for Tiberius' tribunate. One might be tempted to dismiss it as the output of a mediocre composition (like the subsequent claim that Tiberius abrogated the *imperium* or 'power' [*sic*] of his fellow-tribune Octavius); but it is not a simple slip. Velleius resorts again to the same claim at 2.3.2, where Nasica's lynch mob finds Gracchus in the *area Capitolina*, 'the Capitoline precinct', with his cronies, addressing a *frequentia* ('crowd') from almost all of Italy:

> tum optimates, senatus atque equestris ordinis pars melior et maior, et intacta perniciosis consiliis plebs inruere in Gracchum stantem in area cum catervis suis et concientem paene totius Italiae frequentiam.
>
> Then the *optimates*, the Senate and the better and greater part of the equestrian order, and those of the *plebs* who were untouched by his pernicious plans, rushed on Gracchus as he stood with his bands in the *area*

> *Capitolina*, haranguing a large crowd assembled from almost the whole of Italy.

The Italian motif recurs once more shortly afterwards, when Scipio Aemilianus, booed in a *contio* ('assembly') for saying that Ti. Gracchus' death was justified *if indeed* he had attempted revolution, responded that after so much din of battle he was not frightened by the shouts of those to whom Italy was just a step-mother.

> Hic, eum interrogante tribuno Carbone, quid de Ti. Gracchi caede sentiret, respondit, si is occupandae rei publicae animum habuisset, iure caesum. Et cum omnis contio adclamasset, hostium, inquit, armatorum totiens clamore non territus, qui possum vestro moveri, quorum noverca est Italia.
>
> Scipio, when the tribune Carbo asked him, what his opinion was of the killing of Ti. Gracchus, answered that if his intention had been to take by storm the *res publica*, he had been legitimately killed. When the whole *contio* cried out at this statement, he said 'how can I, who have so many times remained unmoved by the cries of armed enemies, how can I be moved by your noise, to whom Italy is only a step-mother? (2.4.4)[39]

Velleius preserves the *only* explicit statement of an enfranchisement proposal by Tiberius. Many scholars have disregarded it, although John Richardson used it in an ingenious attempt to argue that Tiberius had indeed intended to include the Italian allies in his land distribution programme (for which such an enfranchisement would have been a legal prerequisite).[40] The case against believing Velleius on this point was succinctly made by Badian many years ago, and needs no re-iteration here.[41] My purpose is not so much to join the queue of Velleius-bashers, but to ask how this heterodox theme of Tiberius' philo-Italian sentiment came to be not only in the text, but central to Velleius' account of Tiberius' tribunate. There is no doubt that some of Tiberius' enemies, now or later, accused him of this intent, nor that his brother later did espouse the policy of extending the franchise to the Latins; but the lack of corroboration of Velleius' specific claim is telling. It is, surely, whatever his sources, his own consciousness of his roots and his interest in Italy which led him to organise his account as he has, and to take a radically different view of Tiberius' programme from the other conservative writers (with whom, however, he shared a disapproval of the *popularis* methods and packaging – looking after Italian interests is all very well, but not like this!). Only thus can we account for the way that he frames Tiberius as an actor on the political stage between an Italian-oriented bill and an Italian-oriented *contio*.

Velleius' introduction of C. Gracchus' tribunate (2.6) leaves the reader who has just read his paragraph on Tiberius with a sense of *déjà-vu*: we read

of his qualities and prospects in the state ruined by the same failings which undid his brother, whose tribunate Gaius uses as an *exemplum*. This exemplarity is perhaps most striking in the first substantive element of Gauis' proposals described: 'dabat civitatem omnibus Italicis, extendebat eam paene usque Alpis'.[42] The whole account fails to inspire confidence. Velleius is uninterested in precise chronology: he lists Gracchus' proposals and then follows them with the statement that he then sought to continue his tribunate;[43] and he attributes the revival of the traditional 500 *iugera* maxima for holdings of *ager publicus* ('public land') to Gaius not Tiberius. But whatever we think of the accuracy of the claim that citizenship was to be given to *all* Italians, even those in the Po valley – this looks again like a claim deriving from hostile optimate propaganda – we must admit the centrality for Velleius of the Italian angle to Gaius as to Tiberius Gracchus.[44] When we then see that Velleius has pursuit of the citizenship as the dominant Italian motivation in starting the Social War we are not surprised.[45]

Italy features repeatedly in Velleius' account. The casualties of the Social War are described as from the 'youth of Italy' – it seems both sides are meant (2.15.3);[46] Mithridates' threat is to Italy, in response to which Sulla is appointed to deal with him (2.18.3). The Social War continues to serve as a point of reference for later events and subsequent careers: 2.17.3, 21.1, 29.1; also the recollection of Ventidius being led in triumph during the Social War with other Picentine captives, 2.65.3. The limitation of the original enfranchisement of the Italians by their incarceration in eight new tribes (2.20.2) gave Cinna the opportunity to appeal to them for support in return for distribution through all the tribes (*i.e.* probably all thirty-one rural tribes);[47] like Tiberius Gracchus earlier in the narrative, he summoned 'ingentem totius Italiae frequentiam' to Rome.[48]

Marian and Cinnan factions are said to have 'occupied' Italy over the three-year period of Sulla's absence (24.4);[49] Cn. Pompeius raised a strong army from the *ager Picenus* ('Picene territory'), all of which was in the *clientela* ('clientship') of his father.[50] The escape of Spartacus and his fellow-slaves from Capua, and their subsequent rampage, was an affliction for Italy;[51] Italian cities were sacked by the pirates prior to Pompeius' command;[52] the Catilinarian conspiracy is located 'in the city and in Italy';[53] Pompeius' return 'in Italiam' ('to Italy') and his dismissal of his army at Brundisium is dwelt on.[54] Caesar, having hastened back 'in Italiam' to take up his new position as *pontifex maximus*, is then in due course elected consul. Velleius tells us first what Pompeius and Crassus expected of him, but gives first place in his account of Caesar's consular acts to the agrarian law which distributed the *ager Campanus* ('Capuan territory') to Pompeius' veterans,

and the restoration of autonomy to Capua, the latter's date heavily 'marked', not just by the consulship of Caesar, but with the time elapsed since Capua's punishment in the Second Punic War.[55] Cicero fell foul of the dynasts, according to Velleius, by refusing a place on the commission for dividing the *ager Campanus* under this law; the frost in relations is normally attributed rather to Cicero's criticisms of the three during his legal defence of C. Antonius.[56] Cicero was then restored from exile by 'the vows of Italy, the decrees of the Senate and the courage and activity of the tribune of the *plebs* Annius Milo'.[57] Pompeius' illness in Campania is recorded, and the vows of 'all Italy' made for his well-being;[58] Caesar crosses the Rubicon, and the Pompeians abandon Rome, then Italy, Caesar pursuing as far as Brundisium, capturing Domitius at Corfinium *en route*.[59] After Caesar marches into Thessaly, Velleius has many of Pompeius' commanders urge him to cross into Italy in Caesar's absence.[60]

After the young Caesar's return to Italy, Antonius plans to have Gallia (*i.e.* Cisalpine Gaul) transferred to himself;[61] Caesar rouses his father's veterans in Campania, and others defect at Brundisium;[62] after the siege of Mutina is raised, Antonius is forced to withdraw from Italy;[63] as do Brutus and Cassius;[64] Italy supplies recruits to Sex. Pompeius' cause;[65] Ti. Claudius Nero foments a brief revolt in Campania, and flees to Sicily from Neapolis.[66] Asinius Pollio's campaigns in Venetia are noted;[67] then the return of Antonius to Italy and the conferences at Brundisium[68] and at Misenum;[69] and Agrippa's naval bases in Campania.[70] Later still we have Tiberius' intervention to relieve corn shortage at Ostia and Rome;[71] his subjugation of Pannonia removed a threat to Italy.[72] Finally, his progress to the German front in AD 4 exposed him to the popular congratulation of 'the most well-populated part of Italy'.[73] Furthermore, there are relatively detailed narratives: Sulla's return to Italy (24.3–25.4, 28.1);[74] the siege of Praeneste (26.1, 27.4–6); the flight of Marius through Italy (2.19.2–4); the revolt of Caelius and Milo (68.1–3); and the Perusine War (73.1–4).[75] Numerous Italian places, regions, peoples and towns are named in the text of the second book: Caudium (1.5); Capua (8.2, 16.2, 25.2, 30.5, 44.4, 80.2); Campi Raudii (12.5); Asculum (15.1, 21.1); the Marsi (15.1); Aeclanum (16.2); Herculaneum (16.2); Pompeii (16.2); Compsa (16.2, 68.3); Corfinium (16.4, 50.1); Nola (18.4, 20.4, 123.2); the Laurentine marshes (19.1); the marsh of Marica (19. 2); Minturnae (19.2); Picenum (21.1, 29.1); Brundisium (24.3, 50.1; 59.5; 61.2, 76.3, 86.3); Calabria (25.1); Apulia (25.1); Campania (25.1, 44.4, 48.2, 75.1, 76.1, 123.2, cf. 79.2); Mons Tifata (25.4), Sacriportus (26.1, 2, 28.1), Praeneste (26.1, 27.3, 6, 74.3); Clusium (28.1); Faventia (28.1); Fidentia (28.1); mount Vesuvius (30.5); anonymous *municipia* ('chartered towns') (35.3); Bovillae (47.4); Calatia (61.2); Casilinum (61.2); Mutina (2.61.4, 73.2);

the Picentes (65.3); Thurii (68.2); the Hirpini (68.3); Perusia (74.3, 4); Neapolis (76.1, 123.1); Venetia (76.2); Altinum (76.2); Misenum (77.1); Ostia (94.3); Tergeste (110.4); Beneventum (123.2); and Tusculum (128.2). Of these Capua is mentioned half a dozen times, and places in Campania, all told, at least two dozen times; once again, Velleius' interest is palpable.[76]

Just as Italy can be employed as a synonym for *res internae* in Velleius, so Italy and moments in its history can serve as temporal markers. For example, relating the assumption of the dictatorship by Sulla, Velleius tells us that this office had been in abeyance for 120 years, and that 'the most recent dictatorship had been in the year after that in which Hannibal left Italy' (heavy marking).[77] What I want to do now is turn back the clock and look at the architecture of the fragmentary first book, as far as it can be discerned, and at the place of Italy within the overall economy of that section of the text. In attempting to do this, it will quickly become apparent that *time* is of the essence for Velleius, and that without understanding his approach to time and chronology, we cannot understand what is of importance and interest about the work, or about Italy's place within it.

Velleius' highly lacunose first book is strikingly different from much Roman history writing.[78] It is universal in its approach, not the local history which Livy is, even if writ large.[79] In this, it owes more to predecessors like Diodorus Siculus and Pompeius Trogus than to Roman 'annalistic' precedents. Foundation stories relevant to Italy are woven into a broader (if not very detailed) tapestry of Greek myth and history, which is itself approached, at least in Velleius' eyes, in an attitude of learned disputation familiar from Hellenistic scholarship.[80] Thus events relating Greece to Italy appear alongside references to other foundational moments in the west, such as those of Gades in Iberia and Utica in Africa (both places with resonance for the period of the civil wars, the former the home of the Cornelii Balbi, the latter the place of Cato's suicide).[81] They are also placed chronologically about the time of the self-sacrifice of Codrus in Athens ('ea tempestate', 'at that time', 1.2.3 – an example of 'light marking'). Turning to Italy itself, and indeed the opening words of the extant manuscript, we find the foundation of Metapontum by Epeus:

> <Epeus> tempestate distractus a duce suo Nestore Metapontum condidit.
>
> Epeus, separated by a storm from his leader, Nestor, founded Metapontum. (1.1)[82]

This is an event linked to the post Trojan-war returns. Again, at about the time at which Orestes exacts vengeance on those who have wronged him ('per haec tempora', 'at about this time') famine forces the emigration of one of the royal brothers of Lydia:

> sors Tyrrhenum contigit. pervectus in Italiam et loco et incolis et mari nobile ac perpetuum a se nomen dedit.
>
> The lot fell on Tyrrhenus. Carried to Italy, he gave a name, famous and undying, derived from his own, to the place, the inhabitants and their sea. (1.4)[83]

Velleius' aim here encompasses the naming not just of cities, but peoples, lands and seas. Again we may note a Hellenistic learned tinge: the royal myths of the Attalid dynasty seem to have placed some emphasis, via Telephus, on Etruscan connections.[84] Thinking of a contemporary audience, we may note the revival of local myth and tradition among the elites of late republican and Augustan Italy, part of the fetish for cultural nostalgia and the re-elaboration of identities within the new Italy.[85] More Italian material comes 'not long after' ('nec multo post'): following the foundation of Eretria and Chalkis by Athens, and Magnesia in Asia by Sparta, Chalkidians founded Cumae on the Campanian coast of Italy; the oikists are named as Hippokles and Megasthenes.[86] Here we have a little more than the bare notice of foundation:

> Huius classis cursum esse directum alii columbae antecedentis volatu ferunt, alii nocturno aeris sono, qualis Cerealibus sacris cieri solet.
>
> Some say that the voyage of this fleet was guided by the flight of a dove which preceded it, while others say that it was directed by the nocturnal sound of a bronze instrument, like that which is normally beaten in the rites of Ceres. (1.4.2)

The miraculous guidance of the colonists to the new site to be settled has parallels in Greek and Latin literature;[87] one might add the Italic tradition of the sacred spring. It seems to be alien to traditions relating to Roman colonisation (although note a common version of the mythical foundation of Alba Longa);[88] on the other hand it is perhaps most at home in the *ktisis* (foundation) literature of the Hellenistic period, of which Polybios so disapproved.[89] For Roman audiences, the second of the two variant 'guides' offered by Velleius was perhaps especially evocative, in that the south Italian origin of the priestesses of Ceres was a well-known sacral peculiarity at Rome, even after the Social War.[90]

The important foundation of Cumae is rooted unequivocally in Greek chronology, and Velleius makes no attempt to link it to the foundation of Rome, or even the date of the Trojan War. It is not until much time has elapsed ('magno post intervallo', 'after a long interval')[91] that, with the foundation of Naples, Rome impinges on the history of this city, but when it does, the reader is suddenly thrown from the steady dynamic of a predominantly paratactic narrative. Whereas the focalisation has been

hitherto simply 'omniscient-if-hurried narrator', it now becomes more complicated, more editorial, and more consciously rooted in the present (note 'hodieque', 'today').[92] With the benefit of hindsight Velleius passes judgement on the history of both Cumae and Neapolis subsequent to foundation, with, perhaps, an implicit comparison with Rome to set beside the divergent developments of these Campanian cities.

> Pars horum civium magno post intervallo Neapolim condidit. utriusque urbis eximia semper in Romanos fides facit eas nobilitate atque amoenitate sua dignissimas. sed illis diligentior ritus patrii mansit custodia, Cumanos Osca mutavit vicinia. vires autem veteres earum urbium hodieque magnitudo ostentat moenium.
>
> A part of these citizens, after a long interval, founded Neapolis. The outstanding and unbroken loyalty of each of these cities towards the Romans makes them very worthy of their renown and their pleasing situation. But among the latter there remained a more careful preservation of their ancestral customs, whereas their Oscan neighbourhood changed the Cumani. The size of their fortifications, however, shows even today the ancient strength of these cities (1.4.2).[93]

It is worth pausing on this passage, as it seems to illustrate in miniature some central issues which must be faced when judging Velleius' abilities and value. Namely: is there any care put into constructing a take-home message for readers, or is Velleius simply writing second-rate twaddle off the top of his head? Several issues seem to require comment. Firstly, why is *cives* ('citizens') used of the Cumani who founded Neapolis? Is this simply carelessness, a loose end left by Velleius? The detail seems otiose, unless perhaps to stress that both of these cities are proper civic communities, no longer in the heroic age. Yet a more robust explanation for the use of *cives* here seems to be required, since maximum carelessness would have led Velleius to write simply *pars horum* ('part of these'). It may be that the sudden shift between past and present in this passage has led Velleius to anticipate the much later concession of the Roman citizenship, the *civitas sine suffragio* ('citizenship without the vote') to these communities, in the last third of the fourth century – he is just about, after all, to talk about their loyalty to Rome.

Secondly, we should note the introduction of an important Velleian theme, *fides* ('loyalty'), exemplified in Velleius' own family past, as we have seen, by the enduring loyalty of the Magii, famously discussed in the second book in the context of the Social War.[94] Elefante rightly picks up on the association between Velleius' Campanian ancestry and his interest in the *fides* of these Campanian cities.[95]

Thirdly, the logic of the sentence at 1.4.2, beginning 'utriusque', invites further consideration, if we are sure that it is not simply mediocre rhetoric