

### Seneca the Elder and His Rediscovered 'Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium': New Perspectives on Early-Imperial Roman Historiography

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**Seneca the Elder and his Rediscovered *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium***



# **Seneca the Elder and his Rediscovered *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium***

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New Perspectives on Early-Imperial Roman  
Historiography

Edited by  
Maria Chiara Scappaticcio

**DE GRUYTER**

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Maria Chiara Scappaticcio

## When tiny scraps cause new chapters of Latin literature to be written

In the spring of 2014, the binders of the archive of Robert Marichal were dusted off in response to Tiziano Dorandi's recollections of a series of unpublished notes on Latin texts on papyrus. Among these was an in-progress edition of the Latin rolls from Herculaneum, together with Marichal's intuition that one of them had to be ascribed to a certain '*Annaeus Seneca*'.

In that period, the project PLATINUM was taking shape, and the support of the European Research Council soon brought into existence a long planned project on Latin texts on papyrus. PLATINUM – *Papyri and Latin Texts: Insights and Updated Methodologies. Towards a philological, literary, and historical approach to Latin papyri* (ERC-StG 2014 n°636983) is a project dealing with texts in the Latin language on papyrus, both documentary and literary.<sup>1</sup> It is a project that moves from the technicalities of the writing material itself to a textual and contextual exegesis of these texts, in order to open new perspectives on the history and culture, especially in its literary forms, of Roman society. The writing material of papyrus obviously implies documents of Eastern provenience – mainly from Egypt – coming from a multilingual and multicultural literate society. With the exception of Late Antique Ravenna, the only Western context preserving papyrus *volumina* – albeit charred – is the Library of the Herculaneum Villa.

Taking these texts as a focus, PLATINUM followed the unpublished intuition by Robert Marichal as one path of investigation in its own research and work. This work on the Latin *P.Herc.* 1067, including its *editio princeps*, was published in the specialist review *Cronache Ercolanesi* in 2017. Working on this papyrus led us to confirm Marichal's intuitions and to go beyond it: *P.Herc.* 1067 is the only extant direct witness to Seneca the Elder's *Historiae*.

Bringing a new and important chapter of Latin literature arise out of a charred papyrus is significant. It is a further demonstration how, with up-to-date methodology, an undervalued research speciality can produce impressive results, in this case by identifying an historiographical work only known from a

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<sup>1</sup> On the project PLATINUM and its major outputs on literary Latin texts on papyrus see Scappaticcio (2019); more has been and is being done, and the status of the research of the ERC-project PLATINUM can be followed on the website [www.platinum-erc.com](http://www.platinum-erc.com).

very few direct references and perhaps used as a source by later early-imperial historians.

The International Colloquium “Seneca Padre e la storiografia riemersa. Nuove prospettive di ricerca sulle *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*” was held in Naples on the 7th to the 8th of June, 2018, and it represented the largest scholarly event that PLATINUM organized around this discovery. It was not a colloquium on *P.Herc.* 1067. It was a colloquium on how a newly edited roll can open new perspectives on Latin historiography of the early-imperial age. Its success depended on the distinguished scholars who contributed to the colloquium itself. Their contributions, which are gathered here, examine several elements of the same central topic, and are destined to initiate future historiographical and literary debate.

The present volume is made up of two complementary sections, each of which contains seven contributions. They are in close dialogue with each other, or perhaps in an osmotic relationship, which allows each section to gain from the other. Looking at the same literary matter from several points of view yields undeniable advantages and represents an innovative and fruitful step in Latin literary criticism. These two sections express the two different but interlinked axes along which the contributions were developed. On one side, the focus is on the starting point of the debate, namely the discovery of the papyrus roll transmitting the *Historiae* of Seneca the Elder and how such a discovery can be integrated with prior knowledge about this historiographical work. On the other side, there is a broader view on early-imperial Roman historiography, to which the new perspectives opened by the rediscovery of Seneca the Elder’s *Historiae* greatly contributes. This is why some papers do not at first glance deal with Seneca the Elder but with contemporary and comparable historiography.

The volume is opened by two introductions, with a key role played by Timothy J. Cornell’s paper, “Roman historical writing in the age of the Elder Seneca”. It is an invaluable contribution to the knowledge we have of the reconstructed trends in historiography as a literary genre in a historical period where ‘absence’ – and the so-called known unknowns – play a decisive role. In fact, what have been supposed to be mere names of historians – 28 in total for the age covered by the paper – are revealed to have a key-role when trying to reflect on the reasons of absence. This is an insufficiently explored theme, now finally highlighted by the editor of the *FRHist*. Such a paper is a necessary introduction to the matter – and to several matters – highlighted and further developed in the contributions gathered in both sections of this book. It is a necessary *status quaestionis* critically introducing the subsequent historiographical debate.

Section I – “Seneca the Elder’s *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*: integrating new discoveries with old knowledge” – contains all the contributions strictly concerned with the historiographical work of Seneca the Elder, from the discovery of the fragmentary roll from the Herculaneum library to the way in which the scanty textual portions it preserves can contribute to reshaping our knowledge of the *Historiae*. Thus the new discovery leads to dialogue with ‘old’ knowledge.

Valeria Piano published the *editio princeps* of *P.Herc. 1067*, to which she was assigned within PLATINUM as one of its post-doctoral collaborators (2016–2017). Her “A ‘historic(al)’ find from the library of Herculaneum: Seneca the Elder and the *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* in *P.Herc. 1067*” is a reference-quality contribution in terms of its clarity and effectiveness in presenting the bibliological, paleographical, and papyrological work leading to the edition of the roll itself, summarizing and updating the results she previously published. Piano’s impeccable volumetric reconstruction of the roll is the necessary basis for its textual reconstruction, and the paper makes such a technical work understandable even to non-experts, showing the impact a papyrological investigation can have on the text transmitted by *P.Herc. 1067*.

The next paper, Tiziano Dorandi’s “Un libro dell’*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio e il fondo latino della biblioteca della Villa dei Papiri a Ercolano” provides a *status quaestionis* and a complete panorama of Latin papyri from the Library of the Herculaneum Villa. In the process, it also opens new perspectives on both the reading of the *scriptio* of *P.Herc. 1067* and its possible link with the so-called *Carmen de bello Actiaco* of *P.Herc. 817*. It thus shows the contribution that Seneca the Elder’s historiographical work in *P.Herc. 1067* can make to debates on the most ancient Latin rolls from Herculaneum, the developmental phases of the Villa and its library, and the dating and function of the library itself.

“*Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*: Exegetical Surveys on the Direct Transmission of Seneca the Elder’s Historiographical Work” by Maria Chiara Scappaticcio highlights the importance of the philological work on unpublished Latin literary papyri in order to open new perspectives on the study of Latin literature and to write new chapters of it. In particular, the text of the *Historiae* of *P.Herc. 1067* is compared to the Tiberian chapters from Tacitus’s *Annales*, the historical work of Cassius Dio, and the *Lives* of Suetonius, in order to recover possible outlines of the plot of a specific section of Seneca the Elder’s *Historiae*.

Giancarlo Mazzoli’s paper “*Unde primum veritas retro abiit*. Riflessioni sull’inizio delle *Historiae* di Seneca Padre” first exhaustively addresses the confusion generated by the identical *tria nomina* held by Seneca the Elder and Seneca the Younger. This has finally been settled thanks to the *scriptio* of *P.Herc.*

1067, which also shed lights on what remains of Seneca the Younger's fragmentary *De vita patris* on the historical work of his father. This discussion leads to the core of the paper, focused on the role played by references to *veritas* as a possible starting point for Seneca the Elder's *Historiae* (and historical reflection more generally). He considers a complex play of echoes in the *Suasoriae* and *Controversiae*, as well as in other works produced by the family of *Annaei*, namely the *De ira* of Seneca the Younger and the *Bellum civile* of Lucan. The reconstructed starting point of Seneca's historiographical work often comes up in the present volume, and the different hypotheses beginning to emerge highlight the complexity of such an issue and encourage further investigation.

The theme of the civil wars and their origins is dealt with in “*Semina belli. Seneca il Vecchio e le cause delle guerre civili*”, through which Emanuele Berti is able to demonstrate how the model of the lost historiographical work by Seneca the Elder must have been followed by Lucan and Florus. Lucan and Florus drew heavily on Livy but also on another source from which they would have absorbed a moralizing historiographical approach. Accordingly they are key authors for reconstructing the moralizing, rhetorical historiography of Seneca the Elder, who was himself influenced by Sallust.

One of the fragments generally accepted as belonging to the historiographical work by Seneca the Elder is known through Suetonius's *Life of Tiberius*. Cynthia Damon's paper, “Looking for Seneca's *Historiae* in Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius*”, explores Suetonius' biography of the Emperor in order to investigate its sources, and suggestively, intuitively and effectively offers possible connections with Seneca the Elder's work when dealing with equestrian jury lists and when revealing a certain sympathy towards Caligula (against Tiberius), which could have led to its apparent neglected by subsequent historians.

The publication of our proceedings also provides the opportunity to put into circulation a hitherto unpublished work by Lewis A. Sussman. His “The lost *Histories* of the Elder Seneca” remained an unpublished article in typescript since 1972, only a minor part of whose conclusions made it into his fundamental monograph *The Elder Seneca* (1978). His contribution surveys Seneca the Elder's historiography, its scope and chronology (and dates of publications), its conception and philosophy of history, its view of the Republic and the Principate emerging from such a moralistic approach, and the history of its *Quellenforschung*. Biagio Santorelli's “Bibliographical updates” brings Sussman's paper up to date and highlights how each issue discussed by Sussman in the 70's has developed. This paper and its direct follow-up concludes Section I. It is undeniable that many points developed by Sussman in 1972 have been further discussed by scholars in the last forty years, but readers will keep in mind that the pages of Sussman were pioneering in their time.

Section II “Seneca’s *Historiae* in context: new perspectives on early Imperial Roman Historiography” focuses on the relationship between Seneca’s *Historiae* and the complex field of early imperial historiography, showing how renewed attention to the one prompts re-evaluation of the other.

Despite the evident difficulty of working with the fragmentary remains of early imperial historiography, Stephen P. Oakley’s “Point and periodicity: the style of Velleius Paterculus and other Latin historians writing in the early Principate” offers an impressive and exhaustive attempt to analyse common stylistic features. In particular, Lucius Arruntius, Pompeius Trogus, Fenestella, Cremutius Cordus, Bruttidius Niger and Aufidius Bassus, on one side, and Velleius Paterculus, on the other side, show that the influence of Sallust and declamation were relevant features shaping the style of historians between August and Tiberius.

Olivier Devillers’s “La place de Sénèque le Père parmi les sources possibles des *Annales* 1–6” investigates the sources used by Tacitus, a topic explored by the author in several important articles. While identifying the possible sources of the first section of the *Annales*, Devillers has established an internal subdivision, and he emphasizes the contribution that Seneca the Elder’s historiographical work might have made to Tacitus’ perspective. The two final addenda offer a concise but exhaustive panorama of the possible employment of the *acta senatus* and of further subsidiary sources behind *Annales* 1–6.

Arturo De Vivo in “Seneca Padre, Tacito e Germanico” offers an in-depth analysis of the portrait of Drusus and Antonia Minor’s son and Tiberius’ rival, Germanicus, arising from the often indirect judgments on him in Early Imperial literature. In such a perspective, the role played by Seneca the Elder is strengthened by the Tiberian link reconstructable in the text of *P.Herc.* 1067, where the reference to Germanicus is possible. The portrait of Germanicus by Seneca the Elder is undoubtedly negative: references to him are registered both in the *Suasoriae* and the *Controversiae*, but his oratorical talent is never mentioned, and the parallelism with two prototypical tyrants, Alexander the Great and Antonius, in *Suasoria* 1 emphasises only negative traits. This possibly influenced the negative opinion also held by Seneca the Younger, implied indirectly by his reminiscences of Germanicus.

Autocracy and ‘tyrants’ are the key concepts of the analysis of Seneca the Elder’s historiographical approach in Antonio Pistellato’s “Seneca Padre e il ‘canone dei tiranni’ romani: una questione di famiglia?”. The family of the *Annaei* undoubtedly played an important role in shaping what we know as a ‘canon’ of Roman tyrants during the imperial age, and the possible link between the family



of the *Pisones* and Seneca the Elder in their library could represent a further proof of what is otherwise reconstructable through the texts.

“Seneca vs Seneca: generazioni e stili a confronto tra oratoria, filosofia e storiografia” by Chiara Torre has Seneca the Elder and Seneca the Younger as main protagonists, who offer contrasting images of Papirius Fabianus respectively in *Controversiae* 2 and *Epistulae ad Lucilium* 100. The rhetor and philosopher Fabianus stands as generational point of contact, and an in-depth analysis of Seneca the Younger’s letter reveals how the historiographical credo and approach of the father was later kept alive thanks to his son.

The *Historiae* of Seneca the Elder as a source for the historiographical work of *Annaeus* Florus are investigated by Chiara Renda in her “Di *aetas* in *aetas*: considerazioni sulla storiografia di Seneca Padre e Floro”. Reading Florus leads to reconstructing one of his sources and his possible divergences from it – for example, addressing the transition from the Republic to the Principate. This strengthens the hypothesis that Seneca the Elder’s historiographical work likewise began with the Gracchan crisis.

A different perspective on the relationship between Florus and Seneca the Elder is illustrated by John Rich. His paper “Appian, Cassius Dio and Seneca the Elder” moves in the field of Greek historiography. It aims to analyse thoroughly the sources of Appian and Cassius Dio in order to highlight how Seneca’s historiographical work can be numbered among them and to minimise the view that Seneca’s *Historiae* represented the model for structural elements shared by Appian and Florus.

A new chapter of the history of early imperial historiography and Latin literature has emerged, and it strengthens the hypothesis that further efforts in editing unpublished Latin rolls from the Library of Herculaneum could lead to equally relevant discoveries. The enthusiasm animating a research project such as PLATINUM is productive: *membra disiecta* can still help to sketch out a literary culture.

Timothy J. Cornell

## Roman historical writing in the age of the Elder Seneca

The Elder Seneca had a long life – of at least ninety years, if he was born around 50 BC, as most scholars are agreed, and died in the reign of Caligula (although not later than his son’s exile in AD 41).<sup>1</sup> The aim of this paper is to consider the historical writing produced during the seventy–odd years of his adult life, and in particular the work of his near contemporaries, rivals and competitors, who concerned themselves with the period from the civil wars to the reign of Tiberius.

At this point it will be well to remind ourselves of the evidence for the historical work produced by the Elder Seneca. According to the well–known fragment of Seneca the Younger’s biography of his father,<sup>2</sup> he produced ‘Histories from the beginning of the civil wars, where the retreat from truth first began, carried on practically to the day of his death’ (... *historias ab initio bellorum ciuilium, unde primum ueritas retro abiit, paene usque ad mortis suae diem*). The problems raised by this passage include the precise meaning of *unde primum ueritas abiit* – presumably implying that the civil wars gave rise to untruthful history<sup>3</sup> – and the question of when Seneca dated the start of the civil wars.

While many commentators believe that the work began with the crossing of the Rubicon,<sup>4</sup> others prefer the theory of Rossbach and Hahn that Seneca traced the origin of the civil wars to the period of the Gracchi, and thus inspired a tradition that is reflected in Florus and Appian.<sup>5</sup> This view has recently been argued at length by Luciano Canfora, who makes a strong case, but his arguments are not as conclusive, and those of his opponents not as worthless, as his rather ill-

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1 The dates of Seneca’s birth and death are discussed in detail by Griffin (1972) 4–5.

2 *Appendix - T1*; on the discovery and subsequent editions of this text see John Rich in this volume (343 and nn. 43–45).

3 The obvious comparison is with Tac. *hist.* 1.1: *simul* (sc. after Actium) *ueritas pluribus modis infracta*. The parallelism is denied by Sussman (1978) 146 n. 28, in favour of his own interpretation of *ueritas* as ‘righteousness, truth, and integrity’ (see also his essay in this volume 173 and n. 146; but this is hardly convincing, given that the context is the description of a work of history).

4 Niebuhr (1820) 103–104; Schanz/Hosius (1935) 341; Griffin (1972) 9–10; Levick in *FRHist* I 506; and Rich, in this volume, 343.

5 Rossbach (1888) 163 (quoted by Rich in this volume 344), and in a number of subsequent publications (cited by Rich 344). The theory was taken up and elaborated by Hahn (1964), and has been accepted in broad outlines by Zecchini (1977), Sussman (1978) 142, and Westall (2015) 158–160.

tempered discussion might suggest.<sup>6</sup> He helpfully points out that *initium* means ‘beginning’, and that *bella ciuilia* means ‘civil wars’ in the plural; but it simply does not follow that *historiae ab initio bellorum ciuilium* can only describe an account including all the civil wars from the time of Marius and Sulla, still less one that covered the preceding events going back to the Gracchi.<sup>7</sup> It may do, but equally it may not. The civil wars of the 80s were separated by thirty years of uneasy peace before the next outbreak, in 49, which gave rise to a series of civil conflicts lasting until 31. This second, connected sequence of civil wars forms a historical unity, but the wars are referred to in our sources as *bella ciuilia* in the plural.<sup>8</sup> If the Elder Seneca’s *Histories* began in 49, or indeed in 43, it would be perfectly reasonable for his son to characterise them as an account *ab initio bellorum ciuilium*. On the other hand it would be unreasonable for us to rule out this interpretation. The fact remains that we do not know, and that Seneca’s precise starting point remains a matter of conjecture.

In the end Canfora contrives to undermine his own position, by pointing out that the idea that the path to civil war began with the *sedition Gracchana* was actually widely accepted in Roman historiography, and is clearly present in Sallust,

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**6** Canfora (2015). For some reason, Canfora is especially irritated by *The Fragments of the Roman Historians* (*FRHist*). The question of whether this edition serves any useful scholarly purpose (doubted by Canfora 2015, 143 n. 8) can be safely left to the judgement of its users, as can his description of the editors as *neofiti* (143), and *schizzinosi* (160 n. 27). But his attack on Levick, the editor of the fragments of Seneca, is as unwarranted as it is distasteful. The merest glance at her discussion of *ab initio bellorum ciuilium* (*FRHist* I 506, with nn. 18–19) is enough to refute his charge of *inconsapevolezza* (143), and to show that she is perfectly well aware of alternative theories (and of what the Latin text means).

**7** Strictly speaking the first Roman civil war, one in which armies of Roman citizens fought each other, began in 88 BC, when Sulla marched his army on the city. This was the beginning of the civil wars (*initium bellorum ciuilium*), as Asconius pointed out (64C). The preceding Social War (91–88 BC) was regarded as similar to a civil war, but as the Italian insurgents were not citizens it was not strictly a *bellum ciuile*. The political upheavals that led to these events, which began with the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus, were *seditiones*, or, in Greek, στάσεις ἐμφύλιοι. These distinctions are clearly recognised in our sources, including Florus and Appian. Appian carefully noted the moment, in 88 BC, when στάσεις developed into civil war (*E.* 1.60.269). As Rich points out (this volume 334), confusion has arisen because of the conventional but misleading translation, since the Renaissance, of Appian’s *Emphyilia* as *Bella Ciuilia* (‘Civil Wars’). On the Roman notion of civil war see Jal (1963) especially 19–69.

**8** Note for example Vell. 2.89.3: ‘the civil wars were ended in their twentieth year’ (*finita uicesimo anno bella ciuilia*). When Messalla Corvinus memorably described Q. Dellius as *desultor bellorum ciuilium* (*Sen. suas.* 1.7), he hardly meant to imply that his jumping began at the time of Marius and Sulla.

Varro, Cicero and Velleius Paterculus, as well as in Florus and Appian.<sup>9</sup> It follows that the Gracchi could have formed the point of departure for anyone writing about the fall of the Roman republic, and that the source of Appian need not be Seneca the Elder: there are many other possibilities among the historians of the period whose works, like Seneca's, are completely lost. Canfora himself points to the lost work of L. Lucceius, the correspondent of Cicero, who had written a History of the Italian and Civil War (*belli Italici et ciuilis historiam*), which may have started with the *sedition Gracchana*.<sup>10</sup> Indeed in these circumstances – if that event was such a widely recognised starting point – it seems unnecessary to assume that the basic framework of Appian's work was based on 'a source' at all. Once again it does not follow that 'una periodizzazione del genere non può venirgli che da una fonte'. Moreover the vexed question of Appian's sources of information is a completely different matter.

Leaving this digression on one side, let us return to the analysis of historiography at the time of Seneca the Elder, and in particular of those historians who wrote about the age of the civil wars and the establishment of the Principate. What we are really talking about is the nature of historical writing in the early Principate (Augustus to Caligula) and the problems faced by historians writing then, and particularly those writing about their own times.

Broadly speaking there were two types of history at Rome, the first being traditional annalistic history *ab urbe condita* to the writer's own time: its first practitioner was Fabius Pictor, who was succeeded by Cincius Alimentus and later authors such as Cassius Hemina, Calpurnius Piso Frugi, and Gnaeus Gellius. These were followed in the first century by Claudius Quadrigarius, Licinius Macer, Valerius Antias, Aelius Tubero, and finally by Livy. Livy is generally reckoned the last of his kind: no other Latin historian, so it is said, either at the time or in the following decades, tried to write the whole history of Rome in one work. The second type of history was contemporary political history, emerging at the end of the second century with Fannius and Sempronius Asellio, and taken up in the first century by Sisenna, Sallust and Asinius Pollio.

According to one simplistic classification that is certainly as old as Verrius Flaccus, the two types could be defined as *historiae* (contemporary or recent history), and *annales* (longer-term history going back to a more remote past).<sup>11</sup> This

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<sup>9</sup> Canfora (2015) 148–154; cf. Sussman (1978) 142 and n. 16; see also in the present volume Sussman *infra* 146 and n. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Cic. *fam.* 5.12.2 = Lucceius *FRHist* 30 T1. For its starting point see Canfora (2015) 153.

<sup>11</sup> Gell. 5.18.1–2, citing Verrius Flaccus. On this text, and the distinction between *annales* and *historiae*, see Verbrughe (1989); Scholz (1994).

distinction was known to Servius and passed on to the Middle Ages,<sup>12</sup> and no doubt lies behind the application of the conventional titles *Historiae* and *Annales* to the works of Tacitus.<sup>13</sup> As is well known, there is no good authority for these titles; and the distinction between two types of history is not reflected in book titles even in the republican period, when there is no good evidence that historical works were grouped into *historiae* and *annales* on that basis. By Cicero's time *Annales* was just a general word for history, regardless of format or theme; while the Greek term *historiae* was sometimes used in titles of historical works but with no particular implication about the period studied. For example Aelius Tubero's history was entitled *historiae*, even though it went back to the foundation of the city and was arranged annalistically,<sup>14</sup> while Valerius Antias' work is sometimes cited as *Annales*, but more frequently as *Historiae*.<sup>15</sup>

That said, however, we are nonetheless justified in adopting the broad distinction between histories *ab urbe condita* and those that concentrated exclusively on events of the author's lifetime. The point is that, according to current orthodoxy, under Augustus both types of history came to a stop. Livy had no competitors or successors, so it is said, and while some survivors of the Civil Wars were prepared to write about them and record their experiences, contemporary history also gradually dried up as the Principate became established. According to Syme, when Livy set about writing the last nine books of his great work (books 134–142), covering the period from after the triumph of Augustus in 29 down to the death of Drusus in 9 (written, Syme thinks, c. AD 6), he had the field virtually to himself. 'Despite the interest in history aroused by the revolutionary age, the Principate of Augustus can show few historians. Apart from Livy, they are little more than names, and hardly any of them seem to have dealt with the years of peace and order after the end of the civil wars'.<sup>16</sup> This important observation, which has been influential and rarely challenged, deserves careful consideration.

Even if Syme's statement is generally true, it does not mean that all forms of historical writing ceased. In fact it is clear that new types of writing about the past

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<sup>12</sup> Serv. *Aen.*1.373; Isidor. *orig.* 1.44.4 and Schol. Luc. 5.384, all no doubt deriving, directly or indirectly, from Verrius Flaccus. On *annales* in medieval texts see Burgess/Kulikowski (2013) 288–296.

<sup>13</sup> First established by Justus Lipsius in 1574: see Goodyear (1972) 85 n. 4. Goodyear's whole discussion of this issue (85–87) is useful.

<sup>14</sup> Oakley in *FRHist* I 365.

<sup>15</sup> Rich in *FRHist* I 296.

<sup>16</sup> Syme (1959) 64.

were becoming prevalent. In the first place we should mention antiquarianism,<sup>17</sup> which, at its best, entailed scholarly enquiry into monuments, cults, institutions, and customs, especially in pursuit of a meaningful contemporary agenda. Here the republican Varro is the key figure, providing both a model and an inspiration to a host of successors who were interested in the understanding and preservation of the Roman tradition and directing it to new purposes in the process of renewal and restoration. It has become something of a cliché to say that without the immense posthumous influence of the great Varro Augustus' programme of moral and religious regeneration would have been unthinkable.<sup>18</sup>

There was an explosion of interest in the remote past of Rome in the Augustan age, which both contributed to and resulted from Virgil's *Aeneid*, and finds expression in surviving works such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus book 1 and the so-called *Origo Gentis Romanae*, which, as Momigliano famously demonstrated, is a genuine fourth-century work based on an original of Augustan date.<sup>19</sup> The antiquarian writings of Verrius Flaccus and C. Iulius Hyginus are an important feature of the intellectual atmosphere of the Augustan age, and have a strong bearing on its historiography, even if they cannot be classified strictly as historians – although Hyginus wrote a work on the origins of Italian cities which recalls Cato's *Origines*, as well as a series of biographies of famous men (*uiri illustres*), including Valerius Publicola, C. Fabricius and Scipio Africanus.<sup>20</sup>

Both Verrius Flaccus and Hyginus were freedmen who served the emperor, the former as tutor to Augustus' grandsons and the latter as director of the Palatine Library.<sup>21</sup> Their antiquarian and historical researches were made to serve the interests of the regime, in Verrius' case through the *Fasti Praenestini* and in Hyginus' by his possible role in the composition of the *elogia* of the *summi uiri* whose

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**17** On antiquarianism see Momigliano (1950); Rawson (1985) 233–249; Sehlmeier (2003); Stevenson (2004); Bravo (2007); these scholars all deal with the problem, raised in Momigliano's classic study, of the relationship between history and antiquarianism. On the difficulty of distinguishing between categories that have so much overlap see now Smith (2018). Macrae (2018) attempts to cut the Gordian knot by merging them completely, arguing that those Romans who are commonly described as antiquarians were in fact historians, pure and simple. But this suggestion is not borne out by the ancient evidence.

**18** See e.g. Galinsky (1996) 290–291; Wallace-Hadrill (2005) 65–66.

**19** Momigliano (1958), and see especially 70–71 for similarities between the OGR and Dionysius book 1.

**20** On Hyginus' historical and antiquarian writings see Levick and Cornell in *FRHist* I 475–481 (especially 480–481 on their relationship with Virgil); Smith (2018) 126–128.

**21** Suet. *gramm.* 17.2 (Verrius), and 20.2 (Hyginus)

statues adorned the Forum of Augustus.<sup>22</sup> The role of imperial freedmen as intellectual functionaries in the emperor's service was a well-known feature of the imperial court under Claudius, who was himself a historian. So it is a very remarkable fact that one of his freedmen, a certain Ti. Claudius Herma Sideropogon ('Ironbeard'), is described on his funerary inscription as 'a writer of histories'.<sup>23</sup> This is a wholly isolated piece of evidence, but its potential significance is considerable, implying as it does the possibility of a world of learned historiography under imperial patronage.

Antiquarian writing could of course be both nostalgic and evasive – a way of avoiding sensitive topics and thus of putting their authors' consciences to sleep, in Momigliano's words,<sup>24</sup> and at worst became the mindless cataloguing of curiosities and relics of the remote past, with the objective effect of serving the oppressive and reactionary aims of the regime. Formal historiography was not immune from such tendencies. The Elder Seneca's younger contemporary, Q. Curtius Rufus (if he is to be identified with the suffect consul of 43, a senator whom Tiberius so memorably described as self-made – *ex se natus*: Tac. *ann.* 11.21) turned to the history of Alexander the Great. Others wrote about Rome's glorious past. L. Aruntius (*FRHist* 58), probably the consul of 22 BC, rather than his son, cos. AD 6 (whom Augustus on his deathbed is said to have considered *capax imperii*: Tac. *ann.* 1.13.2) chose to write a history of the First Punic War, a choice of subject no doubt prompted by his own experience of naval warfare.<sup>25</sup>

Another who chose this course was Clodius Licinus (*FRHist* 64), the consul of AD 4 and a close friend of Iulius Hyginus. His *Res Romanae* ran to at least 21 books (*FRHist* 64 F3), and covered events of the second century BC. Of its scope and range, however, we know nothing. It may have been a complete annalistic history, and if so would have continued to his own time. Others have suggested that it was more of an antiquarian compilation than an annalistic history, but that is not a legitimate inference from the title *Res Romanae*; Suetonius' description of him as 'the consular historian' (*gramm.* 20.2 = *FRHist* 64 F4) clearly implies a work of formal history.<sup>26</sup>

But historiography and antiquarianism are not easily separated, as is clear from the case of another key figure writing at this time. I refer to Fenestella

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<sup>22</sup> *Fasti Praenestini*: Degrassi (1963). Hyginus and the *elogia* of the Forum of Augustus: Levick and Cornell in *FRHist* I 478

<sup>23</sup> *Historiarum scriptor*: see Grigori in Friggeri *et al.* (2012) 32 = *FRHist* 76 T1.

<sup>24</sup> Momigliano (1961b) 5.

<sup>25</sup> He had probably served as an admiral under Sex. Pompeius, and he certainly did so under Octavian at Actium: see Levick in *FRHist* I 449.

<sup>26</sup> Thus Oakley in *FRHist* I 483.

(*FRHist* 70), a writer as mysterious as he is important. Even his name is unknown; we have only his (rare) cognomen, and his status (senator? equestrian? freedman?) is a matter of pure conjecture. The most likely reconstruction of some difficult evidence is that he died aged 70 in the later part of the reign of Tiberius, and was therefore born in the 30s BC.<sup>27</sup> His work, called *annales* by the authors that cite it, probably went back to the kings and early republic, and extended at least to the first century BC. An event of 57 BC is cited from book 22 (*FRHist* 70 F2). It may have gone down to the later years of Augustus. The general picture that emerges from the fragments (of which *FRHist* prints 31 that can be considered genuine) is that Fenestella was conventional, moralising, and interested in cultural matters (such as the growth of luxury, which he evidently deplored: he therefore appealed to Pliny), religious events (for example he is cited by Macrobius on the trial of the Vestal Virgins in 114 BC: F13), literary events (e.g. the life of Terence: F11) and other matters (e.g. Frontinus quotes him for cost of the aqua Marcia: F12).

That he had antiquarian interests is beyond doubt, but the balance of the fragments reflects the concerns of the citing authorities, not of Fenestella (although they evidently found much in him worth quarrying); and it may be unfair to regard him as a mere antiquarian, as does Momigliano, who includes him among those with sleeping consciences (n. 24, above). Asconius, a good judge of such things, evidently regarded Fenestella as an important source for political events of the first century BC, alongside Cicero and Sallust. A politically conservative viewpoint is suggested by fragments dealing with the age of Marius and Sulla (F16–17), but it is also possible, as e.g. Mazzarino argued, that Fenestella took a hostile view of Cicero (F21).<sup>28</sup> Perhaps, as Drummond says, his overall assessment was ‘cynical but balanced’.<sup>29</sup>

Another feature of Fenestella’s work that is shared by many others writing at this time (for example by Velleius Paterculus) is its strong emphasis on great personalities. This is also reflected in the many dedicated biographies – encomiastic lives of Pompey, Caesar, Cicero, Cato, Brutus, etc. – often written by relatives, dependants or freedmen of the individuals concerned; and memoirs, autobiographies, *commentarii* or (in Greek) ὑπομνήματα by the men themselves – a tradition going back to the time of Marius and Sulla, but then flourishing in the period of the civil wars and subsequent decades. Augustus and Agrippa took up the mantle, and were followed by other emperors, including Tiberius and Claudius.

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<sup>27</sup> See Andrew Drummond’s discussion in *FRHist* I 489–490.

<sup>28</sup> Mazzarino (1966) 2.1.384–386.

<sup>29</sup> Drummond in *FRHist* I 492.



History itself, according to Tacitus, descended into flattery. The work of Velleius Paterculus, with its emphasis on personality and its adulation of Tiberius and the imperial regime, represents for some the depths to which things had sunk.<sup>30</sup>

The conventional view, then, is that historical writing lapsed into escapist antiquarianism, self-serving autobiography and servile accounts of the lives and times of great dynasts. What was no longer produced was serious political history by independent men of high standing; any historians that we do happen to know about were not serious and can therefore be discounted. What is required, according to this orthodoxy, is an explanation of why no serious work was produced.

One obvious answer that can be given is that the new political regime was not disposed to encourage free inquiry and independent analysis of sensitive political events and situations. It was not simply that people were deterred by the risks of taking a critical stance, although examples exist of historians who were persecuted for their republican sympathies and driven to suicide: famously T. Labienus under Augustus, and Cremutius Cordus under Tiberius (in both cases their books were burned on the orders of the Senate).

But the effects of political repression can be exaggerated. State censorship of an effective kind was neither possible nor necessary in the conditions of ancient technology, in which surveillance of what people were writing, saying and thinking was hardly possible, and where levels of literacy and methods of mass dissemination of material were so poorly developed that subversive writing was unlikely to worry the authorities overmuch. No emperor was in serious danger of being overthrown by historiography.

On the other hand, as Tacitus explained so well, despotism promoted servility. Where the emperor was the source of all rewards and advancement, no public figure who wished to prosper could afford to give offence, or even show too much independence. In other words, the new political situation gave rise to an understandable self-censorship, and the deterioration of historical writing, in Tacitus' eyes, resulted not so much from political direction and repression as from deliberate choice; it became a matter of opting for adulation or silence, as men of principle were deterred by the slide into sycophancy: *gliscente adulatione deterrentur* (*ann.* 1.1.2).

An alternative and perhaps more subtle answer is that in the new political climate, and the new institutional set-up, historical writing had rather lost its point.<sup>31</sup> The end of *libertas*, which as Peter Brunt showed was defined politically

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<sup>30</sup> For a classic statement to this effect see Syme (1958) 367–368.

<sup>31</sup> Toher (1990).

as the right of a narrow exclusive group to compete openly and freely for honours that were fairly shared out,<sup>32</sup> meant the end of traditional politics and therefore, to adapt a modern cliché, the end of history.<sup>33</sup>

It has always been an interesting question what ancient historians thought they were doing and why, and what audience, if any, they had in mind. According to the standard view of this matter, traditional senatorial historiography was a political weapon, and was aimed rather exclusively at the political class to which the historians themselves belonged. In the words of Raaflaub and Samons, ‘Roman history was always the history of the ruling class, and Roman historiography as a literary genre was by its very nature *republican* [authors’ italics]. Leading men of the Republic wrote accounts of the state that they governed.’<sup>34</sup> With the collapse of the Republic historiography came to be practised, and to be read, by new classes of people, outside the traditional elite. Professional non-political historians (of whom Livy is the classic example) emerged and wrote a new type of literary history designed to appeal to the cultured and leisured elite. As Gabba showed, under the Principate historians spoke for municipal Italy – most obviously Velleius Paterculus and the source of Appian *E. I.*, whoever he was; and it is worth saying that the strongly ‘Italic’ slant of Appian’s account does not encourage the identification of Seneca the Elder as the source – and eventually for the provinces, with figures such as Pompeius Trogus in the Latin West, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Arrian and Appian from the Greek east – men who found they could celebrate and identify with a universal Roman empire that brought peace, prosperity and the opportunity for advancement to the propertied elites of the provinces, and created a unified society based on Greek culture.<sup>35</sup>

There is of course a great deal of truth in all of these observations. But years of studying the fragments of the lost Roman historians has suggested to me a rather different approach, and a different way of characterising the situation we have been discussing; and the problem, which I think is real enough, but not

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**32** Brunt (1988) 281–350.

**33** The phrase was coined, notoriously, by Fukuyama (1992), who claimed that the collapse of communism and the triumph of capitalism put an end to a secular struggle between competing ideologies and economic systems (which had hitherto given world history its meaning). There is something analogous in the Tacitean idea that the end of political freedom meant the disappearance of historical events worth recording (*ann.* 4.32), and consequently of serious historians (*hist.* 1.1). The same point was made by Jacoby (1949) 110–101, arguing that Attidography (that is, on Jacoby’s view, political historiography at Athens) ‘ceases with the loss of political liberty in the same way ... as the writing of *Annales* ceases in Rome’.

**34** Raaflaub/Samons (1990) 437.

**35** Gabba (1984). Cf. also Yarrow (2006).

quite as it has traditionally been understood, can be simply resolved by a straightforward solution – namely the proposition that the supposed absence of serious historians is not a sign of the demise of historiography in the early Principate but rather the result of a gap in our knowledge.

What I propose from now on is an exercise in the *ars nesciendi*, the principles of which were clearly set out by Donald Rumsfeld (the US Secretary for Defense under George W. Bush). There are, as Rumsfeld famously observed, known knowns (things we know we know), known unknowns (things we know we don't know), and unknown unknowns (things we don't know we don't know).<sup>36</sup> Of course, such a lucid statement of principle does not necessarily mean that you can apply the lesson in reality (as Rumsfeld perhaps discovered in Iraq). The point of the *ars nesciendi*, what makes it an art, is being able to acknowledge what you don't know, and then to ask questions and draw conclusions in the light of your acknowledged ignorance. In other words, a bit of humility and a bit of caution should be the consequences of knowing that you don't know.

Roman historical writing, like all of ancient literature, is full of known unknowns – that is, lost historical works that we know once existed, but about which we know little or nothing. Within this general category I would want to make a further distinction between well-known unknowns (historians such as Cato, Sisenna, Claudius Quadrigarius, or the Histories of Sallust and the lost books of Livy), and poorly or very poorly known unknowns – namely the historians, and actually there are many of them, who were writing in the crucial period between 30 BC and AD 40 (the 'age of Seneca the Elder'). Some of these, as I have said already, are little more than names.

This situation also raises the very real possibility of unknown unknowns – that is, of lost historical works by unknown writers. The possibility has attracted scholars in the past. For instance, Eduard Schwartz famously accounted for similarities in the accounts of the accession of Tiberius in Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio by postulating an unknown annalist writing soon after the death of Tiberius, who skillfully created the familiar portrait of the emperor that we find

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<sup>36</sup> “As we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know.” The comment was made at a Department of Defense News Briefing on 12 February, 2002 (for the full text see <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636>).

in all our sources.<sup>37</sup> Schwartz's theory was very influential and is still widely accepted;<sup>38</sup> admittedly it was dismissed by Syme,<sup>39</sup> but Syme himself was not averse from calling upon the possibility of an Ignotus when it suited him – that is, when he felt he could detect signs of a source that could not be identified with a known historian.<sup>40</sup>

At this point I should like to consider some of the known unknowns – that is, lost historians of the time of Seneca who concerned themselves at least in part with the transition from republic to empire and went on to cover at least some of the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. We have already looked briefly at Fenestella and Clodius Licinus, both of whom dealt with earlier history but may well have gone on to narrate events of their own time. Mention has also been made of T. Labienus, the orator who was notorious for his republican sympathies and his violent invectives, and who is known to us largely thanks to a passage of Seneca's *controuersiae*, which tells us that he was nicknamed 'Rabienus'.<sup>41</sup> He wrote a history, of unknown scope, which the senate ordered to be burned along with his other books, causing him to commit suicide. The history included passages so offensive that even their outspoken author regarded them as too dangerous for recitation during his lifetime. This almost certainly means that the work dealt (in whole or in part) with recent events, and probably that it was flagrantly 'Pompeian'.

A parallel case is that of Cremutius Cordus (*FRHist* 71), the historian who was prosecuted for treason in AD 25 because of his republican sympathies and driven to suicide; his History, which praised the murderers of Caesar and called Cassius the last of the Romans, was burned on the orders of the Senate. It certainly dealt with the civil wars and the triumvirate, and perhaps also covered the principate of Augustus.

Cremutius Cordus is one of those cited by Seneca the Elder in his comparative analysis of how the death of Cicero was treated by historians.<sup>42</sup> The others include Livy, in his now lost book 120; Livy then wrote a further 22 books to take the story down to the death of Drusus and the *clades Variana* in 9 BC; and Asinius Pollio (*FRHist* 56), the great Caesarean marshal (cos. 40) who retired from active politics after his triumph in 39 and from then on devoted himself to oratory and literary

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37 Schwartz (1899) 1716–1717.

38 E.g. Champlin (2008) 418.

39 Syme (1958) 272.

40 Syme (1958) 180–190; (1964) 408; and, notoriously, (1968) 92–93; (1971) 30–53, 111–134.

41 Sen. *contr.* 10 *praef.* 4–8 = *FRHist* 62 T2.

42 Sen. *suas.* 6.14–25.

pursuits; he lived on through most of the reign of Augustus, whose friendship he maintained, while cultivating a reputation for independence of thought and speech. His history, which began with the 'First Triumvirate' in 60 BC, went down to at least 43 BC and probably to Philippi; it contained seventeen books, and may have gone on to cover some or all of the triumviral period and perhaps part of Augustus' reign. But, in spite of a vast amount of speculation, the fact is that nothing remains of the work beyond a pitiful handful of fragments.

Another great man of the time, M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (*FRHist* 61), was a contemporary of Augustus and a leading orator, who reached the consulship in 31 and died in AD 8. Messalla seems to have written a historical work which dealt with Philippi (he served with Cassius) and possibly went on into the 30s and beyond. Although it is sometimes assumed to have been an autobiographical memoir, there is actually no evidence whatever for its scope and character.

Even less is known about one Cornutus (*FRHist* 54), another contemporary of Livy. He is probably to be identified with M. Caecilius Cornutus, the son of a republican victim of the proscriptions, who reached the praetorship and was one of the first Arvals in the 20s BC. He died probably toward the end of the millennium. According to an entry in the *Suda* his readings were well attended because he was rich and childless, and legacy hunters (*captatores*) came in large numbers to fawn upon him, whereas poor old Livy got hardly anyone to listen to him. Cichorius assembled three fragments from the Berne scholia on Lucan;<sup>43</sup> unsurprisingly they concern the Civil War between Pompey and Caesar, but whether the work extended more widely is unknowable.

A comparable (and equally comic) story is told of one Octavius Ruso (*FRHist* 48), referred to by Horace (*sat.* 1.3) as a moneylender who compelled debtors who couldn't pay to listen to recitations of his historical work. He may have been a man of senatorial family and a descendant of the Cn. Octavius Ruso who was quaestor in 105 BC (*Sall. Jug.* 104) and praetor before 91.<sup>44</sup> Horace is clearly mocking a man who had literary pretensions as a historian, but we know nothing about the title, nature, or scope of his historical work or works.

Horace also furnishes information about C. Furnius (*FRHist* 50), a senator (*tr. pl.* 50, *pr.* 42) who fought with Antony but was spared by Octavian and received consular rank in 29; we also know that he outlived his son, the consul of 17 BC. He is hailed by Horace (*sat.* 1.10.86) as a man of literary distinction alongside Pol-

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<sup>43</sup> Cichorius (1922) 261–267.

<sup>44</sup> *MRR* II 24 n. 2.

lio, Messalla Corvinus, Ser. Sulpicius Galba and L. Calpurnius Bibulus. The scholiast *ad loc.* explains that Furnius was renowned for the elegance of his histories; but alas, nothing more is known about them.

Next we may consider C. Sulpicius Galba (*FRHist* 57), the grandfather of the emperor. Born around 68 BC, he held the praetorship (probably under the Triumvirs) and then governed Achaëa, either in the 20s, or perhaps as late as 10 BC. He wrote a history described by Suetonius (*Galb.* 3.3) as *multiplex nec incuriosa* – meaning that it was either variegated or voluminous (*multiplex*), and painstaking (*nec incuriosa*). One fragment (F1) deals with Tarpeia (i.e. the age of Romulus), the other with troop numbers in the war of Sertorius (F2). Nothing more can be said; but it may have been a complete annalistic history going down to the author's own time.

Alongside these historians writing under Augustus we should briefly mention the many contemporary writers of biographical and autobiographical memoirs. These include the Life of Cicero by his freedman Tiro (*FRHist* 46), reminiscences of Brutus by P. Volumnius (*FRHist* 47) and C(?). Calpurnius Bibulus (*FRHist* 49),<sup>45</sup> and the salacious 'kiss-and-tell' memoirs of Q. Dellius (*FRHist* 53), who claimed that it was he who persuaded Cleopatra to seduce Antony. Mention should also be made of the autobiographies of M. Agrippa (*FRHist* 59) and Augustus himself (*FRHist* 60); on the other hand Horace's suggestion that Maecenas should write a history in prose (*carm.* 2.12.10) cannot be taken as evidence that he actually did so.

In this connection we may mention a group of writers who are known only from Suetonius' life of Augustus. Julius Marathus (a freedman–secretary in the imperial household: *FRHist* 65), and C. Drusus (*FRHist* 66) are cited for biographical details about Augustus' early life. Perhaps more interesting, but also more mysterious, are two evidently anti-Caesarian writers, Aquilius Niger (*FRHist* 67), who claimed that Octavian himself killed the consul Vibius Pansa during the battle of Mutina, and Julius (or Junius) Saturninus (*FRHist* 68), who wrote that Octavian prevented Lepidus from bringing the proscriptions to an early end. Like Suetonius' other sources, these were probably contemporaries who could provide first-hand evidence from their own knowledge; but whether their histories went back into the past, or extended down into the principate of Augustus, we have no means of knowing.

The foregoing list of writers surely amounts to a substantial catalogue. There can be no denying that the age of the civil wars and transition from republic to

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45 On the identity and status of this Bibulus (possibly a senator who was aedile in the 20s BC) see Syme (1987) 197.

monarchy gave rise to a large body of historical literature produced by men who had lived through the events and were profoundly affected by them. But it is equally true that our knowledge of what these works were like and what they contained is absolutely pitiful; that we know about them at all is in many cases due to the purest chance. That there were many more that we know absolutely nothing about (unknown unknowns therefore) seems to me extremely likely. The record of the following generation, from the last years of Augustus to the reign of Caligula – that is, the age of those who, as Tacitus so memorably said (*ann.* 1.3.7), had not seen the Republic – is less extensive, but this may result from the fact that it is less well documented in general; and in any case there is enough to show that the alleged demise of historiography is greatly exaggerated.

It is to this period that we can assign the aforementioned Fenestella, Clodius Licinus, Labienus/Rabienus, and Cremutius Cordus. They are shortly followed by Velleius Paterculus, the one prose historian from the age of Seneca whose text actually survives for us to read; that it does so is the purest chance. Had it not done so we should know almost nothing about it.<sup>46</sup> Although often dismissed as a servile panegyric or ignored altogether in studies of imperial historiography,<sup>47</sup> Velleius' work has recently drawn the attention of scholars who have shown that it deserves to be taken seriously;<sup>48</sup> although only a summary account in two books, Velleius frequently speaks of his intention to write a full-scale history, but whether he ever did so is unknown and perhaps unlikely.<sup>49</sup>

Brutteditus Niger (*FRHist* 72) was a contemporary of Velleius, and like him a loyalist and a senator; he was also a close associate of Sejanus, and perished in his downfall. All we know about his history is that it included the death of Cicero (he is one of those cited by the elder Seneca in his famous comparison of different historians' accounts of that event). Whether it went back into the republican past, or forward to cover more recent events, we cannot say.

We know a bit more about Aufidius Bassus (*FRHist* 78) and M. Servilius Nonianus (*FRHist* 79), who were younger contemporaries of Seneca the Elder, although Bassus must have published at least part of his work during Seneca's lifetime because he too is quoted in *suasoria* 6 (18 and 23 = F1–2) on the death of

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<sup>46</sup> Velleius is cited once by Priscian *GL* 2.248.4, once by Servius (*ecl.* 5.11) and twice by the scholiast on Lucan (8.663; 9.178).

<sup>47</sup> He is disparaged by Syme (1958) 367–368, and ignored by Klingner (1958) 194–195.

<sup>48</sup> Sumner (1970); Woodman (1975a); (1975b); (1977); (1983); Elefante (1999); Cowan (2011).

<sup>49</sup> Vell. 2.48.5; 89.1; 96.3; 99.3; 103.4; 114.4; 119.1. Discussion in Sumner (1970) 280–284, and Woodman (1975a), 287–288, explaining why some scholars doubt Velleius' seriousness.

Cicero. It went on to cover the period from 8 BC to AD 31 (F4), but its precise starting and finishing points are a matter of guesswork.<sup>50</sup> That it began with the death of Caesar is a reasonable possibility, but we have no idea how far it extended beyond 31, if at all. The only thing we know is that it was continued by Pliny the Elder (*FRHist* 80), who wrote 31 books *a fine Aufidii Bassi*; the earliest event recorded by Pliny was in 55 (*FRHist* 80 F4). Pliny evidently regarded him as an authority, and also followed him in another respect: both historians wrote separate works on the German Wars, although Pliny's twenty books almost certainly overshadowed Aufidius' *Bellum Germanicum* (in the singular), which may have been no more than a monograph on the campaigns of Tiberius. There is no evidence that he was a senator, but that should not be taken to indicate that he was not.

M. Servilius Nonianus, on the other hand, was definitely a senator; consul in 35 and proconsul of Africa in (probably) 47. His death in 59 is marked by Tacitus, whose obituary describes him as a distinguished orator and historian (*FRHist* 79 F4). Of his work we know little, but he is often invoked as one of Tacitus' sources for the *Annals*.<sup>51</sup>

Last but not least among the contemporaries of Seneca the Elder was the emperor Claudius himself (*FRHist* 75). During his youth Claudius famously devoted himself to history, with the encouragement of Livy (T1). He started with the murder of Caesar, but broke off after two books on the advice of his mother and grandmother, and started again with the end of the civil wars (i.e. after Actium), and completed 41 books. We do not know how far he got; the speculation that he covered the period from 27 BC to AD 14 with one book per year is clever but far from compelling.<sup>52</sup> He also wrote histories of the Etruscans and Carthaginians in Greek, and his oratory (especially the so-called Table of Lyons: *ILS* 212) betrays extensive and abstruse knowledge of the distant past. Syme famously argued that the antiquarian digressions in Tacitus' *Annals* are based on Claudius.<sup>53</sup>

## Concluding remarks

After this exhausting catalogue I should like to draw attention to two contradictory things. First, we know that a great deal of historical writing was practised

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<sup>50</sup> Discussion in Syme (1958) 697–700.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. by Syme (1964), who thinks his status as a consular and man of affairs would lead Tacitus to prefer him over Aufidius.

<sup>52</sup> Levick in *FRHist* I 511 and n. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Syme (1958) 514–515; 703–710.



during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius – the age of the Elder Seneca. We also know that in this period there was a flourishing culture of literary historiography – witness the many references to readings and recitations. Cornutus was surrounded by legacy-hunters at his readings, while Livy’s were sparsely attended; Octavius Ruso compelled his debtors to attend his recitations. Augustus attended a reading by Cremutius Cordus (Suet. *Tib.* 61.3); Labienus omitted from his recitations bits that were too offensive (with the instruction that they be publicised after his death: Sen. *contr.* 10 *praef.* 8); Claudius when emperor dropped in on a reading by Servilius Nonianus (Plin. *epist.* 1.13.3; Servilius was also heard by Quintilian: *inst.* 10.1.102). Claudius’ own readings were a disaster: he kept drying up, and when someone fell off his chair, he kept remembering the incident and couldn’t stop laughing (Suet. *Claud.* 41.1).

But these external facts relate to known unknowns. In spite of the extensive evidence for the existence of this historiography, of the nature and content of the actual works we know almost nothing at all. Our problem therefore is not to explain an absence of historiography, but to explain why we know so little about what there was. The poverty of our knowledge can be illustrated by a comparison with the earlier historiography of the Republic. The interesting and paradoxical fact is that there is far more evidence for historical works produced in the early period, from Fabius Pictor down to c. 40 BC, than for the succeeding century: there are far more fragments and *testimonia* for Fabius Pictor, Cato, Cassius Hemina, Coelius Antipater, Piso, Sisenna, Claudius Quadrigarius, Valerius Antias, Licinius Macer – indeed more for each one of these – than for any historian of the civil wars or early principate, including major figures such as Pollio or Messalla Corvinus. The predecessors of Tacitus, the historians of the early empire (Cremutius Cordus, Aufidius Bassus, Servilius Nonianus, Pliny the Elder, Cluvius Rufus and Fabius Rusticus) are also pitifully represented in the surviving evidence and are very rarely quoted by later authors. Seneca the Elder also belongs to this group.

There is a tendency in some quarters to dismiss little-known historians as figures of no importance – as ‘mere names’. Syme for instance writes that ‘the Principate of Augustus can show few historians. Apart from Livy, they are little more than names ... a certain Cornutus has been disinterred, who appears to have written about the Civil Wars: surely of slight importance’.<sup>54</sup> But this overlooks the fact that we know no more about the work of Servilius Nonianus, whom Syme values highly, seemingly on the grounds that he was a consular and someone who can be investigated prosopographically (*supra* n. 51). Another historian in whom

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54 Syme (1959) 64.

scholars have invested heavily is Asinius Pollio, a very important figure in the political and cultural life of his time. Syme indeed came close to identifying himself with Pollio, and in *The Roman Revolution* reconstructed a version of the history he thought Pollio might have written.<sup>55</sup> But in the words of Raaflaub and Samons: ‘That Pollio’s fame as an historian of the Augustan Age today stands second only to Livy’s is an amazing fact, considering the dearth of fragments from his histories.’<sup>56</sup>

The explanation lies in the fact that quotations from lost authors exist because of the interests of the writers who choose to quote them, and have nothing to do with the relative significance or even literary merits of the works from which they are taken. The republican historians are quoted extensively by grammarians and others interested in their quaint or old-fashioned language. Cato was a favourite quarry; and Sisenna is represented by 143 fragments, almost all cited by grammarians, no fewer than 127 of them by Nonius Marcellus; similarly Claudius Quadrigarius is known to us largely because his old-fashioned language appealed to Aulus Gellius, who preserves around half of the 98 fragments, the rest coming from other grammarians – with the exception of a handful from Livy, who, unlike imperial historians such as Tacitus, Dio and Appian, quotes his sources frequently.

By contrast, Augustan and early imperial historians were of no interest to grammarians, who concentrated overwhelmingly on the language and style of the *ueteres*. Admittedly Pollio is cited once by Charisius (*FRHist* 56 F9) and three times by Priscian (F10–12), but these fragments may well come from other works by Pollio (most obviously speeches), and are included only as ‘possible fragments’ in *FRHist*. A similar source of bias is the fact that very many fragments of the republican historians are quoted by antiquarians and others interested above all in the legendary origins of Rome. This peculiarity accounts for most of the fragments cited by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Festus, Macrobius, the *Origo Gentis Romanae* and the scholia on Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

The result is that the surviving fragments represent a grossly biased sample of the lost works of Roman historiography, heavily slanted toward the earlier republican authors, and then toward their treatment of the earliest history of the city. The imperial historians lose out by comparison, and the resulting data give a wholly misleading picture of imperial historiography, both of the number of historians and of their importance.

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<sup>55</sup> Syme (1939) 4–6; (1958) 136.

<sup>56</sup> Raaflaub/Samons (1990) 43.

Seneca the Elder is one of the historians to have suffered from this unbalanced state of affairs. His historical work is often overlooked in discussions of imperial historians, and of such questions as the possible sources of Tacitus. Because so little survives of this work, it is thought to have been of little importance or influence. Indeed, some scholars have even doubted that it was ever published<sup>57</sup> – a notion that has now been dashed by the discovery that a copy was held in the library of the *Villa dei Papiri* at Herculaneum, in itself a fact of great importance.

A second observation that can be made about the data we have been discussing is that they undermine the idea that there was a change in the social status of historians – that historiography was the exclusive preserve of the senatorial aristocracy in the early days, but that in the late Republic history began to be written by a wider class of professional litterateurs from outside the political elite. While it is true that writers such as Livy (certainly) and Fenestella (probably) were non-senators, it is not certain how much of a novelty this was, since the status of some early historians, such as Cassius Hemina, Vennonius, Cn. Gellius, and Coelius Antipater is wholly uncertain, not to speak of Claudius Quadrigarius and Valerius Antias; and conversely the historians who were writing in the age of Seneca the Elder continued for the most part to be drawn from the senatorial class. The statistics are set out in Table 1.

Of the 28 historians listed, the status of six is completely unknown. Of the remaining 22, more than 70% were from the political elite (three emperors, thirteen certain or possible senators, of whom six were consulars). Two were equites and four were freedmen. As Antonio La Penna argued in an important paper, the distinction between senatorial historians and literary historians has been overdrawn; and among the former group the presence of statesmen of the first rank has been exaggerated.<sup>58</sup> Cato the Censor is wholly exceptional in this sense. A number of the important senatorial historians of the republic were of praetorian rank or below: Fabius Pictor, Cincius Alimentus, C. Fannius C.f. (not the consul of 122 BC!), Sempronius Asellio, Sisenna, Licinius Macer, Sallust. Even among the consulars, only a very few were outstanding political figures (perhaps L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi, Asinius Pollio and Messalla Corvinus).

The social diversity of Roman historiography goes back to the second century BC, as indeed does the diversity of different types of history. Before 100 BC traditional annals had been joined by contemporary *historiae*, monographs and personal memoirs (by such as M. Aemilius Scaurus, P. Rutillius Rufus and Q. Lutatius

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<sup>57</sup> Klotz (1901) 441–442.

<sup>58</sup> La Penna (1967).

Catulus). This diversity continued into the Principate. It may not even be true that Livy was the last of the republican annalists, and that no one else tried to write the whole history of Rome from the beginning to his own time. We know that Velleius planned to do precisely that, and it is perfectly possible that complete annalistic histories were compiled by Galba (the emperor's grandfather), Clodius Licinus and Fenestella.

The foregoing remarks suggest a picture of the development of historical writing at Rome that is very different from the one traditionally presented in modern scholarship. Historiography did not cease with the end of political freedom; on the contrary, there were as many historians active in the generations after Actium as there had been in the preceding period, and the great majority of them continued to be men of senatorial standing. What changes – and it is a very dramatic change – is the availability of evidence. Our knowledge of republican historiography is poor enough, consisting as it does of scattered and often uninformative fragments and *testimonia*. But for the succeeding period of the early Principate the evidence dries up to the merest trickle, and for reasons that have nothing to do with the quality or quantity of the historical writing that was produced. Our knowledge of the historical works of Seneca and his contemporaries is pitifully small – so much so, in fact, that it is actually quite probable that there were many more historians active at the time of whom we know absolutely nothing. The problem of course is that these are speculations, and that we cannot be more precise. We simply do not know. But the *ars nesciendi* requires us to be aware of this fact and to take full account of it. We *know* that we do not know.

**Tab. 1:** Historians writing between c. 30 BC and c. AD 40 ('the age of Seneca the Elder'), in order of appearance in *FRHist* (with *FRHist* numbers).

46. M. Tullius Tiro
47. P. Volumnius
48. Octavius Ruso
49. L. Calpurnius Bibulus
50. C. Furnius
53. Q. Dellius
54. M. Caecilius (?) Cornutus
56. C. Asinius Pollio
57. C. Sulpicius Galba
58. L. Arruntius
59. M. Vipsanius Agrippa
60. Imp. Caesar Augustus

61. M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus
62. T. Labienus
63. C. Iulius Hyginus
64. Clodius Licinus
65. Julius Marathus
66. C. Drusus
67. Aquilius Niger
68. Julius (Junius?) Saturninus
70. Fenestella
71. Cremutius Cordus
72. Brutteditus Niger
73. Ti. Claudius Nero (Ti. Julius Caesar Augustus)
74. L. Annaeus Seneca (Maior)
75. Ti. Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus
76. Ti. Claudius Herma Sideropogon
78. Aufidius Bassus

Social status of the 28 historians listed:

- 3 emperors (Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius)
- 10 senators: 6 consulars (Pollio, Agrippa, Messalla Corvinus, Furnius, Arruntius, Clodius Licinus)  
2 praetorians (Galba, Cornutus)  
1 aedilician (Brutteditus Niger)  
1 other, possibly praetorian (Cremutius Cordus)
- 3 possible/probable senators (Bibulus, Octavius Ruso, Aufidius Bassus)
- 2 equestrians (Labienus, Seneca)
- 4 freedmen (Tiro, Julius Marathus, Hyginus, Herma Sideropogon)
- 6 of unknown status (C. Drusus, Aquilius Niger, Julius (Junius?) Saturninus, Fenestella, Volumnius, Dellius)

Valeria Piano

# A ‘historic(al)’ find from the library of Herculaneum: Seneca the Elder and the *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* in *P.Herc. 1067*


**Abstract:** This article presents in concise but comprehensive fashion the work that led to the identification of the text contained in *P.Herc. 1067* as the historical work of Seneca the Elder. After a brief overview of the history of Herculaneum studies, the paper focuses on the new reading of the first line of the *subscriptio*, which, by allowing us to identify the author as a *Lucius Annaeus Seneca*, has shown the previous attribution of the text to *Lucius Manlius Torquatus*, and accordingly its interpretation as an *oratio in Senatu habita ante principem*, to be incorrect. There follows a description of the roll in bibliological, palaeographical and papyrological terms, as well as a brief presentation of its contents. They are elucidated using the prosopography contained in the papyrus which wholly refers to the Augustan or Tiberian age. The article closes with a detailed description of the second line of the *subscriptio* which contains the title of the work.

## 1 The discovery in the context of Herculaneum studies

The two and a half centuries that separate us from the discovery of the Villa of the Papyri have clearly not been sufficient to exhaust the treasures preserved for millennia by the ashes of Mount Vesuvius. The presence of a work by Seneca the Elder among the carbonized rolls of the only library from classical antiquity to have survived, in part, to our day opens important avenues of research in a number of ways.

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The discovery was made between 2016 and 2017, and confirmed an unpublished palaeographical intuition of Robert Marichal, making possible, in addition, the precise identification of the *auctor* and a plausible proposal concerning the work in question.<sup>1</sup> It has come at a very productive time for Herculaneum studies that are leading to the revision of some aspects of the history and the intellectual life of the *Villa* more generally.

The identification of a work by Seneca the Elder that does not otherwise survive represents an important discovery not only because it allows us to add another piece to the mosaic that is the history of Latin literature; its bibliological and, more generally, historical and cultural significance is considerable. Containing part of a work composed between the end of the 30s and the beginning of the 40s AD, *P.Herc.* 1067 is one of the very few books written in Latin language that have survived from the 1st century AD and that has hitherto been reconstructed. It therefore offers first-hand information on writing practices in the Roman world, at a time when these practices were proliferating for purely literary aims, and public and private libraries were taking shape. Its western provenance, moreover, makes it an even more valuable piece of evidence.

The late date further supports the conclusions reached by archaeological and papyrological evidence which now finally discredits the old hypothesis according to which the *Villa* in the 1st century AD had lost its former luster and was in a phase of agricultural reconversion.<sup>2</sup> If anything, the revised chronology of the *Villa*, the discovery of ongoing renovations in some areas of the complex at the time of the eruption,<sup>3</sup> the first-century dating of hands that reedited some works of Greek philosophical historiography or restored parts of Philodemus' works<sup>4</sup> paint a picture of great socio-cultural liveliness.<sup>5</sup> This impression is confirmed by the observation that the owners of the *Villa*, in addition to commissioning the restoration or reedition of older Greek rolls, also bought new bookrolls, in Latin, that contained newly-produced works, not of philosophy, but, most interestingly, of recent Roman history.

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1 The *editio princeps* of the text including a comprehensive study of the archives, the anatomy of the roll, the script and the *mise en page* of the text is Piano (2017a); the preliminary results of the study were presented at the 28th International Congress of Papyrology (Barcelona 2016), now published in Piano (2019).

2 Wójcick (1986) 37.

3 Guidobaldi/Esposito (2009) and, in English, Guidobaldi/Esposito (2010).

4 Del Mastro (2010).

5 For a treatment of the composition of the library and the owners of the *Villa* that takes into account the consequences of the new dating, see Dorandi (2017a).

Though it is a single papyrus – among the 124 items in the inventory that make up the *pars Latina* of the Library –<sup>6</sup> *P.Herc.* 1067 joins the only other Latin work from Herculaneum identifiable with certainty from its contents, the *Carmen de Bello Actiaco* (*P.Herc.* 817),<sup>7</sup> in confirming a clear interest in events of contemporary history on behalf of the Pisones who, in all likelihood, owned the *Villa*.

As will be seen, a remarkable amount of information can be extracted, directly or indirectly, from a single *volumen*, owing to the unique possibility of studying a literary roll within its original cultural and library context.

## 2 Anatomy of the roll, palaeography and *mise en page*

Of the original *volumen* that is missing its upper part, now known as *P.Herc.* 1067, 16 *pezzi* remain;<sup>8</sup> they were obtained through the process of unrolling using the machine invented by Antonio Piaggio in the final decades of the 18th century.<sup>9</sup> These 16 *pezzi* are preserved in 10 *cornici*, numbered from 1 to 9, but, as is frequently the case with the Herculaneum papyri, the numbering of the *cornici* does not correspond to the original order of the *pezzi* in the papyrus. The *editio princeps* established the correct succession of *pezzi* by studying different kinds of material features and damages visible on the papyrus, that is those folds, fractures and twists that are found consistently in all *pezzi*, since they are the product of deformations suffered by the roll when it was still rolled up.<sup>10</sup> Where this data can be collected and assessed, it offers a guide to the reconstruction of the roll, since – at least in principle – material damage that occurs while a papyrus is still rolled up

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**6** To the 120 items reported in Del Mastro (2005) add the four other items (*P.Herc.* 50, 475, 1586, 1781) classified as Latin papyri from Herculaneum in the website [www.chartes.it](http://www.chartes.it). Remnants of another Latin papyrus have been found at Pompeii; cf. Del Mastro (2018).

**7** For this famous *volumen* cf. now Scappaticcio (2010) and Capasso (2011) 45–61, who provide references to the previous bibliography.

**8** Contrary to the claim in *CatPErc* 254 which registers 15 *pezzi*. On the consistency of the papyrus within the various Inventories stored at the *Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi* “Marcello Gigante”, see Piano (2017a) 163–170. In what follows I will use the terms *pezzo* and *cornice* as understood in Herculaneum papyrology, to refer to the pieces of an unrolled papyrus and the metal containers in which they are preserved respectively.

**9** The archives make clear that *P.Herc.* 1067 was unrolled in two phases: in 1808 by G. Casanova and in 1820 by V. Orsini.

**10** For the definitions of “danno solidale”, “volute” (that is circumference), and “sezione di volute” (that is the section of a circumference) cf. Del Mastro (2011) 56 n. 70.



leaves an imprint on several layers, creating in the *pezzi* of the opened roll folds that are analogous in shape, but progressively decrease in size as one proceeds from the outside of the roll inward.

Analysing these damages<sup>11</sup> has allowed me to infer not only the correct sequence of *pezzi*, but also to make an approximate estimate of the gaps between one *pezzo* and another<sup>12</sup> and therefore of the original length of the roll.

The analysis of the damages of *P.Herc.* 1067 has also shown that at c. 125 cm from the end of the *volumen* the roll broke in half lengthways. As a result, some of the preserved *pezzi* constitute the upper and lower parts of the same portion of the roll.<sup>13</sup>

Volumetric reconstruction showed that the original roll was c. 13 meters long,<sup>14</sup> a figure corroborated also by other calculations made on information that was obtained from the old inventories stored at the *Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi*.<sup>15</sup> Of course, of these 13 meters only a fraction remains. Since the roll is missing the upper section and contains a work unknown to us, it is impossible for us to be certain of the precise height of the roll; information obtained from the archive suggests that the roll had a minimum height of c. [30 cm], making it significantly taller than contemporary Greek scrolls, but according with the height we can calculate for the few Latin rolls from the 1st century AD that are known to us.<sup>16</sup> The length of c. 13 m, however, is very close to the range of dimensions given by Cavallo, with regard to the Philodemus rolls, for the ideal length of ‘library rolls’, i.e. rolls destined for study in the *otium* of the library.<sup>17</sup>

And in fact, the script and the correctness of the text unequivocally indicate that this was a *volumen* of excellent craftsmanship. It is written in an elegant type

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**11** On the pattern of the folds identified in *P.Herc.* 1067 and on their characteristic forms, see Piano (2017a) 170–172.

**12** Cf. the table in Piano (2017a) 175–176.

**13** The *pezzi* obtained from the final portion are cr. 5 pzz. I and II, cr. 7 pz. II, cr. 8 pz. II, cr. 9 pz. III; the measurements of the circumferences indicate that cr. 5 pz. I must be placed above cr. 7 pz. II, and cr. 5 pz. II above cr. 8 pz. II.

**14** Piano (2017a) 176.

**15** The original length of the *volumen*, calculated by Piano (2017a) using the appropriate bibliometric techniques, is entirely compatible with the data that can be deduced from the original circumference of the unopened roll, registered in an inventory that goes back to 1782 (published in Blank/Longo Auricchio (2004) 85), as well as with the parameters proposed by Capasso (2007).

**16** Piano (2017a) 177–178.

**17** In Cavallo (1983) 14–16, and Cavallo (2015) the scholar considers a length of c. 10–12 m to be standard for the Philodemus rolls, all datable within a limited time period in the 1st century BC; in another recent study, he identifies this length as standard for bookrolls to be read in the library; cf. Cavallo (2013) 292–293.

of rustic capital, widely known because of the many palaeographical studies that are dedicated to this script.<sup>18</sup> Compared to more formal examples of this type of script, such as that preserved in *P.Herc.* 1475, the one of 1067 is characterized by a more delicate shading and a slightly more rapid *ductus* which lends a softer shape to the letters, distinctive also for the significant curvature of oblique downward strokes that incline to the right. The letters, c. 4.5 mm high, are embellished by *empattements* at the beginning or end of strokes, and, as usual with this style, the script alternates wide and narrow letters. Even though this hand is similar to that of other Latin Herculaneum papyri, such as *P.Herc.* 1066,<sup>19</sup> no other *pezzi* by the same hand have been identified. The most characteristic letter is the *A*, always in three strokes – and not in two as is commonly claimed – with the middle bar reduced to a short slanting leftward stroke that descends from the end of the second stroke. Attested from the 1st century BC onward, this shape is found throughout the 1st century AD and occurs also in some papyri of the 2nd century.<sup>20</sup> The precise identification of the sequence of strokes of the *A* proved essential for reading the *subscriptio*.

The *mise en page* of the text is also very neat, with an essentially square writing space consisting of columns presumably [22–23] cm high and [16–20] cm wide. These parameters also agree with the most recent palaeographical studies which assert a marked tendency in Latin rolls to place writing in a square space, as opposed to the long and narrow columns typical of contemporary Greek rolls. It suggests that the Romans were more familiar with the format of the codex than with that of the roll.<sup>21</sup>

That the *volumen* was produced for reading seems confirmed by the reduction of interlinear space, by contrast with the remarkable height of the letters. These features could be explained as the product of an intelligent organization of the writing space, precisely in order to prevent the roll from becoming too long, and so uncomfortable for reading.

The scribe aligns the text only along the left margin, and in the entirety of the recovered text there is no example of word division between successive lines. This

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**18** For a complete palaeographical analysis cf. Piano (2017a) 178–180 and n. 41 for previous bibliography.

**19** Del Mastro (2005) 192 drew attention to the similarity between the two hands, identified by Ammirati (2010) 32.

**20** Cf. Piano (2017a) 178 n. 44.

**21** Ammirati (2015) 42–43 and 113, Fioretti (2016) 4–5.



nevertheless in terrible condition. The legibility of the text is complicated, above all, by the confused stratigraphy of the papyrus: almost all 16 *pezzi* are made up of multiple layers of papyrus that have become attached to one another. The impression that a conspicuous quantity of text has been preserved is therefore contradicted by a careful inspection of the original which reveals that apparently consecutive, sometimes even aligned, lines of text are in fact written on different layers of papyrus and are therefore separated from one another by the distance of one or more circumferences of the roll. This explains the extreme fragmentary nature of the text and its complicated classification. Every textual fragment is identified, firstly, by the number of the *cornice* and the *pezzo* to which it belongs, indicated in the edition by the abbreviations *cr.* and *pz.* respectively; there follows the indication *sovrapposto* and Arabic numerals in ascending order. This system was adopted in order to avoid giving equivocal information to the reader and to produce an edition that reflects as closely as possible the stratigraphy of the papyrus. If, in fact, it was possible for individual *pezzi* to infer their original order, the same was not possible for the layers of papyrus that contain the fragments of text. The different layers now prove to overlap over one another in such a high number and such a complex fashion that it is often impossible to determine the relative order of textual fragments written on different layers.

### 3 The *auctor* of the work: the first line of the *subscriptio*

Until 2017 when the *editio princeps* was published, *P.Herc.* 1067 was believed to contain an *oratio in Senatu habita ante principem*. This indeed was the hypothesis advanced by Felice Costabile in the only study dedicated to the contents of the *volumen*, published in 1984.<sup>28</sup> The identification, and, in a second step, the correct reading of the ancient *subscriptio* of the papyrus were central to rebutting this hypothesis. The innermost *pezzo* of *P.Herc.* 1067 (*cr.* 9 *pz.* III) in fact preserves parts of the final column of the text and, at a certain distance, about half way down the roll, part of the ancient 'title'. The first line is preserved in its entirety, while only few, very incomplete traces of ink of the second remain. The discovery of the *subscriptio* is owed to Gianluca Del Mastro who published his findings in 2005,<sup>29</sup> in an article dedicated to Latin Herculaneum papyri in general. Costabile

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<sup>28</sup> Costabile (1984).

<sup>29</sup> Del Mastro (2005) 191–192.

did not in fact note any *subscriptio* for *P.Herc.* 1067, though he did record one for *P.Herc.* 1475, another Latin papyrus that Costabile studied in connection with 1067 and treated within the same article.<sup>30</sup> In this second roll Costabile reported the reading of the *L* of the *praenomen* *Lucius* and, immediately afterwards, of *MA*[, followed in turn, at a distance corresponding to ca. 10 letters, by a *T*. In light of this interpretation, Costabile identified the author of the text as *Lucius Manlius Torquatus*, Roman politician and follower of Epicureanism who died among the ranks of the Pompeians in 46 BC.<sup>31</sup>

In 2005, however, Del Mastro noticed that the *L* and the traces of the letters *M* and *A* that Costabile claimed to have read at the end of *P.Herc.* 1475,<sup>32</sup> were in fact preserved at the end of *P.Herc.* 1067. Del Mastro upheld Costabile's reading, but hypothesized that there had been a confusion between the final *pezzi* of the two papyri at the time when Costabile was working on *P.Herc.* 1067 and 1475. This confusion led to the erroneous attribution of the work contained in *P.Herc.* 1067 to the alleged author previously identified in 1475, since the traces of writing which were linked to the name of *Lucius Manlius Torquatus* were found not at the end of *P.Herc.* 1475, but of papyrus 1067.

Beginning in 2005, therefore, it was widely believed among scholars that *P.Herc.* 1067 contained an *oratio in Senatu habita ante principem* composed by *Lucius Manlius Torquatus*. As a matter of fact, Robert Marichal had already identified and partially transcribed the *subscriptio* of 1067 before Del Mastro. This discovery, however, along with a transcription of this *subscriptio*, which differed from that of Costabile and Del Mastro, remained unpublished and was therefore not known to Del Mastro, either. Marichal dedicated about forty years of research to the Latin Herculaneum papyri, but the results of this tremendous endeavor have unfortunately remained unpublished.<sup>33</sup> At this time, however, his notes on Herculaneum can be consulted at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, where

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**30** *P.Herc.* 1475 has been recently edited by Essler (2019).

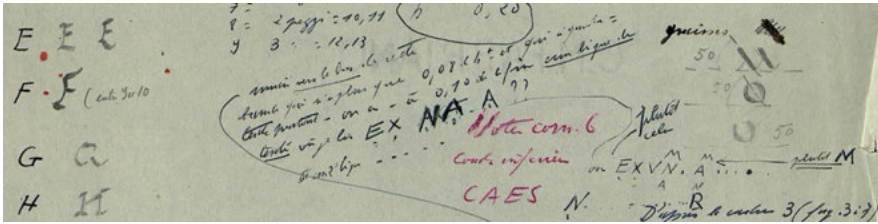
**31** For all this and for the new reading of the first line of the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.* 1067 see Piano (2016).

**32** The autoptic inspection of *P.Herc.* 1475 allowed me to verify the effective presence of a *subscriptio* in the papyrus, preserved, however, not in the last *cornice*, as Costabile (1984) 597 claimed, but in cr. 7, which indeed preserves the final part of the roll (cf. MSI 1475 CR 07 11092–11093), cf. Piano (2016) 276; for a partial reading of the *subscriptio* see Essler (2019) 144–147, who identifies the work as a *Commentarium*.

**33** I was able to study the Herculaneum section of the Marichal Archive in 2015, thanks to a collaboration between PLATINUM ERC–StG and the *École Pratiques des Hautes Études* of Paris; preliminary results on that topic have been published in Piano (2017b).

the entire Marichal archive is kept.<sup>34</sup> Apart from a careful evaluation of the readings proposed by Costabile in 1984, the papers of Marichal concerning *P.Herc.* 1067 contain the transcription of all the *pezzi*; among these there is also the – rather laborious – transcription of the two lines that apparently escaped Costabile's notice, which were not part of the text of the work but were written “vers le bas” – as Marichal notes – of the final *pezzo* of the papyrus – *pezzo* III preserved in *cornice* 9.

A preliminary transcription contains *EXVN . A . . .* in the first of the two surviving lines, and an *N* at the beginning of the second line, followed, at some distance, by an *R*.

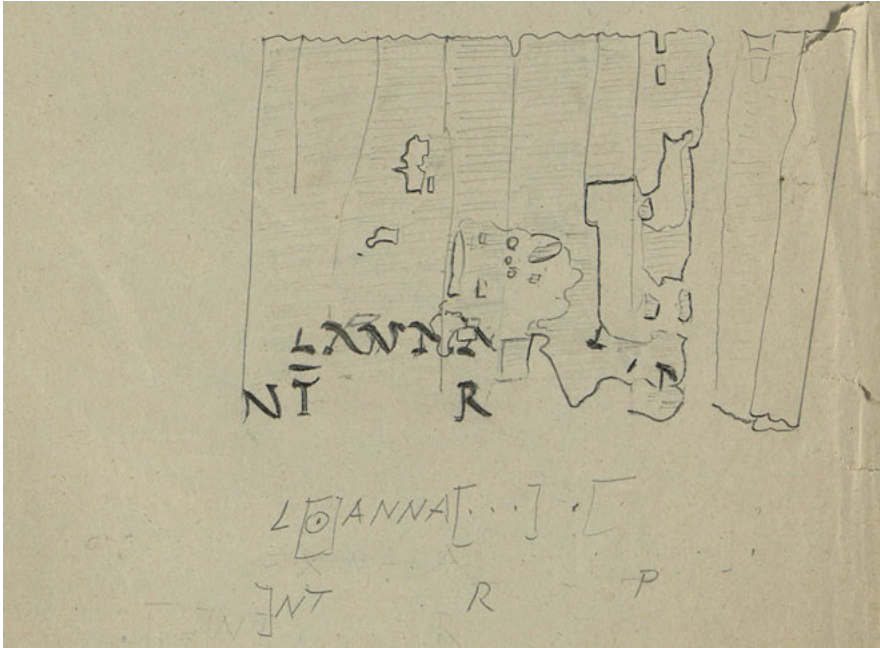


**Fig. 1:** Archives Robert Marichal (image no. EPHE\_PLATINUM\_09\_0496): first attempts of transcription of the first line of the *scriptio*; on the right, the transcription quoted above. © PLATINUM-EPHE

Another sheet from the Archive, dedicated entirely to the final *pezzo* of the roll, contains a very accurate drawing of the end of the *volumen* with traces of ink still visible and a transcription, certainly more scrupulous and therefore later, that differs from the first version. In it, the scholar wrote, on two lines respectively

L [·] ANNA [ . . . ] [·]  
]NT                    R                    P

<sup>34</sup> For an analysis of the portion of the Archive that relates to the Latin papyri see Scappaticcio (2017) which also contains a new inventory edited by Océane Valencia.



**Fig. 2:** Archives Robert Marichal (image no. EPHE\_PLATINUM\_09\_0495): definitive transcription of the *subscriptio*. ©PLATINUM–EPHE

Instead of *L. Ma*], Marichal read *L. Anna*] and therefore understood that the work was written by a *Lucius Annaeus*. Doubts remained on which of the *Annaei* could be its *auctor*. Marichal himself in fact drew up a list of three possible *Annaei* who shared the *praenomen Lucius*: the first name is that of *Lucius Annaeus Cornutus*, followed by Seneca the Elder – whose name is flagged with a question mark, since his *praenomen* was uncertain – and Seneca the Younger whose *praenomen* was certainly *Lucius*.<sup>35</sup>

This, then, was the situation in 2016, when I began to examine *P.Herc.* 1067 in person.

From the autoptic inspection of the last *pezzo* of the roll it emerged immediately that Marichal's second, unpublished reading, *L(uci) Anna*], was much more compatible with the original as compared with the alternative reading, *L(uci) Ma*]. In the rustic capital of *P.Herc.* 1067, the form of letters such as *A*, *M*, and *N*, are somewhat similar and can easily be confused. But there is a detail

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Marichal, *Archives*, image no. EPHE\_PLATINUM\_09\_0494.

which, once identified, allowed me not only to corroborate Marichal's reading, but also to build on it and attribute the work to *Lucius Annaeus Seneca* with certainty.

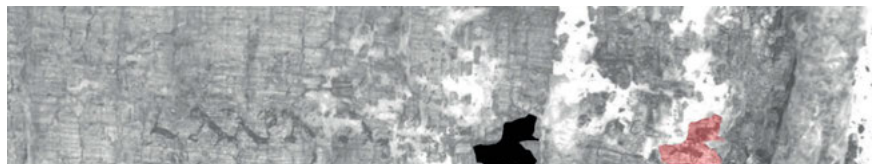
The identification of the third stroke of the *A*, which, as mentioned above, is characteristic of the letter in the script of *P.Herc.* 1067, permitted the certain identification of an *A* in place of the *M* read by Costabile and Del Mastro. Following the *A*, the traces, partial but unmistakable, of two *N*s can be made out, followed, in turn, by another *A*. After this second *A* – the last letter read by Marichal in the first line – very slight traces of the *E* of the diphthong can be made out. It has confirmed the reading *L(uci) Annae[i]*.



**Fig. 3:** *P.Herc.* 1067, cr. 9 pz. III: first line of the *subscriptio*. © Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli – Brigham Young University, Provo, USA

It remained to choose between the chronologically admissible *Lucii Annaei*. The breakthrough in this question came with the decipherment of the traces of ink after the gap following the diphthong *AE* that had been ignored by Marichal, and, above all, with the correct stratigraphic analysis which allowed me to understand that the original position of these traces was different from their current one.

The traces in question are compatible with the remnants of an *A*, as the unmistakable third stroke of the letter shows, followed by an *E*. The virtual placement of this *sovrapposto* moves the letters to the end of the line, and therefore to a position compatible with a genitive singular in *-AE*, and establishes a gap between *Annae[* and *]ae* perfectly bridged by the name *L[.] Annae[i] · Senec]ae*.



**Fig. 4:** *P.Herc.* 1067, cr. 9 pz. III: first line of the *subscriptio* with the repositioning of a *sovrapposto*. © Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli – Brigham Young University, Provo, USA



The complete text of the first line of the *subscriptio* allowed me to reduce the list of possible *auctores* to Seneca *senior* and Seneca *iunior*, both of whom are chronologically acceptable.

## 4 The contents of the work

The choice of Seneca the Elder was guided, above all, by the contents of the text which slowly emerged during my autoptic inspection of the *pezzi*: it was soon possible to deduce that the text was of historical and political nature. Among the various thematic units, the prosopographic one, which belongs to a senatorial context of the Augustan or Tiberian age, is particularly suggestive. There are numerous mentions of members of the Julio–Claudian *gens* (or of Imperial titles which refer to them), rendered even more significant by the extremely fragmentary nature of the text. The mention of Tiberius is particularly striking: it is crucial for both chronological and thematic purposes, and occurs almost at the end of the original *volumen*.

### 4.1 *Caés[a]re, bello · Gall[ico]: cr. 6 pz. II, sovv. 1 + 2*

Proceeding from the beginning of the roll, the first instance relevant for our purposes is that of the term *Caés[a]re*, already identified by Marichal and Del Mastro in the *pezzo* contained in cr. 6 pz. II,<sup>36</sup> which occurred about half way through the roll, approximately speaking. Apart from *Caés[a]re*, the inspection of the original also permitted me to identify the term *bello* in the following line, whereas the examination of the stratigraphy led me virtually to join the layer of papyrus containing *Caés[a]re* and *bello* with another layer placed at the same height but in the following circumference; the two layers are perfectly compatible when joined. The textual fragment obtained by joining the two layers restores *Caés[a]re* and *bello · Gall[ico]* to two consecutive lines of the column. The string *GALL[ico]* can refer to a proper name, but given the presence of *bello* immediately preceding *Gall[ico]*, it seems inevitable to supply *bello · Gall[ico]*.<sup>37</sup> In all surviving literary instances, the expression constituted by the noun *bellum* and the adjective *Gallicum* refers to

<sup>36</sup> Marichal, *Archives* “4\_MAR 175” and image no. EPHE\_PLATINUM\_09\_0496, on which see *supra* Fig. 1, and Piano (2017b) 39, and tab. 3; Del Mastro (2005) 191.

<sup>37</sup> For further details see Piano (2017a) 198–202, with related images.

the wars in Gaul that lead to its conquest and, thus, end with the famous campaign of Gaius Julius Caesar. It seems thus plausible to take this as a reference to that event. On the other hand, since the other prosopographical elements in the papyrus all refer to the principate of Augustus or Tiberius, a potential reference to Caesar's Gallic war would be strictly cursory.<sup>38</sup> It is also possible to hypothesize a reference to the campaigns in Gaul undertaken by Augustus or Tiberius during their rule,<sup>39</sup> but in this case the sources never speak of a *bellum Gallicum* properly, even though the single word *bellum* can be used to refer to a rebellion or a sedition.

## 4.2 Augustus, Haterius, and the Senate: the fragments of cr. 2 and cr. 3

That the mention of the Gallic war is an isolated reference is demonstrated by the presence, not far from the joined fragments, of the first of the two instances of the term *Augustus*. It occurs in the dative or ablative (*A]ú[g]usto*, cr. 2 pz. I sov. 2, l. 2); unfortunately, on the same layer of papyrus only few other letters survive, which are not significant in terms of sense.<sup>40</sup> The same *pezzo* of *cornice* 2 preserves other noteworthy textual fragments. In addition to the possible, but unverifiable mention of Aeneas,<sup>41</sup> and the reference – isolated, unfortunately – to the *stuprum* of a *mulier*, written in part in a marginal note,<sup>42</sup> there is a more extensive fragment that mentions one *Haterius*. The name, partially preserved but certain, appears in a fragment certainly set in the Senate:<sup>43</sup> the strings *rogab* [ and *ut Ha`t[eri-* suggest a senatorial discussion in which Haterius took part. Since the

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Lucarini (2018) 88–89, who supposes that Seneca might have mentioned Julius Caesar's Gallic war in connection with the campaign undertaken by Tiberius in the Eastern part of the Gauls just after his adoption in 4 AD.

<sup>39</sup> So Scappaticcio (2018) 1061–1062, who interprets the fragment with reference to Tiberius' intervention in Gaul in 21 AD to pacify the rebellion animated by Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir (cf. Tac. *ann.* 3.40–47).

<sup>40</sup> Piano (2017a) 204–205.

<sup>41</sup> Cr. 2 pz. I sov. 3 (?), col. I ll. 2–5: *]s · malus | ]rus · captam | ]le . . . [ ] | ]eneam*, for which one reference to Aeneas (l. 5: *A]eneam*) and one to the sack of Troy (taking *captam* in l. 3 in connection with a potential *Troiam*) have been proposed entirely hypothetically; it should be noted that the fragment might belong to the same column where I read *A]ú[g]usto* (cr. 2 pz. I sov. 2), as explained in Piano (2017a) 205–206.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *supra* n. 23.

<sup>43</sup> Cr. 2 pz. I sov. 6, ll. 1–10: *añ · erij[ | c[o]mñ[ | alter[ . . . ]rr[ | rogab[ ]<sup>5</sup> ut · Ha`t[eri- | vař[ [ [ ] | [ ] ] sena[t-]<sup>10</sup> ]vet [·] sen . [; cf. Piano (2017a) 210–212.*

*praenomen* is not mentioned, the identification is not certain, but it is quite probable that this is *Quintius Haterius*,<sup>44</sup> one of the most famous Roman orators living between the first centuries BCE and AD (d. 26 AD), who was very close to Seneca the Elder and in whose rhetorical work he features several times.<sup>45</sup>

Another certain mention of the Senate is found in a subsequent fragment, cr. 3 pz. I sov. 3, where l. 8 reads *Senātu[*. The string *Gall[* is found again on another layer of papyrus which perhaps was part of the same column of sov. 3. The proximity of the two occurrences in this case militates against postulating a second mention of Gaul, suggesting, instead, a proper name. The distance between these fragments and the fragment containing the mention of Haterius cannot be calculated owing to the muddled stratigraphy of the papyrus but might be limited to a few columns.<sup>46</sup>

### 4.3 Apostrophe to the *princeps*: cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1

The most interesting fragments from a textual point of view come from the two *pezzi* stored in *cornice* 5, which must have been located near the end of the roll. The first of the two, cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1, is the most extensive fragment that it has been possible to recover from the papyrus and the only one where we can grasp the syntactic structure of a sentence. The fragment preserves portions of two consecutive columns and in line 3 of the first column the vocative *Auguste* is clearly visible. Indeed, it had already been read by Bassi and confirmed by Costabile,<sup>47</sup> who thought of an *oratio in Senatu habita ante principem* precisely on the basis of this vocative. In this case, too, the surrounding scraps of text<sup>48</sup> allow us to hypothesize a senatorial scene (col. I l. 1: *nostr[*), in which the speaker addresses the *princeps* declaring that he does not want to stray from the key point of his speech

<sup>44</sup> Lucarini (2018) 89–90, who accepts this identification, proposes to connect the mention of *Haterius* with a discussion concerning the adoption of Tiberius held at the Senate in 4 AD. Scapaticcio (2018) 1065–1068 suggests a possible mention of *Haterius Agrippa*, son of *Quintus Haterius*, without excluding a reference to the father in any case.

<sup>45</sup> *Sen. contr.* 1.6.12; *exc.* 4, *praef.* 6–11; 7.1.4 and 24; 7.2.5; 7.8.3; 9.3.14; 9.4.16; 9.6.8 and *passim*; 10.5.24. *Sen. suas.* 2.14; 3.7; 6.1–2; 7.1.

<sup>46</sup> In this regard it is worth recording the episode from the third *suasoria*, set in the Senate, in which the orator Junius Gallio mentions Haterius to Tiberius as an orator characterized by excessive vehemence in his declamations (*suas.* 3.6–7).

<sup>47</sup> Bassi (1926) 211; Costabile (1984) 594–595.

<sup>48</sup> Cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1, col. I: ] *nostr[* | *ne* · ] *ŋgius* · *á* · *propp[osito* | ] *đam* · *Auguste* | ] *ut* · *repetam* · *et* |<sup>5</sup> *c[řébrum* · *eórum* | ] *árum* [·] *qui* ; *ter* | ] *nquar* · *sic* · *uř* [ ] | ] *oga* [·] *i]gnárum* | ] *ařáraru[m]* |<sup>10</sup> ] . *iněs* · *řolof* | ] . . . . . ] .

more than is necessary (ll. 2–3: [± 10–15 *ne · l]ongius · á · prōp[osito] | [± 14–20 *rece]dam · Auguste*, or [± 10–15 *ne · l]ongius · á · prōp[osito] | [recedam ±7–12]dam · Auguste*); this rhetorical trope is paralleled most closely in the *De Clementia*.<sup>49</sup>*

There follow the terms *c]rēbrum*, *i]gnárum* and *amáraru[m]* (col. I ll. 5, 8–9), which seem to refer to an unhappy situation, perhaps “thick” with unpleasant events, probably concerning the *Augustus* named in l. 3. Another possible thematic clue in this regard could come from the following column, where references to adoption and to an act of reproaching, expressed by the verb *exprobrare*, occur in two consecutive lines (col. II ll. 5–6: [*a]doptio[n]*, [*e]xprobray[.]*). It is difficult to imagine that this verb refers to a polemic addressed by the speaker to the *princeps*, more likely, instead, that this is a comment, perhaps by the author rather than the speaker, probably related to difficulties in connection with an act of adoption.

In this case, too, the text does not offer other indications for a more precise contextualization. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note its resemblance to a passage placed at the end of the fourth *controversia* of Book 2. As happens frequently in the work of Seneca rhetor, the topic of adoption is central to the entire *controversia* which is centered around the accusation brought by a son against his father for having adopted the grandson born by another son of his and a *meretrix*. Following the *controversia*, however, Seneca introduces a brief digression which, in spite of taking the case itself as its point of departure, launches into a moralizing commentary of historical and political nature and ends up being rather unrelated from the events narrated. The motive adduced for this *excursus* is of course didactic. In a desire to set beside examples to be emulated also examples to be avoided, Seneca records a striking mistake committed by *Latro* during this case, which could have caused damage not only to his argument but also to his very life (*contrariam rem <non> controversiae dixit, sed sibi*). Though he was declaiming in the Senate in the presence of Augustus and Marcus Agrippa whose sons were about to be adopted by the *princeps*, *Latro*, in taking the side of the son opposed to the adoption, made use of arguments against the practice of adoption in general which proved very offensive to Agrippa, by saying *iam iste* (i.e. the adopted *puer*) *ex imo per adoptionem nobilitati inseritur*, and other things in the same vein (<et> *alia in hanc summam*). Seneca goes on to explain how *Maecenas* tried to put an end to the embarrassing

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<sup>49</sup> Sen. *clem.* 1.5.1: *longius videtur recessisse a proposito oratio mea, at mehercules rem ipsam premit;* cf. also Cic. *fin.* 5. 85.11–12: *tamen aberramus a proposito, et, ne longius, prorsus, inquam, Piso, si ista mala sunt, placet.*

scene, and in so doing introduces a number of details that suggest that he witnessed the episode in person.<sup>50</sup> He concludes with a eulogy of Augustus in a moralizing tone tinged with nostalgia: *tanta autem sub divo Augusto libertas fuit ut praepotenti tunc M. Agrippae non defuerint qui ignobilitatem exprobrarent*.<sup>51</sup>

For however much the narrative frame and the didactic purpose attributed to the episode color its presentation as simply an anecdote connected with the controversy, the historical details that it contains, which resemble cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1 linguistically and thematically, outline a plausible setting for the terms that survive in this fragment. On the other hand, the well-known events connected with Augustus' succession contained such a close sequence of suspicious occurrences and, consequently, of political maneuvers that inevitably gave rise to various types of reproach, not least at the hands of observers who embraced opposing points of view. In this regard the following passage of Tacitus, concerning the discontent felt by Livia at Tiberius' obligation to adopt Germanicus, is revealing: *Nam dubitaverat Augustus Germanicum, sororis nepotem et cunctis laudatum, rei Romanae imponere, sed precibus uxoris evictus Tiberio Germanicum, sibi Tiberium adscivit; id que Augusta exprobrabat, reposcebat* (Tac. ann. 4.57.3).

In combination these passages seem to suggest the general climate characteristic of the Augustus' succession. The two terms [a]doptio[n] and [e]xprobrav[, attested, significantly, in succession in col. II of cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1, in addition to the negative expressions that accompany the apostrophe to the *princeps* in the preceding column, might refer to this climate. The fragmentariness of the text implies this hypothesis must be considered one of many possibilities, including, of course, the alternative of taking the vocative *Auguste* to refer to Tiberius<sup>52</sup> and the expressions [a]doptio[n]- and [e]xprobrav[ of the following column to refer to an adoption that cannot further be specified.<sup>53</sup>

#### 4.4 Tiberius: cr. 5 pz. II sov. 1

The hypothesis of a reference to Augustus' succession in cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1, finally, would also be consistent with the final definite mention of a member of the Julio-

<sup>50</sup> Zanon Dal Bo (1986) II 247 n. 21.

<sup>51</sup> Sen. *contr.* 2.4.12–13.

<sup>52</sup> So Scappaticcio (2018) 1071–1072; by contrast, Lucarini (2018) agrees in identifying the vocative *Auguste* as a reference to Octavianus, and also associates cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1 with his succession.

<sup>53</sup> It is perhaps redundant to observe that if the *Auguste* of col. I is identified with Tiberius it seems rather improbable that the *adoptio* of col. II is that of the very same *princeps*.

Claudian *gens*, i.e. Tiberius. The name of the *princeps* in the nominative is written in clear letters just after a form of the verb *destinare* in a fragment preserved in line 8 of cr. 5 pz II sov. 1.<sup>54</sup> It seems worth mentioning that the fragment in question must have followed the preceding apostrophe to the *princeps* along with the associated reference to adoption by a few columns; moreover, it must have been no more than a few columns from the end of the *volumen*. The text surrounding *Tiberius*, however, does not shed light on the context: the only significant lexical element is the form of the verb *destinare* that precedes the mention of the emperor (cr. 5 pz. II sov. 1, l. 7: ]*dēstina*[·-). The small distance between this fragment and cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1 makes it possible that the context is still the same and that, therefore, the verb *destinare* could refer to the adoption of Tiberius (4 AD)<sup>55</sup> or to his effective succession to Octavian Augustus in 14 AD. An interesting parallel is found in Suetonius' *Life of Caligola*, in a passage that bears a close resemblance with the passage from Tacitus mentioned above with regard to the *exprobratio* of Livia, in which the verb *destinare* appears in connection with Tiberius, once again in reference to the double adoption of Tiberius by Augustus and of Germanicus by Tiberius: *sic probatus (sc. Germanicus) et dilectus a suis, ut Augustus – omitto enim necessitudines reliquas – diu cunctatus an sibi successorem destina-ret, adoptandum Tiberio dedit* (Suet. *Cal.* 4.1).

## 5 The title of the work: the second line of the *subscriptio*

The text of *P.Herc.* 1067 must have ended a few columns later (perhaps three or four at most); of the last there remain a few meagre strings of text, belonging to its upper half, unfortunately inconclusive in terms of sense, followed at a distance of c. 10 cm by the *subscriptio* of the work.

Before returning to the ancient 'title' placed at the bottom of the *volumen*, and in particular to its second line, it is worth stressing a quantitative fact: at least 11 of the recovered fragments belong to historical and political contexts,<sup>56</sup> and

<sup>54</sup> Cr. 5 pz. II sov. 1, ll. 1–8: *h]aβeat [-] çu[m] | ], d[. . . ], a[ ] | ]d[ . . . ] · a]i]um | ]ps[ . . . ] · m · ]<sup>5</sup> ]t · plēni]š | ]átur · cum | ]dēstina[[- ] | ] · Tiberius.*

<sup>55</sup> Hypothesis accepted by Lucarini (2018), who supposes that the entire book contained in *P.Herc.* 1067 concerned the historical events happened in 4 AD.

<sup>56</sup> Cr. 6 pz. II sov. 1 + sov. 2; cr. 2 pz. I sov. 2; sov. 6; cr. 3 pz. I sov. 3; sov. 4; sov. 7 (?); sov. 8; cr. 4 pz. I sov. 2; sov. 4; cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1; cr. 5 pz. II sov. 1.

around 10 are characterized by narrative or historico-narrative aspects,<sup>57</sup> featuring a prosopography entirely linked to the Julio-Claudian family and the senatorial aristocracy connected to it in the very first decades of the empire, with the exception, perhaps, of the possible mention of the Gallic War.

The marked prevalence of historical and political themes and, on the other hand, the rarity if not absence of relevant philosophical expressions favor Seneca the Elder as the author of the work. The choice of his historical work rather than a lost part of his rhetorical one derives, in turn, in first place from the chronology based on prosopographical information, which, though spread across fragments that are often far apart from one another, is attested for the entire length of the roll and unequivocally points to a limited period of time. This impression, corroborated by other textual aspects, has received substantial confirmation from the interpretation, advanced in the *editio princeps*,<sup>58</sup> of the feeble and fragmentary traces of ink preserved in the second line of the *subscriptio* that originally contained the title of the work.

Despite the problems associated with determining the exact titles of ancient works, the few traces of ink surviving in l. 2 are not at all compatible with the title of Seneca's rhetorical work that we know: *Oratorum et rhetorum sententiae divisiones colores*.<sup>59</sup> On the contrary, the same traces are surprisingly compatible with the title which a number of critics have assigned to the historical work of Seneca the Elder, based on his son's evidence: *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*.<sup>60</sup>

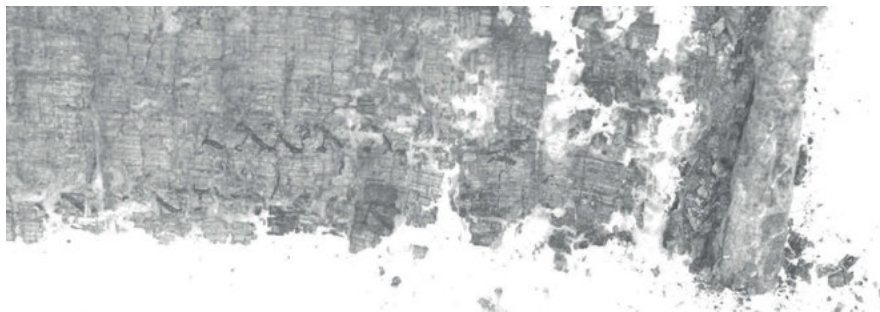
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<sup>57</sup> Cr. 6 pz. II sov. 1 + sov. 2; cr. 2 pz. I sov. 3; cr. 3 pz. I sov. 1; sov. 7 (?); sov. 8; cr. 4 pz. I strato 1; cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1; cr. 5 pz. II sov. 1; sov. 2; sov. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Piano (2017a) 242–244.

<sup>59</sup> Piano (2017a) 246 n. 147.

<sup>60</sup> Appendix · T1; on this fragment, see *FRHist comm. ad loc.*, Winterbottom (2013); on the possibility of understanding the phrase *historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* as the title of the work, cf. Canfora (2015) 138–213.



**Fig. 5:** *P.Herc.* 1067, cr. 9 pz. III: the extant two lines of the *subscriptio*. © Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli – Brigham Young University, Provo, USA

Though thin and in an almost desperate state of preservation, the best-preserved graphic signs of the second line are highly suggestive in this connection: the traces of the first letter are compatible with an *A* (and less probably with an *R*), followed by indistinct traces for a space of two letters. The following traces are among the best-preserved of the line and almost certainly belong to an *N* (less probably a *U*), followed by two narrow letters, which can easily be restored as a *I* and a *T*. After a gap sufficient for a single narrow letter, the lower part of a wide and round letter can be made out, resting on the notional baseline, which could be an *O*, after which only indistinct traces remain. At a short distance from the possible *O*, an *R* is clearly visible and, immediately after it, the beginning of a *U*: these two letters are however placed on a *sovrapposto* and must be virtually transposed to the gap visible in the subsequent circumference of the roll. The digital reconstruction demonstrates that, once the *sovrapposto* has been moved, the *U*, the body of which falls almost entirely in the gap, is very close to traces of triangular shape visible in the upper part of the line, which would suit the *M* required by the preceding letters, allowing us to restore the string *–RUM* near the end of the line. These traces and the gaps which are created by the virtual transposition of the *sovrapposto* are perfectly compatible with *Ab [·] inītiō [· bello]rum*.

After the possible *M*, the papyrus is too damaged for us to make out whether there are other traces of ink. Some material aspects of the roll and the *mise en page* of the *subscriptio* encourage the supposition that there was still space for a short word: to be specific, inserting the word *civilium* would perfectly center the



first line over the second, in accordance with a practice attested for the ‘titles’ of ancient books.<sup>61</sup>



**Fig. 6:** *P.Herc.* 1067, cr. 9 pz. III: supplemented *subscriptio*. The extant letters (or traces of letters) are grey, as well as the two *sovrapposti* that have been moved to their original positions; letters that have been entirely supplemented are red. © Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli – Brigham Young University, Provo, USA

If my hypothesis is accepted as plausible, one could hypothesize the presence, in the third line that has certainly been lost, of a postponed noun on which the expression *Ab initio bellorum civilium* could be made to depend, or, as Dorandi suggests, of the number of the book of the work.<sup>62</sup>

It is in this way that the *diseiecta membra* and the vestiges of faded letters of an old carbonized book have begun to speak again after almost two thousand years of silence, telling a different ‘history’ from the one initially assumed. This (hi)story could continue to bring surprises through new combinations of burnt pieces that have yet to be joined together and interpreted in a plausible way.

<sup>61</sup> For further observations on the *mise en page* of the title of *P.Herc.* 1067, see Piano (2018) 102–106; on the ancient ‘titles’ in Greek Herculaneum papyri see Del Mastro (2014).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Dorandi in this volume, *infra* 66–67.

Tiziano Dorandi

# Un libro dell' *Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio e il fondo latino della biblioteca della Villa dei Papiri a Ercolano

**Abstract:** The recent discovery of remains of a book of the *Ab initio bellorum civilium* of Seneca the Elder in the *PHerc. 1067* is important not only because it proves that this work was preserved in the library of the *Villa des Papyri* at Herculaneum, but also for its contribution to the dating of other Latin papyri of same library. Taking into account that the work of Seneca the Elder was published by his son Seneca the Young only after the death of his father (c. 39 CE), it is obvious that the *P.Herc. 1067* was copied after this date or possibly a few years ago.

In my article, after giving an overview of the studies on the latin scrolls of the Library of Herculaneum and the research on their contribution to the palaeography of the Latin papyri, I develop some additional hypotheses that take into account the new data of *P.Herc. 1067*.

I then try to understand why the owners of the Herculaneum *Villa* in the first century CE (probably still the Pisones family) would have had interest in owning a copy of Seneca the Elder's work in their library.

## 1 Premessa

Negli ultimi decenni, i papiri latini della Biblioteca di Ercolano hanno suscitato un sempre più largo interesse che ha portato a risultati spesso innovanti e convincenti.

È stato provato che nella Villa di Ercolano non esistettero due biblioteche distinte, una greca, che corrisponderebbe *grosso modo* alla raccolta di libri riunita dal filosofo epicureo del I a.C. Filodemo di Gadara, e una latina sulla cui estensione e sui cui contenuti molto si è speculato. I reperti latini sono poi stati studiati nella loro globalità senza soffermarsi esclusivamente sui rotoli meglio conservati, e quindi meglio leggibili e decifrabili, trascurando gli altri in troppo cattivo stato. I progressi nelle indagini sulle tipologie grafiche latine di epoca tardorepubblicana e dei primi secoli dell'Impero, tra il I a.C. e il II d.C., hanno inoltre consentito di meglio inquadrare e classificare le scritture di quei *volumina* attraverso analisi dettagliate e primi abbozzi promettenti di sintesi. Infine, è stato possibile sfatare

in maniera definitiva ipotesi attribuzionistiche attrattive, ma false, e proporre nuove confortate da dati reali affidabili quali la presenza di *subscriptions*.

La scoperta più importante è senza dubbio quella legata all'*editio princeps* del *P.Herc.* 1067 curata da Valeria Piano. La lettura e l'integrazione della *subscriptio* e lo studio accurato delle pur magre reliquie di quel rotolo hanno confermato l'intuizione di Robert Marichal che esso tramandava un libro di un Lucio Anneo e provato che quel libro apparteneva all'opera perduta di Seneca il vecchio (c. 54 a.C. – c. 39 d.C.), padre dell'uomo politico e filosofo omonimo, intitolata *Ab initio bellorum civilium*.

## 2 Un'unica biblioteca greca e latina a Ercolano

L'acquisizione che nella Villa dei papiri a Ercolano vi fosse una sola biblioteca che riuniva libri greci e libri latini è recente, che riviene a Radiciotti.<sup>1</sup> Essa si fonda sull'analisi dell'insieme dei *volumina* greci e latini ercolanesi, sui dati archeologici relativi al loro ritrovamento e sull'esame storico delle fonti di cui disponiamo a proposito delle biblioteche nel mondo romano tra la fine della Repubblica e i primi tempi del principato.<sup>2</sup>

Questa realtà di fatto è del tutto normale per una biblioteca costituita in ambiente romano nella metà del I a.C. L'idea della "doppia biblioteca" nasce all'inizio dell'età imperiale nel contesto delle biblioteche pubbliche di Stato, in seno ad una scelta politica di promozione del latino, come lingua di cultura intellettuale superiore, del tutto raffrontabile al greco: il che caratterizzerà il resto dell'età romana.

In precedenza, aveva predominato l'ipotesi che nella Villa erano presenti due biblioteche: una greca e una latina e che queste due raccolte non solo erano distinte fra loro in considerazione della lingua delle opere in essi conservate, ma anche sistemate in zone differenti dell'edificio.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Radiciotti (2009) i cui risultati sono ripresi e integrati da Capasso (2013a).

<sup>2</sup> Radiciotti (2009) 113–114, da cui la citazione. Si veda anche Ammirati (2010) 33; (2015) 25.

<sup>3</sup> Cito, a titolo di esempio, Cavallo (1984) 23–26 (= 2005, 145–146). Ma si veda ora l'onesta *retractatio* in Cavallo (2015) 577 n. 9, dove viene anche fatto opportunamente notare che "pur in assenza di una bipartizione tra biblioteca greca e biblioteca latina nel senso di una loro collocazione in aule distinte – tutto lascia credere a una sistemazione di libri greci e libri latini almeno in *capsae* o scaffali distinti, anche se in un medesimo ambiente".

### 3 Illusioni perdute e nuove realtà

Knut Kleve aveva insistito a lungo, dalla fine degli anni Ottanta del secolo scorso, sulla possibilità di recuperare resti di una edizione antica del *De rerum natura* di Lucrezio fra i rotoli latini di Ercolano. In un primo momento, lo studioso individuò tracce dei libri I, III, IV e V (per un totale di 38 versi assai malconci) in alcune scorze della cassetta CXIV dell'*Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi* di Napoli.<sup>4</sup>

Kleve attribuì quei frammenti a rotoli differenti, che furono poi inventariati come *P.Herc.* 1829, 1830, 1831 e s.n. I, II, III.<sup>5</sup> In un secondo momento, il medesimo studioso credette scorgere ulteriori resti del II libro del *De rerum natura* nel *P.Herc.* 395,<sup>6</sup> un rotolo che presenta con i precedenti “una forte affinità grafica”<sup>7</sup> e che Capasso aveva già richiamato all’attenzione per provare proprio il contrario, ossia che la precedente attribuzione a Lucrezio dei restanti papiri era impossibile.<sup>8</sup>

Kleve ha in seguito tentato a più riprese di difendere le proprie identificazioni,<sup>9</sup> ma le critiche stringenti di Capasso, coadiuvato per gli aspetti paleografici da Radiciotti, hanno avuto definitivamente ragione della postulata presenza del *De rerum natura* di Lucrezio nella Biblioteca di Ercolano.<sup>10</sup> L’ipotesi deve pertanto essere abbandonata, così come devono essere dismesse anche le ulteriori attribuzioni, suggerite dallo stesso Kleve, di altri due rotoli ercolanesi rispettivamente a Ennio e a Cecilio Stazio: il *P.Herc.* 21 avrebbe tramandato un libro degli *Annales* di Ennio<sup>11</sup> e il *P.Herc.* 78 la commedia *Obolostates sive Faenerator* di Cecilio Stazio.<sup>12</sup>

Capasso e Radiciotti hanno insistito soprattutto su Lucrezio; le loro obiezioni e i loro argomenti valgono comunque, *mutatis mutandis*, anche per Ennio e per Cecilio Stazio.<sup>13</sup>

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4 Kleve (1989).

5 Capasso (1989) 264–265.

6 Kleve (2007).

7 Radiciotti (2000) 367.

8 Capasso (2003).

9 Kleve (2009).

10 È sufficiente rimandare alla dettagliata rassegna redatta da Capasso (2011) 64–86.

11 Kleve (1990).

12 Kleve (1996).

13 Radiciotti (2009) 105. Si veda anche la recisa presa di posizione di Cavallo (2015) 594–595 n. 52, che parla per tutti e tre i casi di identificazioni “destituite di qualsiasi fondamento” (594).

Se dobbiamo rinunciare a Lucrezio, Ennio e Cecilio Stazio, sicura è invece la presenza a Ercolano di almeno altri tre rotoli che tramandano libri latini non altrimenti giunti fino a noi attraverso i canali della tradizione tardoantica e medievale: un poemetto sulla battaglia di Azio di datazione e paternità dibattute (*P.Herc.* 817), forse un'orazione giudiziaria di età augustea (*P.Herc.* 1475) e infine un libro dell'*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio (*P.Herc.* 1067). A questi, si può aggiungere il testo trasmesso dal *P.Herc.* 863 di cui si conservano tracce di difficile interpretazione della *subscriptio* e quello del *P.Herc.* 395 qualora si accetti l'ipotesi (in realtà, ben difficile da dimostrare) di Beate Beer che vi fosse copiata la tragedia *Tieste* di Lucio Vario Rufo.<sup>14</sup> In un solo caso, grazie alla decifrazione e alla ricostruzione della *subscriptio*, siamo in grado di recuperare con certezza il nome dell'autore e di restaurare il titolo dell'opera: *P.Herc.* 1067, Seneca il vecchio, *Ab initio bellorum civilium*.

## 4 La biblioteca latina e i suoi contenuti

Nell'ultimo inventario redatto da Del Mastro sono repertoriati 120 frammenti di papiri latini.<sup>15</sup> Lo studioso è cosciente che un calcolo preciso di quanti fossero all'origine i rotoli dai quali derivano quei resti è impossibile, ma attraverso una analisi delle diverse tipologie dei *volumina* (caratteristiche paleografiche, forma dei frammenti, colore e consistenza dei materiali) egli arriva a dedurre “in via ipotetica” che “allo stato attuale i 120 frammenti latini identificati provengono da circa sessanta rotoli originari”.<sup>16</sup>

Se escludiamo il *Carmen de bello Actiaco*, non è possibile ricavare dai restanti *volumina* che poche parole e frasi prive di contesto che si rivelano per lo più insufficienti per avanzare proposte di identificazione di autori e di contenuti. Il *P.Herc.* 1067 costituisce l'eccezione, non la regola. Eppure, anche in tempi recenti, la tentazione di scoprire nuovi testi della letteratura latina è stata grande.

Capasso ha discusso in un'ampia rassegna tutte le proposte avanzate relative al contenuto, ai generi letterari e ai probabili o possibili autori del fondo latino

<sup>14</sup> Beer (2009). Si veda Capasso (2011) 84–85, con un *caveat* sull'attribuzione del *P.Herc.* 395 a Lucio Vario Rufo e già Ammirati (2010) 30 n. 6. Ulteriori considerazioni sul *P.Herc.* 395 in Capasso (2013b) 48–55.

<sup>15</sup> Del Mastro (2005), da cui la citazione che segue (189).

<sup>16</sup> Secondo Capasso (2013a) 38 il numero dei rotoli sarebbe un po' più alto e si eleverebbe a circa ottanta.

ercolanese.<sup>17</sup> Queste pagine, fatta eccezione per il paragrafo dedicato al *P.Herc.* 1067, che deve essere ripreso oggi alla luce dell'identificazione del suo autore con Seneca il vecchio e del contenuto con un libro della sua opera perduta *Ab initio bellorum civilium*, sono sufficienti per avere un sguardo d'insieme informato su quei materiali.

#### 4.1 Il *Carmen de bello Actiaco* (*P.Herc.* 817)

Il rotolo più studiato, in ragione anche del suo discreto stato di conservazione, è il *PHerc.* 817. Di esso si conservano le ultime otto colonne per un totale di 63 esametri e ventisei frammenti con emistichi di lunghezza variabile di circa altri 150 versi.<sup>18</sup> Nelle colonne superstiti, è descritta la presa di Pelusio, la situazione in Egitto all'annuncio della sconfitta navale di Azio e la conquista di Alessandria da parte delle truppe di Ottaviano. Le cause della guerra e lo svolgimento della battaglia di Azio erano narrate probabilmente nella parte iniziale del rotolo. È verosimile inoltre che il poema contasse un altro libro nel quale erano presentati la morte di Cleopatra e il successivo trionfo di Ottaviano. Di questo secondo *volumen* mancano, per il momento, tracce sicure.<sup>19</sup>

Quattro problemi principali, legati fra loro, hanno animato il dibattito relativo al poema: chi ne è l'autore; quale ne è la cronologia; quale la posizione del poeta rispetto ai fatti narrati e dei protagonisti dell'evento: Ottaviano, da un lato, Antonio e Cleopatra, dall'altro; le caratteristiche paleografiche del *volumen*.

Per lungo tempo ha dominato l'ipotesi che l'autore del *Carmen* fosse il poeta di epoca augustea Gaio Rabirio.<sup>20</sup> In tempi recenti, Gigante ha cercato di confortarne l'attribuzione piuttosto a Lucio Vario Rufo, scrittore di elegie, epica e tragedie e assiduo del circolo di intellettuali che si riunivano intorno a Mecenate e che contava Virgilio, Plozio Tucca, Quintilio Varo e Orazio.<sup>21</sup> Gigante dà particolare

<sup>17</sup> Capasso (2011), con qualche complemento in Capasso (2013b).

<sup>18</sup> Capasso (2011) 45–60. L'ipotesi che il *PHerc.* 817 sia un falso moderno, sostenuta da Brunnhözl (1998), è stata smantellata con successo da Radiciotti (2000). Si veda anche Capasso/Radiciotti (1999).

<sup>19</sup> Janko (2008) 59–62 ha suggerito che resti di un rotolo scritto dalla medesima mano del *P.Herc.* 817 e quindi probabilmente appartenenti al *Carmen de bello Actiaco* siano da individuare nei *P.Herc.* 397 e 399, dei quali si conservano oggi solo di Apografi Oxoniensi. Si tratta di una ipotesi problematica i cui punti deboli sono segnalati e discussi da Capasso (2011) 58–60; (2013a) 45–48.

<sup>20</sup> Per questa ipotesi e altre più aleatorie, si veda il regesto di Capasso (2011) 46–48.

<sup>21</sup> Gigante (1991) 99–117 (= 1998, 57–98).

importanza al fatto che il nome di Vario Rufo è citato al vocativo insieme con quello di Plozio, Quintilio e Virgilio, da Filodemo a più riprese in alcuni libri del suo trattato *Sui vizi e le opposte virtù*. Il che sarebbe una prova a favore dell'ipotesi che il filosofo epicureo avrebbe conosciuto e frequentato quei poeti e che vi potrebbe essere un qualche legame fra il *Carmen de bello Actiaco* e la Biblioteca greca della Villa di Ercolano. Anche la paternità di Vario Rufo non è tuttavia esente da dubbi e bene ha fatto Capasso a mantenersi su una posizione aporetica:<sup>22</sup>

[L]e poème fut vraisemblablement composé vers les dernières années du Ier siècle avant notre ère par un poète qui entendait exalter la figure et l'œuvre d'Auguste. ... En dernière analyse, nous pouvons considérer le poème comme un témoignage sur l'impact que la phase de l'histoire romaine liée à la figure de Cléopâtre a eu sur la culture et la psychologie des contemporains.

Ritornero sulla presenza del *Carmen* nella biblioteca di Ercolano e sulla datazione del *P.Herc.* 817 dopo avere considerato i nuovi elementi che possiamo ricavare dall'edizione dei frammenti del libro di Seneca il vecchio individuato nel *P.Herc.* 1067.

## 4.2 Il testo oratorio del *P.Herc.* 1475

L'altro *volumen* che conserva porzioni di testo alquanto leggibili e sufficienti per trarne qualche elemento utile per l'identificazione del suo contenuto è il *P.Herc.* 1475.

Costabile<sup>23</sup> ha consolidato la suggestione di Crönert<sup>24</sup> che il *P.Herc.* 1475 tramanda esigui frammenti di un'opera di natura oratoria caratterizzata dalla presenza di una terminologia giuridica “cui appartengono per esempio le parole *cuiusdam ordinis* o le voci *manumissio* e *civitas*, nel medesimo contesto, i verbi *refero* (coniug. al particolare *referens*) e *accerso* (nella scrittura libraria in luogo di *arcesso*), di uso tecnico nel significato di chiamare in giudizio e accusare”. Costabile dà importanza anche alla formula introduttiva *ne quid* con cui si apre la prima di due colonne successive in cr. 5 e 6 (fr. 5 e 6).<sup>25</sup> Tale formula è infatti “propria di quegli ordini, con cui il pretore disponeva l'astensione da determinati atti,

<sup>22</sup> Capasso (2011) 54, da cui la citazione.

<sup>23</sup> Costabile (1984), da cui le citazioni che seguono (595–597).

<sup>24</sup> Crönert (1900) 591 (= 1975, 37).

<sup>25</sup> Il testo delle poche parole leggibili in Costabile (1984) 605, con a fronte (604), una fotografia del pezzo.

che sono gli *interdicta prohibitoria*". Più rilevante gli appare comunque l'identificazione di una *lex venditionis*, "un patto di compravendita la cui formulazione tipica e la cui struttura funzionale" conosciamo grazie a due passi di Ulpiano e di Papiniano conservati nel *Digesto*. In *P.Herc.* 1475 cr. 6, Costabile crede che si possa ricostruire il caso che "in una compravendita, evidentemente fondiaria, possa esistere un *quid sacri*, come per esempio un'ara o un sacello" (egli legge in cr. 6, 2 *sacri [s]i quid erit* e in 6, 3 *h]abeant* o *abeant*). Nel papiro, la *lex venditionis* segue la colonna dove è la formula proibitoria *ne quid* (cr. 5, 1 *ne quid*) e precede una proposizione introdotta da un *quid* o *quid* nella quale "la voce mutila *sti[pu]l* potrebbe far pensare ad una *stipulatio* accessoria alla compravendita" in cr. 6, 3 *quid* (preceduto da un *interpunctum*) e 4 *sti[...]*.

Tutti questi suggerimenti sono fondati su scarse tracce di lettere e dovranno essere riscontrati e confermati grazie a una rinnovata lettura dell'originale con l'aiuto delle fotografie multispettrali e dei microscopi di nuova generazione.

Definitivamente da abbandonare è invece, fino da ora, l'ipotesi che si conservi la *subscriptio* del papiro e l'autore del discorso sia Lucio Manlio Torquato.<sup>26</sup> Non solo la *subscriptio* che Costabile attribuisce al *P.Herc.* 1475, e che ricostruisce *L(uci) M(a)nli Torqua]t[i]*,<sup>27</sup> è in realtà quella del *P.Herc.* 1067, ma essa va restaurata in tutt'altra maniera.<sup>28</sup>

Se il tipo di scrittura del *P.Herc.* 1475, una capitale libraria assai formale, orienta verso un'opera letteraria, in assenza della *subscriptio* e di fronte alla estrema scarsità delle tracce leggibili è impossibile pronunciarsi con sicurezza sul genere del testo e soprattutto sul suo eventuale autore.

### 4.3 Il *P.Herc.* 863

Resti di un libro (l'ottavo?) di un'opera letteraria che avrebbe raggiunto dunque una estensione considerevole sembra siano conservati nell'assai malconcio *P.Herc.* 863. Del Mastro<sup>29</sup> ha provato che quel rotolo è scritto in latino e ha individuato nella seconda cornice a destra di quella che possiamo considerare l'ultima

<sup>26</sup> Del Mastro (2005) 191–192.

<sup>27</sup> Costabile (1984) 597–599 (il testo a 597).

<sup>28</sup> Piano (2017a) 241–250; si confronti *infra* § 7.1 Tutto questo capitolo deve oggi essere rimeditato e riscritto alla luce dei risultati di Essler (2019).

<sup>29</sup> Del Mastro (2005) 191. Più di recente, Del Mastro (2014) 137 n. 4 ha richiamato a confronto la scrittura greca del *PHerc.* 362 (*Epic. nat.* 21), datata tra il I a. C. e il I d.C. e ha ritenuto non "improbabile che la mano del papiro greco e del papiro latino sia la stessa". Il confronto fra i due rotoli è registrato anche da Ammirati (2015) 24 n. 13.



colonna del *volumen* tracce di due righe della *scriptio*, che Radiciotti ha proposto di restaurare (a séguito della lettura autoptica dell'originale) – – – *explici*/t | – – – *liber*] *oct(avus)*.<sup>30</sup>

La ricostruzione delle linee può lasciare adito a dubbi vuoi per la presenza della forma verbale *explicit* in quel contesto e a questa epoca vuoi per la lettura *oct(avus)*. Del Mastro, che aveva letto solo *T* e *O*, indica le due lettere come le prime di due righe consecutivi della *scriptio* e suggerisce, seppure con dubbi, che possano essere interpretate come residui del nome dell'autore e del titolo dell'opera.<sup>31</sup>

Evito, a causa della esiguità dei dati disponibili, di insistere su ulteriori proposte di identificazioni di contenuti e di autori di altri rotoli della *pars Latina* della biblioteca.<sup>32</sup> Né su quelle suggerite seppure con la necessaria cautela da Bassi nel suo studio pioneristico sui rotoli latini di Ercolano<sup>33</sup> né su quelle più recenti di Janko,<sup>34</sup> sviluppando anche alcune suggestioni di Lindsay.<sup>35</sup>

## 5 La paleografia al servizio dei contenuti della biblioteca latina di Ercolano

Radiciotti ha fortemente insistito sulla mancanza a Roma, per un lungo periodo di tempo e almeno fino all'ellenizzazione del primo secolo a.C., di una netta separazione tra “il mondo del libro, colla sua scrittura, e quello del documento o della scritturazione della vita quotidiana” e sulla “incapacità dei Romani di definire una tipologia libraria esclusiva da riconoscere nella forma del libro–*volumen* della tradizione greca”:<sup>36</sup>

Questa realtà è anche, a ben vedere, una possibile spiegazione sia della varietà delle scritture dei papiri latini ercolanesi, sia dell'esiguità numerica (almeno per lo stato attuale delle nostre conoscenze) dei papiri librari latini a confronto con quelli greci di Ercolano. Da un

<sup>30</sup> Radiciotti (2009) 114.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Ammirati (2010) 32 e Capasso (2011) 83 n. 222.

<sup>32</sup> Capasso (2011) 60 e Capasso (2013a) 38. Si veda già Ammirati (2010) 32–33.

<sup>33</sup> Bassi (1926). Cf. Radiciotti (2009) 105–106 n. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Janko (2008) 35–40, 47–48, 62–64, 69, 90, 92, 93, 95. Si tenga inoltre anche conto dei due papiri che lo studioso attribuisce al *Carmen de bello Actiaco*.

<sup>35</sup> Lindsay (1890).

<sup>36</sup> Radiciotti (2000) 371–373, da cui la citazione (373). Lo studioso si richiama a Cavallo (1989) 701–704, 708, 720–722.

lato infatti non è ancora avvenuta, nella cultura del libro latino, una definitiva scelta a favore della scrittura capitale più rigidamente canonica (come ad esempio quella del *P. Herc.* 1475) e questo spiega la presenza di capitale più ‘sciolta’ nell’esecuzione, quale appunto quella del *P. Herc.* 817, d’altro canto nei fatti il patrimonio di libri della cultura latina è ancora esiguo ed è costituito probabilmente a Ercolano da opere latine che non avevano la possibilità di giungere fino a noi, attraverso copie tardoantiche o medievali, perché conservate appunto in una biblioteca ‘chiusa’ e non in una biblioteca ‘pubblica’.

Tali osservazioni sono il presupposto delle importanti considerazioni che lo studioso ha avanzato sulla paleografia dei papiri latini di Ercolano<sup>37</sup> riprendendo e approfondendo con significativi apporti personali i risultati della ricerca dalla “impostazione analitica” sul canone della capitale romana della Petronio Nicolaj,<sup>38</sup> riproposta anche da Cavallo.<sup>39</sup>

Radiciotti classifica le scritture dei rotoli latini di Ercolano in due gruppi principali. Al primo gruppo appartengono le scritture “formali”, cioè gli esempi in capitale libraria, al secondo gruppo le scritture “non formali”, cioè quelle di papiri vergati in semicorsiva. All’interno dei due gruppi, vanno a loro volta individuati sottogruppi ben distinti e definiti.<sup>40</sup>

La capitale libraria delle “scritture formali”, testimoniata dai *P.Herc.* 359, 371, 817, 1059, 1067, 1070, 1472, 1475, 1484, 1535 e 1558),<sup>41</sup> è caratterizzata da “scelte formali rigorose, che selezionano un solo disegno per ciascuna delle lettere da eseguire”. Essa mostra inoltre palmari affinità con la scrittura paretaria a pennello, con una sistematica osservanza del “principio dell’effetto chiaroscurale obliquo” realizzato dunque con un calamo con taglio della punta ‘alla romana’ che consentiva facilmente l’alternanza di tratti pieni e tratti sottili.<sup>42</sup>

Al suo interno spicca il sottogruppo costituito dai *P.Herc.* 817 e *P.Herc.* 1067 la cui scrittura mostra peculiarità sue proprie “per giustificare le quali si è parlato di ‘grecismo’ grafico, costituito da alternanza di modulo tra lettere larghe e lettere strette, nonché da una generale tendenza a preferire il chiaroscuro verticale o

<sup>37</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 355–366.

<sup>38</sup> Petronio Nicolaj (1973).

<sup>39</sup> Cavallo (1984) 28 (= 2005, 147–148).

<sup>40</sup> Anche Ammirati (2010) 31–32 individua nel fondo latino di Ercolano due “raggruppamenti secondo tipologie scrittorie”: uno che si esprime in *volumina* in una “scrittura corsiva” e l’altro in una “scrittura posata”. Cf. Ammirati (2015) 24–25.

<sup>41</sup> Radiciotti (1998) tavv. IA–VA e le forme delle lettere tracciate nella fig. I a 358. Altri frammenti, appartenenti a entrambi i gruppi, oltre a quelli elencati da Radiciotti sono stati individuati da Del Mastro (2005) e, laddove possibile, classificati secondo criteri paleografici, rifacendosi comunque ancora alla inaffidabile classificazione delle scritture latine di Kleve (1994).

<sup>42</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 357. La problematica del chiaroscuro è ora riesaminata con risultati innovanti da Cavallo/Fioretto (2014).

quasi” e che si distingue per l’apparenza di una “maggiore scioltezza di esecuzione rispetto al modello della capitale libraria”.<sup>43</sup>

Le scritture “non formali”, quelle cioè che presentano varianti di lettere all’interno di un medesimo *usus scribendi*, sono assai frequenti e sono attestate nei *P.Herc.* 21, 76, 78, 90, 153, 215, 217, 219, 342, 394, 395, 396, 412, 502, 1057, 1208, 1257, 1491, 1624, 1763 (e *P.Herc.* 1806).<sup>44</sup> In questo gruppo abbondano le oscillazioni nella forma delle lettere che talora sono di tipo fortemente corsivo. Anche in questo nucleo sono individuati due sottogruppi “che costituiscono i livelli rispettivamente più basso e più alto della corsività”. Il che porta a distinguere fra testimoni di una “libreria corsiveggiante” (*P.Herc.* 1057 e 1257) e altri di “una vera e propria corsiva antica, talora inclinata a destra, forse adattata all’uso librario” (*P.Herc.* 215, 217 e 394).<sup>45</sup>

Se è plausibile (ma non *condicio sine qua non*) che tutti i rotoli in capitale libraria “formale”, come i *P.Herc.* 871, 1067 e 1475, conservino testi letterari che riflettevano i gusti “prevalenti nell’aristocrazia romana tardorepubblicana/protoimperiale, cui appartennero i proprietari della Villa dei papiri”, più difficile è pronunciarsi sul contenuto dei volumi in scritture “non formali”. Radiciotti non esclude che, messo da parte il *P.Herc.* 1806 estraneo al contesto della Villa, altri rotoli con scritture fortemente corsive siano da ascrivere “ad ambito non letterario” e in particolare presuppone che “l’uso della scrittura potrebbe esser stato destinato, nel periodo immediatamente precedente all’eruzione, soprattutto a quel tipo di redazione di testi a scopo documentario ed archivistico o come scritturazione di attività quotidiane”.<sup>46</sup> Ciò non ostante, è altresì probabile che alcuni rotoli copiati in scritture “non formali” e caratterizzate da un *ductus* che “non è fortemente corsivo e si avvicina semmai alla fisionomia di quella “scrittura di se-

<sup>43</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 357. Si veda anche la forma delle lettere tracciate nella fig. II a 359.

<sup>44</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 358–360. Una scelta di papiri è riprodotta nelle tav. VB–IXB. Si veda anche la forma delle lettere tracciate nella fig. III a pagina 360. A questi testimoni si possono aggiungere i *P.Herc.* 395, 1829, 1830 e 1831.

<sup>45</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 359.

<sup>46</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 361–363 (da cui le citazioni). Egli sottende alla sua interpretazione l’ipotesi (oggi abbandonata, *infra* 71) che la Villa dei Papiri venne trasformata nei primi decenni dell’impero in villa ‘rustica’ e ne trae la conseguente deduzione che in quel periodo la maggior parte dei *volumina* “sarebbe stata semplicemente destinata a costituire una biblioteca di ‘conservazione’ e non ‘di uso’, con conseguente produzione di nuovi testi” (362–363).

conda qualità” di cui parla l'*Edictum de pretiis rerum venalium*,<sup>47</sup> possano anch'essi tramandare copie di testi letterari.<sup>48</sup>

Le conseguenze che derivano da queste conclusioni sono di primaria importanza e sono da tenere in piena considerazione.<sup>49</sup>

[A]lcune scritturazioni di vita quotidiana tipiche dell'ambiente alfabetizzato, come le lettere personali, possono presentare sia una scrittura capitale degna di un libro, sia esempi di corsiva antica vera e propria. Non è dunque possibile sulla base solo dell'esame della scrittura essere del tutto certi dell'attribuzione di un testo all'ambito librario o non librario, salvo che gli elementi di spiccata calligraficità (per l'ambito librario) o di forte corsività (nell'ambito non librario) non denuncino con chiarezza il tipo di testo tràdito.

Il che vale sia per opere letterarie sia per reperti che si collocano nel “mondo del documento e cioè [nel]la produzione di testi scritti con valore giuridico”.

Alla luce di queste ricerche, si dovrà abbandonare definitivamente il tentativo di classificazione delle scritture latine ercolanesi proposto da Kleve,<sup>50</sup> fondato su una ricostruzione dell'evoluzione della tradizione grafica maiuscola a Roma.

Secondo Kleve, la scrittura latina romana avrebbe conosciuto una prima fase corsiva (*latin cursive*, che egli definisce *early Roman*), dalla quale si sarebbe passati, attraverso uno stadio intermedio (*pre classical capital*), alla capitale classica (*classical capital*).

In realtà, la tradizione grafica latina maiuscola si esprime:

[I]n una scrittura calligrafica (capitale), dotata di diverse caratteristiche per le epigrafi e per i libri, ma anche in una forma corsiva (corsiva antica) diffusa nell'ambito dei documenti e delle scritturazioni della vita quotidiana: ma certamente il sistema alfabetico latino aveva conosciuto prima una *facies* posata e poi, mano a mano che si era diffuso ed era entrato profondamente nell'uso quotidiano, aveva sviluppato una tradizione corsiva.<sup>51</sup>

**47** Radiciotti (1998) 363–364. Il riferimento al passo dell'*Edictum* a 364 n. 34.

**48** Radiciotti (1998) 363–364 n. 33 richiama l'attenzione sul *P.Herc.* 412 nel quale Bassi (1926) 209 aveva (seppure con cautela) scorto punti di confronto con il poema di Lucrezio, senza trarne inferenze sulla sua presenza nella biblioteca di Ercolano.

**49** Radiciotti (2000) 362–364 (da cui le citazioni), 370.

**50** Kleve (1994).

**51** Radiciotti (2008). Citazione da 55–56. Le critiche di Radiciotti sono ribadite da Ammirati (2010) 30–31 e Ammirati (2015) 24–25, che nega ogni tentativo di applicare criteri cronologico-evolutivi alle varietà grafiche testimoniate dai papiri ercolanesi. Cf. Fioretti (2014) 41 n. 46.

## 6 Per una cronologia del fondo librario latino a Ercolano

Radiciotti ha rinnovato anche lo studio della cronologia relativa della formazione della biblioteca latina ercolanese attraverso l'analisi comparata delle scritture dei papiri e dei testi in essi trascritti. Il quadro che ne risulta "è univoco" – scrive Radiciotti – "le indicazioni del nome di Augusto in alcuni papiri e, d'altro canto, l'esame analitico delle scritture latine attestate forniscono la stessa indicazione cronologica: i papiri latini risalgono al periodo fra la tarda repubblica e l'età augustea".<sup>52</sup> La nascita del fondo più antico di quella biblioteca è pertanto "coeva al periodo della attività ercolanese di Filodemo". E anche se è "pur vero che i testi in questione potrebbero esser copie di antigrifi del primo secolo avanti Cristo ... il fatto che la villa non fosse più un centro culturale attivo negli anni precedenti l'eruzione si somma ad altri indizi, per farci ritenere che i *volumina* latini di Ercolano di più alta qualità formale devono risalire piuttosto al tardo primo secolo avanti Cristo".<sup>53</sup>

Questa cronologia è più precisa di quella comunemente fornita dagli studi di ampio respiro sulla paleografia dei papiri latini, che insistono piuttosto su un arco temporale che ha il limite estremo nel 79 d.C.;<sup>54</sup> essa ha in più anche il vantaggio di escludere fuorvianti confronti dei rotoli di Ercolano "con materiali papiracei latini rinvenuti in Oriente e risalenti ad età flavia".<sup>55</sup>

Nella sua indagine, Radiciotti ha dato grande importanza specialmente a due indizi. In primo luogo, egli ha insistito sulle affinità grafiche fra i rotoli di Ercolano e i più antichi *volumina* letterari latini recuperati in Oriente, che datano tra il I a.C. e il II-III d.C. Il confronto si rivelerebbe efficace in quanto "tutta la più antica produzione latina in Oriente deve essere concepita come strettamente affine a quella occidentale, perché frutto del puro 'trapianto' della scrittura latina al seguito dell'occupazione militare romana dell'Egitto e dei regni ellenistici orientali". In secondo luogo, egli ha richiamato l'attenzione sulla presenza in Roma e in Campania, tra la repubblica e il principato, di grammatici e retori bi-

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<sup>52</sup> Radiciotti (2009) 107 (da cui la citazione che segue) e già, con maggiori dettagli, Radiciotti (1998) 365–370. Per le indicazioni del nome di Augusto, Radiciotti (2009) 107 n. 2 rinvia a *P.Herc.* 1067 fr. 10 l. 3 nell'edizione di Costabile (1984). Questo elemento deve ora essere valutato altrimenti dopo l'attribuzione del rotolo a Seneca il vecchio.

<sup>53</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 365.

<sup>54</sup> Con un rimando a Seider (1978) 34–36 (nn° 2, 4 e tavv. II–III).

<sup>55</sup> Radiciotti (2009) 107.

lingui che formarono “un ambiente culturale bilingue, intessuto di curiosità filosofiche epicuree, di interessi poetici e storici, di conservazione di libri” comparabile a quello che ritroviamo nella Villa di Ercolano.<sup>56</sup>

Il fatto che nei reperti orientali sia attestata una più larga categoria di scritte di “seconda qualità” rispetto a quelle della biblioteca di Ercolano dipende probabilmente dalle differenti situazioni storico-sociali e culturali legate alla produzione di quei materiali in due mondi e ambienti diversi.

Anche l'apparizione, già in epoca assai antica e molto “prima dell'affermazione sistematica del libro in forma di codice”, di forme “onciali” inserite nel contesto delle scritte di “seconda qualità”, va interpretata come prova ulteriore che la documentazione ercolanese risale a un'epoca più antica di quella a ridosso del 79 d.C. e deve essere considerata, per la maggior parte, “paragonabile per epoca ai prodotti librari greci di età filodemea od immediatamente posteriore”.<sup>57</sup>

## 7 Nuova luce dal *P.Herc. 1067*

Il momento è venuto di rivedere queste acquisizioni alla luce dell'attribuzione del testo trasmesso dal *P.Herc. 1067* all'*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio.

Siamo di fronte a una scoperta fondamentale per molte più ragioni di quante possano apparire a prima vista e di quante siano state finora indicate.

Non ho bisogno di insistere sull'edizione, sul contenuto e sull'attribuzione del rotolo già presentati in maniera eccellente dalla Piano.<sup>58</sup> Mi soffermo invece, in particolare, sui i nuovi elementi che ne scaturiscono e che rimettono in discussione un aspetto almeno della datazione dei papiri latini di Ercolano sulla base di argomenti più solidi che non siano esclusivamente quelli delle caratteristiche paleografiche.

Sapevamo da un passo della cosiddetta *Vita patris* di Seneca il giovane che suo padre aveva lavorato fino alla propria morte (c. 39 d.C.) a un'opera sulla storia recente di Roma (*historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*), rimasta inedita (*Appendix - T1*).<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 365–366.

<sup>57</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 370.

<sup>58</sup> Piano (2017a) e Ead., in questo volume, *supra* 31–50.

<sup>59</sup> Condivido l'ipotesi, riproposta da Sussmann (1978) 144 (con ulteriore bibliografia nella n. 23; si veda anche il contributo dello stesso Sussman *infra* 143–146), che il passo in questione non

A questa opera venivano di solito riportati due frammenti: uno citato da Svetonio sulla morte di Tiberio e uno da Lattanzio relativo alla concezione storiografica dell'autore.<sup>60</sup> Poiché Svetonio e Lattanzio si riferiscono a “Seneca” senza altra specificazione, alcuni studiosi avevano espresso dubbi sulla loro attribuzione a Seneca il vecchio e avevano supposto che l'autore ne fosse piuttosto il figlio omonimo.<sup>61</sup>

La nuova lettura e la conseguente ricostruzione della *subscriptio* del *P.Herc.* 1067 rafforza l'ipotesi che quei due frammenti derivano dall'*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio, un'opera che dovette aver conosciuto una qualche diffusione in certi ambienti culturali e forse anche una discreta sopravvivenza.

L'identificazione del testo con un libro dell'*Ab initio bellorum civilium*, la sua attribuzione a Seneca il vecchio e la sua ‘pubblicazione’ postuma tra la fine gli anni Trenta e gli inizi degli anni Quaranta del I d.C. sono elementi che devono essere ora rilette in relazione con la presenza a Ercolano del *P.Herc.* 1067 e di conseguenza con la cronologia tradizionale dei *volumina* latini della biblioteca della Villa scritti in capitale “formale” o in “scrittura posata”.

## 7.1 Considerazioni sulla *subscriptio* del *PHerc.* 1067

Per cominciare vorrei presentare qualche osservazione complementare sulla *subscriptio* del *P.Herc.* 1067 e sulla ricostruzione che ne è stata proposta.

Il restauro della Piano ha destituito di ogni fondamento l'ipotesi che il *P.Herc.* 1067 tramandasse una *oratio in Senatu habita ante principem*<sup>62</sup> e ha provato anche che quel rotolo trasmette frammenti di un libro dell'*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio.<sup>63</sup>

Piano propone la seguente ricostruzione della *subscriptio*:

L[ · ] Annae[i · Senec]ae  
Ab · *in*itio · b[ello]rum [ · civilium]  
[Historiae]

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deriva da una ‘biografia’ di Seneca il vecchio, ma dalla premessa che il figlio avrebbe apposto alla sua edizione postuma dell'*Ab initio bellorum civilium* del padre.

<sup>60</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 73.2 (= *FRHist* 74 F 1) e Lact. *inst.* 7.15.14 (= *FRHist* 74 F 2).

<sup>61</sup> Si veda Canfora (2015) 138–213.

<sup>62</sup> Piano (2017a) 241–249.

<sup>63</sup> La presenza del nome di Seneca, già intuita da Robert Marichal, era rimasta ignota perché registrata solo nei documenti inediti del suo archivio privato. Ne avevo avuto comunicazione orale da parte dello studioso già agli inizi degli anni Novanta del secolo scorso. Si veda Dorandi (2017b) 23.

Le lettere *ae* di *Senecae* e *ru* di *b[ello]rum* sono recuperate sistemando due sovrapposti. Il papiro è rotto dopo il secondo rigo.



**Fig. 7:** *PHerc. 1067, subscriptio*. © Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli – Brigham Young University, Provo, USA

Il punto critico è costituito dal terzo rigo. La Piano propone di integrarvi, seppure *exempli gratia*, [*Historiae*] appoggiandosi sulla testimonianza del *De vita patris* di Seneca figlio: *quisquis legisset eius historias ab initio bellorum civilium*. In alternativa, essa suggerisce [*Liber*] o [*Libri*].<sup>64</sup>

Personalmente eviterei sia *Historiae* sia [*Liber*] o [*Libri*]. Che l'opera fosse intitolata *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* è possibile, ma non trova una conferma cogente nella *subscriptio* del *P.Herc. 1067*, dove tra l'altro il sostantivo *Historiae* apparirebbe posposto rispetto alla testimonianza del *De vita patris*, con una anomala inversione sintattica. Quanto a [*Liber*] o [*Libri*], come parte integrante del titolo, mancano invece, a quanto so, paralleli cogenti.<sup>65</sup> Penso per-

<sup>64</sup> Piano (2017a) 241–246.

<sup>65</sup> Non è inutile ribadire che la presenza del sostantivo *liber* nelle sottoscrizioni di codici di Livio e di Tacito non fa parte integrante del titolo originale, ma del colofone interno che assicurava il passaggio al libro successivo quando l'opere vennero trasferite da rotoli a codici. Così per esempio, per Livio, nel manoscritto Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Lat. 5730 fol. 225v: Titi*



tanto che il titolo dell'opera di Seneca il vecchio, stando almeno alla testimonianza ercolanese, fosse *Ab initio bellorum civilium* sul modello dell'*Ab urbe condita* di Tito Livio e poi dell'*Ab excessu divi Augusti* di Tacito nonché dell'*A fine Aufidii Bassi* di Plinio il Vecchio.<sup>66</sup>

A parte questo, richiamo l'attenzione sul fatto che nell'attuale ricostruzione della *scriptio* del *P.Herc.* 1067 non c'è traccia del numero del libro dell'opera di Seneca copiato su quel rotolo. Appare evidente che un'opera che narrava la storia di Roma dagli inizi delle guerre civili (comunque si interpreti l'*ab initio* del titolo e la frase *unde primum veritas retro abiit* della testimonianza del *De vita patris*) e che arrivava all'avanzata età augustea e forse fino al principato di Tiberio († 16 marzo 37 d.C.), il cui o nome si legge in cr. 5 pz. II sov. 1 l. 8: *Tiberius* (preceduto da un *interpunctum*),<sup>67</sup> si estendesse per più libri.

Il numerale poteva seguire, sullo stesso rigo, *civilium* oppure essere sistemato, centrato, nel terzo rigo. Suggestivo dunque:<sup>68</sup>

*Ab · inītiō · b[ello]rum [ · civilium (x)]*

oppure

*Ab · inītiō · b[ello]rum [ · civilium  
[(x)].*

In entrambi i casi, (x) indica il numero del libro, che rimane ignoto.

*A priori*, e in via del tutto ipotetica, si potrebbe pensare anche a un'altra eventualità e cioè che il numerale vi mancasse perché il *P.Herc.* 1067 non trasmetteva un unico libro dell'*Ab initio bellorum civilium*, ma piuttosto una scelta di estratti da diversi libri. I troppo magri frammenti e la completa ignoranza sul contenuto dell'opera invitano tuttavia a restare estremamente prudenti, anche se un sia pur labile indizio che potrebbe confortare questa ipotesi è forse conservato.

In cr. 5 pz. I, nel secondo intercolumnio all'altezza del l. 9 di scrittura, Piano ha individuato chiari “segni che sporgono a destra in un vistoso spazio interco-

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*Livi | ab urbe condita liber XXV explic(it) incipit liber XXVI feliciter* e nel Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Lat. 15 fol. 193v *Titi Livi ab urbe condita liber XLV explic(it) incipit liber XLVI feliciter*. Altri dettagli in Oliver (1951) 238. Per Tacito, si vedano gli esempi dal manoscritto Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laureanziana 68.1 registrati da Oliver (1951) 235.

<sup>66</sup> Quest'ultima testimoniata dallo stesso Plin. *nat. praef.* 20 (= *FRHist* 80 T 5) e da Plin. *epist.* 3.5.6 (= *FRHist* 80 T 5 1). Si veda Aufidius Bassus, *FRHist* 78 T 3ab.

<sup>67</sup> Piano (2017a) 236–237.

<sup>68</sup> In entrambi i casi, l'aggiunta di *liber* prima del numerale è verosimile, ma non necessaria.

lonnare, non riconducibili ad una plausibile stringa di testo”. Il tratteggio dei segni assomiglia a una *M*, ma in realtà si tratta di “una sequenza di linee che disegnano forme triangolari, realizzate in modo continuo, senza spazi tra di loro”. Poiché è senza dubbio da escludere che si tratti di una “stringa di testo, sembra verosimile intenderli come parte di un elemento ornamentale apposto con la finalità di distinguere due sezioni di testo”.<sup>69</sup>

Questa proposta mi sembra plausibile. Resta tuttavia da chiedersi (e purtroppo una risposta è allo stato attuale impossibile) se quell’elemento ornamentale (e eventuali altri non più visibili) distinguesse “sezioni di testo” (capitoli?) di un libro oppure estratti di più libri riuniti insieme. Tentare di dire di più sarebbe controproducente e azzardato.<sup>70</sup>

La medesima cautela deve essere applicata infine anche relativamente alla questione se il *P.Herc.* 1067 fosse l’unico libro-*volumen* dell’*Ab initio bellorum civilium* presente nella biblioteca della Villa di Ercolano.

Queste osservazioni non mettono bene inteso in dubbio che la ricostruzione del titolo *Ab initio bellorum civilium* sia corretta e più aderente alle tracce di un titolo che riporti all’altra opera di Seneca il vecchio: *Oratorum et rhetorum sententiae divisiones colores*.<sup>71</sup>

## 7.2 Conseguenze per la cronologia del fondo antico della biblioteca latina

Lasciato da parte il titolo, vengo all’aspetto che mi appare più ricco di conseguenze. Dal punto di vista paleografico, Radiciotti aveva collocato il *P.Herc.* 1067, insieme con il *P.Herc.* 817, nel sottogruppo delle scritture latine di Ercolano in capitale libraria “formale” che si distingue per una “maggiore scioltezza di esecuzione rispetto al modello della capitale libraria” e che “presenta alcune caratteristiche *sui generis*, per giustificare le quali si è parlato di ‘grecismo’ grafico, costituito da alternanza di modulo tra lettere larghe e lettere strette, nonché da

<sup>69</sup> Piano (2017a) 185–186, da cui le citazioni.

<sup>70</sup> Piano (2017a) 186 richiama la presenza di una decorazione analoga (una serpentina di *S*) nel *P.Qasr Ibrîm* 40 (= *ChLA* XLII 1237), frammento latino databile tra I a.C. e I d.C. nel quale “la cornice decorativa sembra nello spazio non scritto destinato al margine superiore”. Preferisco invece non tenere conto (per ragioni cronologiche) dell’altro parallelo con il *P.Monts.Roca* I, frammento da codice papiraceo del IV d.C., che tramanda le *Catilinarie* di Cicerone distinte fra loro da “linee ondulate convergenti ... disposte su più righe”.

<sup>71</sup> Piano (2017a) 246–249 e in particolare 246 n. 147.

una generale tendenza a preferire il chiaroscuro verticale o quasi”.<sup>72</sup> Il *P.Herc.* 817 è datato intorno alla fine del I a.C.;<sup>73</sup> allo stesso periodo è stato di ricondotto anche il *P.Herc.* 1067.

L’attribuzione del *P.Herc.* 1067 all’*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio rimette ora in discussione questa acquisizione. In particolare, non è più possibile accettare *in toto* la proposta che il nucleo più antico dei rotoli latini, ai quali sono ricondotti il *P.Herc.* 1067 e il *P.Herc.* 817, vergati in capitale “formale” o in “scrittura posata” sia da collocare nel “periodo fra la tarda repubblica e l’età augustea”.<sup>74</sup>

La presenza del *P.Herc.* 1067 nella biblioteca di Ercolano ha come presupposto incontestabile, se non la ‘pubblicazione’ a cura di Seneca figlio dopo la morte del padre di quel libro dell’*Ab initio bellorum civilium*, almeno l’esistenza di una sua redazione scritta. Il che sposta di conseguenza il momento della copia del *P.Herc.* 1067 e quindi la datazione del rotolo tra la fine degli anni Trenta e gli inizi degli anni Quaranta del I secolo d.C.

La cronologia della composizione dell’*Ab initio bellorum civilium* risale con buona probabilità agli ultimi anni del principato di Tiberio († 16 marzo 37) o agli inizi di quello di Caligola (18 marzo 37 – 24 gennaio 41).<sup>75</sup> Quanto alla sua ‘pubblicazione’ postuma da parte del figlio, essa resta controversa al punto da essere stata addirittura negata da alcuni studiosi.<sup>76</sup>

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**72** Radiciotti (1998) 357. Cf. Ammirati (2010) 32: “sotto il profilo dell’elaborazione è verosimile collocare la scrittura di questo papiro [sc. *P.Herc.* 1067] tra quella di *P.Herc.* 1059 e 1475, e quella di *P.Herc.* 817”. Piano (2017a) 180 richiama l’attenzione anche sul più tardo *P.Berol.* inv. 11596 *recto* (secondo quarto del II d.C.) su cui Ammirati (2015) 30, 72 (e tav. XVII) e già Ammirati (2010) 38, 39–40 (con la tav. 2).

**73** Radiciotti (1998) 367 e Radiciotti (2000) 361–362 n. 41 “scritto verso la metà del terzo decennio a.C.”. Cf. Capasso (2013a) 40 e Fioretti (2014) 35 n. 25. Per Cavallo (2015) 592, la scrittura del *P.Herc.* 817 “una capitale latina piuttosto fluida e connotata da una certa instabilità di tracciati conforta una datazione al I a.C., ma la cautela è d’obbligo”. Altre proposte di datazione meno convincenti che arrivano fino all’età dei Flavii, registra Capasso (2011) 46–55.

**74** Radiciotti (2009) 107 ripreso da Fioretti (2014) 42 n. 48.

**75** Canfora (2015) 139, 208 suggerisce che Seneca ne avesse cominciato la redazione alla fine del principato di Tiberio e che il figlio l’avesse pubblicata postuma nei primi anni di Caligola, in un momento in cui il *princeps* aveva mostrato una apertura “verso la storiografia ‘repubblicaneggiante’ su cui si era abbattuta la censura (prima con Augusto poi con Tiberio)”. Si veda anche 139, “forse il vecchio si era messo a scrivere quando era avanti negli anni nell’ultimo tempo del principato di Tiberio”.

**76** Si veda in particolare Klotz (1901) 441–442 e Griffin (1972) 10. *Status quaestionis* in Levick in *FRHist* I 506–507, che non esclude una ‘pubblicazione’ anche se qualche anno più tardi e cioè dopo il rientro di Seneca figlio dall’esilio nel 49 d.C.

Per il mio discorso la questione della ‘pubblicazione’ o meno dell’opera non ha una importanza cruciale. Il *P.Herc.* 1067 poté infatti esser stato copiato a uso ‘privato’ prima della eventuale ‘pubblicazione’ sull’esemplare personale di Seneca il vecchio su richiesta dell’allora proprietario della Villa,<sup>77</sup> interessato al suo contenuto per ragioni (intellettuali, ideologiche o politiche) che purtroppo ci sfuggono, ma probabilmente e pur sempre nel rispetto della “prudenza ... comprensibile” che spinse l’autore a non diffondere in pubblico la sua opera storiografica in momenti pericolosi.<sup>78</sup>

Essere più precisi sulla cronologia sia pure relativa è impossibile vuoi in ragione delle difficoltà legate a datare papiri letterari latini (e greci) sulla base delle sole caratteristiche paleografiche vuoi della incertezza del momento in cui Seneca il vecchio iniziò la composizione dell’*Ab initio bellorum civilium*.<sup>79</sup> Né troviamo un aiuto in elementi interni quali la presenza nei frustoli del *PHerc.* 1067 del nome di *Tiberius* e, a più riprese, di quello di *Augustus* nonché di quello di *Quintus Haterius* (cr. 2 pz. I sov. 6 l. 5), uno dei più famosi oratori dell’epoca augustea. Troppo poco e in contesti sempre molto lacunosi perché se ne possano dedurre dati sicuri per definire ulteriormente la data dell’*Ab initio bellorum civilium* e ancora meno di quel libro incerto.

### 7.3 Breve ritorno sul *P.Herc.* 817

Un discorso a parte richiede il *P.Herc.* 817 vergato in un linguaggio grafico affine (anche se non identico) a quello del *P.Herc.* 1067.

Anche se le affinità delle caratteristiche paleografiche dei due rotoli possono spingere a avanzare altresì la cronologia del *P.Herc.* 817, sarebbe azzardato (se non inopportuno) trarre da questi soli elementi la conseguenza che la composizione del *Carmen de bello Actiaco* sia coeva alla copia del rotolo che lo tramanda.

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<sup>77</sup> Sono convinto che la Villa di Ercolano, fatta costruire da un membro della famiglia dei Pisoni, anche se forse non da Lucio Calpurnio Pisone Cesonino, *patronus* di Filodemo, rimase sempre proprietà della *gens Calpurnia* (Dorandi 2017a).

<sup>78</sup> Canfora (2015) 140.

<sup>79</sup> Per questo ultimo aspetto, valgono le considerazioni di Cavallo (2013) 1, che è lecito allargare anche alla produzione latina: “Assegnare datazioni ai papiri greci letterari, normalmente privi di qualsiasi elemento cronologico oggettivo, è operazione talora assai difficile. I criteri archeologici, bibliologici paleografici correntemente adoperati – soprattutto, nel caso di questi ultimi, quando manchino riscontri precisi con scritture documentarie datate – non sempre si dimostrano di peso tale da dare risultati soddisfacenti, sicché non sono poche le datazioni assegnate che restano incerte o aleatorie”.

Niente impedisce infatti *a priori* che vi sia un *décalage* fra la data effettiva di redazione del poema (oggi generalmente colloca alla fine del I a.C.)<sup>80</sup> e quella della confezione *P.Herc.* 817, in questo caso copiato su un più antico esemplare in un'epoca e in un ambiente vicini a quelli del *P.Herc.* 1067.

Se queste considerazioni sono valide, potremmo addirittura suggerire di scorgere nel *P.Herc.* 817 e nel *P.Herc.* 1067 due esempi tangibili della pratica comune alla società romana, fra tarda repubblica e inizio del principato, di una diffusione di libri “entro una certa fascia di lettori mediante esemplari prodotti ... privatamente ma che ... potevano dare luogo ad altre copie per doni scambi e richieste”.<sup>81</sup>

## 8 Tracce di vita culturale della Villa nella prima metà del I d.C.?

Possiamo a questo punto chiederci se l'attribuzione del *P.Herc.* 1067 all'opera di Seneca il vecchio *Ab initio bellorum civilium* e la nuova cronologia ulteriori elementi utili per definire le sorti della biblioteca della Villa di Ercolano in epoca postfilodemea, tra la fine del I a.C. e i decenni centrali del I d.C.

Rispondere a questa domanda non è semplice e il rischio di sopravvalutare i dati di cui disponiamo è sempre presente con tutte le sue insidie.

Piano<sup>82</sup> ritiene che il libro tramandato dal *P.Herc.* 1067 era “strettamente connesso con le vicende vissute, in maniera diretta, dalla stessa aristocrazia romana che frequentava la Villa dei Pisoni” e che i dati che si ricavano dai frammenti di quel rotolo “dimostrano, in modo inequivocabile, che la *domus*, e con essa la sua biblioteca, era ancora caratterizzata da una grande vitalità intellettuale durante tutta la prima metà del I secolo, e dunque fino a ben poco prima dell'eruzione”. Poiché Seneca compose la sua opera tra gli anni Trenta e Quaranta se ne può altresì dedurre che la Villa “durante tutta la metà del I d.C. vide accrescere il suo patrimonio librario con opere filosofiche greche, affiancate da opere latine di altro genere, ma che insieme alla *pars philosophica* contribuiscono a delineare uno spaccato sempre più preciso e verosimile della vita sociale, politica e culturale della Villa dei Papiri”.

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**80** *Supra* 55–56.

**81** Cavallo (2015) 596. Con un rimando (nella n. 54) a Starr (1987) 213–223.

**82** Piano (2017a) 249–250, da cui le citazioni che seguono.

Non c'è alcun dubbio che questa lettura è più coerente e verosimile di quella avanzata anni addietro, limitatamente al solo fondo latino della biblioteca, da Radiciotti perché compromessa dall'accettazione dell'ipotesi di una riconversione agricola della Villa nel I d.C.:<sup>83</sup>

[I] fatto che la villa non fosse più un centro culturale attivo negli anni precedenti l'eruzione si somma ad altri indizi, per farci ritenere che i *volumina* latini di Ercolano di più alta qualità formale devono risalire piuttosto al tardo primo secolo avanti Cristo.

L'ipotesi di una trasformazione in *villa rustica*<sup>84</sup> è da scartare in maniera definitiva alla luce in particolare dei recenti scavi *in situ* che hanno mostrato che al momento dell'eruzione del Vesuvio del 79 d.C. le decorazioni pittoriche parietali della *basis Villae* erano in restauro.<sup>85</sup>

Mi sia consentito tuttavia esprimere una punta di scetticismo anche a proposito della lettura, almeno a mio parere, un po' troppo ottimistica della Piano e suggerire qualche pista parallela.

Senza mettere per niente in discussione tutta l'importanza della scoperta del libro di Seneca il vecchio, non riesco a scorgere in questa testimonianza e in quella della copia apparentemente coeva del *P.Herc.* 817, una prova determinante che la Villa “durante tutta la metà del I secolo d.C. vide accrescere il suo patrimonio librario con opere filosofiche greche, affiancate da opere latine di altro genere”.

Innanzitutto, le considerazioni che ho esposto sulle conseguenze che la presenza di un libro dell'*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio a Ercolano ha sulla cronologia relativa di una parte almeno dei rotoli latini della Biblioteca devono mettere in guardia anche sull'attribuzione, su basi esclusivamente paleografiche, di un manipolo di papiri greci a tutta la prima metà del I d.C.

Nella realtà della biblioteca di Ercolano, distinguere tra reperti della fine del I a. C. e altri dell'inizio o della prima metà del I d.C. può rivelarsi un esercizio pericoloso, che è bene praticare con la più grande moderazione.<sup>86</sup>

Piano rileva infine, a ragione, che il libro di Seneca è “strettamente connesso con le vicende vissute, in maniera diretta, dalla stessa aristocrazia romana che frequentava la Villa dei Pisoni” e che contribuisce a delinearne “uno spaccato sempre più preciso e verosimile della vita sociale, politica e culturale”.

<sup>83</sup> Radiciotti (1998) 365.

<sup>84</sup> Wójcik (1986) 37.

<sup>85</sup> Guidobaldi/Esposito (2009) 343–352 e Del Mastro (2010) 64–65.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Capasso (2013a) 35–36.

Integrerei queste affermazioni con qualche considerazione relativa anche alla presenza forse non fortuita nella Villa di Ercolano, in momenti non troppo lontani fra loro, dell'esemplare di almeno un libro dell'*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio e di quello di almeno un libro del *Carmen de bello Actiaco*.<sup>87</sup>

Simili testi oltre che per motivi letterari e intellettuali poterono infatti attirare gli interessi dei proprietari della Villa o di chi ne frequentava la biblioteca anche per il messaggio ideologico e politico legato al loro contenuto.

In ogni modo, una attenzione particolare fu in quei momenti riservata al poema trasmesso dal *P.Herc.* 817. Lo provano i numerosi interventi 'extratestuali' peculiari a quel rotolo rivelati dalla Scappaticcio:<sup>88</sup> *interpuncta*, *I longa*, segni obliqui alla fine dei versi, *diploi* e *apices* scritti talora di altra mano e quindi indizi evidenti di una utilizzazione diacronica del rotolo.

La studiosa ha messo in relazione fra loro, in particolare, i segni obliqui alla fine dei versi e gli *apices* e indica in essi un sistema che avrebbe potuto segnalare, all'interno degli esametri, delle "cesure non tanto testuali, quanto piuttosto ritmiche".<sup>89</sup> I due segni appaiono aggiunte seriori di persona diversa dallo scriba che ha copiato il testo. I tratti obliqui "probabilmente vennero apposti per segnalare momenti in cui si dovesse arrestare la voce o regolare l'intonazione con cui cantare quei determinati esametri, concentrando la propria enfasi su elementi ben precisi". Quanto agli *apices*,<sup>90</sup> essi sono indicazioni apposte da una persona con il "chiaro intento di indicare l'esatta pronuncia di parole che probabilmente non le erano particolarmente note" e che pertanto "non aveva una conoscenza perfetta della lingua latina ... qualcuno che non aveva il latino quale lingua nativa".<sup>91</sup> Il tutto porta la studiosa a supporre che almeno gli *apices* "possano avere un'evidente connessione con la lettura – direi, con la 'recitazione' – che era fatta

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**87** Scrivo in entrambi i casi "di almeno un libro" tenendo conto della realtà attuale e ben cosciente che questi dati potranno essere affinati o corretti da successive scoperte di nuovi rotoli o dallo svolgimento o lettura di altri.

**88** Scappaticcio (2008).

**89** Scappaticcio (2008) 240–245. Citazioni da 240 e 245.

**90** Scappaticcio (2008) 240 utilizza convenzionalmente il termine *apex* (preso in prestito dall'epigrafia) "per indicare l'accento acuto apposto – per lo più sopra vocali – all'interno delle testimonianze papiracee". *Apices* sono presenti anche nel *P.Herc.* 1067, Piano (2017a) 186. Ulteriori considerazioni in Scappaticcio (2012).

**91** Scappaticcio (2008) 245–246. Un intervento per certi aspetti simile, ma su un testo greco (il primo libro *Sui poemi* di Filodemo, *P.Herc.* 460), è segnalato da Janko (2000) 84. Vi si scorgono alcuni accenti (a quanto pare, posteriori alla copia del rotolo), che Janko attribuisce a un "neophyte practising accentuation on an old neglected tome".

del *Carme* segnalando talora delle pause ritmiche, talora dei punti in cui era necessario modulare in modo particolare la propria voce e farla crescere di intensità, al fine di dare un'interpretazione quanto più possibile esatta del testo".<sup>92</sup>

Questi elementi sono importanti che si voglia o meno dedurne che il *P.Herc.* 817 trasmette un testo "vissuto", dunque letto e recitato ad alta voce perché noto". Chiunque abbia apposto quei segni e qualunque siano stati i suoi intenti e i suoi interessi per il contenuto e il messaggio del poema, la loro presenza nel *P.Herc.* 817 costituisce una prova chiara che alcuni testi almeno della biblioteca erano letti, per ragioni che ci sfuggono, verso verso metà del I d.C.

## 9 In conclusione

Non vado oltre per evitare di dare l'impressione di affastellare ipotesi su ipotesi. Ho cercato di presentare in una forma per lo più aporetica i problemi che i nuovi elementi derivati dalla scoperta del libro *Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio hanno fatto emergere e con i quali dovranno, d'ora in poi, fare i conti coloro che si occuperanno dello studio della *pars Latina* della biblioteca di Ercolano.

Essa resta ancora la più misteriosa, ma la speranza che nuove scoperte aprano la via a ricerche che allargheranno le nostre conoscenze e la nostra sete di sapere non è forse vana. La decifrazione della *scriptio* e dei sia pure magri resti del *P.Herc.* 1067 ne è una prova concreta che invita a continuare in questa direzione.

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<sup>92</sup> Scappaticcio (2008) 246 (da cui le citazioni che seguono).





Maria Chiara Scappaticcio

## ***Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium:***

### Exegetical Surveys on the Direct Transmission of Seneca the Elder's Historiographical Work

**Abstract:** Working on *P.Herc. 1067* has revealed it to be the only direct witness to the otherwise unknown Seneca the Elder's *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*. This paper highlights the importance of philological work on unpublished Latin literary papyri in order to open new perspectives on the study of Latin literature and to write new chapters of it.

An overview of the reconstructable contents is offered through a work of *Quellenforschung* of Imperial historiography and biography. Reading the text of *P.Herc. 1067* together with the Tiberian chapters from the *Annales* of Tacitus, the historical work of Cassius Dio and the *Lives* of Suetonius is instructive in order to recover possible traits of the plot of a section of the historiographical work by Seneca the Elder.

## **1 Genesis: *P.Herc. 1067*, Robert Marichal, and the authorship of an *Annaeus***

Recovering new fragments of Latin literature from papyri is not predictable; it is complex and often hard to achieve, but it can lead to unexpected results. When

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scraps seem to give voice to new chapters of Latin literature, the appropriate response is extreme scrupulousness and philological scepticism, despite the enthusiastic desire to shout the discovery from the rooftops.<sup>1</sup>

When he realized in the 90's that a certain *Lucius Annaeus* was the author of a work transmitted by a roll coming from the library of the Herculaneum Villa, Robert Marichal shared his idea with Tiziano Dorandi, while working together towards the publication of some of the volumes of the *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*. Among his projects was an analytical paleographical study of scripts of Latin rolls from the Villa; he was possibly even planning an edition of these *volamina*. Marichal's project remained unachieved because of his death, and it was destined to survive only in binders of notes stored among the shelves of the Archives of the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* in Paris.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the same roll Marichal linked to the *Annaei* family was solidly identified as an *oratio in senatu habita ante principem*, whose author would have been a certain *L. Manlius Torquatus*. Although an edition was never published, the 'case' of *P.Herc.* 1067 was set aside in 1983.<sup>3</sup>

Its elegant capital script made the Latin *P.Herc.* 1067 an item of discussion among paleographers, but papyrologists, philologists, and historians of ancient literature let the text transmitted by such a roll remain unpublished and dormant, together with its *Caesar*, *Augustus* and *Tiberius* and together with the omnipresent *Senatus*, all of them exciting elements of the reconstructable plot.<sup>4</sup> Giving critical thought to just one of these names should have been enough to inspire someone to risk working on this roll.

The assertion / fact / claim that the roll *P.Herc.* 1067 is the only known direct witness of Seneca the Elder's *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* is recent, and is indelibly linked to the name of PLATINUM.

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1 Often dealing with unpublished Latin texts with papyrus, the project PLATINUM has reached important results also in such a field, given that otherwise unknown literary Latin texts have been published and deeply analysed.

2 The section concerning Latin texts on papyrus from the Archive of Robert Marichal has been recently explored within the project PLATINUM and specific contributions have been gathered in Scappaticcio (2017). On the unpublished work Robert Marichal did on Latin papyri from Herculaneum see Piano (2017a).

3 The only non-paleographical contribution on *P.Herc.* 1067 is represented by Costabile (1984), a paper given an year before in occasion of the 17th International Congress of Papyrology in Naples; see also Del Mastro (2005) 191–192, where further details are given on a mistaken sequence of *cornici* (i.e. frames storing Herculaneum papyri) discussed by Costabile. On such a matter see the exhaustive analysis by Piano (2017b) 163–165; 178–187.

4 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 6 pz. II sov. 1 l. 4: *Caes[a]re*; cr. 2 pz. I sov. 2 l. 2: *A]u[g]usto*; cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1 l. 3: *Auguste*; cr. 5 pz. II sov. 1 ll. 7–8: [ – – – ]*destinat[ – – – ]<sup>8</sup>*. *Tiberius*.

The authorship is known thanks to the *subscriptio* that the roll preserves, and it is supported by the historical plot which can be sketchily reconstructed.<sup>5</sup> How the history of ancient literature can benefit from such a discovery is evident, since Seneca the Elder's *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* has remained concealed behind the biographical draft his son sketched of him and behind the self-professed use made of it as a model by later historiographers.<sup>6</sup> The *Historiae* must have illustrated events involving the *Urbs* at least until the death of Tiberius, given that Suetonius references its version of the death of that emperor;<sup>7</sup> as for the *bella civilia* from which the *Historiae* started, it is debated whether they concerned Caesar and Pompey or the age of the Gracchi.<sup>8</sup>

Considering the work's wide circulation – Martial suggests in more than one epigram that it was well received –<sup>9</sup> and its treatment of fundamental events in the history of the Principate and the Early Imperial Age, which were all later dealt with by historians such as Tacitus, Suetonius, Appian, Florus, and Cassius Dio – the rediscovery should prompt new reflections and perhaps revive old views of *Quellenforschung*. In fact, meticulous investigation of the sources of Imperial historiography reveal traces of Seneca the Elder's *Historiae*. But the scantiness of the

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5 On the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.* 1067 see Piano (2016).

6 *Sen. vita patr.* (Appendix - T1). On Seneca's *de vita patris* see the recent contribution by Winterbottom (2013), where further references to previous publications are found. On Seneca the Elder's *Historiae* see Sussman (1978) 138–152; Fairweather (1981) 15–17; on Seneca the Elder's historiography see also *FRHist* I 118–119, with the two only extant fragments (from indirect witness) given at II 982–985 and discussed at III 596–597. Further bibliographical references are found in Scappaticcio (2018) 1074–1082.

7 Suet. *Tib.* 73.2: *Seneca eum scribit intellecta defectione exemptum anulum quasi alicui traditurum parumper tenuisse, dein nersus aptasse digito et compressa sinistra manu iacuisse diu immobilem; subito vocatis ministris ac nemine respondente consurrexisse nec procul a lectulo deficientibus viribus concidisse*, on which see *FRHist* III 596.

8 The possibility that the relevant civil war is that between Caesar and Pompey has been recently discussed by Barbara Levick in *FRHist* I 506 (see also III 596–597 no. 74), and supported by Zecchini (2016) 152–153. As for the possibility that the referenced wars can be identified with the *seditio Gracchana* see Hahn (1964); Zecchini (1977), and later Canfora (2000) 162–167; Id. (2015) 138–202. On this matter see Cornell *supra* 20–23.

9 See Sussman (1978) 145–148 and *infra* 150 n. 29. The relevant contexts are: Mart. 1.61.7–8: *duosque Senecas unicumque Lucanum / facunda loquitur Corduba*; and 4.40.1–2: *atria Pisonum stabant cum stemmate toto / et docti Senecae ter numeranda domus*. See also Mart. 10.72.8–13: *non est hic dominus, sed imperator, / sed iustissimus omnium senator, / per quem de Stygia domo reducta est / siccis rustica Veritas capillis. / Hoc sub principe, si sapis, caveto, / verbis, Roma, prioribus loquaris*. Sussman (1978) 147–148 and *infra* 173–174 observes that the *Veritas* of Martial reflects the idea of *veritas* which emerges from the only *de vita patris* by Seneca the Younger and Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 7–10; on the *veritas* in Seneca the Elder see Mazzoli *infra* 95–98.

portion transmitted by *P.Herc.* 1067 will also prompt cautiousness, and the enthusiasm to interpret the remains of these important *Historiae* is tempered by the physical limits of a roll in which only textual splinters survive. Although hypotheses cannot achieve certainty as far as the detailed reconstruction of the narrated events goes, it is still possible to weave together certain threads into a necessarily patchy plot.

## 2 Development: Intertwining threads of history from textual splinters. The Tiberian lead

*Prudentia, et alia* – That the central character of the roll’s historical narrative is Tiberius is suggested indirectly by the certain presence of his name and by the possibility that the allusion to a *Caesar* is addressed to him. Further elements also need to be emphasized: 1. the reference to the *prudentia*, a quality which – either real or simulated – was appropriate for the first years of Tiberius’ power;<sup>10</sup> 2. the frequent use of *verba dicendi*, both in the first and second person, possibly recurring in dialogues or letters, both genres often associated with (?) Tiberius in portraits by historiographers;<sup>11</sup> 3. the frequent mention of the Senate, which could

<sup>10</sup> *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 4 pz. I sov. 2 ll. 5–7: [ – – – ]ç[ ] pr[o]vid[ – – – ]<sup>6</sup> – – – ]ḡ n[i]hi[l – – – ]<sup>7</sup> – – – ]e v[i]r prud[en – – – ]. On Tiberius’ *prudentia* see: Tac. *ann.* 3.69.5: *atque ille (scil. Tiberius) prudens moderandi, si propria ira non impelleretur, addidit insulam Gyarum immitem et sine cultu hominum esse: darent Iuliae familiae et viro quondam ordinis eiusdem, ut Cythnum potius concederet*; Suet. *Tib.* 21.3 (a letter by August): *adduci tamen nequeo quin existimem, circumspicissimum et prudentissimum principem in tanto praesertim negotio nihil temere fecisse; sed vitii Tiberi[i] virtutibusque perpensis potiores duxisse virtutes, praesertim cum et rei publicae causa adoptare se eum pro contione iuraverit et epistulis aliquot ut peritissimum rei militaris utque unicum p. R. praesidium prosequatur*; 21.5: *ordinem aestivorum tuorum ego vero mi Tiberi, et inter tot rerum difficultates καὶ τοσαύτην ἀποθυμίαν τῶν στρατευομένων non potuisse quemquam prudentius gerere se quam tu gesseris, existimo*; Vell. 2.111.4: *quantis prudentia ducis opportunitatibus furentes eorum vires universas elusimus, fudimus partibus! (...) Qua prudentia hiberna disposita sunt!*; Ps. Aur. *Vict. epit.* 2.3: *(scil. Tiberius) satis prudens in armis satisque fortunatus ante sumptum imperium sub Augusto fuit, ut non immerito reipublicae dominatus ei committeretur*. References to Tiberius’ *prudentia* can be found in Tac. *ann.* 4.6.4; 4.41.2; Suet. *Tib.* 18.1. On this topic see a deeper examination in Scappaticcio (2018) 1056.

<sup>11</sup> As for the *verba dicendi* see: *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 3 pz. I sov. 1 l. 8: *dixit*; cr. 5 pz. I sov. 5 l. 10: *]dixi[*; cr. 5 pz. II sov. 3 ll. 3–6: *sub sign[ – – – ]<sup>4</sup> – – – ]ce[ . . . ]ruñt . [ – – – ]<sup>5</sup> – – – ]enñi[ – – – ]<sup>6</sup> n]arraba[t- . . ]ḡ r[ – – – ]*. As for verbal forms at the first or second (singular or plural) persons, see: *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 1 pz. I sov. 5 l. 4: *scis*; cr. 3 pz. I sov. 8 col. I ll. 9–10: *] . eritis ]<sup>0</sup> [ – – – ]atis*;

even imply the presence of speech by the emperor;<sup>12</sup> 4. the mention of military contexts, as in Gaul or that concerning an unharmed man and some enemies.<sup>13</sup>

*Bellum in Gallia* – The mention of a *Caesar*, a *bellum* and a *Gall[us]* in close proximity does not leave any doubt that the narration is focused on a military action in Gaul that would have had a Caesar as a main character.<sup>14</sup> A reference to Gaius Julius Caesar's military campaign in the 50's BC could either involve a specific episode depicted in Caesar's history, whose main stylistic quality was *brevitas*, or it might be an example coming from recent history. The latter hypothesis – although rare, references to Caesar's Gallic campaign do occur in the historiography of the Imperial Age –<sup>15</sup> has been used as a basis to reconstruct a possible reference to Tiberius' intervention in Germany. This echoed Caesar's campaign in Gaul and helped to justify Tiberius' adoption by Augustus in 4 AD.<sup>16</sup>

However, there is another, more contemporary possibility. During the Principate, the Caesarian campaign in Gaul was eclipsed by the reorganization of the province by Octavian Augustus between 27 and 10 BC. If *Caesar* refers to Tiberius, it naturally recalls the mission Tiberius himself promoted in 21 AD in order to repress the revolt inspired by Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir and defined as a *bellum* by Tacitus in the third book of the *Annales*.<sup>17</sup>

Talking about the Gallic events of 21 AD as a *bellum* means sharing the same senatorial and anti-Tiberian feelings in Tacitus' narration. Tiberius would have preferred such a mission to have been seen simply as an instrument through which to reestablish public order (*ann.* 3.47).

*Dies Iunius* – Identifying this *bellum* with the Gallic campaign Tiberius wanted in 21 AD is even more plausible because of the nearby reference to *A[u]g[us]to*<sup>18</sup> and

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cr. 5 pz. I sov. 11. 1: *nost[er]*; cr. 5 pz. I sov. 11. 4: *repetam*; l. 7: *inquar*. Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1056–1057.

12 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 2 pz. I sov. 6 ll. 9–10: *Şena[t- - - ]<sup>10</sup> [ - - - ]ye[ ] Şen . [ - - - ]*; cr. 3 pz. I sov. 3 l. 8: *Şenatu[ ]*. Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1057.

13 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 4 strato 11. 4–6: *incolumem [ - - - ]<sup>5</sup> cum hostes e . . [ - - - ]<sup>6</sup> . İu . . . gerer[ . . . . ]qm [ ]*. Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1058.

14 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 6 pz. II sov. 1+2 ll. 4–5: *]. Caes[a]re [ . . ]or [<sup>5</sup> ]um[ ] bello Gall[ ]*. Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1061–1062.

15 See: Cic. *Att.* 1.19.2; *fam.* 7.18.1; *prov.* 19; 32; 35–36; 47; Quint. *inst.* 3.8.20; Suet. *Iul.* 56.1; 69.1; Sen. *benef.* 5.15.5; Front. *ep.* 9 (224.12 van den Hout).

16 See Lucarini (2018).

17 Tac. *ann.* 3.40–47; see e.g. 3.41.3: *consultus super eo Tiberius aspernatus est indicium aluitque dubitatione bellum*. The lines of Suet. *Tib.* 49 are instructive, as well. See also Vell. 1.129.3.

18 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 2 pz. I sov. 2 l. 2.

because in a previous section – almost a meter and a half before in the length of the roll – the text mentions an event that happened between 17 and 20 AD. In fact, this contains a dating formula referring to the Kalends, Nones, or Ides of June in an undefined year, which provides an additional chronological parameter.<sup>19</sup> This could be the seventh day before the Kalends of June of 17 AD, when Germanicus triumphantly ended his mission along the Elbe River,<sup>20</sup> or the fifth day before the Kalends of June of 20 AD, when Drusus, Tiberius' son, triumphed in the Illyricum.<sup>21</sup> The latter hypothesis is strengthened by the nearby reference to a *Cn[ae]-*,<sup>22</sup> perhaps neither Gnaeus Lentulus the Augur<sup>23</sup> nor Gnaeus Sentius,<sup>24</sup> but rather Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, suspected of having poisoned Germanicus, accused of high treason and victim of a well-known trial that took place in the spring of 20 AD.<sup>25</sup>

*Haterius* – The name Haterius stands out in the onomastic record of the Herculeum roll. Is this Haterius Agrippa, consul in 22 AD, a disliked (?) character, described by Tacitus as sexually perverse<sup>26</sup> and as the opponent of Cultorius Priscus, who was accused of having composed verses on the death of Germanicus?<sup>27</sup> Or is this Quintus Haterius, the father of Haterius Agrippa?

**19** *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 1 pz. II sov. 21. 8: *IJun*; this is possibly an abbreviated form standing for the name of the month. Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1058–1061.

**20** See Tac. *ann.* 2.41.2: *C. Caelio L. Pomponio consulibus Germanicus Caesar a.d. VII Kal. Iunias triumphavit de Cheruscis Chhattisque et Angrivariis quaeque aliae nationes usque ad Albim colunt.*

**21** Between the half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the end of Tiberian age, only three events are said in the *Fasti Ostienses* and *Amiternini* to have taken place in June–July. In addition to the above mentioned two episodes, another one must be added, that is the wearing of the virile toga by Nero Caesar, son of Germanicus, on the seventh day of the Ides of June in 20 AD.

**22** *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 1 pz.

**23** Gnaeus Lentulus Augur is mentioned speaking of the trial against Libon, started in 16 AD (Tac. *ann.* 1.27), and of the process (trial?) for concussion (?) against the proconsul of Asia Junius Silanus, in 22 AD (2.32). See Tac. *ann.* 3.68; 4.29; 44. On this character, see also Suet. *Tib.* 49.

**24** Gnaeus Sentius is mentioned in Tac. *ann.* 2.74; 3.7 because he made the poisoner Martina be sent away from Rome, in 19 AD.

**25** On Piso's trial and suicide see: Tac. *ann.* 3.1–19; Suet. *Tib.* 52; D.C. 57.18.10. On the Senate's Decree concerning Gnaeus Piso see the *editio princeps* by Caballos *et al.* (1996) and the increased version by Eck *et al.* (1996). Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1060–1061.

**26** Tac. *ann.* 6.4.4.

**27** Tac. *ann.* 3.49.

Quintus Haterius garnered the attention of Tacitus because of his repeated flattering,<sup>28</sup> and his obituary is recorded in the *Annales*.<sup>29</sup> Quintus Haterius notably was an illustrious orator; he died in 26 AD, but he was long-lived enough to experience the Principate of Augustus and the first years of the Reign of Tiberius. He is one of the characters frequently appearing in Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae*,<sup>30</sup> and he interacts with both the Caesars.<sup>31</sup>

The elderly orator is depicted conversing with Tiberius also in Suetonius' life of the emperor, at a moment in Tiberius' life not clearly reconstructable but surely prior to his retirement to Capri.<sup>32</sup> This episode does not have any parallel in the narratives of Tacitus and Cassius Dio, but it shares some details with the context where Haterius is mentioned in the *Herculaneum roll*.<sup>33</sup> In fact, in both Suetonius' biography and in the narrative of the *Herculaneum roll* the senate is identifiable as the backdrop (Suet.: *curia; senator* ~ *P.Herc.* 1067: *şena[t-; şen . ]*); the verb *rogo* occurs (Suet.: *rogo* ~ *P.Herc.* 1067: *rogab[ ]*); and an Haterius is mentioned (Suet.: *Q. Haterio* ~ *P.Herc.* 1067: *Ha`[eri-]*).

In Suetonius' biography, Haterius is also involved in an episode which would have highlighted Tiberius' *civilitas* during the first years of his empire. Suetonius reports that he pardoned an unnamed *consularis* who threw himself down on his

**28** On the episode of 22 AD, see Tac. *ann.* 3.57.2: *at Q. Haterius cum eius diei Senatus consulta aureis litteris figenda in curia censuisset, deridiculo fuit, senex foedissimae adulationis tantum infamia usurus*; on the episodes of 14 AD, see Tac. *ann.* 1.13.3–6.

**29** Tac. *ann.* 4.61.1.

**30** Sen. *contr.* 1.6.12; 4, *praef.* 6–7; 7.1.4; 7.1.24; 7.2.5; 7.8.3; 9.3.13; 9.4.16; 9.6.8; 9.6.11; 9.6.13; 9.6.16; 10.5.24; *suas.* 2.14; 6.1; 7.1. See also Sen. *epist.* 40.10: *nam Q. Hateri cursum, suis temporibus oratoris celeberrimi, longe abesse ab homine sano volo: numquam dubitavit, numquam intermisit; semel incipiebat, semel desinebat.*

**31** On Augustus see Sen. *contr.* 4 *praef.* 7: *declamabat autem Haterius admissio populo ex tempore: solus omnium Romanorum, quos modo ipse cognovi, in Latinam linguam transtulit Graecam facultatem. Tanta erat illi velocitas orationis ut vitium fieret. Itaque divus Augustus optime dixit: 'Haterius noster sufflammandus est.' Adeo non currere sed decurrere videbatur. Nec verborum illi tantum copia sed etiam rerum erat: quotiens velles eandem rem et quamdiu velles diceret, aliis totiens figuris, aliis tractationibus, ita ut regi posset nec consumi.* On Tiberius see Sen. *suas.* 3.7: *apud Caesarem cum mentio esset de ingenio Hateri, consuetudine prolapsus dixit (scil. Gallio): 'et ille erat plena deo'.*

**32** Suet. *Tib.* 29.1: *dissentiens in curia a Q. Haterio: 'ignoscas', inquit, 'rogo, si quid adversus te liberius sicut senator dixerō'.*

**33** *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 2 pz. I sov. 6 ll. 4–10: *rogab[ --- ]<sup>5</sup> ut Ha`[eri- --- ]<sup>6</sup> var[ --- ]<sup>7</sup> [ --- ]<sup>8</sup> [ --- ]<sup>9</sup> [ --- ] şena[t- --- ]<sup>10</sup> [ --- ] yet [ ] şen . [ --- ]*.



knees.<sup>34</sup> In the *Annales* (1.13.6) such a *consularis* is named as Haterius, and the possibility arises that this episode – although differently employed by Suetonius and Tacitus in order to illustrate various aspects of the emperor’s nature – can be ascribed to a common source.<sup>35</sup>

*Poculum* – In the *editio princeps* of *P.Herc.* 1067 it was emphasised that one of the clearest textual sections is characterized by sinister tones, in particular an allusion to a slow-acting drink, which suggests poisoning.<sup>36</sup>

Poisoning is a common theme in declamation,<sup>37</sup> and it is more characteristic of historical episodes in the Tiberian than the Augustan period. For instance, suspected poisonings involved the death of Germanicus – by Piso –<sup>38</sup> and Martina and Agrippa’s sons,<sup>39</sup> while a real poisoning killed Quirinius – by Lepida;<sup>40</sup> and a simulated poisoning occurred to Agrippina, who was given an apple by the emperor.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, self-poisonings are known during the reign of Tiberius, a few even taking place in the Senate.<sup>42</sup>

**34** Suet. *Tib.* 27.1: *adulationes adeo aversatus est, ut neminem senatorum aut officii aut negotii causa ad lecticam suam admiserit, consularem vero satisfacientem sibi ac per genua orare conantem ita suffugerit, ut caderet supinus*; see Rietra (1928) 20.

**35** Gascou (1984) 270; see also the analytic parallelism between Tac. *ann.* 1.13.7 and Suet. *Tib.* 27.1 on Quintus Haterius (269–270; 396–397). Further details on this possible Haterius mentioned in *P.Herc.* 1067 see Scappaticcio (2018) 1065–1068. Lucarini (2018) 89 has recently supposed that the presence of Q. Haterius shall support a possible discussion in the Senate on Tiberius’ adoption by Augustus.

**36** *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 3 pz. I sov. 8 col. II ll. 4–17: *sepa[ --- ]<sup>f</sup> !entī [ --- ]<sup>f</sup> subiba[ --- ]<sup>f</sup> potur[ --- ]<sup>f</sup> ş[i]mūl[ --- ]<sup>f</sup> ]aşçe[ --- ]<sup>f</sup> metu . [ --- ]<sup>f</sup> ]f . [ --- ]<sup>f</sup> . . [ ]<sup>f</sup> ]rcire qu[ --- ]<sup>f</sup> . tum lu[ --- ]<sup>f</sup> ]ç[ ]<sup>f</sup> . ]açtūr[ ]<sup>f</sup> ]gare[ --- ]*. Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1068–1070.

**37** Poisoning is a frequent declamatory theme in the rhetorical work of Seneca the Elder; for instance, the fourth and sixth *controversiae* of the sixth book respectively concern a *potio ex parte mortifera* (Sen. *contr.* 6.4) and an *adultera venefica* (6.6), while the sixth *controversia* from the ninth book concerns a *filia conscia in veneno privigni* (9.6).

**38** See Tac. *ann.* 2.69.3; 3.12.4; 3.13.2; 3.14.1.

**39** See Tac. *ann.* 3.7.2 and 3.19.3.

**40** Tac. *ann.* 3.23.2.

**41** Tac. *ann.* 4.54.1 and Suet. *Tib.* 53.1.

**42** Suet. *Tib.* 61.4; see also the self-poisoning of Vibullius Agrippa (Tac. *ann.* 6.40.1).

According to the *Annales*' account of the death of Drusus in 23 AD, Drusus himself is said to have received back the same cup (*ann.* 4.10.2: *potionem*; 3: *poculum*) he meant to administer to his father.<sup>43</sup> The *Annales* also stages the homicide of Artabanus, king of Parthia, who, although prevented by fear (*Tac. ann.* 6, 32, 1: *metu*), wished to take revenge on those who had sent a delegation from his country to Rome and gave slow-acting poison to the eunuch Abdus.<sup>44</sup> According to the sources whose material was absorbed in Suetonius' *Life*, the poison possibly administered to Tiberius by Gaius in 37 AD was slow and lethal too.<sup>45</sup> Whether the suicide of the orator and poet Mamercus Scaurus in 34 AD was caused by poison is impossible to say.<sup>46</sup> Mamercus Scaurus had also been accused of attacking Agamemnon in some of his verses. Is there an *Agamemnon* behind the unexpectedly accented monosyllable *Jnon* in *P.Herc.* 1067?<sup>47</sup>

Much uncertainty remains about these episodes. On the one hand, if the *poculum* refers to the poisoning of Drusus in 21 AD, this implies that the narrative of events was lengthy and detailed, since almost two meters of roll intervened between it and the earlier reference to the Gallic *bellum* of Tiberius in 21 AD. On the other hand, if the *poculum* refers to the murder of Abderus, almost ten years must have been covered by the same length of roll. Of course, it is also possible that the event recorded here has nothing to do with these two episodes and left no further traces in imperial historiography.

*Augustus* – Two columns after this episode is the word *Auguste*. More than thirty years ago, this was the crucial evidence in favor of reconstructing an *oratio in Senatu habita ante principem*. The vocative, as well as the verb form and pronoun in the first person undoubtedly imply direct address to the *princeps*.<sup>48</sup>

43 *Tac. ann.* 4.10–11 (10.3: *atque illo ignaro et iuveniliter hauriente auctam suspicionem, tamquam metu et pudore sibimet inrogaret mortem quam patri struxerat*); see also *Suet. Tib.* 62.1.

44 *Tac. ann.* 6.32.2: *ut Abdum specie amicitiae vocatum ad epulas lento veneno inligaret, Sinnacem dissimulatione ac donis, simul per negotia moraretur*.

45 *Suet. Tib.* 73.2: *sunt qui putent venenum ei a Gaio datum lentum atque tabificum*.

46 Mamercus Scaurus was accused to have committed adultery with Livilla and to have injured Agamemnon in some of his verses. The latter episode is narrated in detail by D.C. 58.24.3–4: in the tragedy whose title was *Atrous* Mamercus Scaurus would have done 'like Euripides' (*Phoen.* 393), suggesting a servant to tolerate the tyrant's madness; so then, Tiberius wanted Mamercus become 'an Aiax', obliging him to kill himself. See *Tac. ann.* 6.29.3 and *Svet. Tib.* 61.3 (*quod in tragoedia Agamemnonem probris lacessisset*).

47 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 3 pz. I sov. 8 col. I l. 2.

48 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 5 pz. I sov. 1 col. I ll. 1–11: [ --- ] *nostr[ --- ]<sup>2</sup> --- ]ongius a pro[osito ]<sup>3</sup> --- ]dam Auguste ]<sup>4</sup> [ --- ] ut ]epetam et ]<sup>5</sup> [ --- ]rebrum eorum ]<sup>6</sup> [ --- ]arum [ ] qui ter ]<sup>7</sup> [ --- ]nquar sic ut . [ --- ]<sup>8</sup> --- ]oga . [ ]gnarum ]<sup>9</sup> [ --- ] ammaru[ --- ]<sup>10</sup> --- ] . . inēs*

In these lines there is a possible reference to senators (*nostri*); something (or someone) ‘dense’ or ‘full’ appears on the scene; there is an allusion to ‘leaving’ (if l. 7 can be integrated as *li]nquar* or *reli]nquar*); the unconsciousness or ignorance of someone who had to be interrogated is mentioned; something is bitter.

Whether the *princeps* addressed as *Augustus* is Octavian or Tiberius is impossible to say. In fact, this title was assigned to Tiberius by his predecessor.<sup>49</sup> Tiberius had an ambivalent relationship with the title, and he only used it in his correspondence with foreign dynasties,<sup>50</sup> though it is also documented in inscriptions and on coins.<sup>51</sup>

It remains possible to imagine either Augustus or Tiberius as the emperor being addressed. It is also conceivable that the address took place through the medium of a letter, such as the one written by the king of Parthian Artaban to Tiberius, according to the Suetonian *Life*.<sup>52</sup>

*Adoptio* – Further along is the suggestive word *adoptio*. It is impossible to say whether this is the *adoptio* of Germanicus forced on Tiberius by his predecessor,<sup>53</sup> of Tiberius’s maternal grandfather into the *gens* Livia,<sup>54</sup> or of Tiberius himself.<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, *adoptio* is a theme of declamation, along with *stuprum*, which also appears in the roll’s narrative (*-st]upratā muliē[re*).<sup>56</sup> The presence of these

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solō[ --- ]<sup>11</sup> --- ] . . . . . [; col. II ll. 2–7: [ . . . . . ]ςζ[ --- ]<sup>13</sup> . . . . . ]υ[ . . . ] . c[ --- ] ]<sup>14</sup> ποτῖσset [ --- ] ]<sup>15</sup> [a]doptiōn[ --- ] ]<sup>16</sup> [e]xprobaυ[ --- ] ]<sup>17</sup> [ . . . . . ]ορ . [ Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1071–1072.

49 Suet. *Aug.* 101.2: *heredes instituit primos Tiberium ex parte dimidia et sextante, Liviam ex parte tertia, quos et ferre nomen suum iussit*; see Ov. *fast.* 1.608: *tanti cognominis (scil. Augusti) heres*.

50 Suet. *Tib.* 26, 2: *ac ne ‘Augusti’ quidem nomen, quanquam hereditarium, nullis nisi ad reges ac dynastas epistulis addidit*; D.C. 57.8.1–2: τὸ τοῦ Αὐγούστου (scil. πρόσρημα) οὐκ ἐπέθετο μὲν (οὐδὲ γὰρ ψηφισθῆναι ποτε εἶασε), λεγόμενον δ’ἀκούων καὶ γραφόμενον ἀναγιγνώσκων ἔφερε καὶ ὁσάκις γε βασιλεῦσί τισιν ἐπέστελλε, καὶ ἐκεῖνο προσενέγραφε. Τὸ δ’ὄλον Καῖσαρ.

51 See Scott (1932); on the honorific titles of Tiberius see also Baar (1990) 162–165 and Yavetz (1999) 40, where further bibliographical references are found.

52 Suet. *Tib.* 66.2: *quin et Artabani Parthorum regis laceratus est litteris parricidia et caedes et ignaviam et luxuriam obicientis monentisque, ut voluntaria morte maximo iustissimoque civium odio quam primum satis faceret*.

53 Tac. *ann.* 1.3.5; Suet. *Tib.* 15.2; *Cal.* 4.1; see Baar (1990) 117.

54 Tac. *ann.* 5.1.1; 6.51.1; see Suet. *Tib.* 3.1; 52.1.

55 Tiberius’ adoption by Augustus in 4 AD has been supported by Lucarini (2018). See Tac. *ann.* 1.7.7; Suet. *Aug.* 65.1; on which Baar (1990) 59.

56 *P.Herc.* 1067 cr. 2 pz. I sov. 4 l. 5 (in the marginale). Further details in Scappaticcio (2018) 1064–1065.

particular themes is further evidence of Senecan paternity, and it helps to characterise a specific type of ‘rhetorical historiography’.<sup>57</sup>

### 3 Perspectives: the *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* and Imperial historiography

The text recovered from *P.Herc.* 1067 seems to give pronounced attention to narrative details. Was this work complete in the one surviving roll or did it spread across several *volumina*? The authorship of the work is certain thanks to the presence of *Lucius Annaeus* in the *subscriptio*. These considerations lead to the conclusion that the work is the *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*.

The possibility that the historical characters mentioned are characters in anecdotes or *exempla* in a rhetorical work can be excluded by the evidence of the *subscriptio* and by the quantity of text – the roll had to measure almost thirteen meters in total. This is far more than the quantity of text known to be in the full version of the *Oratorum et rhetorum sententiae, divisiones, colores*.

The text’s narrative detail and possible interest in anecdote is complemented by dialogic (or epistolary) sections, all focusing on historical characters of the imperial family. Similar elements can be traced back to the historiography of Seneca the Elder.

The highly fragmentary plot can be filled out by parallels from later historiography concerned with the Late Republic and early empire. The historiographical work found in *P.Herc.* 1067 seems to have shared with some later historiographical works a basically annalistic setting, as in Tacitus’ *Annales*. Tiberius seems to emerge as a common denominator of all the episodes found in the roll.

The recovery of a new manuscript witness narrating some details of the reign of Tiberius – or the final period (?) of the Principate of Augustus – creates a dialogue with the first six books of the *Annales* of Tacitus, the biography of Suetonius, and Cassius Dio’s *Histories*. The *Historiae* now known from *P.Herc.* 1067 must have been in circulation before Tacitus, before Suetonius, before Appian, and before Cassius Dio. It is conceivable that it influenced these later historians

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57 On such a topic Migliario (2007) stands as reference work.

and represented one of their sources.<sup>58</sup> It has long been known that the relationship between Tacitus and Suetonius is complex, since both drew on Seneca the Elder's historiography, as well as the works of Aufidius Bassus and Servilius Nonianus. It was also established that Seneca's *Historiae* were characterized by a slanderous tone against the emperor, too.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, it has also been questioned whether the father's historiographical work was a model for his son, who cites historiographical *exempla* in his works,<sup>60</sup> as well as a model for Pliny the Elder, whose sources for historiographical *exempla* deserve further investigation.<sup>61</sup>

Regardless of whether the surviving fragmentary columns of text from the original roll of *P.Herc.* 1067 can be connected to the reign of Tiberius (or the Principate of Augustus), whether the narration of Seneca the Elder was accurate in historiographical detail, and whether the *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* explored the history of Rome since the *sedition Gracchana* or since the civil wars between Caesar and Pompey, it is clear that the surviving roll would have not been the only one bearing the text of this historiographical work. Perhaps it would be fruitless to hunt for the rest of Seneca the Elder's *Historiae* in the surviving rolls from the Library of the Herculaneum Villa, but such a story of discovery nurtures the hope that more new chapters of Latin literature might one day be written and it encourages more work on unpublished Latin fragments.

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**58** Questa (1963<sup>2</sup>) stands as reference work; a specific section is dedicated to the sources of the first six books of the *Annales* (125–173). More recently, on the sources of Tacitus see Devillers (2003); on Seneca the Elder as one of the possible sources of Tacitus see Devillers *infra* 249–252.

**59** Questa (1963<sup>2</sup>) 171–173; Gascou (1984) 265.

**60** What Castiglioni (1928) 456 affirms about Seneca the Elder's historiographical work is instructive: “un’opera, ricca di dettaglio, costituente il patrimonio letterario della famiglia”.

**61** Further details in Scappaticcio (2018).

Giancarlo Mazzoli

## ***Unde primum veritas retro abiit.* Riflessioni sull'inizio delle *Historiae* di Seneca Padre**

**Abstract:** The coincidence in the *tria nomina* of Seneca the Elder and the Young, as well as inducing, until the Renaissance, a centuries-old misunderstanding of their respective literary identities, is also at the base of the *vexata quaestio* related to the attribution of the fragment, quoted by Lactantius, that revisits the history of Rome as *bios* and divides it in age groups up to the first imperial age. Do are confirmed the reasons that lead to assign it to the *Historiae*, the important work of Seneca the Elder which started from the beginning of the civil wars, *unde primum veritas retro abiit*, according to what witnessed by the small palimpsest piece transmitted of the *De vita patris*, the biography written shortly after the death of the parent by Seneca the philosopher. Already a more careful reading of the fragment transmitted by Lactantius helps to consider more probable that the *Historiae* devoted attention also to the first signs of the so-called 'Roman revolution'; and confirmations in this sense come from a whole series of textual comparisons, especially with the *Suasoriae* and *Controversiae* of Seneca the Elder, the *De ira* of the son and an initial section of the *Bellum civile* of the nephew Lucan. On the basis of these critical acquisitions we intend to deepen the interpretation of the polemic hint with which Seneca the Elder, in the *Historiae*, linked the first retreat of *veritas* to the beginning of the civil wars in order to leave the place, probably, within the social and political institutions of Rome, to error and mystification.

*Duosque Senecas unicumque Lucanum / facunda loquitur Corduba.* Con orgoglio iberico Marziale (1.61.7) esalta quella che altrove (4.40.2) definisce la *docti Senecae ter numeranda domus*, una dinastia letteraria senza uguali nella latinità, distesa attraverso tre generazioni, padre figlio nipote; le sono solo accostabili altre come quelle, in età repubblicana, di Ennio e Pacuvio e, a ridosso cronologico, dei Plini, entrambe soltanto su due generazioni, di zio (materno) e nipote. Ma l'epigrammatista non avrebbe potuto immaginare l'involontario innesco provocato dalla sua, peraltro esatta, testimonianza, a una delle più longeve trafile di confusione identitaria prodottesi nelle letterature classiche, destinata a riemergere per larga parte dell'età umanistica, non senza condizionare perfino moderne valutazioni critiche.

Chi ha fatto il punto più chiaro sull'intera questione è stata Laura Bocciolini Palagi,<sup>1</sup> al cui contributo qui faccio principale riferimento. La Bocciolini giustamente riconosce il fondamentale punto di svolta della intricata vicenda, dopo la metà del V d.C., nei versi di Sidonio Apollinare, che torna sulla falsariga di Marziale a esaltare, in *car.* 9.230–238 e anche 23.162 s., i *celsos Senecas* nativi di Cordova, ma distinguendo Seneca filosofo – cultore a suo dire dell'*hispidus Plato* (perché probabilmente anch'egli autore di *dialogi*) e vano ammonitore del *suus Nero* – non da Seneca padre ma dal drammaturgo, seguace di Euripide, di Eschilo, di Tespi: un *distinguo* arbitrario che, dalla tarda antichità, attraverserà carsicamente il medioevo per riaffiorare, come detto, in età umanistica fino almeno alla metà del '500: illustri fra tutti i coinvolgimenti di Petrarca e, più nettamente ancora, di Boccaccio; ma si pensi già al dantesco 'Seneca morale'.

Sidonio ritiene di dirimere così, sull'autorità, evidentemente fraintesa, di Marziale, la confusione – da ritenersi ormai piena almeno dal IV d.C. – ingenerata dall'omonimia fra i *duos Senecas*. Dalla tradizione manoscritta infatti già il padre appare accreditato dei *tria nomina* del figlio, *Lucius Annaeus Seneca*. C'è tuttavia chi non esclude che ciò possa essere accaduto per mero effetto dal ben maggiore prestigio letterario del figlio, che avrebbe finito per produrre nei manoscritti appunto il conguaglio del prenome paterno col suo.<sup>2</sup> Se si giudica in base all'ordine della dedica delle *Controversiae* paterne ai tre figli, Seneca filosofo par essere il secondogenito, dopo Novato e prima di Mela. Una volta adottato, in età già adulta, dal retore Giunio Gallione, anche Novato porterà il prenome Lucio, ma non si sa se questo potesse già essere il suo prima dell'adozione, considerato anche il fatto che sarà dato al filosofo; e in ciò s'è voluta vedere una possibile conferma retroattiva del dubbio sul prenome del padre, che, se *Lucius*, sarebbe più facilmente passato, secondo la prassi, al primogenito piuttosto che al secondogenito. Mi pare francamente un dubbio troppo sottile, dato che è una prassi che conosce deroghe.<sup>3</sup> Dal momento che è il futuro filosofo e non il fratello a ereditare il *cognomen* Seneca del padre, appare plausibile che possa averne raccolto anche il prenome. Naturalmente, la *subscriptio* della *P.Herc.* 1067, una volta riconosciuta nel suo contenuto l'opera di Seneca padre, viene a dirimere in modo *tranchant* la questione.

<sup>1</sup> Bocciolini Palagi (1978).

<sup>2</sup> Di recente, per esempio, Levick in *FRHist* I 505, ma cf. già Bocciolini Palagi (1978) 219 n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Basti un esempio: *Fabius Maximus Africanus*, *cos.* 10 a.C., reca il prenome *Quintus* (cf. *RE* 1, 716, s. v. *Africanus*, n. 8 a) del padre (*suff.* 45 a.C.) pur essendo fratello minore di *Paullus Fabius Maximus* (*cos.* 11 a.C.): cf. Syme (1986) 55, 57, 320, 403.

Come ben rileva la Bocciolini,<sup>4</sup> fin dal primo momento troviamo padre e figlio menzionati entrambi indistintamente col semplice *cognomen* Seneca in autori pur non sospettabili di ignorarne le rispettive identità: così Quintiliano che, ibero anch'egli, quando in *inst.* 9.2.42 cita *Seneca in controversiis* certo sa bene che sta parlando del padre: basta il preciso riferimento all'opera declamatoria per dirimere ogni equivoco. E possiamo ben ritenere che neanche a Svetonio sfuggisse in *Tib.* 13 l'identità del Seneca cui *tout court* ascrive un aneddoto sulla morte del successore di Augusto, ma è meglio ora non occuparcene per evitare qualunque rischio di commettere petizioni di principio. In autori più tardi la situazione sicuramente cambia. Evidenti segnali di confusione emergono da Prisciano (*GL* 3 410), che, nel citare (verosimilmente a memoria) un passo del decimo libro delle *Controversiae* (5.21), lo attribuisce a un decimo libro di fantomatiche *Epistulae ad Novatum*: palese la contaminazione con la produzione epistolografica di Seneca figlio. Anche dai cristiani provengono analoghi indizi. Già nel IV d.C., osserva ancora la Bocciolini,<sup>5</sup> esce dall'epistolario apocrifo con San Paolo l'immagine d'un Seneca cultore a un tempo di filosofia e di arte oratoria: in particolare la sua definizione, nell'epistola 2, come *ensor sophista*, lo rappresenta appunto come maestro di morale e di retorica, fondendo assieme le professioni letterarie di padre e figlio.

E nulla induce a credere che nella prima metà del secolo fosse maggiormente in grado di distinguerle Lattanzio, sul quale ci dobbiamo fermare. Infatti, accanto a molteplici citazioni da scritti perduti del filosofo, quali le *Exhortationes* e i *Libri moralis philosophiae*, l'apologista africano in *inst.* 7.15.14–16 ascrive in forma indiretta a un generico Seneca e senza indicazione d'opera il famoso frammento con cui la storia di Roma viene sinteticamente rivisitata *non inscite* come *bios* e, di conseguenza, ripartita in fasce d'età.

Fino al conseguimento dell'*acmé*, le scansioni biologiche sono marcate nel frammento con chiarezza di referenti cronologici: nascita e prima infanzia di Roma sotto il regno di Romolo, età puerile e, per così dire, formazione scolastica sotto i restanti re, fin quasi all'*adulescentia*, che effettivamente decorre dalla presa di coscienza dinanzi all'intollerabile dispotismo dell'ultimo monarca, Tarquinio il Superbo, con la conseguente cacciata del tiranno e la scelta, retoricamente marcata,<sup>6</sup> di obbedire *legibus* piuttosto che *regibus*. Si apre così il lungo processo di irrobustimento concluso dal trionfo su Cartagine, perché con la soppressione della nemica storica prende a sua volta inizio il *iuvenescere*, cioè il

4 Bocciolini Palagi (1978) 217–219.

5 Bocciolini Palagi (1978) 222–224.

6 Klotz (1901) 431 n. 1 la segnala già in *Rhet. Her.* 2.40.3.



pieno conseguimento di forze dell'età matura, per una Roma ormai potenza mondiale, senza più nemici esterni. Ma proprio il venir meno di questa *bellorum materia* – buona la sintonia col pensiero di Sallustio e di Livio – induce ben presto quelle forze a confliggere tra di loro e a fiaccarsi sotto il proprio stesso peso. Siamo al *turning point* della parabola biologica, da cui prende primo avvio una *senectus* paradossalmente assimilabile a una seconda *infantia*, perché nuovamente astretta, a causa della sua debolezza, ad affidare, come in età regia, il proprio sostentamento a un *singulare imperium*.

Il *locus* non appartiene ad alcuno scritto conservato di Seneca figlio, innescando di conseguenza tra gli studiosi una dibattuta questione di attribuzione. Una linea – che annovera quali più autorevoli assertori Alfred Klotz a inizi '900 e, in tempi più recenti, Miriam T. Griffin che oggi compiangiamo,<sup>7</sup> per non dire del *non liquet* di Lewis Sussman –<sup>8</sup> tende a rivendicarne la paternità al pensatore, ma senza riuscire, a mio avviso, a trarre dal raffronto con la sua opera cogenti elementi a favore della tesi. Mi riferisco in particolare a *benef.* 2.20 che, movendo famose critiche al gesto cesaricida di Marco Bruto, illustra al meglio la disincantata e per certi versi pre-tacitiana ideologia del filosofo. Ha studiato attentamente quel testo, sullo sfondo dottrinale del *de clementia*, Italo Lana, giungendo alle seguenti per me condivisibili conclusioni:<sup>9</sup>

accettazione del principato (e conseguente rinuncia a qualsiasi progetto di restaurazione repubblicana, ritenuta improbabile), rifiuto della concezione repubblicana della libertà, nuova fondazione del rapporto fra dominante e dominato sulla base della *clementia* (che, da questo punto di vista, sostituisce l'ideale repubblicano della *libertas*): giustificazione della teoria della *clementia* basata sulla finzione del *rex iustus* che diffonde la virtù, il bene, la felicità, ecc. fra i suoi sudditi.

Sembra, beninteso sul piano teorico, che per il filosofo la vicenda costituzionale, una volta conseguito l'*optimus civitatis status sub rege iusto*, sia al suo approdo, come ha scritto Margherita Isnardi Parente:<sup>10</sup>

Seneca ha in mente un tipo di *res publica* che non si identifica con quella di Pompeo, o Cicerone, o di Marco Bruto (che non è, infatti, il suo eroe). La sua *res publica* potrebbe anche sopportare un *rex*, purché i valori della giustizia e della equità vengano rispettati.

7 Klotz (1901); Griffin (1972) 19; (1976) 194–201, in particolare 198–199.

8 Sussman (1978) 140–141.

9 Lana (1970) 107–116, in particolare 116.

10 Isnardi Parente (1998) 222–223.

Diversa e più amara percezione suggerisce il frammento citato da Lattanzio, proponendo una implicita visione ciclica: per gli *urbis tempora*, caduti di nuovo dopo le guerre civili nello stadio eteronomo dell'età infantile, il regime imperiale s'impone come ricorso necessario e provvisorio ma lungi dal rappresentare l'*optimus status*; nel 'ciclo' precedente Roma aveva saputo riscattarsene, con la vigorosa instaurazione della *libertas* repubblicana e solo se così mai riuscisse a fare una seconda volta, si lascia sottintendere, potrebbe nuovamente tornare adulta e padrona delle sue forze. C'è qui una implicazione polemica che prudenza e realismo mantengono di necessità inespresa; ma ben mostra di coglierla e rimuoverla, tra coloro che riprenderanno il modello 'biologico' delle età di Roma,<sup>11</sup> Floro (*epit.* 1 *praef.* 8), quando sceglie di sostituire al ritorno in età imperiale della fiacca *infantia* il trapasso diretto, *sub Traiano principe*, dall'inerte *senectus* dei predecessori a una insperata repentina *iuventus*.

Ben meglio che al figlio la riflessione contenuta nel frammento s'addice all'atteggiamento ideologico di Seneca padre, così sintetizzato da Sussman:<sup>12</sup>

Seneca lived through the worst years of the Republic and the best of the Principate. Nevertheless in the extant works there appears disillusionment with the Principate and the uncovering of some Republican sentiments. He recognized the system for what it was; not a "Republic restored" (*res publica restituta*) as the Augustan slogan went, but rather an autocracy which could be benevolent at times or despotic [...] But Seneca was a realist who recognized that the Republic was dead. Though sometimes repressive, the Principate was necessary to maintain order.

In effetti la linea critica che attribuisce a lui il frammento è largamente maggioritaria: si va, solo per citare alcuni nomi, da Angelo Mai a Luigi Castiglioni, a Marion Lausberg, a Laura Bocciolini, Janet Fairweather e Dionigi Vottero fino ai più recenti interventi di Luciano Canfora del 2015 e già del 2000.<sup>13</sup>

C'è ancora un punto sul quale vorrei insistere, perché porta più nel vivo del mio tema. Il frammento palesa una *forma mentis* incline a sintetizzare storicamente in una visione d'assieme gli eventi d'un popolo (una plausibile opinione<sup>14</sup> la accredita come *incipit* dell'opera storica di Seneca padre secondo il procedimento reso famoso dal libro 1 di Tucidide e che farà poi suo Tac. *ann.* 1.1 con la

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Klotz (1901) 430–437.

<sup>12</sup> Sussman (1978) 31, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Klotz (1901) 429 (per la notizia su Mai); Castiglioni (1928); Lausberg (1970) 3 n. 10; (1989) 1957–1958 con ampia bibliografia; Bocciolini Palagi (1978) 220; Fairweather (1981) 16–17; Vottero (1998) 78 con ulteriore bibliografia; Canfora (2000) 165; (2015) 158.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Fairweather (1981) 17.

medesima stringatezza palesata dal frammento) piuttosto che a riflettere su alcuni di essi teoricamente: com'è invece per Seneca figlio, interessato non al *continuum* della vicenda storico-politica di Roma ma al *discretum* dell'ampia messe di *exempla* morali che, in modo sostanzialmente acronico, se ne possono astrarre<sup>15</sup> in due direzioni, microcosmo e cosmopoli, tra loro polari ma altrettanto centrifughe rispetto a Roma in quanto *civitas*, cioè cronotopo socio-politico.<sup>16</sup> Il filosofo, che in *apocol.* 1 e 5 ironizza apertamente sulla scarsa serietà degli storici, esprime nelle *naturales quaestiones* sul loro conto critiche ancora più severe, tacciandoli di, anche consapevole, mendacio (4a *praef.* 21; 4b.3.1; 7.16.1) e antepo- nendo recisamente in 3 *praef.* 7 il *quid faciendum* oggetto della parnesi etica al *quid factum* oggetto della narrazione storica.<sup>17</sup> Non potrebbe dunque esserci una più netta presa di distanza dal padre, del quale del resto in *epist.* 108.22 dichiara apertamente che *philosophiam oderat*; da un padre che aveva viceversa assunto quasi come una sua missione l'esortazione dei figli alle storie, *solida et verum habentia (suas.* 6.16),<sup>18</sup> e che alla storia romana aveva dedicato un'opera ben più importante delle raccolte di *declamationes* che di lui noi possediamo, forse introdotta proprio da quel frammento conservatoci da Lattanzio di cui ci siamo ora occupati. Ma sorte ha voluto che delle *Historiae* di Seneca padre non restassero se non precarie tracce relegate in veri e propri terminali della ricerca filologica, il lacerto del palinsesto vaticano contenente l'inizio del *de vita patris* di Seneca filosofo (*Appendix* - T1) e ora i frustuli del papiro ercolanese su cui si sono concentrate le cure assidue di questo *Progetto Platinum* diretto da Maria Chiara Scappaticcio, mirato a dare sviluppo e più tangibile sostanza all'intuizione che fu già di Robert Marichal.

Il papiro, tramite le preziose acquisizioni edite da Valeria Piano, ci restituisce un *Lucius Annaeus Seneca* nella *subscriptio* di un'opera che si spingeva fino a trattare di Tiberio, rendendo così plausibile ascriverle anche l'aneddoto sulla morte del principe citato, come già s'è detto, da Svetonio: dato compatibile solo con una composizione protratta dal suo autore sino alla più tarda età, in piena sintonia con l'informazione biografica, ben presto mutila, fornitaci da Seneca figlio, su cui dobbiamo finalmente portare tutta la nostra attenzione:

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15 Cf. Lévy (2003) 503.

16 Cf. Mazzoli (2012).

17 Cf. Mazzoli (2016) 52–54.

18 Cf. Sussman (1978) 138 n. 2; si veda anche il contributo dello stesso Sussman *infra* 179–186.

*quisquis legisset eius historias ab initio bellorum civilium, unde primum veritas retro abiit, paene usque ad mortis suae diem, magno aestimasset scire, quibus natus esset parentibus ille qui res Roma<nas>...*

Se il *terminus ad quem* dell'opera – verosimilmente il principato di Caligola, nel cui corso si lascia assegnare la morte di Seneca padre – si può individuare senza particolare difficoltà, ben diversamente stanno le cose per l'*a quo*, nonostante l'apparente chiarezza dell'indicazione presente nel palinsesto, *ab initio bellorum civilium*, né viene certo in soccorso quanto soggiunto, *unde primum veritas retro abiit*. Infatti, se la notizia cronologica si riferisce ufficialmente e oggettivamente all'*incipit* storico, quale ch'esso sia, della trattazione, resta ambiguo ed esposto a interpretazioni soggettive il referente della successiva precisazione. E inoltre: con essa Seneca figlio si limita a registrare fedelmente il pensiero del padre o si tratta d'un commento in proprio da lui aggiunto? È un plesso di problemi esegetici concatenati, su cui la critica ha argomentato in modo assai variegato.

Infatti la pluralità di *bella civilia* succedutisi nei lunghi svolgimenti della 'rivoluzione romana', ivi inclusi sommovimenti che ne sono stati avvisaglie, ha consentito di situare molto variamente il punto di partenza storico dell'opera seneana, dal periodo dei Gracchi fino all'avvento del principato augusteo, e rimando in proposito alla, ancor valida oggi, messa a punto anche bibliografica di Marion Lausberg.<sup>19</sup> A tirare le somme del dibattito, sembra prevalere la tesi che l'opera prenda le mosse dagli ultimi decenni dell'età repubblicana, con particolare riguardo al tempo del conflitto tra Cesare e Pompeo che, come poi mostrerà il poema lucaneo, può essere considerato il *bellum civile* per eccellenza: a partire, sull'*auctoritas* di Asinio Pollione, dall'inizio del primo triumvirato, *ex Metello consule*, 60 a. C., secondo la testimonianza oraziana, *carm.* 2.1.1–8; e potrebbe giocare a favore di questo orientamento il titolo stesso di *Historiae* assegnato all'opera da Seneca filosofo, se nel senso inteso da Verrio Flacco (Gell. 5.18.1), di racconto in sincrono col vissuto del narratore, come poté essere per Seneca padre già dalla matura età di Cicerone (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 11): *ne Ciceronem quidem aetas mihi eripuerat sed bellorum civilium furor, qui tunc orbem totum pervagabatur, intra coloniam meam me continuit*. Si noti qui anche l'impiego del plurale *bellorum civilium* in rapporto a un *tunc* alquanto circoscritto, a indebolire l'argomento di coloro che vogliono invece vedere nel medesimo plurale usato nel *de vita patris* un riferimento molto comprensivo se non addirittura globale alle guerre civili via via succedutesi a Roma. E tuttavia, portandoci ora a considerare gli elementi che

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Lausberg (1989) 1939 e nn. 220–223. A favore dell'inizio delle *Historiae* di Seneca dalla guerra tra Cesare e Pompeo si dichiara anche Rich (*infra*, in particolare 343–352).

giocano a favore di questa diversa tesi, non possiamo trascurare proprio il fatto che, secondo il *de vita patris*, le *Historiae* prendevano avvio non dal periodo di pieno *furor* delle guerre civili, evocato nel passo delle *Controversiae*, ma specificamente dal loro primo momento genetico. E questo, tenuto conto di quanto accaduto a Roma dopo la fine delle guerre puniche, avvalorava la presenza nell'opera d'una retrospezione di maggiore profondità, che potrebbe arretrare anche fino alla *seditio Gracchana*:<sup>20</sup> quanto meno come antefatto 'archeologico'. Vorrei richiamare l'attenzione su un possibile indizio che non vedo considerato dalla critica. La notizia del *de vita patris* s'interrompe per noi sul più bello, ma a tempo per consentirci una domanda che mi pare non irrilevante: perché mai chi avesse letto *Historiae* moventi *ab initio bellorum civilium* dovrebbe reputare importante conoscere gli antecedenti genealogici del loro autore, *quibus natus esset parentibus*, se non per la ragione che anche quel passato generazionale fosse incluso tra le *res Roma<nas>* oggetto dell'opera?

Entra qui in gioco necessariamente il confronto testuale col frammento citato da Lattanzio (*Appendix* – F2), del quale non tutti hanno interpretato giustamente la parte finale, col risultato di influenzare in modo non corretto anche l'approccio critico alla notizia del *de vita patris*.

*Amissa enim libertate, quam Bruto duce et auctore defenderat, ita consenuit, tamquam sustentare se ipsa non valeret, nisi adminiculo regentium niteretur.*

Il fraintendimento è già palese nell'indagine di Luigi Castiglioni, che, benemerita per la molto argomentata attribuzione del frammento a Seneca padre, ha non poco condizionato la ricerca successiva. Lo studioso si dichiara per tempo (siamo nel 1928) a favore dell'inizio *ex Metello consule* delle *Historiae*, ma poi così precisa la sua opzione:<sup>21</sup>

se davvero per la completezza del quadro storico Seneca si rifaceva al consolato di Metello, traspare dal passo in questione che, a suo giudizio, il culmine degli avvenimenti era rappresentato dalla lotta di Bruto e Cassio contro Ottaviano e Antonio. L'estrema vecchiaia di Roma coincide con la sconfitta dei due congiurati, che erano il simbolo dell'antica libertà. [...] Il rilievo [...] è eloquente per sé stesso e lascia ben vedere quale importanza lo storico annettesse agli eventi del 41.

<sup>20</sup> Come sostenuto con particolare convinzione da Sussman (1978) 142–143 (cf. anche il contributo dello stesso Sussman *infra* 147 e n. 18; e più recentemente da Canfora (2000) 165–168; (2015) 138–213, facendo molta leva sulle cronologie seguite, a suo avviso appunto sulla scorta di Seneca padre, da Appiano e Floro.

<sup>21</sup> Castiglioni (1928) 460: cf. anche 474.

Se il Bruto del frammento fosse Marco, il cesaricida,<sup>22</sup> il contenuto delle *Historiae* verrebbe inevitabilmente a schiacciarsi sulle ultime vicende della Roma repubblicana. Si tratta invece sicuramente<sup>23</sup> di Lucio Giunio Bruto, il suo celebre antenato, con chiara rispondenza tra il *servitium non tulisse* che nella prima parte del frammento evoca il riscatto dalla *dominatio* di Tarquinio il Superbo e la definizione finale di Bruto quale *dux* e *auctor* della *libertas* romana (*Bruto libertatem debemus*, ribadirà Seneca figlio in *dial.* 6.16.2, dunque negli stessi anni in cui si occupa delle *Historiae* paterne). E possiamo aggiungere a conferma che, sia nelle *Controversiae* sia nelle *Suasoriae*, ogniqualvolta Bruto venga menzionato *tout court*, senza prenome, si tratta di Lucio, mentre il suo, ben più discusso, discendente è sempre distinto dal prenome Marco quando non strettamente abbinato con l'altro principale cesaricida Cassio.<sup>24</sup>

Riferito all'operato di Lucio e non di Marco Bruto, il piuccheperfetto *defenderat* pianta un paletto cronologico dal quale decorre l'intera storia repubblicana di Roma, non più uno spazio ristretto di anni in cui di necessità situare, *amissa libertate*, la complessiva involuzione, per così dire bio-politica, che riconduce Roma all'*altera infantia*. Il frammento invita invece a intendere che dovette trattarsi d'un processo di decadimento di più lungo corso, instauratosi fin da quando, fiaccate da *intestinum malum*, presero a vacillare – prodromi già nei moti graccani – le libere istituzioni d'una Roma non più impegnata a combattere per la sua egemonia internazionale. Si noti l'enfasi portata, tramite specifiche marche, sulla precocità del *Wendepunkt*: *haec fuit prima eius senectus*, cioè appunto – secondo la notizia del *De vita patris – ab initio bellorum civilium, unde primum veritas retro abiit*.

Una medesima patologia regressiva, a partire da quell'*initium*, omologa pertanto al ritorno di Roma all'infanzia l'arretramento della *veritas*: opinione, quest'ultima, che il figlio riporta ricalcando dunque ben probabilmente le parole paterne stesse. Assai indicativo in tal senso si rivela il confronto<sup>25</sup> con *contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7, una delle due uniche volte che l'astratto *veritas* occorre nelle opere

22 Cf. ancora in tal senso Weinrib (1990) 137; Lana (1955) 81: “M. Giunio Bruto, il cesaricida, era dunque considerato, da Seneca padre, guida nella rivendicazione della libertà perduta e propugnatore della medesima”; stranamente, si lascia evincere, anche Sussman (1978), 33 n. 71, che pure è tra coloro che propendono per arretrare maggiormente la cronologia dell'*initium*, secondo Seneca padre, *bellorum civilium*.

23 Come già osservato, pur senza trarne alcune opportune conseguenze, da Griffin (1972) 19; (1976) 198 n. 3; Levick in *FRHist* I 597.

24 Cf. per Lucio *contr.* 3 *exc.* 9; 9.2.9; 9.*exc.* 2; 10.3.3; 10 *exc.* 3; per Marco *contr.* 10.1.8; *suas.* 6.11.14, e, con Cassio, 6.14; 17; 19; 7.5.

25 Proposto, ma solo parzialmente, anche in Fairweather (1981) 16.

rimasteci di Seneca padre (ci interesserà anche l'altra, *suas.* 1.5); e, ciò che più conta, in stretto rapporto contestuale col processo patologico di cui ci stiamo occupando e l'eziogenesi che ne viene indicata. Il padre caldeggia che i suoi tre giovani figli, non paghi, nella loro formazione retorica, delle moderne imitazioni, desiderino conoscere i grandi modelli del passato, anzitutto perché *semper citra veritatem est similitudo* (ci torneremo su) e poi per rendersi ben conto di *quantum cotidie ingenia decrescant et nescio qua iniquitate naturae eloquentia se retro tulerit*. Notevole, nella denuncia della sindrome regressiva, la somiglianza terminologica con quanto attestato nel *de vita patris*. E il passo continua esaltando la splendida fioritura dell'oratoria romana al tempo di Cicerone; cui poi tien dietro l'inarrestabile declino, imputabile a due cause fondamentali:

*in deterius deinde cotidie data res est sive luxu temporum, nihil enim tam mortiferum ingeniis quam luxuria est, [...] sive fato quodam, cuius maligna perpetuaque in rebus omnibus lex est, ut ad summum perducta rursus ad infimum velocius quidem quam ascenderant relabantur.*

Si potrebbe obiettare il *décalage* cronologico di questo *retro se ferre* della *Romana facundia*, fatto decorrere dal termine dell'età ciceroniana, rispetto alla genesi, imputata a un'epoca ben probabilmente anteriore, del *retro abire* della *veritas* nella 'vita' politica dell'*urbs*. Ma c'è di mezzo, a renderlo inevitabile, proprio il culto di Seneca padre per la figura del grande oratore: se ci portiamo ai due 'pezzi' più forti che ce lo attestano, le suasorie 6 e 7, emerge chiaramente un ben altro giudizio sui *tempora* e i *mores* (cf. in particolare *suas.* 6.3) in cui già egli ebbe a imbattearsi. E c'è, di prim'ordine, la testimonianza del proemio di Lucano, per la quale mi sembra si possa ancor meglio segnalare il debito contratto col pensiero del nonno. A partire da 1.67 il poeta mutua, sull'eziologia del *bellum civile* che si accinge a narrare, esattamente la diagnosi formulata da Seneca padre sulla crisi dell'oratoria romana; e ciò avvalora il sospetto che quella diagnosi particolare riprendesse a sua volta una disamina di ben più larga portata condotta nelle *Historiae* sulle cause complessive dell'involuzione che, di pari passo appunto con le guerre civili, portò l'*urbs* alla seconda infanzia. Già ai vv. 70–72 Lucano identifica la prima ragione nella 'maligna' legge del fato che, a lungo andare, ha fatto crollare Roma sotto il suo peso, proprio come già indicato nel frammento citato da Lattanzio:

*invida fatorum series summisque negatum  
stare diu nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus  
nec se Roma ferens.*

Dopo un'analisi di fattori più strettamente inerenti allo specifico conflitto tra Cesare e Pompeo, ecco l'altra più remota e generale motivazione, il *luxus*, vv. 158–162 (i neretti aiutano a coglierne l'essenziale):

*hae ducibus causae; suberant sed publica belli  
semina, quae populos semper mersere potentis.  
namque, ut opes nimias mundo fortuna subacto  
intulit et rebus mores cessere secundis  
praedaque et hostiles luxum suasere rapinae.*

Motivazioni *communes*, si dirà, sia l'una che l'altra, *fatum* e *luxus*, atte a trovare facile cassa di risonanza nelle scuole di declamazione,<sup>26</sup> ma per intanto colpisce trovarle entrambe, e in così stretta connessione tra loro, prima di Lucano, proprio e solo in Seneca padre, sebbene condensate *en passant* in un *locus* che, come dicevo, non par essere se non il corollario d'una ben più ampia riflessione già fatta altrove. E, ciò che più conta, Lucano, proprio come il nonno, intende rifarsi alle ragioni primarie del conflitto, arretrando dalle *causae* prossime ai *publica belli semina* (efficace l'*enjambement*), che più avanti precisa (vv. 171–182):

*non erat is populus quem pax tranquilla iuaret,  
quem sua libertas inmotis pasceret armis.  
inde irae faciles et, quod suasisset egestas,  
vile nefas, magnumque decus ferroque petendum  
plus patria potuisse sua, mensuraque iuris  
vis erat: hinc leges et plebis scita coactae  
et cum consulibus turbantes iura tribuni.  
hinc rapti fasces pretio sectorque favoris  
ipse sui populus letalisque ambitus urbi  
annua venali referens certamina Campo;  
hinc usura vorax avidumque in tempora fenus  
et concussa fides et multis utile bellum.*

*Inde, hinc*, le marche incipitarie del degrado politico, a fronte di *unde primum*, indicata da Seneca padre. Per Lucano dunque Roma incomincia ad abdicare alla sua antica *libertas* dal primo insorgere delle discordie interne, ben anteriormente allo specifico *bellum civile* ch'egli intende cantare. Questo *a quo* viene principalmente identificato nei *plebis scita coactae et cum consulibus turbantes iura tribuni*, dai moti graccani in avanti; e diagnosi affini, sempre molto a ridosso, non solo concettuale, di quella di Seneca padre, si lasciano poi rintracciare in Taci-

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Bonner (2010) 90.



to<sup>27</sup> e in Floro.<sup>28</sup> Nel rilevare queste affinità, Andrew Lintott<sup>29</sup> non esclude che riflessioni così tra loro simili rimandino a una ‘fonte comune anteriore’ perduta e acutamente prende in considerazione, accanto ad altri possibili ascendenti (come un Sallustio o un Pollione) anche Seneca padre: candidato direi preferibile, per la sua maggiore vicinanza cronologica agli autori dei testi ora citati e per la sua stessa stretta parentela con due d’essi, Annei entrambi.

Questi testi ci permettono di entrare meglio nel merito concettuale di quel *retro abire* della verità *ab initio bellorum civilium* che pare fungere, secondo la polemica testimonianza di Seneca filosofo, da perno e motore ideologico delle *Historiae* paterne. La spiegazione più corrente è quella che troviamo per esempio da ultimo in Canfora:<sup>30</sup> “stravolgimento fazioso della verità storica come uno degli effetti delle guerre civili” cui occorre contrapporre “la salvaguardia e la rivendicazione della *veritas* in un tempo di sistematica storia falsa”. Facile specialmente il richiamo al proemio delle *Historiae* tacitiane (1.1),<sup>31</sup> e tuttavia nell’arretramento della *veritas* lamentato da Seneca padre c’è a mio avviso qualcosa di più e d’altro che non un suo essere *infracta* da racconti storici variamente inattendibili e tale dunque da dover essere, secondo un ricorrente protocollo di ‘genere’, ripristinata. È il caso di tornare a considerare *suas*. 6.16 in lode d’una storiografia su eventi degli ultimi tempi repubblicani ben più ligia alla *veritas* rispetto alle stravaganti distorsioni della *declamatio*.<sup>32</sup> Quella che, giusto dall’inizio delle guerre civili, prende per Seneca padre ad arretrare è la verità come oggetto, piuttosto che come criterio dell’indagine storiografica: con conseguente cessione di campo, ben più che alla menzogna di talune interpretazioni,

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27 Tac. ann. 3.27: *pulso Tarquinio adversum patrum factiones multa populus paravit tuendae libertatis et firmandae concordiae, creatique decemviri et accitis quae usquam egregia compositae duodecim tabulae, finis aequi iuris. Nam secutae leges etsi aliquando in maleficos ex delicto, saepius tamen dissensione ordinum et apiscendi inlicitos honores aut pellendi claros viros aliaque ob prava per vim latae sunt. Hinc Gracchi et Saturnini turbatores plebis nec minor largitor nomine senatus Drusus; corrupti spe aut inlusi per intercessionem socii. Ac ne bello quidem Italico, mox civili...*

28 Flor. epit. 1.47.7–8: *quae enim res alia civiles furores peperit quam nimiae felicitates? Syria prima nos victa corrumpit, mox Asiatica Pergameni regis hereditas. Illae opes atque divitiae adfixere saeculi mores, mersamque vitii suis quasi sentina rem publicam pessum dedere. Unde enim populus Romanus a tribunis agros et cibaria flagitaret, nisi per famem quam luxus fecerat? Hinc ergo Gracchana prima et secunda et illa tertia Apuleiana seditio...*

29 Lintott (2010) 253–255.

30 Canfora (2015) 170; 172; cf. Vottero (1998) 80.

31 Cf. ancora Canfora (2000) 167.

32 Cf. Migliario (2007) 144–145.

a due altri antonimi responsabili davvero di aver riportato Roma alla sua seconda innaturale condizione puerile.

Anzitutto, *veritas vs error*. Assai significative in proposito le parole con cui esordirà in Lucano la retrospettiva dei *publica belli semina* (1.173): *inde irae faciles*. Grande nemica della verità l'ira, e la conferma ci viene dal trattato di Seneca filosofo scritto in anni ancora assai memori del *De vita patris* e della, ben probabile, edizione delle *Historiae* paterne. Fin dalle primissime movenze il suo *De ira* mette a fuoco, di questo male 'pubblico', specialmente l'indole eversiva e autoleisionistica, *ad dispectum aequi verique inhabilis, ruinis simillima quae super id quod oppressere franguntur* (1.1.2); e, sulla sindrome dell'ira, 1.18.2 precisa: *etiam si ingeritur oculis veritas, amat et tuetur errorem*, un travolgimento che investe non solo la sfera morale – l'aspetto su cui più insiste Sussman<sup>33</sup> – ma l'intera gestione della vita associata: se ne veda ancora il quadro a tinte fosche delineato in *dial.* 4.3.2 in un crescendo patologico che arriva appunto allo scatenarsi della guerra civile.

E poi *veritas vs similitudo*, l'antonimo più insidioso e ingannevole. È lo stesso Seneca padre a dircelo in quel *locus* così ideologicamente rilevante, *contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7, che lamenta il *retro se ferre* dell'eloquenza dopo Cicerone: *haec rei natura est: semper citra veritatem est similitudo*, da intendersi come mera apparenza esteriore, affettazione o addirittura mistificazione e contraffazione di modelli ormai irrecuperabili nella loro genuina sostanza: *in deterius deinde cotidie data res est*. È il degrado toccato non solo all'oratoria del più recente *saeculum* ma, già dall'inizio delle guerre civili, ai valori istituzionali che erano stati il nerbo della *res publica*, autenticamente fondati sulla *libertas* e sull'*amicitia* (nel pregnante senso sociale e politico del trattato ciceroniano). Nuovamente qui ci soccorre Seneca filosofo, *benef.* 6.34.1–2, ben probabilmente ancora sulle orme paterne quando ricorda come furono proprio i tribuni Gaio Gracco e poi Druso a introdurre *primi omnium* a Roma una discriminazione in classi degli *amici* che si addice *regibus regesque simulantibus*, col risultato che

*habuerunt itaque isti amicos primos, habuerunt secundos, nunquam veros. Amicum vocas, cuius disponitur salutatio? Aut potest huius tibi patere fides, qui per fores maligne apertas non intrat, sed inlabitur? Huic pervenire usque ad libertatem destringendam licet [...]*

Ecco, già da quel tempo, la *concussa fides* additata da Lucano (1.177) tra i *semina* della guerra civile, e il venir meno della *parrhesia*: proprio come già denunciato

<sup>33</sup> Sussman (1978) 146–148 e *infra* 172–176: non a torto, come invece sostiene Lausberg (1989) 1938 n. 217, ma troppo esclusivamente.

in *suas.* 1.5 da Seneca padre nel riferire, con condivisione,<sup>34</sup> l'opinione del retore Cestio Pio secondo il quale ben diversi sono i modi di *dicere sententiam* in una *libera civitas* e in un regime dispotico, perché *apud reges* non è affatto pratica generalizzata il *veritatem pati*, la libera espressione della sincerità,<sup>35</sup> né per converso Seneca padre – ho già citato Sussman in proposito<sup>36</sup> – era uomo da attribuire patente di *veritas* alla *res publica restituta* propagandata da Augusto.

Sicuramente le *Historiae*, la sua opera maggiore, avevano buon titolo, anche ideologico, per trovar posto a Ercolano nella biblioteca della villa appartenuta (almeno secondo l'ipotesi più accreditata) alla famiglia dei Pisoni Cesonini, entrando quando più illustre esponente ne era quel Gaio Calpurnio che la tradizione<sup>37</sup> erge quasi a fronte del principato giulio-claudio, volentieri associandone il nome gentilizio a quello dei Seneca: fino alla congiura antineroniana del 65, che segnò, per lui come per gli amici Annei, la fine.

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<sup>34</sup> Questo è anche l'avviso di Migliario (2007) 68–70.

<sup>35</sup> La stessa *veritas* di cui a sua volta Mart. 10, 72 imputerà la scomparsa al regime del *dominus et deus* Domiziano (celebrandone peraltro il restauro per merito del *iustissimus omnium senator* Traiano).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *supra*, n. 12.

<sup>37</sup> Dall'anonima *Laus* a Mart. 4.40.1–2; 12.36.8, e a Iuv. 5.109.

Emanuele Berti

## ***Semina belli. Seneca il Vecchio e le cause delle guerre civili***

**Abstract:** The exposition of the causes of the civil wars was an historiographical *topos*, which had certainly to be treated in the proemial section of Seneca the Elder's lost *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*, in connection with the idea of the political and social decline of the Roman republic (which emerges from a famous fragment transmitted by Lactantius and ascribable to Seneca's *Historiae*). Through a thorough analysis of a series of passages from the preface to the first book of Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae*, from a declamation by Papirius Fabianus, from the first book of Lucan's *Bellum civile*, and from Florus' *Epitome*, all of which can in different ways be related to Seneca's historical work, I try to reconstruct how the author could develop this topic, and I suggest in particular that he insisted on the moral causes of the conflict (the civil wars as a consequence of the spreading of *luxuria* and of excess prosperity). What results from this proposal of reconstruction is the image of a rhetorical historiography, deeply indebted to Sallust's historiographical model, but also influenced by the rhetorical and declamatory tradition.

Nel quasi totale naufragio della storiografia latina sulle guerre civili, l'esistenza di un'opera come le *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il Vecchio ha comprensibilmente spesso suscitato l'attenzione degli studiosi, che sulla scorta dei pochi elementi disponibili si sono adoperati a ricostruirne la struttura, i contenuti e l'orientamento politico-ideologico, nonché a ricercarne le tracce in autori successivi che possono averla usata come fonte:<sup>1</sup> e in questo ci si è spinti talora fin troppo avanti nel voler riconoscere la presenza delle *Historiae* senecane dietro ai riferimenti alla storia recente negli scritti di Seneca filosofo, o a porzioni significative della narrazione storica in opere come il *Bellum civile* di Lucano, l'*Epi-*

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<sup>1</sup> La più esaustiva ed equilibrata discussione delle diverse questioni inerenti alle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio si deve a Sussman (1978) 137–152, a cui si aggiunge adesso il contributo dello stesso studioso in questo volume.

*tome* di Floro e le *Guerre civili* di Appiano.<sup>2</sup> Un'operazione di tal genere, che applicata su così vasta scala risulta senza dubbio un azzardo, può tuttavia essere tentata su basi critiche un po' più solide per alcuni temi e aspetti più specifici e circoscritti; e a questo scopo può essere anche utilmente sfruttato il confronto con l'opera superstita di Seneca il Vecchio, la silloge declamatoria intitolata *Oratorum et rhetorum sententiae, divisiones, colores*, la cui composizione si pone quasi certamente più o meno in contemporanea con le *Historiae*, negli ultimi anni della lunghissima vita dell'autore,<sup>3</sup> e in cui la tematica delle guerre civili ha uno spazio di un certo rilievo.<sup>4</sup>

## 1

Fino alla scoperta del papiro ercolanese delle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio,<sup>5</sup> le uniche notizie certe su quest'opera erano quelle ricavabili dal frammento del *De vita patris* di Seneca filosofo, rinvenuto nel 1820 da Niebuhr in un palinsesto della biblioteca Vaticana<sup>6</sup> (*Appendix* - T1).

Dai pur brevi accenni presenti nel frammento, deduciamo che l'opera storica di Seneca il Vecchio, lasciata inedita dall'autore (forse anche per motivi di opportunità e prudenza politica),<sup>7</sup> ma di sicuro pubblicata postuma dal figlio (probabilmente non molto dopo la scomparsa del padre, ancora sotto il regno di Caligola o comunque prima della partenza di Seneca per l'esilio in Corsica, inflittogli da

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<sup>2</sup> Mi riferisco in special modo ai lavori di Rossbach (1888) 161–173; Hahn (1964), e da ultimo Canfora (2015) 138–213; contro eccessi di tal genere si vedano ad esempio le obiezioni di Hose (1994) 162–165.

<sup>3</sup> Una testimonianza diretta del lavoro preparatorio svolto da Seneca per la sua opera storica e del suo metodo storiografico può essere ricavata dalla famosa digressione sulla morte di Cicerone contenuta nella sesta *suasoria* (*suas.* 6.16–25), in cui egli pone a confronto e discute criticamente una serie di fonti storiche (Tito Livio, Aufidio Basso, Cremuzio Cordo, Bruttidio Nigro e Asinio Pollione) relative a questo episodio; cf. Sussman (1978) 150–151 e *infra* 158–160; Canfora (2000) 161–162; Migliario (2007) 144–145.

<sup>4</sup> Sul tema delle guerre civili nell'opera retorica di Seneca il Vecchio cf. Danesi Marioni (2003) 166–168; Mazzoli (2006); Touahri (2010).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Piano (2016) e (2017a).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Niebuhr (1820) 103–104. Il breve frammento, che costituisce l'*incipit* dello scritto senecano, è stato in seguito ripubblicato in forma più accurata da Studemund (1888) XXXI–XXXIII. Su questo frammento cf. Lausberg (1989) 1937–1941; Vottero (1998) 75–81.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ad es. Griffin (1972) 10–11; Canfora (2000) 162–165; (2015) 170–172.

Claudio nel 41 d.C.),<sup>8</sup> aveva per oggetto la fase più recente della storia romana, *ab initio bellorum civilium ... paene usque ad mortis suae diem*;<sup>9</sup> mentre l'incipio *unde primum veritas retro abiit*, che pur da intendere come una considerazione di Seneca filosofo, nondimeno rifletterà un motivo già presente nell'opera paterna,<sup>10</sup> mostra che l'autore riconosceva nel periodo in oggetto il punto d'inizio di un'epocale crisi storico-politica, in cui la *veritas*, la veridicità e obiettività nel resoconto e interpretazione degli eventi, aveva dovuto lasciare spazio alla partigianeria e alle verità di comodo propagandate dalle diverse fazioni in lotta.<sup>11</sup> Questa idea delle guerre civili come momento cruciale di un processo di decadenza

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**8** Possono considerarsi definitivamente superati i dubbi, risalenti a Westerburg (1882) 48–49, e Klotz (1901), ma ribaditi da Griffin (1972) 9–11; (1976) 33, e ancora, pur in forma più sfumata, da Levick in *FRHist* I 506–507, sull'effettiva pubblicazione delle *Historiae*; è anzi possibile che il *De vita patris* costituisse una sorta di prefazione all'edizione delle *Historiae* (ed eventualmente di altre opere inedite del padre) curata da Seneca filosofo, secondo un'idea suggerita per la prima volta da Schendel (1908) 50 (cf. anche Sussman (1978) 143–145 e *infra* 149; Vottero (1998) 76–77).

**9** Assai dibattuta è la questione su quale fosse il punto d'avvio delle *Historiae*, indicato dall'espressione *ab initio bellorum civilium*, se la guerra civile tra Cesare e Pompeo (come pensò già Niebuhr, e hanno poi sostenuto tra gli altri Castiglioni (1928) 458–460; Lausberg (1989) 1939; Vottero (1998) 78–80; Levick in *FRHist* I 506), oppure l'età graccana, tradizionalmente considerata come il momento iniziale della crisi istituzionale dello stato romano (così Rossbach (1888) 162–164, seguito tra gli altri da Hahn (1964) 176–177; Sussman (1978) 142–143 e *infra* 147–148, e da ultimo, con particolare risolutezza, da Canfora (2000) 165–167; (2015) 138–147); è in ogni caso possibile che, se anche la narrazione delle *Historiae* prendeva le mosse dalla guerra tra Cesare e Pompeo, questa fosse preceduta da una retrospettiva sugli avvenimenti del secolo precedente (per una discussione più approfondita del problema si vedano anche, con conclusioni opposte, i contributi di Giancarlo Mazzoli e John Rich in questo stesso volume). Quanto al punto terminale dell'opera, dato che la morte di Seneca il Vecchio deve risalire ai primi anni del regno di Caligola, è possibile che il racconto procedesse fino a comprendere l'intero regno di Tiberio: ciò consente di assegnare alle *Historiae* un frammento relativo alla morte di questo imperatore, citato da Suet. *Tib.* 73.2 e attribuito senza ulteriori specificazioni a Seneca (il frammento, che già Niebuhr pensò di poter riferire all'opera storica senecana, figura come frg. 2 delle *Historiae* sia nelle edizioni di Seneca il Vecchio, a partire da Müller (1887) fino ad Håkanson (1989), sia nelle raccolte dei frammenti degli storici latini, da Peter (1906) fino alla recente edizione dei *FRHist*).

**10** Cf. ad. es. Fairweather (1981) 16; Canfora (2000) 162.

**11** Il miglior commento a queste parole è dato dalle considerazioni, pur riferite a una fase storica successiva, svolte da Tacito al principio delle sue *Historiae* (cf. Tac. *hist.* 1.1.1: *postquam bellatum apud Actium atque omnem potentiam ad unum conferri pacis interfuit, magna illa ingenia cessare; simul veritas pluribus modis infracta, primum inscitia rei publicae ut alienae, mox libidine adsentandi aut rursus odio adversus dominantes; ita neutris cura posteritatis inter infensos vel obnoxios*; cf. Canfora (2000) 167–168); ma importante è anche la dichiarazione d'intenti che Sallustio poneva nel proemio delle sue *Historiae* (un'opera che, come vedremo, sembra avere avuto un'influenza rilevante sulle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio): cf. Sall. *hist.* frg. 1.6 Maurenbrecher = 1.12 La Penna/Funari: *neque me diversa pars in civilibus armis movit a vero*. Improbabile è che *veritas*

politica e civile è coerente con la visione storiografica risultante da un noto frammento attribuito a Seneca da Lattanzio, dove è sviluppata la metafora biologica che comporta l'equiparazione delle diverse fasi della storia di Roma alle età della vita umana, e in cui le guerre civili segnano il principio della *senectus* e del disfacimento dello stato romano, soccombente sotto le discordie intestine e il peso delle sue stesse forze (*Appendix - F2*).<sup>12</sup>

Si è molto discusso sulla paternità di questo frammento e se esso debba essere ascritto alle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio (come ipotizzò per la prima volta Angelo Mai, pochi anni dopo la scoperta del palinsesto del *De vita patris*),<sup>13</sup> oppure a un'opera perduta di Seneca filosofo.<sup>14</sup> Tuttavia l'obiezione principale addotta contro l'attribuzione a Seneca il Vecchio, cioè il fatto che Lattanzio, nel nominare Seneca, non poteva che riferirsi al filosofo, uno degli autori pagani da lui più spesso citati, può considerarsi superata dall'osservazione che già in età tardoantica è attestata una confusione tra le figure dei due Seneca padre e figlio, sovrapposte in un'unica persona;<sup>15</sup> cosicché, nonostante il perdurante scetticismo di alcuni,<sup>16</sup> l'appartenenza del frammento all'opera storica del padre può essere data per acquisita.<sup>17</sup> Allo stesso modo possiamo ammettere almeno come ipotesi di lavoro che la citazione di Lattanzio, per quanto certamente almeno in parte

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abbia in Seneca il senso di "rettezza, integrità (morale)", come intende Sussman (1978) 142–143; 146–148 e *infra* 172–174 (si vedano i giusti rilievi di Lausberg (1989) 1938, n. 217); si può tuttavia ben ammettere che l'arretramento della *veritas* implichi anche l'idea di una contestuale decadenza morale.

**12** Sul passo di Lattanzio, dopo il contributo di Lühr (1978), si veda la dettagliata analisi di Freund (2009) 424–439.

**13** Cf. Mai (1828) 157 (*ad Cic. rep.* 2.11); anche in questo caso il frammento è entrato a far parte, come fig. 1 delle *Historiae*, sia delle edizioni di Seneca il Vecchio, da Müller (1887) ad Håkanson (1989), sia delle raccolte dei frammenti degli storici, da Peter (1906) ai *FRHist*.

**14** Per una rassegna delle posizioni dei diversi studiosi cf. Lausberg (1970) 3, n. 10; (1989) 1957, n. 295; Alonso-Núñez (1982) 9–10, n. 15; un'esauritiva disamina della questione, con attenta analisi degli elementi pro e contro, è offerta adesso da Freund (2009) 425–428.

**15** Cf. il fondamentale studio di Bocciolini Palagi (1978); anche Trillitzsch (1971) I 141–143, e in questo volume il contributo di Giancarlo Mazzoli, *supra* 87–89.

**16** Ben testimoniato dalle cautele e riserve di Levick in *FRHist* I 507–508; III 596–597, che si rifà specialmente all'autorità di Griffin (1972) 19; (1976) 194–201, una delle più convinte sostenitrici dell'attribuzione del frammento al filosofo.

**17** Come osserva Bocciolini Palagi (1978) 221, non è necessario presupporre che Lattanzio leggesse l'intera opera storica di Seneca il Vecchio; è anche possibile che egli conoscesse quest'unico frammento come uno squarcio isolato trasmesso attraverso la tradizione retorica e scolastica (il che potrebbe avere ancor più favorito lo scambio o confusione tra i due Seneca). Che il passo senecano continuasse a circolare, probabilmente come frammento isolato, in età tardoantica è testimoniato anche dai riecheggiamenti presenti nel proemio della *Vita Cari*

frutto di una rielaborazione dell'autore cristiano, rispecchi in modo sostanzialmente fedele l'originale senecano, e restituisca, se non le precise parole, quanto meno il senso del passo delle *Historiae*.<sup>18</sup>

È assai verosimile che questo trovasse posto nella sezione proemiale dell'opera, in cui Seneca, seguendo una prassi consolidata nei proemi di opere storiografiche (basti pensare alle *Historiae* di Sallustio, o più tardi agli *Annales* di Tacito), proponeva una rapida retrospettiva dell'intera storia di Roma,<sup>19</sup> stabilendo una periodizzazione basata su un modello biologico di sviluppo dall'*infantia* sotto Romolo all'attuale *senectus* sotto il principato, concepita come un'*altera infantia* e un ritorno al regime monarchico delle origini.<sup>20</sup> Al di là del problema se Seneca debba essere considerato l'ideatore dello schema biologico (qui applicato per la prima volta in questa forma completa, prima di essere ripreso da storici più tardi, come Floro, Ammiano Marcellino e la *Historia Augusta*),<sup>21</sup> oppure abbia adottato un modello già sviluppato da autori precedenti (in particolare è stato indicato come possibile antecedente il *De vita populi Romani* di Varrone),<sup>22</sup> è in esso piuttosto palese l'ispirazione sallustiana. Questa si manifesta nel modo più chiaro nella definizione di Cartagine come *aemula imperii*, direttamente mutuata

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dell'*Historia Augusta* (cf. *Hist. Aug. Car.* 2.1–3.1), che nel riprendere la metafora biologica delle età di Roma sembra rifarsi *recta via* a Seneca il Vecchio; cf. Klotz (1901) 435–437; Häussler (1964) 316–317; Bessone (2008) 22–30.

**18** Cf. soprattutto Castiglioni (1928) 462–475; appaiono invece eccessive le conclusioni di Härtke (1951) 393–395, che in base a un'analisi ritmica del frammento – che lo studioso attribuisce peraltro a Seneca filosofo –, pensa di poter scorgere in esso la presenza di sostanziali rimaneggiamenti e aggiunte da parte di Lattanzio. Su tutta la questione cf. da ultimo la messa a punto di Freund (2009) 428–430.

**19** Cf. Castiglioni (1928) 460 e n. 1; Richter (1961) 302–303, e soprattutto Fairweather (1981) 16–17.

**20** Sui problemi posti da questa periodizzazione, in cui i limiti tra un'*aetas* e l'altra non sono sempre indicati in modo inequivoco, cf. Freund (2009) 430–436, con discussione delle posizioni degli studiosi precedenti; cf. anche *infra*, nn. 24 e 28.

**21** Sullo schema biologico, i suoi presupposti e i suoi successivi sviluppi cf. almeno Häussler (1964) e (1983); Demandt (1965) 118–147; Archambault (1966); Jal (1967) LXIX–LXXIX; Santos-Yanguas (1981–1982); Alonso-Núñez (1982); Havas (1983); Bessone (2008); Galdi (2009). Su Seneca il Vecchio come inventore dello schema insiste in special modo Richter (1961) 310–311; in particolare sul rapporto tra Seneca e Floro si veda *infra* 118–121.

**22** L'esistenza di un antecedente di età augustea per il modello biologico era stato postulato da Klotz (1901) 441; il *De vita populi Romani* di Varrone è stato chiamato in causa da Häussler (1964) 319–323, e da Hahn (1965) 26–27; cf. poi l'ampia discussione di Bessone (2008) 49–87, e da ultimo le puntualizzazioni di Pittà (2015) 266–274. Da parte sua Heldmann (1987) 225–229 ritiene che l'ideazione dello schema sia stata ispirata da Livio e dalle sue riflessioni sulla conquista della libertà all'inizio del libro 2 degli *Ab urbe condita libri* (cf. Liv. 2.1.1–6); mentre a un possibile influsso della descrizione delle età dell'uomo in Hor. *ars* 156–178 pensa Galdi (2009) 417–419.



dalla cosiddetta archeologia del *Bellum Catilinae*, insieme all'idea che la sconfitta della grande rivale apre ai Romani le porte della conquista per terra e per mare;<sup>23</sup> ma in generale è l'intera impostazione dello schema biologico a risentire della nota concezione sallustiana per cui la vittoria contro Cartagine rappresenta il vero punto di svolta della storia di Roma,<sup>24</sup> che proprio nel momento della sua espansione mondiale, a causa della sopravvenuta incapacità di sostenere la propria grandezza, precipita in una spirale di decadenza che sfocerà infine nelle guerre civili:<sup>25</sup> e in questo senso, ancor più dell'archeologia del *Bellum Catilinae*, sembra essere stato decisivo l'influsso del proemio delle *Historiae*, perduto ma

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**23** Cf. *Appendix - F2* (15: *sublata enim Carthagine, quae diu aemula imperii fuit, manus suas in totum orbem terra marique porrexit, donec regibus cunctis et nationibus imperio subiugatis...*), da confrontare con Sall. *Catil.* 10.1: *sed ubi ... reges magni bello domiti, nationes ferae et populi ingentes vi subacti, Carthago aemula imperii Romani ab stirpe interiit, cuncta maria terraeque patebant*. Contro l'idea di Härtke (1951) 394–395, che questa sorta di tassello sallustiano sia stato introdotto da Lattanzio, si pronunciano a mio parere giustamente Kühnen (1962) 80 n. 1; Griffin (1976) 197–198 (entrambi assegnano peraltro il frammento a Seneca filosofo); ma cf. già Klotz (1901) 436–437, che portava il confronto con *Hist. Aug. Car.* 3.1: *crevit deinde victa Carthagine trans maria missis imperiis*, a dimostrazione della presenza della citazione sallustiana già in Seneca. Sulla questione cf. anche Freund (2009) 428–429.

**24** Su questo punto il dettato del frammento di Lattanzio risulta un po' ambiguo, non essendo immediatamente chiaro a quale delle guerre puniche si faccia riferimento con l'espressione *finis Punici belli* (che marca il passaggio dall'*adulescentia* alla *iuventus*): se il successivo ablativo assoluto *sublata Carthagine* farebbe pensare alla distruzione di Cartagine nel 146 a.C. (cf. anche la medesima espressione in Vell. 2.1.1: *quippe remoto Carthaginis metu sublataque imperii aemula, non gradu sed praecipiti cursu a virtute descitum, ad vitia transcursum*), l'idea dell'espansione di Roma nell'intero *orbis* rimanda piuttosto al periodo successivo alla seconda guerra punica; senza contare che, ponendo l'inizio della *iuventus* al 146 a.C., la sua durata risulterebbe brevissima, se è vero che la *senectus* prende avvio dalle prime discordie civili nell'età dei Gracchi (si veda *infra* n. 28, e sulla questione Freund (2009) 431). È tuttavia possibile che, più che alludere a date precise, Seneca abbia voluto rimarcare, sulla scia di Sallustio, il duplice ordine di conseguenze della vittoria contro Cartagine, che porta da un lato a una fase di grande sviluppo esterno del dominio romano, dall'altro all'apertura della crisi interna; ne consegue di fatto una certa sovrapposizione tra le età della *iuventus* e della *senectus* (cf. Heldmann (1987) 228–229). Si osservi d'altronde come nella *Vita Cari* dell'*Historia Augusta* (che come detto dovrebbe dipendere *recta via* da Seneca il Vecchio: si veda *supra* n. 17), queste fasi siano più chiaramente distinte (cf. *Hist. Aug. Car.* 3.1: *crevit deinde victa Carthagine trans maria missis imperiis, sed socialibus adfecta discordiis extenuato felicitatis sensu usque ad Augustum bellis civilibus adfecta consenuit*; che il parallelo della *Vita Cari* possa essere usato per chiarire il senso del frammento senecano è sostenuto da Häussler (1964) 317; anche Bessone (2008) 13; 23–24).

**25** Cf. Richter (1961) 310 e n. 51; Hahn (1964) 203–206; (1965) 26–27; Alonso-Núñez (1982) 7–8; Bessone (1995a) 65–68.

ricostruibile nelle sue linee principali grazie alle citazioni fatte da Agostino,<sup>26</sup> a cui si affianca anche un probabile richiamo alla *praefatio* di Livio,<sup>27</sup> a sua volta senz'altro debitore della visione storica di Sallustio. È comunque proprio quest'ultima fase della storia romana, etichettata da Seneca come *senectus*, che doveva essere al centro della sua opera;<sup>28</sup> cosicché il frammento conservato da Lattanzio costituisce una più che adeguata premessa alla trattazione specifica delle guerre civili, a partire dall'esposizione delle cause, che dovevano rendere conto di tale decadenza.<sup>29</sup>

## 2

L'indagine sulle cause di un dato evento o fenomeno storico, oltre a essere un pezzo quasi obbligato della riflessione storica sulle guerre civili,<sup>30</sup> è in generale un importante motivo storiografico, adatto soprattutto a un contesto proemiale.

**26** Cf. Sall. *hist. frg.* 1.11 Maurenbrecher = 1.15 La Penna/Funari: *at discordia et avaritia atque ambitio et cetera secundis rebus oriri sueta mala post Carthaginis excidium maxime aucta sunt* (dove è anche da notare l'emergere dell'idea della fatale necessità della decadenza dopo le *res secundae*), e soprattutto 1.12 Maurenbrecher = 1.16 La Penna/Funari: *postquam remoto metu Punico similitates exercere vacuum fuit, plurimae turbae, seditiones et ad postremum bella civilia orta sunt* (con il commento di La Penna/Funari (2015) 131–139).

**27** Cf. Liv. *praef.* 4: *res est praeterea et immensi operis, ut quae supra septingentesimum annum repetatur et quae ab exiguis profecta in initis eo creverit ut iam magnitudine labore sua; et legentium plerisque haud dubito quin primae origines proximaque originibus minus praebitura voluptatis sint, festinantibus ad haec nova quibus iam pridem praevalentis populi vires se ipsae conficiunt* (dove si ha anche un abbozzo di metafora organica nell'uso del verbo *cresco*), da confrontare con la fine del paragrafo 15 nel nostro frammento (...*viribus suis male uteretur, quibus se ipsa confecit*).

**28** Nonostante una certa ambiguità presente anche in questo caso nel dettato del frammento (16: *haec fuit prima eius senectus, cum bellis lacerata civilibus atque intestino malo pressa rursus ad regimen singularis imperii recessit*), sarei abbastanza sicuro, con la maggioranza degli interpreti, che Seneca facesse coincidere l'inizio della vecchiaia (*prima senectus*) con il periodo dei *bella civilia* e delle discordie intestine (quindi, presumibilmente, con la *seditione Gracchana* del 133 a.C.), e non, come ritengono altri, con l'avvento del principato (*regimen singularis imperii*), che rappresenta semmai la fase più avanzata della senescenza; per tutto cf. Freund (2009) 431–432.

**29** Il fatto che le *Historiae* senecane proseguissero fino almeno a tutto il regno di Tiberio mostra che esse non erano propriamente un'opera storica sulle guerre civili; ma la scelta dei *bella civilia* come punto d'inizio della narrazione (qualunque cosa ciò significasse) lascia intendere che questi, e di conseguenza anche le loro cause iniziali, dovessero avere un ruolo rilevante nella trattazione.

**30** Cf. Pohlenz (1927); Jal (1963) 360–391.

In Seneca il Vecchio lo possiamo riscontrare anche nella *praefatio* al libro 1 delle *Controversiae*, che funge da introduzione generale all'intera opera retorica, in cui emerge una visione in senso lato storiografica assimilabile a quella delle *Historiae*. Il problema è in questo caso il declino dell'eloquenza, su cui Seneca è il primo autore latino a riflettere in maniera organica, tentando per l'appunto di definirne le cause con l'applicazione del tipico modulo delle spiegazioni multiple (Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7):

[6] *Facitis autem, iuvenes mei, rem necessariam et utilem, quod non contenti exemplis saeculi vestri priores quoque vultis cognoscere. [...] Deinde ut possitis aestimare in quantum cotidie ingenia decrescant et nescio qua iniquitate naturae eloquentia se retro tulerit. Quidquid Romana facundia habet, quod insolenti Graeciae aut opponat aut praeferat, circa Ciceronem effloruit; [7] omnia ingenia, quae lucem studiis nostris attulerunt, tunc nata sunt. In deterius deinde cotidie data res est, sive luxu temporum – nihil enim tam mortiferum ingeniis quam luxuria est –, sive, cum praemium pulcherrimae rei cecidisset, translatum est omne certamen ad turpia multo honore quaestuque vigentia, sive fato quodam, cuius maligna perpetuaeque in rebus omnibus lex est, ut ad summum perducta rursus ad infimum velocius quidem quam ascenderant relabantur.*<sup>31</sup>

Nel quadro qui delineato affiora una concezione di tipo organico (il declino dell'eloquenza come decrescita e ritorno indietro: cf. 6: *in quantum cotidie ingenia decrescant et nescio qua iniquitate naturae eloquentia se retro tulerit*), che pur non esattamente identica, presenta dei punti in comune con il modello biologico sviluppato nelle *Historiae*.<sup>32</sup> Non solo, ma tra le possibili cause del fenomeno addotte da Seneca vi è una legge del destino, che vuole che tutte le cose, una volta raggiunta la loro acme, siano soggette a una rapida discesa (7: *sive fato quodam, cuius maligna perpetuaeque in rebus omnibus lex est, ut ad summum perducta rursus ad infimum velocius quidem quam ascenderant relabantur*):<sup>33</sup> anche in questo caso non siamo così lontani dalla concezione del frammento delle *Historiae*, per

<sup>31</sup> Su questo importante passo cf. tra gli altri Sussman (1972); Fairweather (1981) 132–148; Heldmann (1982) 60–97; Citti (2005) 178–182; anche Berti (2007) 212–218.

<sup>32</sup> Significativo è il preciso parallelo tra l'espressione *eloquentia se retro tulerit* e le parole di Seneca figlio nel frammento del *De vita patris, unde primum veritas retro abiit* (*Appendix - T1*).

<sup>33</sup> L'idea costituisce peraltro un luogo comune, come mostra anche la sua ricomparsa in una *sententia* del retore Albucio Silo riportata da Sen. *suas.* 1.3: *quidquid ad summum pervenit, incremento non reliquit locum* (e cf. ancora Sen. *dial.* 2.5.4; *dial.* 6.23.3); ma in anni non lontani da Seneca essa era stata applicata al declino delle arti anche da Velleio Patercolo (cf. Vell. 1.17.6: *matureque quod summo studio petatum est ascendit in summum, difficilisque in perfecto mora est, naturaliterque quod procedere non potest recedit*). È possibile che alla base di queste formulazioni si debba cogliere l'influenza di Sall. *Iug.* 2.3: *omniaque orta occidunt et aucta senescunt*, dove il principio, espresso in termini generali, è declinato in chiave biologica.

la comune presenza di un'idea di fatalismo e determinismo legata all'agire di una legge naturale universalmente valida, che dopo la fase del massimo sviluppo comporta di necessità il momento della decrescita, ovvero dell'invecchiamento.<sup>34</sup> Da questo punto di vista non pare azzardato ipotizzare che la suggestione di tali riflessioni sul declino dell'eloquenza abbia avuto una sua parte nell'ideazione della metafora organica applicata alla storia romana; tanto più che un più compiuto schema biologico di crescita, invecchiamento e morte, in relazione al progresso e successivo declino dell'arte oratoria, era stato in precedenza sviluppato da Cicerone nel proemio al libro 2 delle *Tusculanae disputationes*, un passo sicuramente tenuto presente da Seneca il Vecchio (cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 2.5: *oratorum quidem laus ita ducta ab humili venit ad summum, ut iam, quod natura fert in omnibus fere rebus, senescat brevique tempore ad nihilum ventura videatur*).

Stando così le cose, può essere interessante considerare anche le altre cause proposte da Seneca a spiegazione del fenomeno della *corrupta eloquentia*, e in particolare il fattore da lui indicato come principale responsabile della depravazione degli *ingenia*, ovvero il *luxus temporum*. Notiamo innanzitutto che le due spiegazioni, quella della legge del fato e quella dell'azione della *luxuria*, presentate da Seneca come alternative (insieme a una terza che chiama in causa la perdita del *praemium eloquentiae*, gli onori spettanti alla pratica dell'eloquenza),<sup>35</sup> in realtà non si escludono necessariamente a vicenda, ma possono anzi essere considerate come complementari, nella misura in cui in entrambi i casi si tratta di un fattore esterno, che interviene a provocare il declino dell'arte oratoria; in questo senso la *luxuria* può essere intesa come l'agente concreto che pone effettivamente in essere quella spirale di decadenza iscritta nella legge del destino. La preminenza che Seneca ascrive alla spiegazione morale è tuttavia testimoniata dalla successiva tirata polemica contro la corruzione delle giovani generazioni,

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<sup>34</sup> Per il confronto tra le concezioni che emergono dai due passi cf. Sussman (1978) 140–141; 147–149, nonché *infra* 153–154 e 175–178; in generale su questa spiegazione che potremmo definire 'ciclica' del declino dell'eloquenza cf. Sussman (1972) 206–208; Fairweather (1981) 135–137; Citti (2005) 178–179 e n. 26, e soprattutto l'ampia disamina di Heldmann (1982) 63–84, che distingue tra le varie sfaccettature con cui essa si presenta anche in autori diversi da Seneca il Vecchio, e accenna anche (79–83) alle affinità con la metafora biologica del frammento delle *Historiae*.

<sup>35</sup> Implicita anche in questa terza spiegazione è l'idea moralistica che la causa del declino è in ultima analisi da ricercare nella brama di onori e ricchezze, che provoca l'abbandono dell'eloquenza, una volta venuto meno il suo *praemium* (o *pretium*, secondo una congettura accolta a testo da alcuni editori senecani), in favore di altre attività più turpi (un possibile riferimento alla delazione?), ma *multo honore quaestuque vigentia*; cf. anche Heldmann (1982) 94–97.

le quali dedite all'ozio, alla pigrizia e a ogni genere di depravazione, tralasciano del tutto di coltivare l'eloquenza (Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 8–10):

[8] *Torpent ecce ingenia desidiosae iuventutis, nec in unius honestae rei labore vigilatur: somnus languorque ac somno et languore turpior malarum rerum industria invasit animos; cantandi saltandique obscena studia effeminatos tenent; capillum frangere et ad muliebres blanditias extenuare vocem, mollitia corporis certare cum feminis et immundissimis se excolere munditiis nostrorum adulescentium specimen est.* [9] *Quis aequalium vestrorum quid dicam satis ingeniosus, satis studiosus, immo quis satis vir est? Emolliti enervesque quod nati sunt inviti manent, expugnatores alienae pudicitiae, neglegentes suae. In hos ne dii tantum mali ut cadat eloquentia; quam non mirarer, nisi animos in quos se conferret eligeret. Erratis, optimi iuvenes, nisi illam vocem non M. Catonis sed oraculi creditis; quid enim est oraculum? Nempe voluntas divina hominis ore enuntiata; et quem tandem antistitem sanctiorem sibi invenire divinitas potuit quam M. Catonem, per quem humano generi non praeciperet sed convicium faceret?* [10] *Ille ergo vir quid ait? "Orator est, Marce fili, vir bonus dicendi peritus". Ite nunc et in istis vulsis atque expolitis et nusquam nisi in libidine viris quaerite oratores. Merito talia habent exempla qualia ingenia. Quis est qui memoriae studeat? Quis est qui non dico magnis viribus sed suis placeat? Sententias a disertissimis viris factas facile in tanta hominum desidia pro suis dicunt et sic sacerrimam eloquentiam, quam praestare non possunt, violare non desinunt.*<sup>36</sup>

Questa rappresentazione, pur intrisa delle tematiche tipiche della tradizione del moralismo romano, presenta anch'essa un riconoscibile sapore sallustiano, rimandando al quadro della gioventù corrotta tracciato nell'archeologia del *Bellum Catilinae*;<sup>37</sup> ma più in generale è un punto basilare della concezione storica di Sallustio, per quanto anch'esso radicato nella tradizione moralistica, l'idea della *luxuria* e della *desidia* come fattori scatenanti di una degenerazione che è allo

<sup>36</sup> Su questo brano cf. il contributo specifico di Danesi Marioni (2006); in generale sulla spiegazione morale del declino dell'eloquenza cf. Sussman (1972) 202–206; Fairweather (1981) 132–133; Citti (2005) 178–182, e soprattutto Heldmann (1982) 84–91.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. soprattutto Sall. *Catil.* 12.2: *igitur ex divitiis iuventutem luxuria atque avaritia cum superbia invasere; rapere, consumere, sua parvi pendere, aliena cupere, pudorem, pudicitiam, divina atque humana promiscua, nihil pensi neque moderati habere*; 13.3–5: *sed libido stupri, ganeae ceterique cultus non minor incesserat: viri muliebria pati, mulieres pudicitiam in propatulo habere; vescendi causa terra marique omnia exquirere; dormire prius quam somni cupido esset, non famem aut sitim neque frigus neque lassitudinem opperiri, sed ea omnia luxu antecapere. Haec iuventutem, ubi familiares opes defecerant, ad facinora incendebant. Animus imbutus malis artibus haud facile libidinibus carebat; eo profusius omnibus modis quaestui atque sumptui deditus erat.*

stesso tempo morale e politica – un motivo che emerge non solo nel *Bellum Catilinae*,<sup>38</sup> ma anche, e in modo forse ancor più rilevante, nel proemio delle *Historiae*.<sup>39</sup>

Proprio in virtù del comune sfondo sallustiano possiamo con una certa confidenza proiettare la visione moralistica della prima *praefatio* sul proemio dell'opera storica di Seneca il Vecchio, e ipotizzare che essa potesse avere un ruolo anche nell'indagine sulle cause delle guerre civili;<sup>40</sup> nell'aderire a una tale concezione, che faceva della corruzione morale prodotta dalla *luxuria* la causa ultima della crisi dello stato romano, Seneca non farebbe del resto che seguire quello che, dopo Sallustio, era divenuto un *topos* della storiografia latina (come mostrano ancora la *praefatio* di Livio, oppure Velleio Patercolo).<sup>41</sup> In questi precedenti non è tuttavia presente (o lo è solo implicitamente) un nesso diretto fra i suddetti fattori di decadenza e lo scoppio delle guerre civili;<sup>42</sup> appare allora significativo che questo collegamento si trovi chiaramente stabilito per la prima volta in un estratto di declamazione riportato dallo stesso Seneca il Vecchio e appartenente a Papirio Fabiano, un retore e filosofo attivo all'inizio dell'età imperiale, assai stimato da Seneca (che gli dedica un ampio profilo nella *praefatio* al libro 2 delle *Controversiae*), e noto anche per essere stato uno dei maestri di Seneca filosofo. Si tratta di una lunga digressione, che si configura in sostanza come

**38** Cf. ad es. Sall. *Catil.* 5.8; 10.2–3; 12.1–2, nonché 53.5: *sed postquam luxu atque desidia civitas corrupta est.*

**39** Cf. Sall. *hist.* frg. 1.11 Maurenbrecher = 1.15 La Penna/Funari (citato *supra* n. 26), e specialmente 1.16 Maurenbrecher = 1.17 La Penna/Funari: *ex quo tempore maiorum mores non paulatim, ut antea, sed torrentis modo praecipitati; adeo iuventus luxu atque avaritia corrupta, ut merito dicatur genitos esse, qui neque ipsi habere possent res familiares neque alios pati* (con La Penna/Funari (2015) 139–141 *ad loc.*); per tutto cf. anche Heldmann (1982) 86–88.

**40** Cf. anche Sussman (1978) 148–149.

**41** Cf. Liv. *praef.* 9–12: *ad illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quae vita, qui mores fuerunt, per quos viros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et partum et auctum imperium sit; labante deinde paulatim disciplina velut dissidentes primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint, tum ire coeperint praecipites, donec ad haec tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est. [...] Ceterum aut me amor negotii suscepti fallit, aut nulla umquam res publica nec maior nec sanctorum nec bonis exemplis ditior fuit, nec in quam civitatem tam serae avaritia luxuriaque immigraverint, nec ubi tantus ac tam diu paupertati ac parsimoniae honor fuerit. Adeo quanto rerum minus, tanto minus cupiditatis erat: nuper divitiae avaritiam et abundantes voluptates desiderium per luxum atque libidinem pereundi perendique omnia invexere;* anche 34.4.1–2; inoltre Vell. 2.1.1 (citato *supra* n. 24).

**42** Sulle cause morali delle guerre civili secondo gli scrittori latini cf. Jal (1963) 377–391 (in particolare 390–391 sul lusso).

un pezzo retorico a sé stante, solo marginalmente legato all'argomento della *controversia* in questione (la 2.1 della raccolta),<sup>43</sup> dove è svolto il tema moralistico del *convicium saeculi* (nel quale, come ricorda Seneca, Fabiano era particolarmente versato)<sup>44</sup> e della polemica contro le ricchezze; il frammento inizia appunto delineando lo scenario assai fosco di un conflitto civile, per poi interrogarsi sulla *causa* che ha spinto gli uomini ad armarsi contro i propri congiunti e consanguinei, e giungere alla risposta che responsabili di tutta questa follia sono le *divitiae*, la smodata brama di ricchezze (Sen. *contr.* 2.1.10–11):

[10] *Ecce instructi exercitus saepe civium cognatorumque conserturi proelio manus constiterunt, et colles equis utrimque complentur, et subinde omnis regio trucidatorum corporibus consternitur. In illa tum multitudine cadaverum vel spoliantium sic quaesierit aliquis: quae causa hominem adversus hominem in facinus coegit? Nam neque feris inter se bella sunt, nec, si forent, eadem hominem deceant, placidum proximumque divino genus. Quae tanta vos pestis, cum una stirps idemque sanguis sitis, quaeve furiae in mutuum sanguinem egere? Quod tantum malum huic generi fato vel forte iniunctum? [11] An, ut convivia populis instruantur et tecta auro fulgeant, parricidium tanti fuit? Magna enim vero solacia sunt, propter quae mensam et lacunaria sua <nocentes> potius quam lucem innocentes intueri maluerint. An, ne quid ventri negetur libidinique, orbis servitium expetendum est? In quid tandem sic pestiferae istae divitiae expetuntur, si ne in hoc quidem, ut liberis relinquuntur? Quid tandem est, quod divitiae <non> corruperint?*<sup>45</sup>

Il riuso del linguaggio moralistico sallustiano, anche qui abbastanza ben percepibile, prende una declinazione particolare, nella misura in cui l'azione corrottrice delle *divitiae* trova precisamente sbocco nello scontro fratricida.<sup>46</sup> Ora, sarebbe senz'altro eccessivo voler trarre da questo brano inferenze certe sul modo

<sup>43</sup> Questo il *thema* della *contr.* 2.1: *Dives tres filios abdicavit. Petit a paupere unicum filium in adoptionem. Pauper dare vult; nolentem ire abdicat.* Lo spunto per la tirata moralistica di Fabiano in *divitias* (cf. Sen. *contr.* 2.1.25) è dato dal motivo, tipico dell'universo declamatorio, del contrasto tra *dives* e *pauper* (cf. Migliario (1989) 527–533).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 2. Sul brano di Fabiano come concentrato di *topoi* moralistici sul *convicium saeculi* cf. Citroni Marchetti (1991) 112–114.

<sup>45</sup> La tirata prosegue svolgendo altri motivi tipici della critica contro il lusso, legati in particolare alla *luxuria* edilizia (cf. Sen. *contr.* 2.1.12: *ad delicias dementis luxuriae lapis omnis eruitur, caedunturque gentium silvae; aeris ferrique usus, iam auri quoque, in extruendis et decorandis domibus, eqs.*), anch'esso un tema polemico di derivazione sallustiana (cf. Sall. *Catil.* 12.3–4). Sull'intero brano, dopo il contributo di Casamento (2002), cf. adesso Huelsenbeck (2018) 99–117; inoltre Fairweather (1981) 272–273; Migliario (1989) 531–533; Danesi Marioni (2003) 167–168.

<sup>46</sup> Da notare che gli stessi motivi ritornano anche in un altro estratto di Fabiano proveniente da una diversa *controversia*: cf. Sen. *contr.* 2.6.2: *noli pecuniam concupiscere. Quid tibi dicam: haec est quae auget discordiam urbis et terrarum orbem in bellum agitat, humanum genus cognatum natura in fraudes et scelera et mutuum odium instigat?*

in cui Seneca il Vecchio trattava nelle *Historiae* le cause delle guerre civili; anche se il fatto che il pezzo di Papirio Fabiano avesse particolarmente attirato l'attenzione e magari stimolato la riflessione di Seneca, si può dedurre da ciò, che si tratta del più ampio estratto continuo di una declamazione citato dall'autore nell'intera raccolta (se si eccettua la *controversia* completa di Porcio Latrone riportata in *contr.* 2.7). Ma forse si può andare qualche passo oltre.

### 3

La più completa esposizione superstite delle cause delle guerre civili romane è conservata non in un'opera storica, ma in un poema epico, il *Bellum civile* di Lucano (nipote di Seneca il Vecchio). Qui nel primo libro del poema, subito dopo il proemio e le *laudes Neronis*, segue un'ampia sezione di oltre 100 versi (Lucan. 1.67–182), dedicata appunto all'analisi delle radici del conflitto tra Cesare e Pompeo.<sup>47</sup> La prima a essere presentata è una causa di ordine metafisico, consistente nell'*invida fatorum series*, l'invidiosa catena del destino, che pone un limite alla crescita di tutte le cose e vieta a ciò che ha raggiunto il sommo della grandezza di mantenersi a lungo in questa posizione (Lucan. 1.70–72; 81–82):

*Invida fatorum series, summisque negatum  
stare diu, nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus  
nec se Roma ferens. [...]  
In se magna ruunt: laetis hunc numina rebus  
crescendi posuere modum.*

È abbastanza evidente, ed è stata più volte osservata, l'affinità concettuale con la spiegazione 'ciclica' proposta da Seneca il Vecchio nella prima *praefatio* come una delle possibili cause del declino dell'eloquenza (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 7), che come abbiamo visto chiamava in causa la medesima ineluttabile legge del fato.<sup>48</sup> Non

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Lucan. 1.67–69: *fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerum, / immensumque aperitur opus, quid in arma furem / impulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi*. Su questa sezione del poema, dopo Pohlenz (1927), cf. Brisset (1964) 35–50; Campiche (1965); Lintott (1971) 493–498; Lebek (1976) 45–74; Radicke (2004) 162–170, e da ultimo Roche (2009) 36–39; 146–203, con commento puntuale di questi versi.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Pohlenz (1927) 201–202 (= Pohlenz (1965) 139–140); Brisset (1964) 53–54; Narducci (2002) 42; e si veda anche nel presente volume il contributo di Giancarlo Mazzoli, *supra* 95–98. Come rileva Brisset (1964) 51–65, si tratta di una concezione in ultima analisi di matrice stoica, che non a caso viene illustrata, nei vv. 72–80, mediante una comparazione con la conflagrazione finale



solo: la formulazione dei vv. 81–82, con l’impiego del verbo *cresco*, suggerisce una metafora organica che rimanda al frammento delle *Historiae* citato da Lattanzio (le guerre civili come punto terminale della crescita e inizio della decadenza o *senectus*); e anche l’idea di Roma che crolla sotto il peso della sua grandezza e soccombe alle sue stesse forze, pur essendo topica e contando significativi precedenti in autori come Orazio, Livio e anche Seneca filosofo,<sup>49</sup> trova corrispondenza nel frammento di Lattanzio, dove essa è pure connessa con l’avvio del declino e l’avvento delle guerre civili nell’età della *senectus* (cf. 15: *donec ... cum iam bellorum materia deficeret, viribus suis male uteretur, quibus se ipsa confecit*;<sup>50</sup> anche 16: *ita consenuit, tamquam sustentare se ipsa non valeret*). Fin dall’inizio della trattazione delle cause, Lucano sembra dunque muoversi su un terreno comune a quello dell’opera storica del suo avo; e ciò incoraggia a verificare la presenza di possibili punti di contatto anche nel seguito del passo.

Dopo la presentazione delle motivazioni politiche e personali del conflitto, che comprendono la stipula e la successiva rottura del patto triumvirale, la morte di Crasso e poi di Giulia, per finire con le opposte ambizioni di Cesare e Pompeo, e che hanno lo spazio più ampio nell’esposizione (vv. 82–157), Lucano conclude con una rassegna dei *publica belli semina*, le cause sociali e morali della guerra civile (Lucan. 1.158–182):

*Hae ducibus causae; suberant sed publica belli  
semina, quae populos semper mersere potentis.  
Namque, ut opes nimias mundo Fortuna subacto*                      160  
*intulit et rebus mores cessere secundis  
praedaque et hostiles luxum suasere rapinae,  
non auro tectisve modus, mensasque priores  
aspermata fames; cultus gestare decoros*  
*vix nuribus rapuere mares; fecunda virorum*                      165  
*paupertas fugitur totoque accersitur orbe  
quo gens quaeque perit; tum longos iungere fines  
agrorum, et quondam duro sulcata Camilli  
vomere et antiquos Curiorum passa ligones*

dell’universo, l’ecpirosi degli Stoici (cf. anche Sussman (1978) 149 e n. 37 e nel presente volume *infra* 178 n. 167).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Hor. *epod.* 16.1–2: *altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas, / suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit*; Liv. *praef.* 4 (citato *supra* n. 27); Sen. *clem.* 1.3.5. Su questo motivo cf. Dutoit (1936); Jal (1963) 251–254.

<sup>50</sup> Anche l’idea dello scoppio della guerra civile come conseguenza della mancanza di ulteriore *materia bellorum* è sviluppata a lungo, per essere polemicamente smentita, nel proemio di Lucano: cf. Lucan. 1.10–23, in particolare 21–23: *tum, si tantus amor belli tibi, Roma, nefandi, / totum sub Latias leges cum miseris orbem, / in te verte manus: nondum tibi defuit hostis.*

*longa sub ignotis extendere rura colonis.* 170  
*Non erat is populus quem pax tranquilla iuaret,*  
*quem sua libertas immotis pasceret armis.*  
*Inde irae faciles et, quod suasisset egestas,*  
*vile nefas, magnumque decus ferroque petendum*  
*plus patria potuisse sua, mensuraque iuris* 175  
*vis erat; hinc leges et plebis scita coactae*  
*et cum consulibus turbantes iura tribuni;*  
*hinc rapti fasces pretio sectorque favoris*  
*ipse sui populus letalisque ambitus urbi*  
*annua venali referens certamina Campo;* 180  
*hinc usura vorax avidumque in tempora fenus*  
*et concussa fides et multis utile bellum.*

L'idea centrale del passo è che l'origine ultima della guerra è da ricercare nell'afflusso di ricchezze seguito alle conquiste romane in gran parte del mondo, e nella conseguente diffusione del lusso in tutti gli ambiti della vita pubblica e privata (nelle abitazioni, nei banchetti, nel *cultus* personale, nell'estensione della proprietà fondiaria): ne risulta, insieme a una generalizzata depravazione dei *mores*, un grave perturbamento del quadro politico, prodotto dagli squilibri socio-economici, dalla brama di denaro e potere, e in seguito a ciò dal dilagare della violenza, dell'illegalità, della corruzione e infine dell'usura; al punto che la guerra diviene l'unico possibile esito della situazione.<sup>51</sup> Ancora una volta riconosciamo in questi versi un'inconfondibile matrice sallustiana,<sup>52</sup> comprovata dalla presenza di precisi paralleli, più volte rilevati, soprattutto con i capitoli 10–13 del *Bellum Catilinae*, ma anche con i frammenti del proemio delle *Historiae*.<sup>53</sup> Allo stesso tempo, come ebbe a notare Bonner, il brano lucaneo presenta alcune coincidenze piuttosto puntuali con il succitato estratto della declamazione di Fabiano riportato da Seneca il Vecchio:<sup>54</sup> i confronti che si possono addurre sono Lucan.

51 Per un'analisi più ravvicinata di questi versi cf. Brisset (1964) 41–50; Campiche (1965) 228–230; Lintott (1971) 495–497; Lebek (1976) 50–54, e il commento di Roche (2009) 195–203.

52 Cf. Aricò (1971); Viansino (1974) 20–24; Roche (2009) 38–39.

53 Cf. in particolare Lucan. 1.161: *rebus mores cessere secundis* e Sall. *hist. frg.* 1.11 Maurenbrecher = 1.15 La Penna/Funari: *at discordia et avaritia atque ambitio et cetera secundis rebus oriri sueta mala* (cf. Aricò (1971) 71–72, che osserva anche come l'idea della necessità del nesso tra *secundae res* e vizi morali, implicita nelle parole di Sallustio, si rifletta in Lucano nel v. 159 *quae populos semper mersere potentis*), e ancora Lucan. 1.175–176: *mensuraque iuris / vis erat* e Sall. *hist. frg.* 1.18 Maurenbrecher = 1.20 La Penna/Funari: *et relatus inconditae olim vitae mos, ut omne ius in viribus esset* (frammento non a caso citato dalle *Adnotationes super Lucanum* nello scolio al verso lucaneo, e appartenente molto probabilmente al proemio delle *Historiae*; cf. La Penna/Funari (2015) 141–142 *ad loc.*).

54 Cf. Bonner (1966) 270–271.

1.163–164: *non auro tectisve modus, mensasque priores / aspernata fames* con Sen. *contr.* 2.1.11: *an, ut convivia populis instruantur et tecta auro fulgeant, parricidium tanti fuit?*; 12: *infusum tectis aurum*; Lucan. 1.165–166: *fecunda virorum / paupertas fugitur* con Sen. *contr.* 2.1.12: *o paupertas, quam ignotum bonum es!*; Lucan. 1.166–167: *totoque accersitur orbe / quo gens quaeque perit* con Sen. *contr.* 2.1.11: *an, ne quid ventri negetur libidinique, orbis servitium expetendum est?*<sup>55</sup> Tali coincidenze si potrebbero ricondurre al comune riutilizzo di moduli moralistici; ma il fatto che in entrambi i casi il motivo degli effetti nocivi del lusso e della corruzione morale sia direttamente associato con il tema della guerra civile, lascia presupporre un rapporto un po' più stretto tra i due testi. Non si può escludere che Lucano conoscesse la declamazione di Fabiano (magari per il tramite dell'antologia di Seneca il Vecchio), e ad essa si fosse in qualche misura ispirato;<sup>56</sup> tuttavia tra Fabiano e Lucano sembra mancare un anello, in cui questi *topoi* moralistici fossero stati rielaborati in una chiave più prettamente storiografica e inseriti in un discorso organico sulle cause della guerra civile: e tutti gli indizi su questo anello mancante portano alle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio.<sup>57</sup>

## 4

Naturalmente si potrebbe pensare, ed è stato pensato, che alla base dei versi lucanei sui *publica semina belli* vi fosse piuttosto Livio, che come si evince dalla *periocha* del libro 109,<sup>58</sup> faceva precedere il racconto della guerra civile tra Cesare

<sup>55</sup> Si aggiunga ancora Lucan. 1.164–165: *cultus gestare decoros / vix nurbus rapuere mares*, che richiama il quadro della gioventù effeminata e abbigliata con panni femminili nella prima *prae-fatio* senecana (cf. Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 8).

<sup>56</sup> Un altro possibile punto di contatto tra la declamazione di Fabiano e Lucano si ha nell'enfatica interrogativa retorica di Sen. *contr.* 2.1.10: *quae tanta vos pestis, cum una stirps idemque sanguis sitis, quaeve furiae in mutuum sanguinem egere?*, che richiama l'analoga domanda retorica che suggella il proemio lucaneo (cf. Lucan. 1.8: *quis furor, o cives, quae tanta licentia ferri?*); cf. Bonner (1966) 259–260; Narducci (2002) 19.

<sup>57</sup> L'idea che per la sezione sulle cause della guerra civile Lucano potesse avere utilizzato come fonte le *Historiae* senecane era stata affacciata anche da Brisset (1964) 35.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Liv. *perioch.* 109: *causae civilium armorum et initia referuntur*. L'esposizione delle cause delle guerre civili doveva trovare posto anche nelle *Historiae* di Asinio Pollione (stando alla testimonianza di Hor. *carm.* 2.1.1–2: *motum ex Metello consule civicum / bellique causas ... tractas*); ma la perdita totale di quest'opera non permette di fare nessuna ipotesi sul modo in cui il motivo era in essa svolto.

e Pompeo da una disamina delle *causae civilium armorum*.<sup>59</sup> Un indizio contro tale ipotesi può però essere ricavato dal confronto con il capitolo dedicato al *Bellum civile Caesaris et Pompei* nell'*Epitome* di Floro. Qui l'autore, seguendo in ciò senza dubbio la tradizione liviana, propone preliminarmente una discussione delle cause del conflitto (cf. Flor. *epit.* 2.13.8–17). In questa sezione, che presenta fortissime analogie con la corrispondente pagina di Lucano,<sup>60</sup> sono passati in rassegna il triumvirato del 59 a.C., le morti di Crasso e Giulia, e infine lo spirito di emulazione che opponeva Cesare e Pompeo, ma non si fa alcun cenno a cause morali, se si eccettua una fugace allusione nella frase di esordio, subito lasciata cadere, alla *nimia felicitas* (cf. Flor. *epit.* 2.13.8: *causa tantae calamitatis eadem quae omnium, nimia felicitas*).<sup>61</sup> Ciò è forse segno che la fonte qui seguita da Floro, che verosimilmente è la stessa usata da Lucano per i vv. 82–157 e che può identificarsi con Livio,<sup>62</sup> si limitava a trattare le ragioni storiche più immediate della

**59** Per questa idea cf. Pohlenz (1927) 206–210 (= Pohlenz (1965) 144–148); Radicke (2004) 162–170, che ritiene tuttavia che, a differenza della sezione precedente, i vv. 158–182 traggano la loro materia non dal libro 109, ma dalla *praefatio* liviana; mentre Lebek (1976), che pure postula la presenza di Livio dietro i vv. 82–157 (62–65), pensa che la trattazione dei *publica belli semina* sia il frutto di un'autonoma elaborazione di Lucano (52–54). L'uso di Livio come fonte per questi versi è escluso, anche in base a considerazioni di natura stilistica, pure da Lintott (1971) 496–497.

**60** Cf. ancora Pohlenz (1927) 207 (= Pohlenz (1965) 145), e già Baier (1874) 17–18; Westerburg (1882) 37–38; per un commento dettagliato di questa sezione cf. adesso Emberger (2005) 210–272. Oltre all'affinità nell'impostazione generale del discorso e nella presentazione delle cause, vi sono delle vere e proprie coincidenze letterali: cf. soprattutto Flor. *epit.* 2.13.14: *nec ille (sc. Pompeius) ferebat parem, nec hic (sc. Caesar) superiorem. Pro nefas! sic de principatu laborabant, tamquam duos tanti imperii fortuna non caperet* e Lucan. 1.109–111: *dividitur ferro regnum, populiue potentis / quae mare, quae terras, quae totum possidet orbem, / non cepit fortuna duos*; 1.125–126: *nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem / Pompeiusve parem*; ma cf. anche Flor. *epit.* 2.13.1: *iam paene toto orbe pacato maius erat imperium Romanum quam ut ullis exteris viribus opprimi posset. Itaque invidens Fortuna principi gentium populo ipsum illum in exitium sui armavit* e Lucan. 1.68–70: *...quid in arma furentem / impulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi. / Invidia fatorum series*; 82–84: *nec gentibus ullis / commodat in populum terrae pelagique potentem / invidiam Fortuna suam* (dove è notevole la concordanza nella concezione della *Fortuna invidens*).

**61** È peraltro possibile che la menzione della *nimia felicitas* provenga dal passo di Flor. *epit.* 1.47.7 (su cui si veda *infra* 120–121); si tratta del resto di un nesso quasi formulare per esprimere l'idea dell'eccesso di prosperità posto all'origine di una decadenza morale (cf. Curt. 10.3.9; Val. Max. 1.5.2; Sen. *dial.* 1.3.10; 1.4.6; *clem.* 1.1.7; *epist.* 91.5; 114.8).

**62** In generale le consonanze tra Lucano e Floro, che sono numerose per tutto il racconto della guerra civile, sono state diversamente spiegate e valutate. L'idea prevalente, sostenuta ad es. da Baier (1874) e ripresa da Pichon (1912) 69–81, che l'accordo tra i due autori rimandi a Livio come fonte, è stata respinta da Westerburg (1882) 35–46, che pensava che Floro avesse direttamente utilizzato Lucano; per una soluzione di compromesso tra queste due si pronuncia ora Radicke

guerra, tralasciando l'aspetto morale, che dunque Lucano deve aver tratto da un'altra fonte.

Che quest'ultima possa individuarsi nelle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio può trovare un'ulteriore conferma nello stesso Floro. L'esposizione delle cause morali del conflitto civile, assente in *epit.* 2.13, trova infatti spazio in un altro punto dell'*Epitome*, precisamente in *epit.* 1.47, la cosiddetta *anacephalaeosis* o ricapitolazione della *tertia aetas* della storia romana. Come è noto, Floro adotta come criterio ordinatore del suo compendio storico una divisione della storia di Roma in *aetates*, che viene esposto organicamente nella *praefatio* dell'opera,<sup>63</sup> e risulta perfettamente analogo al modello biologico sviluppato nel frammento senecano trasmesso da Lattanzio.<sup>64</sup> Nonostante alcune opinioni contrarie, che sostengono l'indipendenza dei due autori,<sup>65</sup> vi è oggi un sostanziale accordo nel ritenere che Floro si sia ispirato direttamente a Seneca il Vecchio, pur apportando al modello le opportune varianti, dovute in parte all'adozione di un diverso criterio evolutivo

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(2004) 20–22. Da parte sua Rossbach (1888) 167–71; (1896) LVI–LVII, individuava la fonte comune di Floro e Lucano nelle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio; sulla sua scia si pone Hahn (1964) 177–193, che aggiunge la considerazione di una serie di paralleli tra Lucano e Appiano, ricondotti anch'essi all'opera storica di Seneca. Una spiegazione univoca in merito probabilmente non esiste, e bisognerebbe piuttosto vagliare singolarmente il valore e significato di ciascuna corrispondenza; ma la questione meriterebbe forse una riconsiderazione complessiva.

**63** Cf. Flor. *epit.* 1. *praef.* 4–8: *si quis ergo populum Romanum quasi unum hominem consideret totamque eius aetatem percenseat, ut coeperit utque adoleverit, ut quasi ad quandam iuventae frugem pervenerit, ut postea velut consenuerit, quattuor gradus processusque eius inveniet. Prima aetas sub regibus fuit prope per annos quadringentos, quibus circum urbem ipsam cum finitimis luctatus est. Haec erit eius infantia. Sequens a Bruto Collatinoque consulibus in Appium Claudium Quintum Fulvium consules centum quinquaginta annos patet, quibus Italiam subegit. Hoc fuit tempus viris armis incitatissimum, ideoque quis adulescentiam dixerit. Deinceps ad Caesarem Augustum centum et quinquaginta anni, quibus totum orbem pacavit. Hic iam ipsa iuventus imperii et quaedam quasi robusta maturitas. A Caesare Augusto in saeculum nostrum haud multo minus anni ducenti, quibus inertia Caesarum quasi consenuit atque decoxit, nisi quod sub Traiano principe movit lacertos et praeter spem omnium senectus imperii quasi reddita iuventute revirescit.* Sul proemio di Floro e le numerose problematiche da esso presentate (anche in rapporto alla struttura complessiva dell'opera) cf. specialmente Jal (1967) LXIX–CXI; Facchini Tosi (1990) in particolare 29–40; Hose (1994) 56–61; 65–69; per un commento a questa sezione cf. inoltre Facchini Tosi (1998) 96–110.

**64** È ormai del tutto tramontata la vecchia idea, risalente a studiosi come Spengel (1860) 345–346; Unger (1884) 438–440, ma ancora riaffacciata più di recente da Havas (1983) 106, che Lattanzio potesse aver confuso Anneo Seneca con Anneo Floro, e che dunque nel passo delle *Divinae institutiones* stesse in realtà parafrasando la *praefatio* dell'*Epitome* (per una confutazione di tale ipotesi cf. ad esempio Archambault (1966) 196–197; Jal (1967) LXXV–LXXVII).

**65** Cf. in particolare Jal (1967) LXXII–LXXVII.

della storia romana, che privilegia la politica estera e l'espansione militare rispetto alle dinamiche interne e ai mutamenti nell'ordinamento istituzionale dello stato, ma soprattutto al fatto che Floro, scrivendo circa un secolo più tardi rispetto a Seneca, ha dovuto di necessità adattare lo schema a una situazione storica ormai mutata, posticipando in particolare l'inizio della *senectus*, datata a partire dall'avvento del principato per prolungarla fino ai suoi tempi, e accorpare nella terza età, la *iuventus*, l'intero periodo dalle guerre puniche ad Augusto.<sup>66</sup>

Un utilizzo diretto delle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio da parte di Floro può essere dunque postulato con buone ragioni per la *praefatio*, ma anche per quei capitoli ricapitolativi che l'autore inserisce a conclusione della trattazione delle prime tre età, l'*infantia* (*epit.* 1.2), l'*adulescentia* (*epit.* 1.17) e la *iuventus* (*epit.* 1.47). In quest'ultimo caso l'influsso senecano è d'altra parte confermato da un dato formale: qui Floro, che come detto aveva necessariamente variato lo schema biologico di Seneca, unificando nella sua terza età le ultime due età del modello, torna a suddividere tale *aetas*, definita adesso *transmarina*, in modo da distinguere al suo interno cento *anni aurei*, coincidenti con l'espansione del dominio romano nel bacino del Mediterraneo, e corrispondenti alla *iuventus* di Seneca, e cento *anni ferrei*, coincidenti con la crisi interna dello stato seguita alla distruzione di Cartagine, e corrispondenti alla *senectus* senecana;<sup>67</sup> e a conferma di tale

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66 Cf. già Jahn (1852) XXXVIII–XXXVIII, poi, tra gli altri, Rossbach (1888) 164–165; (1896) LIII–LIV; Castiglioni (1928) 460–462; Tibiletti (1959) 339–340; Hahn (1964) 174–175; (1965) in particolare 22–33; Facchini Tosi (1990) 33–40; (1998) 16–18; Bessone (1996) 31–41; (2008) 36–40; sul rapporto tra Seneca il Vecchio e Floro si vedano inoltre in questo volume i contributi di Chiara Renda e John Rich (il quale si attesta su una posizione di maggiore prudenza). Non pare invece sostenibile l'idea per certi versi provocatoria avanzata da Neuhausen (1992) e (1994), e ripresa da ultimo da Koch (2014), che ritenendo l'*Epitome* opera di età augustea composta da Giulio Floro, destinatario delle *epist.* 1.3 e 2.2 di Orazio, e ripubblicata poi nel II d.C. da un anonimo redattore (che avrebbe rimaneggiato la *praefatio*, interpolando tutti i riferimenti alla *senectus* dopo Augusto), vorrebbe invertire il rapporto di dipendenza, postulando che sia Seneca il Vecchio a derivare da Floro (cf. Neuhausen (1992) 241–248; (1994) 152–154, e la confutazione di Bessone (1995a); (1995b); (1996) in particolare 123–132).

67 Cf. Flor. *epit.* 1.47.1–3: *haec est illa tertia aetas populi Romani transmarina, qua Italia progredi ausus orbe toto arma circumtulit. Cuius aetatis superiores centum anni sancti, pii et, ut diximus, aurei, sine flagitio, sine scelere, dum sincera adhuc et innoxia pastoriae illius sectae integritas, dumque Poenorum hostium imminens metus disciplinam veterem continebat. Posterius centum, quos a Carthaginis, Corinthi Numantiaeque excidiis et Attali regis Asiatica hereditate deduximus in Caesarem et Pompeium secutumque hos, de quo dicemus, Augustum, ut claritate rerum bellicarum magnifici, ita domesticis cladibus miseri et erubescendi*; e già *epit.* 1.34 = 2.19.1–3: *hactenus populus Romanus pulcher, egregius, pius, sanctus atque magnificus: reliqua saeculi, ut grandia aequae, ita vel magis turbida et foeda, crescentibus cum ipsa magnitudine imperii vitiiis; adeo ut si quis*

rapporto di stretta dipendenza, si riscontrano in questo capitolo alcune riprese letterali del frammento trasmesso da Lattanzio.<sup>68</sup> Ma ciò che più ci interessa è il modo in cui in *epit.* 1.47 sono analizzate le cause della decadenza occorsa negli *anni ferrei*, che culmina infine nelle guerre civili (*Flor. epit.* 1.47.7–13):

[7] *Quae enim res alia civiles furores peperit quam nimiae felicitates? Syria prima nos victa corruptit, mox Asiatica Pergameni regis hereditas.* [8] *Illae opes atque divitiae adflixere saeculi mores, mersamque vitiiis suis quasi sentina rem publicam pessum dedere. Unde enim populus Romanus a tribunis agros et cibaria flagitaret, nisi per famem quam luxur fecerat? Hinc ergo Gracchana prima et secunda et illa tertia Apuleiana seditio.* [9] *Unde iudiciariis legibus divolsus a senatu eques, nisi ex avaritia, ut vectigalia rei publicae atque ipsa iudicia in quaestu haberentur? Hinc Drusus et promissa civitas Latio et per hoc arma sociorum.* [10] *Quid autem? Bella servilia unde nobis, nisi ex abundantia familiarum? Unde gladiatori adversus dominos suos exercitus, nisi ad conciliandum plebis favorem effusa largitio, dum spectaculis indulget, supplicia quondam hostium artem facit?* [11] *Iam ut speciosiora vitia tangamus, nonne ambitus honorum ab isdem divitiis concitatus?* [12] *Atquin inde Mariana, inde Sullana tempestas. Aut magnificus apparatus conviviorum et sumptuosa largitio non ab opulentia paritura mox egestatem? Haec Catilinam patriae suae impegit.* [13] *Denique illa ipsa principatus et dominandi cupido unde nisi ex nimis opibus venit? Atquin haec Caesarem atque Pompeium furibilibus in exitium rei publicae facibus armavit.*<sup>69</sup>

A prescindere dalla menzione delle singole tappe ed episodi delle discordie civili, dalla *seditio Gracchana* al conflitto tra Cesare e Pompeo, che costituiranno l'og-

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*hanc tertiam eius aetatem transmarinam, quam ducentorum annorum fecimus, dividat, centum hos priores, quibus Africam, Macedoniam, Siciliam, Hispaniam domuit, aureos, sicut poetae canunt, iure meritoque fateatur, centum sequentes ferreos plane et cruentos et si quid immani.* Da osservare che in questa suddivisione della terza età Floro non può comunque evitare una certa sovrapposizione tra le due parti, per il fatto che la spinta espansionistica degli *anni aurei* non si estingue del tutto anche negli *anni ferrei* (tanto che Floro rinuncia in questa parte dell'opera all'ordine cronologico, trattando prima, nei capitoli finali del libro 1, le guerre esterne tra II e I a.C., poi, nel libro 2, le sedizioni e guerre civili: cf. *Flor. epit.* 1.34 = 2.19.5): si tratta della stessa parziale sovrapposizione tra le età della *iuventus* e della *senectus* che si osservava anche nel frammento delle *Historiae* senecane (si veda *supra* n. 24).

**68** Cf. *Flor. epit.* 1.47.1: *...orbe toto arma circumtulit* e *Lact. inst.* 7.15.15: *manus suas in totum orbem terra marique porrexit*, e soprattutto *Flor. epit.* 1.47.6: *...eo magnitudinis crescere ut viribus suis confi-ceretur* e *Lact. ibid.*: *donec ... viribus suis male uteretur, quibus se ipsa confecit* (anche se è possibile che qui Floro avesse presente anche il passo di *Liv. praef.* 4, citato *supra* n. 27). Cf. Castiglioni (1928) 467–468, e per tutto Hahn (1965) 28–33.

**69** Per alcune osservazioni su questo importante capitolo cf. Hose (1994) 103–109, che esclude la sua dipendenza da Livio, e propone invece il confronto con una nota pagina di Plinio il Vecchio sulla penetrazione della *luxuria* a Roma (cf. *Plin. nat.* 33.148–150), pensando a una fonte comune (mentre nessun accenno è fatto a una possibile derivazione da Seneca il Vecchio).

getto della successiva trattazione storica, ritroviamo qui l'idea fondante del collegamento tra *civiles furores* e *nimiae felicitates*, per cui la radice ultima di tutte le lotte intestine che hanno portato alla lacerazione dello stato romano è da ricercare nell'eccesso di prosperità: sono fattori come il lusso e le ricchezze a generare, accanto alla depravazione morale, fenomeni quali la corruzione e l'illegalità politica, l'ambizione, l'*egestas* e infine la *cupido dominandi*, che rende la guerra inevitabile. Si tratta evidentemente della stessa linea di pensiero, di ascendenza salustiana, svolta nell'estratto della declamazione di Fabiano e soprattutto nel passo sui *publica semina belli* di Lucano: e specialmente rispetto a quest'ultimo il capitolo di Floro presenta, oltre a una palese analogia nella concezione storica di fondo, delle coincidenze di dettaglio nell'analisi delle cause, che si manifestano nella presenza di alcuni precisi paralleli testuali. Il confronto più stretto è tra l'attacco del passo di Lucano (1.158–161: *suberant sed publica belli / semina, quae populos semper mersere potentis. / Namque, ut opes nimias mundo Fortuna subacto / intulit et rebus mores cessere secundis*) e Flor. *epit.* 1.47.8: *illae opes atque divitiae adflixere saeculi mores, mersamque vitiis suis quasi sentina rem publicam pessum dedere*,<sup>70</sup> dove ricorre anche la stessa immagine dell'affondamento evocata dall'impiego metaforico del verbo *mergo*; si aggiungano ancora i paralleli di Flor. *epit.* 1.47.8: *per famem quam luxus fecerat* e Lucan. 1.162–164: *ut ... praedaque et hostiles luxum suasere rapinae, / non auro tectisve modus, mensasque priores / aspernata fames*; Flor. *epit.* 1.47.11: *nonne ambitus honorum ab isdem divitiis concitatus?* e Lucan. 1.179: *letalisque ambitus urbi*; Flor. *epit.* 1.47.12: *ab opulentia paritura mox egestatem* e Lucan. 1.173–174: *quod suasisset egestas / vile nefas*;<sup>71</sup> ma note-vole è pure l'affinità dell'impianto argomentativo, per cui l'idea di conseguenza-lità degli effetti determinati da queste cause iniziali è affidata al ricorrere in sequenza degli avverbi *hinc* e *inde*.<sup>72</sup> Considerando il più che probabile sfondo senecano del capitolo di Floro, si può credere con buone ragioni che in questo caso l'accordo tra Lucano e Floro davvero ci restituisca una traccia delle *Historiae* di Seneca il Vecchio, e che a lui debba essere fatta risalire l'analisi delle cause morali delle guerre civili.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. anche Flor. *epit.* 1.47.13 per il nesso *nimiae opes*.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Pohlenz (1927) 205–206 (= Pohlenz (1965) 143–144).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Lintott (1971) 496–497; anche Roche (2009) 201.



## 5

Se la nostra proposta di ricostruzione è fondata, il confronto tra questi diversi testimoni ci consente forse di intravedere come Seneca il Vecchio affrontava un tema storiografico importante come quello delle *causae civilium armorum*, ma anche, a partire da ciò, di cogliere alcune linee di orientamento più generali che informavano la sua opera storica. In primo luogo appare decisivo il modello di Sallustio:<sup>73</sup> da esso deriva una lettura della storia più recente dominata da un'ottica moralistica, per cui decadenza politica e decadenza morale vanno di pari passo e sono una la conseguenza dell'altra;<sup>74</sup> in questo le *Historiae* senecane si inseriscono a pieno titolo in un filone storiografico che va per la maggiore nel I d.C., in cui domina una visione pessimistica del presente come epoca di irreversibile declino rispetto al buon tempo antico, e che concepisce la ricerca storica come indagine sui motivi di questo fatale regresso.<sup>75</sup> Allo stesso tempo in Seneca il Vecchio questi motivi moralistici sallustiani appaiono mediati attraverso il filtro della retorica e della declamazione (come mostrano i possibili punti di contatto con la *controversia* di Fabiano), che tende almeno in parte a generalizzarli e deproblematizzarli, cristallizzandoli entro le maglie del *convicium saeculi*; del resto proprio questa patina retorica, che sembra essere un tratto specifico dell'opera senecana, può contribuire a spiegare la sua fortuna presso autori come Lucano e Floro, i quali (al di là del possibile retaggio familiare, se è vero che anche Floro apparteneva alla famiglia degli Annei) appaiono in generale non insensibili al richiamo della retorica. Quella di Seneca il Vecchio può essere dunque a buon diritto etichettata, pur nella scarsità degli elementi disponibili, come una storiografia retorica, una definizione che risulta coerente con il profilo dell'autore e con la commistione tra i due generi che si può spesso osservare anche nella sua opera declamatoria.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> La stima di Seneca il Vecchio per Sallustio, anche come storico, è confermata dai riferimenti a questo autore presenti nella sua opera declamatoria (cf. *Sen. contr.* 3 *praef.* 8; 9.1.13–14; *suas.* 6.21); si veda anche il contributo di Lewis A. Sussman, *infra* 157 e n. 64.

<sup>74</sup> Per alcune conclusioni non dissimili cf. ancora il contributo di Lewis A. Sussman, *infra* 190–191.

<sup>75</sup> Per un profilo di questo filone storiografico cf. i lavori di Klingner (1958), in particolare 199 e 201 su Seneca il Vecchio, e Richter (1961), in particolare 302–303 su Seneca il Vecchio.

<sup>76</sup> Per alcuni interessanti spunti di riflessione in proposito, relativamente alle declamazioni sulla morte di Cicerone, cf. il contributo di Roller (1997).

Cynthia Damon

## Looking for Seneca's *Historiae* in Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius*

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to identify potentially Senecan material in Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius*, the site of one of the two generally accepted references to the *Historiae* (*Tib.* 73.2 = *FRHist* 74 F1). Given the paucity of the evidence for the *Historiae* the discussion is necessarily speculative, but suggestive connections are found especially in material pertinent to *equites Romani* or tententiously pro-Caligula. If Seneca's *Historiae* did herald a new golden age presided over by Caligula, this might explain the work's apparent neglect by subsequent historians.

Traces of the elder Seneca's *Historiae* are difficult to detect in the ancient literary tradition, but Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* is a good place to look, since the scholarly biographer supplies one of the two generally accepted references to the *Historiae* (*Tib.* 73.2 - *Appendix* F1);<sup>1</sup> he also seems to have used material that originated in Seneca's rhetorical works for his *De grammaticis et rhetoribus*.<sup>2</sup> The principal aim of this paper is to identify potentially Senecan material in Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius*, the site of that reference to the *Historiae*.

Identifying Suetonius' sources is a large and complex project and one – given the disappearance of most of those sources – in which success is ultimately unattainable. Jacques Gascou devoted some 300 pages of his monumental *Suétone*

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<sup>1</sup> I take this opportunity to express my lively gratitude to Maria Chiara Scappaticcio for the invitation to participate in a stimulating conference devoted to the *Historiae* of Seneca the elder. I am also grateful to John Ramsey for sharing with me his expertise on equestrian jury panels. In what follows, citations of Suetonius refer to Kaster (2016). Citations without title refer to the *Life of Tiberius*. Fragments of the Roman historians are cited from *FRHist*.

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius borrows the language of the elder Seneca for his notice on Albius Silus (*rhet.* 30.4, cf. *contr.* 7.praef. 4.6). A debt to our Seneca has also been conjectured in Suetonius' lost notice on Cestius Pius (*rhet.* fr. 1), who "is one of the main figures in Sen.'s memoirs" (Kaster (1995) 327). Suetonius cites "Seneca" in the *Life of Virgil*, paraphrasing a passage that may have come from a lacuna in the elder's *Controversiae* but has also been attributed to a lacuna in the younger's *Epistulae morales*; see Grisart (1961) and Kaster (1995) Appendix 4, "Suetonius and the elder Seneca." On the basis of some surprising gaps in Suetonius' material on topics treated in the elder Seneca's rhetorical works Kaster (1995) 355–359 postulates that Suetonius' direct source was an unidentified intermediary, not Seneca himself. On Suetonius' source at 73.2, where he cites again 'Seneca' without further qualification, see n. 67 below.

*historien* to the topic,<sup>3</sup> but for the purposes of the present paper a quick overview of the various categories of source used in the *Life of Tiberius* will suffice; particular attention will be paid to Suetonius' use of material from historiographical sources. In the second and longer section of the paper I turn to the question of the moment: Can we detect material from Seneca's *Historiae ab initio bellorum ciuilium* in the *Life of Tiberius*?

## 1 Sources for the *Life of Tiberius*

### 1.1 Types of source

After a life-by-life inquiry into Suetonius' use of his sources Gascou concludes that the biographer produced a systematic aggregation of data taken from a variety of different types of source and was fairly catholic in his definition of 'source.'<sup>4</sup> Gascou finds traces of – to mention just the broadest categories – annalistic histories, contemporary pamphlets, memoirs, biographies and autobiographies, letters, speeches, collections of *bons mots* and anecdotes,<sup>5</sup> the *acta senatus*,<sup>6</sup> inscriptions, oral sources (including Suetonius' own father on the death of Otho), and personal experience. The only sources Suetonius seems wary of are those discredited by adulation.<sup>7</sup>

Many of these categories were put under contribution for his *Tiberius*, which, with its 76 chapters, is the third longest of the twelve, after *Julius* and *Augustus*. Tiberius himself is a prominent source: Suetonius quotes his speeches, letters, and *bons mots*, mentions his *commentarii de uita sua*, and appears to have seen two copies of his will.<sup>8</sup> He also implies that he looked for Tiberius' accounts, the

<sup>3</sup> Gascou (1984) 3–339, with general conclusions on 335–339.

<sup>4</sup> Gascou (1984) 337: “combinaison systématique d'informations empruntées à des sources de nature très différente” and “tout lui est bon pour reconstituer l'existence des Césars.”

<sup>5</sup> On Suetonius quoting the emperors see recently Damon (2014).

<sup>6</sup> De Coninck (1983) 175–178 suggests that *acta senatus* were used by Suetonius with particular intensity for the early phase of Tiberius' principate, when Tiberius' relationship with the senate was being shaped. Cf. Talbert (1984) 334–335.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., *Cal.* 8.2 *Gaetulicum refellit Plinius quasi mentitum per adulationem*. Sources hostile to the Caesars are used without caveat (e.g., Antony at *Jul.* 52.2).

<sup>8</sup> Edict: 34.2. Speeches: 24.1, 28, 29, 34.1, 47, 65.1, 67.3–4. Letters: 26.2, 32.1, 32.2, 50, 67.1. *Bons mots*: 22, 25.1, 28, 32.2, 53.1, 53.2, 57.2, 58.1, 59.2, 61.5, 62.3; *Cal.* 11; *Gal.* 4.1; cf. Vattuone (1983–84) 216: “Sull'esistenza ... di una tradizione di *logoi* tiberiani e di *dicta* da essi (o altrove) estratti non par lecito dubitare.” *Commentarius de uita sua*: 61.1, *Dom.* 20. Will: 76.

*rationes imperii*, but concluded that Tiberius did not publish any, despite the precedent set by Augustus and followed by Caligula (*Cal.* 16.1). Other explicit citations point to material from a “consular author of *Annales*” who is universally assumed to be Servilius Nonianus (61.6 *annalibus suis uir consularis inseruit*), and of course to material from Seneca himself (73.2 *Seneca ... scribit*) in a passage considered below, where Suetonius also cites material from other literary sources using the frustratingly opaque formulas *sunt qui*, *alii*, and *nonnulli*. The *Life* begins with antiquarian material pertaining to the *gens Claudia* (1.2), including a tally of Claudian magistracies (“28 consulships, 5 dictatorships, 7 censorships, 6 triumphs, 2 ovations”)<sup>9</sup> and a Sabine etymology for the Claudian cognomen Nero (“strong” or “spirited”). In addition, biographer reproduces rumors<sup>10</sup> and cites oral sources preserved in literary form, such as the verse criticisms quoted with relish in chapter 59, including this epigram: “[Tiberius] doesn’t care for wine: it’s blood he’s thirsty for now.”<sup>11</sup> Other types of sources can be detected despite the lack of explicit citation, particularly where Suetonius’ notices lack parallels in the historiographic tradition.

## 1.2 Historiography in the biography

The majority of Suetonius’ material for the *Life of Tiberius* presumably came from historiographical sources.<sup>12</sup> Until well past halfway through the biography the organization is largely chronological (chh. 4–41).<sup>13</sup> And in these chronologically arranged chapters the presence of material from a source or sources shared with

<sup>9</sup> For the historical problems in this list see Lindsay (1999) *ad loc.* Lindsay infers that Suetonius used “a digested version of the information” (7).

<sup>10</sup> For insults and rumors see, e.g., 7.2: *uulgo existimabatur*, 21.1: *uulgo persuasum*, 38: *uulgo iam per iocum ‘Callipides’ uocaretur*, 43.2: *quae palam iam et uulgo nomine insulae abutentes Caprineum dictitabant*, 45: <uox> ... *excepta percrebruit*, 52.3: *multifariam inscriptum et per noctes celeberrime acclamatum est “redde Germanicum.”*

<sup>11</sup> Quoted at 59.1: *fastidit uinum, quia iam sitit iste cruorem*. Tacitus, by contrast, summarizes this material (*ann.* 1.72.4). For discussion see Slater (2014).

<sup>12</sup> See Lindsay (1999) 6–11 for sources in the *Life of Tiberius*, Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 13–15 for a brief introduction to the biographer’s “processes of dissolution and reconstitution” (13), and Gascou (1984) 9–339 for detailed examples.

<sup>13</sup> In chapters pertaining to Tiberius’ vices, education, and physique (42–72) chronology recedes as an organizing principle. In Suetonius’ discussion of Tiberius’ rapaciousness (49), for example, the final item, his treacherous appropriation of Vonones’ treasure (49.2), is dated prior to those that precede it. See Gascou (1984) 408–410, especially 410: “il a préféré à une ordre chronologique un ordre ‘d’intensité’.”

historians of Tiberius' principate, particularly Tacitus and Dio, is undeniable. All three authors, for example, comment on Tiberius' debt relief measures, his interventions in trials, his repression of foreign rites, and his neglect of Livia's testamentary arrangements.<sup>14</sup> This is not the place to investigate source of their common material; suffice it to say that the material that Suetonius seems to have drawn from this source includes both annalistic elements such as dates, dedications, and sumptuary policies,<sup>15</sup> and the familiar tyrannical features of Tiberius' portrait: the paranoia, brutality, and sexual license that break through the carefully constructed façade of the *ciuilis princeps*.<sup>16</sup> But Suetonius was not a slave to the common source: aware of conflicting traditions,<sup>17</sup> he frequently diverges from Tacitus and Dio in the transmission, deployment, and interpretation of shared content.

Suetonius also supplements the common source or sources with events that the historians neglect<sup>18</sup> or with details, sometimes indecorous, that they seem to have suppressed: only Suetonius reports that Livia's body had begun to rot by the time her funeral took place (51.2), for example, that the elder Julia's jailers beat her so severely that she lost an eye (53), that one form of torture used on Capri

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**14** Debt relief: 48.1, Tac. *ann.* 6.16–17, D.C. 58.21.5. Trials: 33, Tac. *ann.* 1.75.1, D.C. 57.7.6. Rites: 36, Tac. *ann.* 2.32.3 and 2.85.4, D.C. 57.15.8 and 57.18.5a. Livia's will: 51.2, Tac. *ann.* 5.2.1, D.C. 58.2.1. See also Scappaticcio (2018) 1065–1068 on Q. Haterius, whose encounter with Tiberius is reported by Suetonius (27.1) and Tacitus (*ann.* 1.13.6) and who may be mentioned in *P.Herc.* 1067.

**15** Dates: 53 (cf. Tac. *ann.* 6.25.3), 73.1. Dedications: 20 (cf. D.C. 55.27.4, 56.25.1). Sumptuary measures: 71 (cf. D.C. 57.15.2).

**16** See Baar (1990) 188–200, especially 189–191, with Lindsay (1999) 11–19.

**17** Conflicting traditions: 1.1, 3.2, 5.1, 9.1, 10 (with 11.5), 22, 73.

**18** Apropos of Tiberius' shameless "performance" (*23 impudentissimo mimo*) at the first senate meeting after Augustus' death, for example, which Tacitus ignores (*ann.* 1.8), Gascou (1984) 260 comments: "S. a donc sans doute eu ici accès à une source inconnue de Tacite." Other items appropriate to historiography but found only in Suetonius include: 25.3 details about the entrapment and trial of Libo Drusus not found in Tacitus' relatively full account (*ann.* 2.28–32) or Dio's short one (57.15.3–4); 26.2 Tiberius' abbreviated tenure of the consulships of 18, 21, and 31 CE, absent from the references to these consulships by Tacitus (*ann.* 2.53.1, 3.31.1) and Dio (57.20.1–2, 58.4.3); 34.2 a Tiberian edict banning *cotidiana oscula*; 35.2 Tiberius' demotion of two senators on moral grounds; 37.3 the misbehavior and punishment of the city of Pollentia; 50.3 Livia's public response to a fire at the temple of Vesta; 52.2 a deputation from Ilium with condolences on the death of Drusus; 58 examples of infringements of the *lex maiestatis* not mentioned elsewhere; 63 Tiberius' attempt to prevent people from consulting oracles; 72.1 the guards stationed on the banks of the Naumachia during Tiberius' visit to Rome in 32 CE (Tac. *ann.* 6.1.1 supplies the date but not the staging, which according to Lindsay (1999) *ad loc.* "may ... be authentic"). See also *infra* n. 75. Some, but perhaps not all, of these omissions may be explained by the lacunose state of the account of Tiberius' principate in both Tacitus and Dio.

involved tying up victims' ureters to prevent urination (62), and that the number of corpses on the Gemonian steps on a single day during Tiberius' murderous purge in 33 CE was twenty (61.4; cf. Tac. *ann.* 6.19.2 *immensa strages*). Less to his credit, Suetonius often generalizes on the basis of a single incident, saying, for example, that late in Tiberius' reign "no day was free of punishment," which must a hyperbolic report of the execution of Titius Sabinus on New Year's Day in 28 CE (61.2; cf. Tac. *ann.* 4.70.1–3). Or he trivializes the information in the common source by omitting a key detail, such as the role of Sejanus in concentrating the praetorian guard within the city of Rome (37.1; cf. Tac. *ann.* 4.2.1, D.C. 57.19.6).

To sum up. The picture derived by Gascou for the *Caesars* as a whole is applicable to the *Life of Tiberius*: Suetonius' sources were numerous and of various types, and he used them with some freedom. Some of his divergences from our historiographical sources on Tiberius' principate can be credited to his use of different sources, and some to the expedients he used to convert historiography into biography.

## 2 Possible traces of the *Historiae* in Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius*

### 2.1 *Historiae ab initio bellorum ciuilium*

To see where Seneca might fit in this picture it will be helpful to review what we little we know about his *Historiae*, with a particular focus on the *Life of Tiberius*.

Whatever starting point *ab initio bellorum ciuilium* refers to – and there are several candidates –<sup>19</sup> two things are clear. First, the beginning of Seneca's work will have overlapped with Livy's *Ab urbe condita* through 9 BCE and probably also with the works of the other annalistic historians he cites on the death of Cicero (*suas.* 6.16–24): Asinius Pollio, Aufidius Bassus, Cremutius Cordus, and Bruttedius Niger. So far as we can tell, the furthest any of these rival narratives went was 31 CE, the end point of Aufidius Bassus' history. For the post-Sejanus period, however, we can name no histories that would have been extant before Seneca's death at some point probably not too long after 37 CE, unless Claudius' works

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<sup>19</sup> Candidates include 133 BCE (Canfora (2015) *passim*), 49 BCE, and 43 BCE; see Levick in *FRHist* I 506 for discussion and bibliography. Seneca uses the plural *bella ciuilia* to refer to the wars that ended at Philippi and Actium (*suas.* 1.7, quoting Messala Corvinus), but also to a period prior to the death of Cicero (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 11).

were then available (*Claud.* 41–42, especially 41.3 *De uita sua*). So the second point that we can perhaps glean from this phrase is that Seneca would have been aware of the novelty of his account of *res Romanae* for the years 32–37 CE.<sup>20</sup>

We are on somewhat firmer ground in assuming – from his son’s characterization of the *Histories*’ starting point as “the time when truth withdrew” – that the historian asserted the *ueritas* of his own account.<sup>21</sup> As what historian does not? But in Seneca’s case the assertion of *ueritas* might have been buttressed by reference to the rather more uncommon circumstance that the work was to be withheld for posthumous publication.<sup>22</sup> Posthumous publication suggests – but does not prove – that the work’s contents were unlikely to please the irritable Tiberius (61.3 *omne crimen pro capitali receptum, etiam paucorum simpliciumque uerborum*),<sup>23</sup> under whom some of it is likely to have been written. It is also possible, however, that the publication delay was meant to protect the author against suspicions of self-interested adulation.<sup>24</sup>

It is not clear why Seneca framed a history that reached Tiberius’ death as having its beginning in civil wars.<sup>25</sup> Lactantius attributed to Seneca an overview of Rome’s history from its birth with Romulus to its old age in the period of civil wars (*inst.* 7.15.14; *Appendix* - F2). If the passage preserved by Lactantius represents either directly or indirectly the elder Seneca’s biological view of history, Seneca may have characterized the present as a rebirth.<sup>26</sup> But that inference is of

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**20** Cf. Scappaticcio (2018) 1080, with a different emphasis: “per gli ultimi anni del regno di Tiberio Seneca Padre dovette rappresentare una fonte importante.”

**21** His claim, of course, was challenged by Tacitus, who asserts that the truth manifested in *all* post-Actium histories is crippled (*hist.* 1.1.1: *ueritas ... infracta*), especially those whose subject was the affairs of Tiberius and later *principes* (*ann.* 1.1.2: *res ... falsae*).

**22** Cf. Sen. *contr.* 10 *praef.* 8 on Labienus rolling up a scroll before reading the end of a historiographical work at a recitation, with the implication that the unread portion of the scroll would not please the powerful; cited by Canfora (2015) 167–168 to show Seneca’s critique of Augustus. At the conference in Naples Tim Cornell reminded us that an author might wish to avoid giving offense not only to the emperor but also to other eminent contemporaries.

**23** The passage continues with a list of Tiberius’ literary victims. On the context see, e.g., Knox (2001).

**24** As Levick points out (*FRHist* I 506), that is how the elder Pliny explains the delayed publication of his contemporary history: *nat. praef.* 20: *iam pridem peracta* (sc. *temporum nostrorum historia*) *sancitur et alioqui statutum erat heredi mandare, ne quid ambitioni dedisse uita iudicaretur*.

**25** Levick at *FRHist ad loc.* notes that “The scale of the work seems to be considerable, if it began in 49 BC and included so detailed an account of Tiberius’ death.”

**26** Sussman (1978) 143–144 and *infra* 148–149 and Canfora (2015) 139–144 connect the publication (and possibly composition) of Seneca’s *Historiae* with a brief moment of tolerance for historiography early in Caligula’s principate (Suet. *Cal.* 13–16, D.C. 59.24.4, Sen. *dial.* 6.1.2–4). Levick

limited use, since it is difficult to determine where Seneca would have located the end of the civil wars and the beginning of the new era: with Augustus? Or perhaps with Caligula?<sup>27</sup> Still, it is clear that whichever of these rulers Seneca chose as his golden boy, his Tiberius was going to provide a dark contrast.

In short, we should be looking for traces of a work in which Rome's civil wars served a structural function and that was characterized by an awareness of its own novelty, particularly for the years 32–37, a polemical claim of honesty, and a suggestion that the work was dangerous to either the safety or the reputation of its author. Judging by the elder Seneca's comments about historiography, particularly its proximity to oratory, the *Historiae* are also likely to have had a pronounced rhetorical character.<sup>28</sup>

One would think that a fresh, combative, risk-taking account written in a lively style by an eye-witness to the last years of Tiberius' principate would be prized by anyone trying to make sense of the second *princeps*. And yet Syme is not alone in summing up the source question thus: "Two writers of mark and consequence dealt with the principate of Tiberius Caesar, namely Aufidius Bassus and Servilius Nonianus." For Syme and others, Seneca is an also-ran.<sup>29</sup> The attitude of modern scholars reflects that of Quintilian, who doesn't even mention Seneca in his brief list of post-Livy historians, which includes only Bassus, Nonianus, and, rather grudgingly, Cremutius Cordus. However, Quintilian also overlooks Claudius, the elder Pliny, Cluvius Rufus, and Fabius Rusticus, to mention just a few, so his silence about Seneca is less pointed than it might seem.<sup>30</sup> True, Seneca is unlikely to have been the source exploited by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio for the official business of these years, since he was not a senator.<sup>31</sup> He is also

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at *FRHist* I 507 considers a publication date after the younger Seneca's return from exile in 49 CE more probable.

**27** Cf., e.g., Suet. *Cal.* 13–16, and Barrett (2015) 72–106 describing Caligula's first six months in power as "a period of near-euphoria" (99).

**28** In *Suasoria* 6, on whether Cicero would beg Antony's pardon to save his life, for example, Seneca insists that Pollio, writing history, seemed to vie with Cicero in eloquence: *suas.* 6.25: *adfirmare uobis possum nihil esse in historiis eius (sc. Pollionis) hoc, quem rettuli, loco disertius, ut mihi tunc non laudasse Ciceronem sed certasse cum Cicerone uideatur.*

**29** Syme (1958) 277 mentions him only briefly. Cf. Levick in *FRHist* I 507: "the influence of Seneca's historical works is hardly a substantial subject." Canfora (2015) 154 is an exception: in his view Seneca's *Historiae* was Appian's main source for *Bella ciuilia* 1–2. See Rich *infra* 342–352.

**30** As Quintilian explains (*inst.* 10.1.104), *sunt alii scriptores boni, sed nos genera degustamus, non bibliothecas excutimus.*

**31** Of Seneca's two senatorial sons, only Gallio is likely to have been a member of the Tiberian senate (born c. 5 BCE, *cos. suff.* 55). Seneca the younger probably entered the senate after 37 CE; see Habinek (2013).



unlikely to have been the source of the scandalous stories of life on Capri, for which Servilius Nonianus, a known visitor to the island, is a better bet.<sup>32</sup> But Seneca was in Rome during Tiberius' stay on Capri, including the years 32–37, which were not covered by Aufidius Bassus. So it seems worth asking whether we can identify material that subsequent historians (construed broadly) were more likely to get from Seneca than from any other source. From there we can perhaps draw some conclusions about the type of material Seneca contributed to the history of the early principate. By the time our extant sources were written, of course, the story of Tiberius' principate had been told by historians writing after Seneca – Servilius Nonianus and the elder Pliny, to name just two – and this tends to occlude Seneca's contribution, if any.<sup>33</sup> But the recent reemergence of this work provides a good excuse to try again to penetrate the fog. For the purposes of this paper I tested four approaches to task of detecting Senecan material in the *Life of Tiberius*.

## 2.2 Looking for the *Historiae*

### 2.2.1 *decuriae equitum*

First I looked for items, especially items relevant to the years 32–37 CE, that were not likely to be in one of the identifiable sources for the period, sources identifiable by content, if not by author or title: I was looking for items that were not senatorial or annalistic, not set on Capri,<sup>34</sup> not autobiographical for either Tiberius and Claudius, not antiquarian (like the etymology of “Nero”), not from Tiberius' speeches and letters, not documentary (like Tiberius' will), and not based on Suetonian autopsy. An item that caught my eye was a notice about equestrian jury lists.

More specifically, Suetonius' report that for the last eleven years of his principate Tiberius did not replenish the equestrian jury lists (41: *regressus in insulam rei p. quidem curam usque adeo abiecit ut postea non decurias equitum umquam suppleuerit*). Why report something that did not happen? The biographer's topical arrangement of his material facilitates comparisons between one Caesar and another, and as we will see, the jury lists make repeat appearances in the *Caesars*.

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<sup>32</sup> For Nonianus on Capri see Houston (1985) 195 n.35: “the hypothesis is now treated as a certainty.”

<sup>33</sup> See *supra* n. 2 on Suetonius' derivation of material from Seneca's *Controversiae* from an intervening source.

<sup>34</sup> Presumably Nonianus; see Champlin (2011) 32 n.8.

The notice in chapter 41 is the first item in several lists of things that Tiberius did not do once he retired to Capri: he didn't appoint new military tribunes or prefects or provincial governors, didn't appoint any governors for Spain or Syria for years at a time, didn't respond to enemy attacks on the empire (41); he didn't construct any magnificent buildings or finish the buildings he did start, he didn't sponsor entertainments or attend those put on by others (47), and so on. Replenishing the jury lists, apparently, is an example of the emperor's *cura rei publicae*, and Tiberius's neglect of the *decuriae* while on Capri is noticeable by contrast.

For the jury lists are mentioned in each of the first four *Lives*. Julius Caesar, who inherited a system that empaneled senators, *equites Romani*, and *tribuni aerarum*, eliminated the *tribuni aerarum* (*Jul.* 41.2; cf. D.C. 43.25.1–2). As for Augustus, among other provisions aimed at increasing the number of jurors, he added a fourth panel to the preexisting three: his new jurors would be drawn from a lower census class, the *ducenarii*, and hear cases involving smaller sums of money (*Aug.* 32.3);<sup>35</sup> Suetonius also reports that as an old man Augustus reviewed the jury lists in his Palatine library (*Aug.* 29.3 *decurias iudicum recognouit*). The *Life of Tiberius*, in addition to the notice about Tiberius' failure to replenish the jury lists, also contains a notice pertaining to an occasion some time before Livia's death in 29 CE on which Tiberius *did* revise the lists: Livia was putting pressure on him to enroll a new citizen in the jury lists and he refused to do so unless permitted to include the words “[a concession] extorted by his mother” on the relevant document (51.1: *instanti [sc. Liui] saepius ut ciuitate donatum in decuriis adlegeret negauit alia se condicione adlecturum quam si pateretur ascribi albo extortum id sibi a matre*).<sup>36</sup> This is a peculiar combination of detailed reportage and implausible scenario, and the notice is quite likely to have annoyed Tiberius. (We will return to the apparent ban on including new citizens in the *decuriae*.)<sup>37</sup> The

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35 Suet. *Aug.* 32.3: *Ad tris iudicum decurias quartam addidit ex inferiore censu, quae ducentariorum uocaretur iudicaretque de leuioribus summis. Iudices a tricensimo aetatis anno adlegit, id est quinquennio maturius quam solebant.* When these arrangements met with resistance, Augustus reluctantly made concessions to render the new civic duty less burdensome: *Aug.* 32.3: *Ac plerisque iudicandi munus detractantibus uix concessit, ut singulis decuriis per uices annua uacatio esset et ut solitae aei Nouembri ac Decembri mense res omitterentur* (cf. D.C. 55.13). See Wardle (2014) on this passage and Henderson (1963), Demougin (1988), and especially Ramsey (2005) on the changing constitution of the jury panels after Caesar's death; according to Ramsey (2005) Suetonius reports only the last Augustan phase (see further *infra* n. 37).

36 A notice in Tacitus' obituary for Lucius Volusius suggests that Tiberius may also have delegated the job on occasion: *ann.* 3.30.1: *censoria ... potestate legendis equitum decuriis functus.*

37 Ramsey (2005) 35 dates the ban on new citizens in the jury lists to early in the post-Actian period, a phase not mentioned by Suetonius.

last innovation recorded by Suetonius is the institution of a fifth panel at the beginning of Caligula's reign, apparently a further concession to ease the burden on jurors (*Cal.* 16.2: *ut leuior labor iudicantibus foret ad quattuor prioris quintam decuriam addidit*).<sup>38</sup> The *decuriae* are mentioned once more, in the *Life of Galba*, where Suetonius reports another non-occurrence: Galba did not add a sixth panel when asked to do so.<sup>39</sup> Almost none of this material is noticed by Tacitus or Dio, although these authors occasionally mention reviews of the equestrian *ordo* in general terms.<sup>40</sup> The jury-panel notices might be pigeonholed as the sort of insignificant administrative detail that the pedantic Suetonius paid attention to, with equestrian offices being perhaps of particular interest in a collection of biographies dedicated to a praetorian prefect, Septicius Clarus, who had reached the peak of the equestrian bureaucracy (*Lyd. Mag.* 2.6).<sup>41</sup> And Suetonius himself might have felt a personal connection to the history of the jury panels if, as a plausible conjecture on his career inscription suggests, he himself was a *iudex*.<sup>42</sup>

But Suetonius is not the only ancient author interested in this material: the elder Pliny (like Suetonius an equestrian office-holder) gives an account of the changing composition of the *decuriae*. It is embedded in his history of the use of rings to signify rank in *nat.* 33. The information is presented there in thematic rather than chronological order, but Pliny gives us a glimpse of jury panels from

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**38** In the *Lives* of Claudius (16.2) and Domitian (8.3) Suetonius reports the ejection of individual jurors but no further changes to the institution.

**39** Suet. *Gal.* 14.3: *iudicibus sextam decuriam adici precantibus non modo negauit, sed et concessum a Claudio beneficium, ne hieme initioque anni ad iudicandum euocarentur, eripuit*. There is nothing in the *Life of Claudius* about the Claudian reform mentioned here, unless the vague language about “public business” at *Claud.* 23.1 alludes to it: *rerum actum diuisum antea in hibernos aestiuosque menses coniunxit* (cf. *Aug.* 32.2: *ne quod autem maleficium negotiumue inpunitate uel mora elaberetur, triginta amplius dies, qui honoraris ludis occupabantur, actui rerum accommodauit*). Otherwise, Claudius is said to have reviewed the jury panel lists (*Claud.* 15.1: *cum decurias ... expungeret*) but not to have changed their operation. See also *infra* n. 53.

**40** E.g., Dio does not mention jury panels in connection with either Augustus' review of men of duceanian status (55.13.4) or Caligula's expansion of the equestrian *ordo* (59.9.5).

**41** Suetonius also provides references to reviews of the lists: *Aug.* 29.3, *Cal.* 16.2, *Claud.* 15.1, 26.4, *Dom.* 8.1–3; cf. Tac. *ann.* 3.30.1, 14.20.5. On Suetonius' penchant for administrative detail see, e.g., Wallace-Hadrill (1980) 73–78, and 135 on the *decuriae*: “It (sc. the equestrian order) supplied the courts with juries, and changes in that field are detailed with some care.”

**42** *Année épigraphique* 1953 n°73, line 4: *adlecto inter selectos a diuo Traiano*, with Townend (1961a) 100. On the *iudices selecti* more generally see Staveley (1953). Staveley wrote before the discovery of Suetonius' career inscription, but he mentions an apposite parallel from the career of Aulus Gellius (212–213, on *Gell.* 14.2.1).

the Gracchi to Caligula (33.30–34).<sup>43</sup> He also describes the above-mentioned ban on new citizens in the panels as contemporary Flavian practice (33.30: *seruatum ... in hodiernum est, ne quis e nouis ciuibus in iis iudicaret*).<sup>44</sup>

The jury lists also turn up in more unlikely places. The younger Seneca mentions them in the *De beneficiis*, where he contrasts the judge who needs *sapientia* with the judge “enrolled in the panel (*in album*) by his bank account and his equestrian lineage,” neatly capturing two key characteristics of the equestrian judge: his property qualification, *census*, and fact that he was a citizen by birth, *equestris hereditas*.<sup>45</sup> Neither characteristic is necessary for Seneca's argument here, which is about philosophy, not jury panels; they just provide an “effet du réel” and a sonorous conclusion to a paragraph arguing that, unlike philosophy, a court is incapable of defining a *beneficium* or discerning the feelings of a beneficiary.<sup>46</sup> The jury panel reforms are also mentioned in the pseudo-Sallustian *Second epistle to Caesar* (7.10–12). This is a text widely believed to have been “written by a rhetorician masquerading as Sallust,” a rhetorician who “seems to have had a very good grasp of Republican history.”<sup>47</sup> Someone like Seneca himself, in fact. The letter, which is often labeled a *suasoria*, purports to offer advice to Julius Caesar in 50 BCE, on the brink of civil war. Among the reforms proposed, some of them quite anachronistic for the letter's dramatic date but attested elsewhere in Roman history, is one pertaining to jury panels. The author urges Caesar to extend eligibility to more of the citizen body by enrolling all members of the first

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**43** Plin. *nat.* 33.30–34: 30 *diuo Augusto decurias ordinante ... seruatumque in hodiernum ...* 33: *Gaius princeps decuriam quintam adiecit ...* 34: *iudicum autem appellatione separare eum ordinem primi omnium instituere Gracchi.*

**44** Zehnacker (1983) does not discuss Pliny's source for this section or Book 33 more generally: “l'étude des sources de Pline est à refaire” (31).

**45** Sen. *benef.* 3.7.7: *ubi uero animi coniectura capienda est, ubi id, de quo sola sapientia decernit, in controuersiam incidit, non potest sumi ad haec iudex ex turba selectorum, quem census in album et equestris hereditas misit.* Seneca's rather ironic expression *ex turba selectorum* captures a third technical detail of equestrian jury service, the “exclusivity” of the *iudices selecti*, who may have been hand-picked by the *princeps*: see Staveley (1953) 209–213, qualified by Henderson (1963) 68–69. For income as the defining feature of judges see also Sen. *contr.* 2.1.7: *census iudices in foro legit*; Plin. *nat.* 14.5: *iudex fieri censu* (sc. *coeptus*). See also *infra* n. 48.

**46** For broad claims about the younger Seneca's debt to his father's *Historiae* see Canfora (2000) and (2015) 164–202 (acknowledging a debt to Castiglioni 1928), especially the description of the *Historiae* as a “patrimonio letterario della famiglia” (174). On the more general literary debt see Trinacty (2009).

**47** Ramsey (2005) 30. On the *Epistle* see recently Santangelo (2012).

census class, i.e., those who met a property qualification of 100,000 sesterces, a quarter that of the equestrian *ordo* and half that of Augustus' *ducenarii*.<sup>48</sup>

Scholars who study these various attestations have not discussed in any great detail the original source(s) of the history of Rome's equestrian jury panels.<sup>49</sup> It seems likely that the immediate source of the material in Suetonius' *Caesars* was his earlier treatise *De institutione officiorum*, whose title suggests that it contained a historical survey of official duties.<sup>50</sup> But this simply pushes the question "Where did Suetonius get it?" back one stage, for the existence of an overview in Pliny's *Natural History* makes it hard to believe that Suetonius was the first compiler of the *decuriae* material.<sup>51</sup> Of the sources cited in the index for Pliny's Book 33 only two candidates emerge for the *decuriae* material.<sup>52</sup> One possibility is Licinius Mucianus, who is the only author on Pliny's list known to have outlived Caligula: his collection of imperial speeches might have included a speech that we know Claudius to have given on the subject of judiciary reforms.<sup>53</sup>

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48 [Sall.] *epist.* 2.7.11: *Iudices a paucis probari, regnum est; ex pecunia legi, inhonestum. Quare omnes primae classis iudicare placet, sed numero plures, quam iudicant.* On the anachronistic connections between this proposal, echoed at *epist.* 2.12.1, and that of Antony in 44 BCE see Ramsey (2005) 29–30.

49 The scarcity of historical scrutiny mentioned by Staveley (1953) 202 has been remedied by, e.g., Henderson (1963), Demougin (1988), and Ramsey (2005), but the source question remains neglected.

50 For jury service as an *officium* see *Gal.* 15.1: *existimabatur (sc. Galba) etiam senatoria et equestris officia bienni spatio determinaturus nec daturus nisi iniuitis ac recusantibus.* Although Suetonius' treatise on "offices" is almost entirely lost, one of its three surviving fragments concerns a bureaucratic arrangement instituted under Augustus: fr. 200 Reifferscheid: τὸ τῶν ἔργων σκρίβιον οὐκ ὄν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ Αὐγουστος προσέειπε τῆι ἀρχῆι τὴν ἐν τῆι Ῥώμηι βασιλικὴν ἀνεγείρων. On Suetonius' creation or transmission of chronological surveys in connection with his treatise *On games* see fr. 185 Reifferscheid: *qui quos quem per ordinem et quibus idolis ludos instituerint, positum est apud Suetonium Tranquillum uel a quibus Tranquillus accepit.*

51 Suetonius may, however, have supplemented it, since an item absent from Pliny's survey and present in Suetonius' series of notices pertains to Galba (*Gal.* 14.3, quoted *supra* n. 39).

52 Sources cited for *Plin. nat.* 33: *EX AUCTORIBUS Domitiano Caesare. Iunio Gracchano. L. Pisono. M. Varrone. Coruino. Attico Pomponio. Caluo Licinio. Cornelio Nepote. Muciano. Boccho. Feltiale. Fenestella. Valerio Maximo. Iulio Basso qui de medicina Graece scripsit. Sextio Nigro qui item. EXTERNIS Theophrasto. Democrito. Iuba. Timaeo historico. Qui de medicina metallica scripserunt: Heraclide. Andrea. Diagora. Botrye. Archedemo. Dionysio. Aristogene. Democle. Mneside. Attalo medico. Xenocrate item. Theomnesto. Nymphodoro. Iolla. Apollodoro. Pasitele qui mirabilia opera scripsit. Antigono qui de toreutice scripsit. Menaechmo qui item.*

53 Portions of the speech on judiciary matters delivered by Claudius to the senate survive on papyrus (*BGU* 2.611; text, images, and bibliography can be found online at <http://berlpap.smb.museum/02461/> (verified 17 March 2018). No details pertinent to our investigation emerge, but the speaker does mention the *quinque decuriae* in the first surviving line.

The other is Fenestella, whose *Annales* seem to have included chronological overviews.<sup>54</sup> Suetonius cites both Claudius and Fenestella elsewhere (Claudius: *Claud.* 21.2; Fenestella: *Poet.* 11). But as we have seen, he also cites Seneca, and it seems at least possible that the *Historiae* was the (or a) source for the references to the *decuriae* in the younger Seneca's *De beneficiis* and the pseudo-Sallustian *Letter to Caesar* – i.e., in works where historical facts serve primarily rhetorical purposes.<sup>55</sup> Seneca's pride in his own equestrian status comes across clearly in the *Controversiae* (*contr.* 2 *praef.* 3),<sup>56</sup> and he was well informed about contemporary trials (*contr.* 7.4.6–8 with 7 *praef.* 6–7; 2.3.13, 7.2.8, 7.5.12, 7.6.22). Furthermore, in his rhetorical works, which communicate his admiration for historiography (*suas.* 6.14–16), he provides chronological overviews of the rise of declamation (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 12) and the development of the historiographical death notice (*suas.* 6). And the contentious issue of jury service would be hard to overlook in a history starting anywhere in Rome's long century of civil wars.<sup>57</sup> One might even go a little further and say that in this matter the record would have shown that the system created *guttatim* by emperors from Caesar to Caligula was less divisive than any of its Republican predecessors.<sup>58</sup>

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54 According to a problematic notice in the elder Pliny, Fenestella died late in Tiberius' principate (*nat.* 33.146 = *FRHist* 70 T2). On the difficulty of dating Fenestella and his rivalry with Livy see Drummond at *FRHist* I 489–496. Surviving fragments of Fenestella's work make him a plausible source for a survey of jury panel rules (e.g., *FRHist* 70 F15 on chronological overview of use of elephants, F 24–26 on developments in use of silver dinnerware, pearls, and fancy togas, possibly also F14 on use of gold rings, F5 on the institution of the 12-month calendar, and F7 on the origin of the term *quaestor*). He is cited once by Suetonius, in the *Life of Terence* (*FRHist* 70 F11) and once by the younger Seneca (*epist.* 108.31 = *FRHist* 70 F8). The material pertaining to Caligula could have been added by Pliny himself, born c. 23 CE.

55 Pliny cites the younger but not the elder Seneca as a source: *nat.* 1, for Books 6, 9, 36; cf. 6.60, 9.167, 14.51, 29.10.

56 Cf. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 5 on Blandus, *qui <primus> eques Romanus Romae docuit*.

57 The issue is prominent in the opening paragraph of Florus' book on the civil wars, for example: *epit.* 2.1: *quid ad ius libertatis aequandae magis efficax quam ut senatu regente provinciarum ordinis equestris auctoritas saltem iudiciorum regno niteretur?*

58 For the divisiveness of judiciary law proposed by C. Gracchus see, e.g., Varro *de uita populi Romani* IV fr. 114 Riposati: *iniquus equestri ordini iudicia tradidit ac bicipitem ciuitatem fecit*, echoed by Flor. *epit.* 2.5: *iudiciaria lege Gracchi diuiserant populum Romanum et bicipitem ex una fecerant ciuitatem*. See also Wiseman (2010) and Canfora (2015) 151–154. For developments in the imperial period see Demougin (1988), who devotes an appendix to the Julio-Claudian jury panels: “le siège de juré, tout en conservant son prestige social, perdit de son importance politique” (443).

### 2.2.2 *iusiurandum mariti et uxoris*

Am I on thin evidentiary ice in suggesting that the history of equestrian jury panels figured in Seneca's *Historiae ab initio bellorum ciuilium*? Of course. But the pronounced equestrian angle of the jury panel topic led me to look more closely at an equestrian-related episode earlier in the biography. Apropos of Tiberius' attention to public morals Suetonius reports that Tiberius released an equestrian husband from a vow never to divorce his wife, after it was discovered that the man's wife had committed adultery with their son-in-law (35.1 eq.: *R. iuris iurandi gratiam fecit <ut> uxorem in stupro generi compertam dimitteret quam se numquam repudiaturum ante iurauerat*). The parallel tradition is silent about this incident, although Tacitus does report some of the senatorial examples of female *impudicitia* that Suetonius packages with this equestrian incident under the heading of familial hearings about *feminae famosae* (Tac. *ann.* 2.85.1–2, cf. *Tib.* 35.2). The husband's premarital oath is unusual,<sup>59</sup> and his predicament looks like something that would come up in a comedy<sup>60</sup> or in a *controuersia* on the theme of *iniustum repudium*.<sup>61</sup> Our convener has already mentioned the Suetonian passage in connection with the *mulier stuprata* of our papyrus,<sup>62</sup> so I will just point to the

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<sup>59</sup> For a premarital oath that occasioned a divorce see Gell. 4.3 *praef.* 2 on Caruilius Ruga, who divorced a barren wife because he had sworn that his marriage was for the purpose of producing children (also 17.21.44).

<sup>60</sup> For the oath cf. especially Ter. *Ad.* 332: *qui sine hac iurabat se unum numquam uicturum diem*; similarly Plaut. *Merc.* 790–791, Ter. *Hec.* 60–62.

<sup>61</sup> For the declamatory theme of *iniustum repudium* see, e.g., Quint. *decl.* 251 (with the “lex” *intra quinquennium non parientem repudiare liceat*), 262 (which begins *Lex iniusti repudii, maxime necessaria ad continenda matrimonia, et his praecipue moribus, quibus finem tantum necessitas facit, super omnes leges tuenda est*), 327, 368. Also Sen. *contr.* 2.5.17, Quint. *inst.* 7.4.38, Calp. *decl.* 10.3. Perhaps Suetonius relished the parallel between the husband's predicament and that of Tiberius, whose desire to sever his marital bond with the adulterous Julia the biographer stresses (10.1: *uxoris ... taedio, quam neque criminari aut dimittere auderet neque ultra perferre posset*). It may be that Tiberius' biographer Barbara Levick (1999) ch. 8 concurs with my doubts about the historicity of the event reported by Suetonius, since she nowhere mentions Tiberius' concession to the unhappily married Roman knight in her chapter on Tiberius' relationship with the *equites* and *plebs*.

<sup>62</sup> Scappaticcio (2018) 1064–1065.

equestrian protagonist<sup>63</sup> and mention that Seneca does in fact discuss a *controversia* on the theme of a marital oath (*contr.* 2.2).<sup>64</sup> In “The oath sworn by husband and wife,” *iusiurandum mariti et uxoris*, the couple swore that if one died, the other would commit suicide; Seneca tells us that Ovid declaimed on the theme (*contr.* 2.2.8). The details are different, of course, but both oaths reflect the same basic “till death do us part” sentiment.<sup>65</sup>

### 2.2.3 *Seneca ... scribit*

Next I took the obvious approach: I scrutinized the Senecan version of Tiberius' death, the fourth of four reported by Suetonius. More specifically, I looked for features that distinguish Seneca's version from the other versions reported by Suetonius (*Appendix* - F2). This seemed like it might generate some leads on Senecan “taste,” because we know that Seneca was interested in death scenes: he gives an overview of the history of historiographical death scenes in *Suasoria* 6 and credits them with offering a comprehensive picture of the life of the deceased, analogous to that of a *laudatio funebris* (*suas.* 6.21: *fere consummatio totius uitae et quasi funebris laudatio redditur*).

The variants are as follows:

- version 1) Caligula poisoned Tiberius (*uenenum ei a Gaio datum lentum atque tabificum*).
- version 2) Tiberius was denied food when he asked for it (*in remissione fortuitae febris cibum desideranti negatum*).
- version 3) Tiberius was smothered with a pillow after reviving when someone tried to remove his signet ring (*puluinum iniectum cum extractum sibi deficienti anulum mox resipiscens requisisset*).

<sup>63</sup> Two other equestrian-related notices absent from the parallel tradition: at 42.2 Suetonius reports that Tiberius appointed the equestrian-ranked Caesonius Priscus to a new secretariat “*a uoluptatibus*,” and at 51.1 he reports that Tiberius mistreated Livia's friends and connections after her death, among them a man of equestrian rank (*uno ex iis, equestris ordinis uiro, et in aniliam condemnato*).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *contr.* 1.6 on another husband oath-bound to wife (especially 1.6.8, 1.6.10–12), and Quint. *inst.* 9.2.98: *Nam et in totum iurare, nisi ubi necesse est, graui uiro parum conuenit, et est a Seneca dictum eleganter non patronorum hoc esse sed testium*.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. Sen. *contr.* 2.2.2: *adsiduae contentiones erant: ‘ego magis amo’: ‘immo ego’; ‘sine te uiuere non possum’: ‘immo ego sine te’; qui solet exitus esse certaminum, iurauimus. And contr.* 2.2.5: *Hunc enim animum sine dubio fuisse iurantium, ut uiui non diducerentur*.



The signet ring in version three was presumably the ring Tiberius inherited from Augustus, which, Suetonius tells us, was used by all the Caesars (*Aug.* 50). The biographer makes sure we take his point that Tiberius holds a powerful symbol of Caesarism in a death grip by giving a fourth version, also involving the signet ring, and attributed to Seneca:

- version 4) Tiberius, realizing that his end is near, ponders whether to pass the signet ring to some successor, decides against so doing, calls for his attendants, and when no one responds, gets out of bed, collapses, and dies alone in his bedroom (*Seneca eum scribit ... concidisse*).<sup>66</sup>

As many have noted, Seneca's version implies no wrongdoing. In versions 1 and 3 Tiberius is actively murdered, and even version 2, with *negatum*, implies intentional assistance to the dying process. But Seneca's *nemine respondente* implies no more than neglect, and his *deficientibus uiribus* describes a natural death. Seneca's version might therefore be the most acceptable of the four to Caligula, at least in the short term.<sup>67</sup> (At some unspecified point *postea* (*Cal.* 12.3) Caligula started boasting that he once went into Tiberius' bedroom with murderous intent, dagger in hand.)<sup>68</sup> But the cause of death is not the only thing that differentiates Seneca's version from the others. Even the précis given by Suetonius is enough to indicate that Seneca depicted the dying man's thought process in some detail: "I'm dying. Shall I name a successor? No, I am going to stay emperor to the end. Let me get some help here. No answer? I'll have to do something about that!" But with Tiberius' mind still heading angrily for the door his body gives out. This death scene is not exactly a *consummatio totius uitae* or a *laudatio funebris*, of course, but it has a lively plot on which a good bit of emotion and description

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<sup>66</sup> In the amalgamated version of these variants at *Cal.* 12.2–3 Suetonius makes Caligula, not the dying Tiberius, the central figure. For differences between the two scenes and what they say about Suetonius' biographical priorities see Wardle (1994) *ad loc.* and Ramondetti (2002), both with further bibliography.

<sup>67</sup> This weakens the case presented by Barrett (2015) 71, echoing Hurley (1993) 190, for identifying Suetonius' source as the younger Seneca: "It is argued by Grisart 1961 that the elder Seneca was intended here. But given that there were tensions between Caligula and the younger Seneca, it is much more likely that the latter is intended."

<sup>68</sup> Suet. *Cal.* 12.3: ... *cum sint quidam auctores ipsum (sc. Gaium) postea etsi non de perfecto, at certe de cogitato quondam parricidio professum, gloriatum enim assidue in commemoranda sua pietate ad ulciscendam necem matris et fratrum introisse se cum pugione cubiculum Tiberi dormientis sed misericordia correptum abiecto ferro recessisse.*

could be overlaid.<sup>69</sup> We know from his discussion of competing versions of Cicero's death scene that Seneca expected historians to supplement a factual core – Cicero assassinated on Antony's orders, head and hand(s) displayed on the *Rostrum* in Rome – with dialogue, emotion, description, corroborating details, and ironic reversals (*suas.* 6.17–21), within the bounds of plausibility, of course (*suas.* 6.15: *haec inepte ficta cuilibet uideri potest*).<sup>70</sup> But it is hard to say how the Senecan version of Tiberius' death scene, the one reasonably secure Suetonian borrowing from the *Historiae*, can help us identify more Senecan material in the *Caesars*. One might look for traces of Senecan “taste” more generally in Suetonius, but it would be hard to avoid the disquieting thought that this death scene has a great deal in common with the death scenes written by near contemporary historians for Cicero. So how “Senecan” is it? On the whole I am inclined to distrust the results of this approach, apart from what can be gleaned about the Tiberian death scene itself, most importantly that it was less hostile to Caligula than any of the others.

#### 2.2.4 *parricidia*

Assuming (on admittedly slight grounds) that Caligula was depicted in a positive light in Seneca's *Historiae*, for my final approach I scrutinized episodes pertinent to the rehabilitation of the memory of Germanicus. This rehabilitation was of course a persistent project during the principates of Germanicus' son and brother, and it is robustly evident in both the historical tradition and the material record.<sup>71</sup> So the topic is not specific to Seneca. But he would have witnessed the initial campaign, which began directly upon Caligula's accession: in Caligula's eulogy for Tiberius, according to Dio, the praise for Tiberius was less prominent than the recollection of Augustus and Germanicus (59.3.8). And Caligula thereupon hastened to gather the scattered remains of his mother and brothers for interment in the Mausoleum of Augustus (54.2, *Cal.* 15.1; D.C. 59.3.5–6; see also *Cal.*

<sup>69</sup> Even the scant remains of Seneca's story are “effectively moving” for Baldwin (1983) 150.

<sup>70</sup> His topic here is *quomodo quisque se ex historicis aduersus memoriam Ciceronis gesserit* (*suas.* 6.14). For discussion see, e.g., Roller (1997), Berti (2007) 325–328, Migliario (2007) 142–149, Feddern (2013) 426–465.

<sup>71</sup> For the Suetonian evidence on the principate of Caligula see below, for that of Germanicus' brother see *Claud.* 11.2: *fratris memoriam per omnem occasionem celebratam* with Hurley (2001) *ad loc.* The bibliography on Germanicus is enormous. Orientation is available at Bonamente/Segoloni (1987) and, more recently, Rivière (2015) 545–550. For coinage see recently Reinard (2015).

12.3, quoted *supra* n. 68). The new *princeps* also honored the still living mother and daughters of Germanicus (*Cal.* 15.2–3; D.C. 59.3.3–4) and renamed the month of September “Germanicus” (*Cal.* 15.2). Suetonius’ *Life of Tiberius* contains a detail relevant to the rehabilitation of Germanicus not mentioned elsewhere, namely, a letter addressed to Tiberius by Artabanus, the king of Parthia. This letter appears in the discussion of Tiberius’ reactions to criticism, for according to Suetonius the Parthian king accused Tiberius of “kin-killing and slaughter and cowardice and extravagance,” then advised him to kill himself (66):

*Quin et Artabani Parthorum regis laceratus est litteris parricidia et caedes et ignaviam et luxuriam obicientis monentisque, ut uoluntaria morte maximo iustissimoque ciuium odio quam primum satis faceret.*

It is generally assumed that the occasion for this letter was the embassy sent in 35 CE to reclaim the treasure with which the deposed king of Armenia, Vonones, had arrived in Syria nearly twenty years earlier (*Tac. ann.* 6.31.1: *missis qui gazam a Vonone relictam in Syria Ciliciaque reposcerent*).<sup>72</sup> The letter’s tone certainly suits the aggressive behavior that Tacitus attributes to Artabanus at this late date in Tiberius’ reign: the Parthian ruler unilaterally supplied Armenia with a king in place of the recently deceased Artaxias, a king crowned by Germanicus with much fanfare in 18 CE.<sup>73</sup> But Tacitus mentions no letter,<sup>74</sup> and the contents as summarized by Suetonius sit uncomfortably alongside a demand for the return

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<sup>72</sup> On the historical circumstances of both episodes see recently Olbrycht (2012) and (2016). In what follows I assume that the letter summarized by Suetonius is a historical fiction and make no presumptions about the existence of a historical letter. Suetonius mentions both Artabanus’ hostility to Tiberius and his graciousness to Caligula at *Cal.* 14.3: *Artabanus Parthorum rex, odium semper contemptumque Tiberii prae se ferens, amicitiam huius (sc. Gai) ultro petiit*. See also *infra* n. 76.

<sup>73</sup> *Tac. ann.* 6.31.1: *C. Cestio M. Serulio consulibus nobiles Parthi in urbem uenere, ignaro rege Artabano. is metu Germanici fidus Romanis, aequabilis in suos, mox superbiam in nos, saeuitiam in popularis sumpsit, fretus bellis quae secunda aduersum circumiectas nationes exercuerat, et senectutem Tiberii ut inermem despiciens audisusque Armeniae, cui defuncto rege Artaxia Arsacen liberorum suorum ueterrimum imposuit, addita contumelia et missis qui gazam a Vonone relictam in Syria Ciliciaque reposcerent; simul ueteres Persarum ac Macedonum terminos seque inuasurum possessa Cyro et post Alexandro per uaniloquentiam ac minas iaciebat.*

<sup>74</sup> Or if he does, it is designated vaguely by the expression *iaciebat* (*ann.* 6.31.1, quoted *supra* n. 73). If so, the contents of the letter are strikingly different. Woodman (2017) *ad loc.* associates the charges of kin-killing etc. with *addita contumelia*.

of what Suetonius earlier called “a huge treasure” (49.2: *ingenti gaza*).<sup>75</sup> Even without a firm context, however, the letter proves a striking critique of Tiberius, headed by the charge, *parricidia*, that would have been most pertinent to an attempt to revive public regret for the deaths of Caligula's parents and siblings and enthusiasm for Germanicus' surviving son.<sup>76</sup> Both kin-killing and letters are of course standard fare in the declamations commemorated by Seneca<sup>77</sup> – and in imperial-era biography and historiography. So there is no particular reason to attribute Artabanus' letter to the *Historiae*. But its surprising conclusion, with its reference to the unappeased hatred of Tiberius' subjects (*ut ... maximo iustissimoque ciuium odio quam primum satis faceret*), does anticipate nicely another episode unique to Suetonius, a crowd scene in Rome when news of Tiberius' death arrived (75.1):

*Morte eius ita laetatus est populus ut ad primum nuntium discurrentes pars 'Tiberium in Tiberim!' clamarent, pars Terram matrem deosque Manes orarent ne mortuo sedem ullam nisi inter impios darent, alii unicum et Gemonias cadaveri minarentur.*

The passage continues with more details: the Gemonian steps were on people's mind because Tiberius' last victims, who had pleaded for delaying execution until Caligula's arrival, has just been exposed there (75.2). And a few days later,

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<sup>75</sup> But in other details, too, Suetonius' account of Germanicus' actions in Armenia differs materially from the parallel tradition: most notably, only Suetonius reports that Germanicus conquered the king of Armenia (*Cal. 1.2: cum Armeniae regem deuicisset*); according to Tacitus the installation of the new king was entirely peaceful (*ann. 2.56.2–3*, with Olbrycht (2016) on the events and Kaster (2016) *ad loc.* for attempts to emend away this discrepancy). Other unparalleled details appear in Suetonius' account of Vonones' death: 49.2: *Vononem regem Parthorum, qui pulsus a suis quasi in fidem p. R. cum ingenti gaza Antiochiam se receperat, spoliatum perfidia et occisum* (cf. Tac. *ann. 2.4.3, 2.58, 2.68*, with Lindsay (1999) *ad loc.*: “Suetonius appears to be unfair in claiming that Vonones' death was a product of the greed of Tiberius”).

<sup>76</sup> According to Seager (2005 [1972]) 275 n.61, “Suetonius' version of Artabanus' letter must be grossly exaggerated.” Suetonius is also our sole authority for Artabanus' mourning for Germanicus (*Cal. 5: regum etiam regem et exercitatione uenandi et conuictu megistanum abstinuisse, quod apud Parthos iustitii instar est*; it may be relevant to the possibly Senecan origin of this material that the rare word *megistanus* also turns up in a letter written by his son: Sen. *epist.* 21.4). See Hurley (1993) 43 n.17 for the uniquely pro-Caligula *tendence* in Suetonius' report of the meeting between Artabanus and the imperial legate L. Vitellius in 37 CE at *Cal. 14.3* (cf. I. *AI.* 18.101–102, D.C. 59.27.3, and an incompatible account at *Vit.* 2.4).

<sup>77</sup> *Parricidium* occurs more than 100x in Seneca's rhetorical works. Letters are a plot element in *contr.* 1.7, 4.3, 7.4, 10.6.

when Tiberius' corpse was on its way to Rome for the funeral, another crowd proposed a preliminary attempt to cremate the tyrant at Atella (75.3).<sup>78</sup> A historian who was in Rome in 37 CE would have been well placed to capture the contemporary anti-Tiberius pro-Caligula mood.<sup>79</sup>

### 3 Conclusions

For a paper as speculative as this one has been conclusions are necessarily in short supply. It is perhaps worth noting that some of the Senecan and potentially Senecan material I have discussed reflects badly on Tiberius and well on Caligula.<sup>80</sup> This is true of Tiberius' death scene and Artabanus' letter, and also of the equestrian jury panels, where Caligula followed Augustus' precedent and Tiberius did not.<sup>81</sup> The divorce case, however, could be spun either for or against Tiberius: he either released a member of the elite from a foolish oath and made a wicked woman pay for her crime (that is how Suetonius tells it), or he interfered in a matter that the family might have preferred to settle privately. If Seneca's *Historiae* did herald a new golden age presided over by the one son of Germanicus who survived the Tiberian gloom, however, subsequent historians may well have turned up their noses and kept their distance from the work.<sup>82</sup>

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**78** Lindsay (1999) *ad loc.*, with further references and bibliography: "It was notorious that a tyrant's body could not be totally consumed by the flames."

**79** Cf. Lindsay (1999) 187: "Such a view of the last stages of the Tiberian regime was perhaps encouraged by Caligula and Macro, who could not fail to benefit from an unfavourable review of the predecessor."

**80** Contrasting views have been expressed on Seneca's attitude to the principate more generally. Fairweather (1981) 3–26, for example, views Seneca as "a man of his time" and maintains that his son's portrait of him as a truth-telling and dissident historian is primarily indicative of that son's preoccupations, while Canfora (2015) argues that Seneca's work was characterized by "*pietas* republicana" (155; see also 164–172). On Seneca's ideological legacy see recently Petrovičová (2015) and Lentano (2016).

**81** See also *supra* nn. 35–41.

**82** See Gascou (1984) 274–279 on Suetonius' disregard for pro-principate authors such as Velleius and Josephus, and cf. Townend (1960) 119 "Pliny ... appears ... to have been rendered obsolete almost before he completed his *Histories* by his failure to take a savage enough line about Nero and his predecessors."

Lewis A. Sussman

# The Lost *Histories* of the Elder Seneca (1972)

**Abstract:** Written in the early 70s but never published until now, this paper offers an overview of what we can reconstruct of Seneca the Elder's *Histories*. The scant fragmentary evidence handed down to us is analyzed to determine the possible scope and date of this work, while the attitude and the method of Seneca as an historian are assessed based on his extant rhetorical anthology. Particular attention is devoted to the selection and the critical evaluation of sources by Seneca, his philosophy of history, and the purpose and value that historiography had in his eye. The overall reading of our available clues regarding the lost *Histories* leads us to draw the profile of an independent thinker for his age, interested in the absolute nature of the moral values which he espoused in his work.

## 1 Introduction: the fragments

As his two names suggest, the fame of the elder Seneca, or Seneca Rhetor (as he is most inappropriately called)<sup>1</sup> rests either on the family relationship to his more renowned son, or on the tattered collections of extracts he gathered from the declaimers of the early Empire (the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae*). One therefore learns with some degree of surprise that he also wrote a monumental history of Rome extending from the beginning of the civil wars until nearly the day of his own death, usually dated to AD 39.<sup>2</sup> Our sole undisputable evidence for this work is a brief notice in the younger Seneca's fragmentary biography of his father (*De vita Patris*; *Appendix* - T1), in which the work's moralistic overtones and preoccupation with the motif of decline are both plainly apparent.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Throughout this paper, I shall refer to the elder Seneca by that title or as just "Seneca." His son will always be designated the "younger Seneca."

2 The evidence for this dating is collected conveniently in Rossbach (1894) 2238; cf. Bornecque (1902a) 12–13; Schendel (1908) 50; Edward (1928) xxiv–xxv; Ferrill (1964) 54; and *infra*, n. 18. The arguments stand even if we disregard the fragment in Suet. *Tib.* 73. Weinrib (1968) 150–151 finds it possible to date the death before the summer of AD 39.

3 See also Müller (1887) 548 n. 1. On the text of the fragment and its significance see Studemund (1888) *passim* and Rossbach (1888) 162–184. "If I had already published whatever works my father wrote and wanted to have published, he would sufficiently have seen to the fame of his own

The importance of the *Histories*, as the younger Seneca entitles the work, is underscored by the assertions of such eminent scholars as Syme, Hahn, Rossbach, and others who believe that it was probably a source for a number of important later writers, including Lucan, Tacitus, Suetonius, Florus, and especially Appian.<sup>4</sup> If their beliefs are correct (and Hahn's argument that Seneca was a source for Appian is very persuasive), then the *Histories* are clearly a work of pivotal importance in the historiography of the early Empire.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, of this extensive work we have only two fragments, and the authenticity of these has been hotly disputed for a century. In fact, scholarly discussion of the *Histories* has focussed on this authenticity question, nearly to the exclusion of equally important considerations with which this paper will primarily deal.

One fragment is a vivid and rhetorical description of Tiberius' death, ascribed only to Seneca, in Suetonius' life of that Emperor (*Appendix* - F1).<sup>6</sup>

The ambiguity of the attribution has caused the contention between two rival camps: one claiming it for Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *pater*, in view of the fact that

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name. For unless my filial devotion deceives me, and even the error arising from this is honorable, he would be considered among those who, because of their innate ability, have deserved to be famous by the mere titles of their writings. If anyone had read his *Histories* from the beginning of the civil wars, the point where righteousness declined for the first time, nearly up until the day of his own death, he would consider it important to know who the parents were of the man who [recorded] Roman events// . . . ”

4 As a source for Lucan, see Brisset (1964) 35; Ferrill (1964) 55 and n. 70; Hahn (1964) 197–198; 201; Rossbach (1888) 168–169; Wuilleumier–Le Bonniec (1962) 4. As a source for Tacitus, see Syme (1958) I 277. Cf. the parallelism of thought in Tacitus and the elder Seneca on the fate of delators; *contr.* 10 *praef.* 7 ~ *ann.* 1.74, and those noted by Preisendanz (1908) 105, n. 101. As a source for Suetonius, see Grisart (1961), who believes the elder Seneca is the source not only for *Tib.* 73, as many others do, but also for *Ver.* 28. Seneca is also the apparent source for an incident in the life of Albucius, *rhet.* 6; cf. 7 *praef.* 7. As a source for Florus, see Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>) II CXVIII–CXVIII; Rossbach (1909) 2761; 2765; Forster (1929) xi; Forster (1949) 365; Tibiletti (1959); Hahn (1964) 172–206, especially 174; 197; Jal (1967) I XXIX–XXX (with much citation); LXXXIX. Castiglioni (1928) 460 asserts that the debt of Florus to Seneca is that of imitator to model. For Seneca as a source of Appian, see Hahn (1964) 196–206. For the influence of the elder Seneca on his son, see Rolland (1906). Castiglioni (1928) 456–457 would like to attribute a number of historical references in the younger Seneca to his father's historical work, especially some which mention the imperial family.

5 The references to the extensive literature on this question of their authenticity are conveniently listed in Schanz/Hosius (1935) 341. See also the more current bibliography (here primarily in reference to the Lactantius fragment) in Lausberg (1970) 3, n. 10. Grisart (1961) should be consulted on the Suetonius fragment.

6 Suet. *Tib.* 73.

he wrote a history which covered that event, and the other for Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *filius*, in the belief that the reference to Seneca *sic nude* could refer only to him. The weight of the evidence, and in particular an ingenious argument made by Grisart,<sup>7</sup> tend in my view towards ascribing the fragment to *pater*.

Lactantius apparently preserves another, and more extensive passage from the *Histories* (*Appendix* - F2).<sup>8</sup> He attributes the piece to a Seneca who has cleverly divided up Roman history into periods analogous to the various ages of man. Starting with birth and infancy under Romulus, Rome progressed successively through childhood under the kings and, at the termination of royal rule, into adolescence, which lasted until the first Punic war. Then, according to the fragment, Rome entered a vigorous manhood. Declining old age began after the third Punic war when Rome lacked other nations to fight and so began to make war upon itself. Finally, under the rule of Augustus, after the civil wars had ended, Rome entered into another infancy.<sup>9</sup>

Again, the debate has raged about which Seneca is meant, primarily for the reasons described above. Quintilian, who is usually thorough on such matters, does not mention that the younger Seneca wrote history<sup>10</sup> and since the fragment in Lactantius almost certainly comes from such a work,<sup>11</sup> many have persisted in ascribing it to the elder Seneca. Also, the younger Seneca displays such a distinct bias against history that it is difficult to conceive of him ever entering this field.<sup>12</sup> The other side points out that this description could just as easily have come from a lost philosophical work of the younger Seneca, and that in any event Lactantius was so familiar with the younger Seneca that he could not have made such a mistaken ascription.<sup>13</sup> In support, they point out several close parallels in wording with extant works of the younger Seneca. Of course, it could be said in rebuttal that the style and thought of the younger Seneca were deeply influenced by his father, and that, even if the fragment were from a lost philosophical work, the conception could originally stem from the *Histories*. In any event, the style of the

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7 Cf. *supra* n. 4.

8 Lact. *inst.* 7.15.14–16.

9 See the discussion of this passage in Archambault (1966) 193–200.

10 Quint. *inst.* 10.1.129.

11 Cf. Sall. *Catil.* 10; *hist.* 1, fr. 9; 11; 12; 16 Maurenbrecher; Liv. *praef.* 9; Flor. *epit.* 1 *praef.* 4–8; Script. Hist. Aug. *Car.* 2.3; Amm. 14.6. See Archambault (1966) 193–200.

12 Noted by Kühnen (1962) 20–27; cf. Sen. *nat.* 3 *praef.* 5ff.; *epist.* 83.13; *dial.* 4.3.22.1. But on 78, he attributes the Lactantius fragment to the younger Seneca mainly because of the plain attribution to “Seneca” only, adding (85–86) that it does not necessarily have to originate in a historical work, but could be from a lost philosophical tract.

13 Kühnen (1962) summarizes these arguments well.



fragment has been shown to be primarily Lactantian, and ascription on stylistic grounds to one or the other Seneca is therefore difficult.<sup>14</sup> From several comments in the *Controversiae* and information in the *De Vita Patris*, we know that the elder Seneca was greatly interested in the cyclical conception of decline.<sup>15</sup> In fact, this fragmentary biography, which also happens to be the only evidence for the existence of the *Histories*, describes the work as the elder Seneca's "histories from the beginning of the civil wars, the point where righteousness declined for the first time," a close reminder of the Lactantius fragment. Again, the evidence points towards the elder Seneca's *Histories* as the source. And to those who rest their argument on the impossibility of Lactantius' confusing the two Senecas, one need only point out the card catalogues of many large research libraries, where professional librarians have themselves made the same error (repeatedly, I might add).<sup>16</sup>

Thus the battle rages, and no doubt will continue to do so with little prospect of a definite settlement. Nevertheless, given the importance of the *Histories* and the possibility of learning more about them through sources other than the fragments, we ought to detour around this one troublesome area and attempt to obtain independently more important information; e.g., the scope of the work, the elder Seneca's philosophy of history, his sources, purposes, and style. If, on analysis, the fragments fit into a reconstruction of the *Histories*, then we have added an independent argument for authenticity. Likewise, if one or the other contradicts the reconstruction, then we have even firmer evidence for rejection.

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14 For discussion see Castiglioni (1928) 462–475; Hartke (1951) 394–395 n. 4; Kühnen (1962) 78–79; Hahn (1965), 24–38.

15 E.g., the elder Seneca's comments on the decline of Roman eloquence: *contr. 1 praef. 6–7: Deinde ut possitis aestimare, in quantum cotidie ingenia decrescant et nescio qua iniquitate naturae eloquentia se retro tulerit: quidquid Romana facundia habet, quod insolenti Graeciae aut opponat aut praeferat, circa Ciceronem effloruit; omnia ingenia, quae lucem studiis nostris attulerunt, tunc nata sunt. In deterius deinde cotidie data res est, sive luxu temporum – nihil enim tam mortiferum ingeniis quam luxuria est – sive, cum pretium pulcherrimae rei cecidisset, translatum est omne certamen ad turpia multo honore quaestuque vigentia, sive fato quodam, cuius maligna perpetuaque in rebus omnibus lex est, ut ad summum perducta rursus ad infimum, velocius guidem quam ascenderant, relabantur.* See also his discussion on the growth of declamation, where the closing statement clearly reveals the biological viewpoint: *contr. 1 praef. 12: ideo facile est mihi ab incunabulis nosse rem post me natam.*

16 The two Senecas have been constantly confused because of their names: both are Lucius Annaeus Seneca. See Müller (1887) VII and n. 1; also Edward (1928) XXIII n. 1. It is indeed possible that confusion began at a very early date. Grisart's (1961) discussion is of interest in this regard.

## 2 The scope and date of the *Histories*

From the *De Vita Patris* it is apparent that the *Histories* covered Roman events (*res Romanas*) from the inception of the civil wars until nearly the day of the elder Seneca's own death, in the early part of Gaius's reign.<sup>17</sup>

Although different points have been proposed for the beginning of the civil wars (e.g., the Gracchi, Social War, Marius and Sulla), the phrase *ab initio bellorum civilium unde primum veritas retro abiit* is in itself decisive for identifying the beginning of the *Histories*. Seneca has associated the outbreak of these wars, probably as an effect, with growing luxury and moral decadence. Ancient writers, among them Sallust, Velleius, Lucan, Florus, Appian, Victorinus, and Ammianus are practically unanimous in assigning the inception of moral decay to the period encompassing the destruction of Carthage and Corinth in 146 BC, and, likewise, they all date the beginning of Rome's disastrous civil wars to the period of the Gracchi shortly thereafter.<sup>18</sup> The Lactantius fragment itself also reflects this tradition, and this is not unusual since Roman historians were essentially conservative. The tradition was established long before Seneca, and it would be hard to

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. *supra*, n. 2. The work was not just a history of the civil wars: the wording of *De Vita Patris* is clear: (1) It obviously covered events far beyond the end of the wars, and (2) it dealt with *res Romanas*, indicating a wide scope.

<sup>18</sup> It is of particular importance in this regard to note the opinions held by at least one of the *Annaei*; cf. Lucan l.158ff, especially 173–182; also Florus (if we admit him into the family) *epit.* 1.47.2; *epit.* 2.1–2; cf. Rossbach (1894) 2239. On the apparent inconsistency between Florus *epit.* 1.19 and his proem, see Hahn (1964) 175. For this dating, see Sall. *Catil.* 10.1; *hist.* 1 fr. 11= 15 La Penna/Funari; 12 Maurenbrecher = 16 La Penna/Funari; cf. Clausen (1947); Hahn (1964) 173; 203; Vell. 2.1.1–2; cf. 1.12.6; 2.2.2; 2.3.3; Plin. *nat.* 33.150; App. *BC.* 1.2; Victorin. *rhet. Cic.* 158 Halm; cf. Aug. *civ.* 2.18; 2.21; also 1.30; Oros. *hist.* 5.8.2. In general see Rossbach (1888) 162–163; Rossbach (1894), Rossbach (1903) 85; Earl (1961) 47. One may interpret Tac. *hist.* 1.1 as opposing this dating; he says that before Actium Roman history was written *pari eloquentia ac libertate*, but that afterwards, when *omnem potentiam ad unum conferri pacis interfuit, magna illa ingenia cessere; simul veritas pluribus modis infracta*. Schanz/Hosius (1935) 341 also believes the Gracchan dating to be wrong; cf. Klotz (1901), especially 438. Weinrib (1968) 137 apparently takes the disappearance of *libertas* with the death of Brutus as the equivalent of the decline of *veritas*, and therefore the starting point in accordance with the text of the Lactantius fragment (*amissa enim libertate*); cf. Castiglioni (1928) 458–475. However, decline was shown in the fragment after the destruction of Carthage when Rome's first old age began (*bellis lacerata civilibus atque intestine mala pressa*). It is hard to believe that the elder Seneca, who was obviously preoccupied with the notion of decline and equated it with the civil wars, would have this decline take place so soon before the reign of Augustus. The point *ab initio bellorum civilium unde primum veritas retro abiit* must surely go further back in the Republic, especially given the time and conditions (the Julio-Claudians were still reigning) under which Seneca wrote.

imagine his straying from the generally accepted pattern, especially in view of his own deep conservatism.<sup>19</sup>

In keeping with the common practice of Roman historians, we may also assume that Seneca treated events in greater detail as the account progressed. Thus we could expect the work to deal most extensively with the period beginning in 43 BC, at which time we know that the elder Seneca was a schoolboy greatly disturbed by the frenzy of the civil wars, which had interfered with his studies in rhetoric.<sup>20</sup> We know also that he possessed an astounding memory, an extensive knowledge of historical writings, personal acquaintance with the leading politicians of the day, and a marked propensity for treating events or anecdotes which he knew well in full detail.<sup>21</sup> Assuredly, it was not a brief work.

Extensive treatment of Spanish affairs can also be surmised. Many of the bloodiest and most decisive campaigns of the civil wars were waged there, and the people who figured prominently in many of these events, or their families, must have been well known to Seneca, a native of Cordova, who was in that city during the turbulent early 40's BC.

The elder Seneca wrote the *Histories* in the early years of Gaius's reign. This dating helps explain the appearance of this historical narrative,<sup>22</sup> for under Tiberius the authors of similar ones were punished and the works were burned. Asinius Pollio thought it prudent to end his historical account at 42 BC, and even the young Claudius was dissuaded from covering the more sensitive parts of this

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**19** Hahn's (1964) discussion of the scope of the *Histories* (176ff.) is the most sensible. He argues that it must go back at least to the fighting between Marius and Sulla, or the *Bellum Sociale*, if not to the Gracchi, who could then be linked to the fall of Carthage; cf. Studemund (1888) 163; Roszbach (1894) 2239; Roszbach (1903) col. 85. Roszbach (1888) rightly considers the mention of *unde primum veritas retro abiit* as a vital piece of evidence and more suitable to the times of the Gracchi than to the later civil conflicts. On the elder Seneca's conservatism, see the younger Seneca, *dial.* 12.17.3–4.

**20** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11.

**21** On his memory see *contr.* 1 *praef.* 2–5; on his broad knowledge of Roman historical writings see *suas.* 6 and 7 (also discussed below as are Seneca's acquaintance with the leading political figures of his day and his love of anecdotes).

**22** According to the *De Vita Patris* Seneca was working on the *Histories* and also covering the period nearly up until the day of his death, which can be dated about AD 39. Cf. Schanz/Hosius (1935) 341; Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>) II CXVIII; Teuffel (1920<sup>7</sup>) 170–172; Roszbach (1894) 2239; and *supra*, n. 2. Seneca may have begun work at the end of Tiberius' reign. In any event, from the tone of *suas.* 6 and 7, and other remarks in his extant works, it is evident that he must have been considering writing history. Weinrib (1968) 151–153 maintains that his time schedule was so tight that he must have been writing the *Suasoriae* and the *Histories* at the same time.

period.<sup>23</sup> But at Gaius's accession there was a brief period of *libertas* and optimism. The old histories, once banned or burned, were now republished and a new one was written.<sup>24</sup> It was a propitious time for a project which had evidently been on Seneca's mind for some time.

Nevertheless, Alfred Klotz and others have suggested that the elder Seneca's *Histories* were never published.<sup>25</sup> In their opinion it would have been extremely dangerous to release a work narrating the history of a period so recent and so likely to irritate the imperial government. Other evidence contradicts their assumption.

First, the wording of the *De Vita Patris*, especially the beginning, clearly shows that it was not so much a biography as the publisher's introduction to the *Histories*.<sup>26</sup> Would the younger Seneca have published the introduction and not the book? Or would he have mentioned the *Histories* at all, if they were as dangerous as Klotz believes?<sup>27</sup> The slightly apologetic air of the *De Vita Patris* is important. Three reasons help to explain this tone and fit in well with the general purposes of an introduction:

1. The work lacked the *ultima manus*, since the elder Seneca was plainly working on it almost to the day of his death;
2. The elder Seneca was not primarily a literary man, but a talented amateur;

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**23** Cf. on Pollio Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>) II LXXXVI. Claudius wrote a voluminous history, *Post Caedem Caesaris*, which opened with the death of Caesar and picked up again after the civil wars. The intervening period was too sensitive to be covered in any detail (Suet. *Claud.* 41). Claudius began the work when young and resumed it while Emperor. Cf. Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>) II CXX–CXXIII; Brisset (1964) 8.

**24** See Suet. *Calig.* 13–16; D.C. 59.24.4; Sen. *dial.* 6.1.2–4; cf. Ferrill (1964) 32–33.

**25** Klotz (1901) 427; 440; 442; Klotz (1909) 1527; Westerburg (1882) 48–49; Teuffel (1902<sup>7</sup>) 171. Those who believe that the work was published include Rossbach (1888) 164ff.; Rossbach (1894) 2239; Rossbach (1903) 85; Bornecque (1902a) 14–15 (asserts that *De Vita Patris* indicates that the work had not yet been published, but does not preclude later publication); Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>), II CXVIII; Schendel (1908) 48–50; Faider (1921) 171; Schanz/Hosius (1935) 340; 341; 398; Syme (1958) I 277; Brisset (1964) 7; Weinrib (1968) 152–153; Whitehorne (1969) 20.

**26** The wording emphasizes the *Histories* and their content while mentioning the other works in an elliptical fashion. The *Histories* were so unlike the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* that they deserved a prefatory explanation of the author, his background, and how a municipal equestrian from Spain came to write an account of Roman history, especially since this field was usually considered the prerogative of the senatorial class. Among those favoring the *De Vita Patris* as an introduction to the *Histories* are Schendel (1908) 50; Faider (1921) 171; Schanz/Hosius (1935) 340; 398. Rossbach (1888) 162 maintains that it was not a *laudatio funebris* in n. 1, and also that it was published before the *Histories* which followed shortly thereafter.

**27** Klotz (1901) 442; cf. Rossbach (1903) 85.

3. His morals and politics (and therefore the *Histories*) were somewhat old-fashioned and anachronistic for the times.

Next, it strains credulity to believe that the elder Seneca would write a history so politically outspoken and candid that it could endanger the political fortunes of his sons and prosperity of the Annaean *gens*, both of which he carefully nurtured. He was also aware that a work of this nature would certainly be banned or burned.

Another possible objection is that the *Histories* were written for a very limited private circulation and not for general publication. Here again it seems unlikely that a man of the elder Seneca's advanced years would work so assiduously at such a demanding task if there were no prospect that the fruits of his labors would ever see the light of day.

Martial indicates eventual publication; for he says that eloquent (*facunda*) Cordova talks of its two Senecas and unique Lucan.<sup>28</sup> Clearly the transferred epithet *facunda* would not apply to an anthologist of rhetorical specimens. The term is more appropriate to a historian, whose works Martial must have read.<sup>29</sup>

Of course, if the fragments in either Suetonius or Lactantius are genuine, then the argument for eventual publication is conclusive.<sup>30</sup> Undoubtedly the *Histories* appeared after the elder Seneca's death (about AD 39). Publication could have occurred in one of three time periods:

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**28** Cf. Mart. 1.61.7–8: *Duosque Senecas, unicumque Lucanum / facunda loquitur Corduba*.

**29** Another reference in Martial may be relevant: *Atria Pisonum stabant cum stemmate toto / et docti Senecae ter numeranda domus* (4.40.1–2). If he is referring to the younger and elder Senecas and Lucan, we have the convergence of two terms typifying these three representatives of the Annaei: *facundus* (1.61.7–8; see *supra* n. 28) and *doctus*. *Facundia* could be exhibited in the law courts, or more so, in the Senate. It refers also to literature, including poetry and history. *Doctus* implies great learning and erudition. For this reason it seems inappropriate to apply such terms to a man whose published works were two anthologies of extracts from declaimers. However, they would fit a man who had written a history of Rome. That Martial expected these terms to be understood without further explanation would suggest that the *Histories* were published and well known. One must accept the possibility that in 1.61.8 Martial is speaking of the younger Seneca and one of his brothers (Novatus or Mela) and that in 4.40.2 he is referring to all three. But with our knowledge of the sketchy literary careers of the brothers, one if not both of the references should bring to mind the elder Seneca. Friedländer (1886) in his notes does not attempt to identify the two Senecas of 1.61.7. But for 4.40.2 (*et docti Senecae ter numeranda domus*) he specifies the three Seneca brothers. While this is a distinct possibility, the parallel reference of 1.61.7 with its additional qualification of the poet Lucan again for a total of three seems to argue against Friedländer's interpretation.

**30** Also, if one allows that other writers used the elder Seneca's *Histories* as a source (*supra* n. 4), one must suppose eventual publication.

1. *Under Gaius*: Optimism and freedom characterized the inception of his reign. Freedom of speech was renewed and previously banned works were allowed to be republished.<sup>31</sup> This would seem an auspicious time for the younger Seneca to publish his father's work, and also the most likely possibility of the three periods.

2. *The Early Years of Claudius' reign*: In the years 41–49 the younger Seneca was exiled to Corsica, and it was during this enforced absence that his literary career really began in earnest. Perhaps he also filled his leisure with editing his father's *Histories* and then, with a deprecatory preface, had the work published in Rome. A number of his own compositions were published in this manner to keep the name of Seneca before the influential and literary public.<sup>32</sup> In so doing, he hoped to win sympathy for his cause from these *literati* and perhaps from the Emperor himself, who also had a great interest in historical writing and oratory, and would certainly have heard of the elder Seneca's earlier works. Thus another of these works might please the Emperor, especially since both men harbored a deep respect for Cicero, whose personal and literary reputation had waned greatly during this age of declamation. The elder Seneca would no doubt give Cicero his full due.<sup>33</sup>

3. *The Reign of Nero*: This is another possibility which has not yet been explored. The wording of the *De Vita Patris* in no way implies that the younger Seneca wrote it and published the *Histories* shortly after the elder Seneca's death. Therefore, publication could also have occurred while Seneca was Nero's tutor and first minister, or during his retirement. Perhaps he released the work in response to his nephew Lucan's request for an account of the period which he planned to treat in his epic poetry.

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31 See *supra* n. 24.

32 See Ferrill (1964) 75; cf. 102–103.

33 The pro-Ciceronianism of Claudius, no doubt fostered by his erstwhile preceptor, Livy, took literary form in a defense of Cicero (Suet. *Claud.* 41.3; cf. Ferrill (1964) 75 and n. 32). The elder Seneca's pro-Ciceronian bias is apparent throughout his extant works, particularly in matters of style; cf. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7; 11; 7.4.6; 10 *praef.* 6; *suas.* 6.12; 6.14–27; 7.10; also Ferrill (1964) 55–56; Sussman (1969) 152–155. On the declining regard for Cicero, see *contr.* 3 *praef.* 15 ff.; *suas.* 7.13–14. His works were often plagiarized: *suas.* 2.19; 7.14; Sussman (1969) 154–155. It is of interest to note the younger Seneca's comment that Claudius could serve as the model of a good historian: *Plb.* 8.2; cf. Ferrill (1964) 85.

### 3 Seneca's opinion of history as a calling

Although the elder Seneca wrote extensively on declamation, obviously enjoyed it, and spent considerable time frequenting the declamatory displays, he never lost sight of its importance relative to the other genres of eloquence. As a preparatory study he applauded declamation, but he stressed its ability to prepare the declaimer for advancement in other fields: philosophy, literature, oratory, and history.<sup>34</sup>

The testimony of Seneca's remarks and his own literary career indicate that if he preferred a substitute for oratorical eloquence, it was history. This he considered a more substantial field than declamation,<sup>35</sup> and he encouraged his sons to ponder it as a field for future endeavor. Although Seneca apologizes for introducing historical accounts into the *Suasoriae*, nevertheless he confesses that he does it intentionally in order to whet his sons' appetites for the study of history.<sup>36</sup> This did not conflict with the half-hearted permission given his son Mela to devote himself to rhetoric, which Seneca viewed as a preparation for more serious studies later.<sup>37</sup>

In his attitudes to history and its relation to oratory and declamation, Seneca closely parallels Tacitus. Both men favored historical education for young men,<sup>38</sup> both were aware of cyclical movements in history and oratory<sup>39</sup> and both made the transition from rhetorical pursuits to history. Quite possibly Seneca renounced oratory and rhetoric for the same reason as Tacitus—the decline of oratory:

*omissis forensium causarum angustiis in quibus mihi satis superque sudatum est, sanctiorem illam et augustiorem eloquentiam colam.*<sup>40</sup>

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**34** Cf. *contr. 2 praef. 3*: *Facilis ab hac [i.e., declamation] in omnes artes discursus est; instruit etiam quos non sibi exercet*. Declamation in itself, he thought, was an honorable part of oratory (*contr. 2 praef. 5*; cf. *1 praef. 7*), but it did not approach the summit of literary achievement (*contr. 1.8.16*), which he assigned to oratory and history (*suas. 5.8*; *6.16*). Two of Seneca's prefaces are damning indictments of declamation (*3 praef.*, quotation of Cassius Severus; *9 praef.*, quotation of Votienus Montanus.) Their statements are not contradicted. The elder Seneca himself emphasizes the triviality of the exercises; cf. *contr. 10 praef. 1*. In general, on this question, see Sussman (1969) 158–168.

**35** Cf. Sen. *suas. 5.8*.

**36** Cf. Sen. *suas. 6.16*.

**37** Cf. Sen. *contr. 2 praef. 3–4*; *1.8.16*.

**38** Cf. Sen. *suas. 6.16* ~ Tac. *dial. 30*.

**39** Cf. Sen. *contr. 1 praef. 7* ~ Tac. *dial.*, *passim*.

**40** Tac. *dial. 4* (cf. Sen. *contr. 1 praef. 7*), Maternus speaking. On Tacitus' identification with Maternus, see Gudeman (1894) xxxviii; cf. Michel (1962) 201.

The political conditions of the Empire and the decline of oratory caused both men to retire and devote themselves to history, in their eyes a higher pursuit and a more suitable outlet for eloquence.<sup>41</sup> But Seneca realized that the hand of autocracy did not leave history alone either. As he frequently observes, those who expressed outspoken views often suffered the destruction of their works, exile, and even death.<sup>42</sup> Seneca understandably betrayed great indignation when this, the only worthy outlet left for eloquence, seemed closed off during the reign of Tiberius.<sup>43</sup>

## 4 Subjects and ideas which chiefly interested the elder Seneca

The particular interests of the elder Seneca undoubtedly influenced the shape of the *Histories* greatly. And since in his extant works the elder Seneca was obviously preoccupied with the old Republican notions of morality, it is here that we must find a major focus of the *Histories*.

A fervid admirer of the elder Cato, the elder Seneca was himself a man of *antiquus rigor*.<sup>44</sup> In the preface to the first book of *Controversiae* and to a lesser extent elsewhere, he expounds at length on the degeneracy of the age and the corruption of the youth.<sup>45</sup> Thus we can assign a pervasive moral tone for the work, especially in view of the period covered.

Closely linked to the extensive discussion of deteriorating morality is a short section speculating on the causes of the decline of Roman eloquence,<sup>46</sup> which he envisioned as the result of a cyclical process and also related to the decline of

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41 See Sussman (1972).

42 E.g. the case of Labienus, *contr.* 10 *praef.* 7; perhaps Cassius Severus, *contr.* 3 *praef.* 3 (cf. Tac. *ann.* 4.21; Suet. *Calig.* 16); cf. Timagenes, *contr.* 10.5.22; Scaurus, *contr.* 10 *praef.* 3 (also *suas.* 2.22; Tac. *ann.* 6.29; D.C. 58.24.3–5; Suet. *Tib.* 61). Votienus Montanus, whose reported quotation comprises *contr.* 9 *praef.*, was exiled in AD 25 for some intemperate remarks (Tac. *ann.* 4.42). In the same year Cremutius Cordus' historical writings were burned by order of the Senate (Tac. *ann.* 4.34ff.; D.C. 57.24.2–4; cf. Suet. *Calig.* 16; Sen. *dial.* 6.1.3).

43 Cf. Sen. *contr.* 10 *praef.* 6–7.

44 Sen. *dial.* 12.17.3. The elder Seneca's laudation of Cato is emphatic and sincere (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 9). On the former's character in general, see the good summaries in Bornecque (1902a) 16–21 and Edward (1928) xxvii–xxx.

45 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 8–10; cf. his disgust with obscenity, *contr.* 1.1.23; also 2 *praef.* 5.

46 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7.



morality.<sup>47</sup> His remarks here and in other parts of his works, and also the testimony of the *De Vita Patris*, indicate that the elder Seneca saw a similar cycle, of moral decay, in history.<sup>48</sup> The whole conception seems to have fascinated him, and we can assume that it was an important and perhaps unifying theme of the *Histories*, as we shall see later.

The partial description of the work in the *De Vita Patris as historias ab initio bellorum civilium* reveals yet another focus. During his impressionable youth at Cordova, the elder Seneca and his family lived through, and probably participated in, some of the bloodiest fighting and civil discord of these wars.<sup>49</sup> He pointedly refers to the *furor* of the period<sup>50</sup> and, as did Lucan, who may have used his grandfather's *Histories* as a source, he quite conceivably emphasized the horror of civil war.<sup>51</sup> Events in Spain would certainly receive full notice. A passage in the *Suasoriae* may reveal another tendency of the *Histories*. Here, the elder Seneca mentions an fascinating man named Dellius, who, during the civil wars, constantly changed sides. Led astray by his unusual character, he devotes a full paragraph to Dellius, and ends with a plea for indulgence since, Seneca says, the attraction of the anecdotes he retells often carries him too far from the subject.<sup>52</sup> From this and similar instances the implication is plain: the elder Seneca was an irrepressible raconteur who enjoyed telling a good story about unusual people, and especially relating anecdotes tinged with the bizarre.<sup>53</sup> We could reasonably

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47 On this see Sussman (1972).

48 One may compare the statement in Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 6: *Deinde ut possitis aestimare in quantum cotidie ingenia decrescant et nescio qua iniquitate naturae eloquentia se retro tulerit*. Both passages strongly imply a cyclical conception with the use of *retro*; see discussion *infra*.

49 The date of the elder Seneca's birth is usually deduced from a statement in *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11, where, in pointedly alluding to the events of 43 BC, he says that if it had not been for the civil wars, he could have traveled to Rome and heard Cicero declaiming. Since boys usually left the *grammaticus* and began declamatory training with the *rheto*r between the ages of twelve and sixteen, this would give a birthdate between 58 and 54 BC and make the elder Seneca at least eleven years old during the civil discord in Cordova (cf. Schanz/Hosius (1935) 340; Bornecque (1902a) 9–10). Edward (1928) XXIII–XXIV, for various reasons, says that Seneca's birthdate need not be placed earlier than 50 BC. A fair compromise would be 53 BC (cf. Sussman (1969) xi). In any event, the bloody events could not have failed to make a vivid impression upon the prodigious memory of the elder Seneca.

50 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11.

51 The opening lines of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, especially 1.1–32, are noteworthy. Cf. *infra* n. 197.

52 Sen. *suas.* 1.7.

53 On Seneca's love of anecdotes and the anecdotal style see discussion below. According to at least one observer, his vivid portrayal of character in these excelled Cicero's pioneering efforts in the *Brutus*; cf. D'Alton (1931) 544–545. The extended description of Seneca's friend Latro is a

expect that his *Histories* contained many such amusing asides, highlighted by personal recollections of people he knew.

The period which Seneca covered in the *Histories* was one replete with the deaths of many great and often tragic figures. In reporting these, he could not have failed to employ with great frequency a type of character sketch which summed up a person's qualities, achievements, and character. Termed *epitaphia*, these provided the writer with an opportunity to display his mastery of the terse *sententia* and rhetorical point. Seneca himself had studied the use of this device. In a notable passage he traces its sparing use in Thucydides, occasional appearance in Sallust, and then its increasingly elaborate and ornate aspect in Livy and those who followed him.<sup>54</sup> Following this discussion, Seneca provides a series of six *epitaphia* composed by Roman writers on Cicero.

A brief remark and an extended quotation in the *Suasoriae*<sup>55</sup> are indicative of another Senecan tendency. When discussing the attempts of various declaimers to describe the ocean, he quotes at length Albinovanus Pedo's hexameters from a lost epic portraying Germanicus' voyage at sea during a storm. Greatly admired, says Seneca, is the section's *spiritus*, which, he claims, surpasses any declaimer's efforts on a similar subject. All of this suggests that Seneca was strongly attracted to the poetical,<sup>56</sup> dramatic, rhetorical, and descriptive aspects of historical writing.

## 5 Sources of the *Histories*

In the *Controversiae* and particularly in the *Suasoriae*, Seneca displays time and again his wide acquaintance with the writings of many historians whose works embraced or touched upon the period of his *Histories*. For instance, there are quo-

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minor classic (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 13–24). Cf. his portrayal of the acidic historian-declamer, Labienus (10 *praef.* 4–8), and the weird declaimer Seneca Grandio (*suas.* 2.17).

54 Cf. Sen. *suas.* 6.21: *Quotiens magni alicuius <viri> mors ab historicis narrata est, totiens fere consummatio totius vitae et quasi funebris laudatio redditur. Hoc, semel aut iterum a Thucydide factum, item in paucissimis personis usurpatum a Sallustio, T. Livius benignus omnibus magnis viris praestitit. Sequentes historici multo id effusius fecerunt. Ciceroni hoc, ut Graeco verbo utar, ἐπιτάφιον Livius reddit.*

55 Sen. *suas.* 1.15.

56 Cf. Sen. *suas.* 6.25–26, on Cornelius Severus.

tations from the works of Sallust, Livy, Pollio, Aufidius Bassus, Cremutius Cordus, and Brutteditus Niger.<sup>57</sup> Equally absorbing is his apparent personal acquaintance with many of the men themselves.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps, as his tone indicates at times, Seneca was either contemplating this vast project or actually engaged in the preliminary research.

Seneca also had the good fortune to be alive for a large part of the period covered by the *Histories*, and thus he may well have been acquainted with many events first-hand or through some of his many highly placed friends.<sup>59</sup>

From all that we know of his life, he was present in Spain (although very young) during the important and turbulent early 40's BC and thereafter spent long periods in Rome, that were probably interrupted by trips home. Whether he was an active participant in events is hard to say in the absence of direct evidence. But, as mentioned above, Seneca knew personally many of the leading political and military figures of the time. Whether this was due to a common interest in declamation or is indicative of some official governmental post at one time is unclear. The wealth, ambition, and shrewd marriages of the Annaei point to a combination of the two. Whatever the reason, the elder Seneca, equipped with an astounding memory, was accepted in the circles of such notables as Augustus, Pollio, Messalla, Tiberius, the important Vinicii, Maecenas, and others. He therefore had unusual access to first-hand accounts of events.

Other primary sources existed in profusion: numerous autobiographies of prominent men, eyewitness reports, personal papers, and official government records. Although many of these documents may have been private in nature,

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<sup>57</sup> Sallust: *Sen. contr.* 9.1.13 (cf. 3 *praef.* 8; 9.1.14; *suas.* 6.21). Livy: *suas.* 6.17; 6.22 (on the death of Cicero, cf. *contr.* 9.1.14; 9.2.26; 10 *praef.* 2; *suas.* 6.21). Pollio: *suas.* 6.24; cf. 6.15. Aufidius Bassus: *suas.* 6.18; 23. Cremutius Cordus: *suas.* 6.19; 23. Brutteditus Niger: *suas.* 6.20–21. The historian/poets Albinovanus Pedo (*suas.* 1.15) and Cornelius Severus (*suas.* 6.26). Labienus: *contr.* 10 *praef.* 5; 7–8. M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus: *suas.* 1.7 (he, too, wrote a history of the civil war). Timagenes: *contr.* 10.5.22. A check of the index to Kiessling (1872) reveals the names of numerous well-known historians and others who are better known for their efforts in different fields, yet who dabbled also in writing history: Maecenas, Agrippa, Arruntius, Augustus, Dellius, the elder Cato, Sextilius Ena, Julius Caesar.

<sup>58</sup> From his comments it seems that he knew the following writers of historical works: Messalla (*contr.* 2.4.8; 10; *suas.* 3.6; 6.27; cf. 1.7 and 2.20); Labienus (*contr.* 10 *praef.* 4–8; 4 *praef.* 2; 10.2.19); Pollio (*contr.* 4 *praef.* 2–6; *suas.* 6.27); Augustus (*contr.* 2.4.12; 2.5.20; 4 *praef.* 7; 10 *praef.* 14); Agrippa (*contr.* 2.4.12–13); and Maecenas (*contr.* 2.4.13; 9.3.14; *suas.* 1.12; 2.20). He also may well have known Livy, Cremutius Cordus, and Aufidius Bassus.

<sup>59</sup> On the many and highly placed connections and friends of the elder Seneca, see the valuable compilations of Weinrib (1968) 32–182.

through his highly placed friends and connections, Seneca may have enjoyed access to them. Other material, widely published, was also available, among them were the letters of Cicero, the autobiography and letters of Augustus, various published speeches, and numerous monographs.<sup>60</sup>

Many histories of the period were published and the elder Seneca was familiar with nearly all of them. For example, in the sixth *Suasoria*, which deals with Cicero, he mentions and gives examples from the works of Livy, Pollio, Aufidius Bassus, Cremutius Cordus, Bruttidius Niger, and Sallust. Seneca is not averse to poetically flavored history,<sup>61</sup> and he offers examples of historical epic from the poets Albinovanus Pedo and Cornelius Severus.<sup>62</sup> Elsewhere in his writings Seneca mentions a number of historians and dilettantes in the field including Labienus, Lucius Arruntius, Messalla, Maecenas, Dellius, Tuscus, and the Greek Timagenes.<sup>63</sup>

Seneca's admiration for Sallust probably points to extensive Sallustian influence in the *Histories*.<sup>64</sup> Livy, and perhaps to a lesser extent, Pollio, Aufidius Bassus, and Labienus, would also leave their mark. The elder Seneca's great respect for the elder Cato<sup>65</sup> suggests familiarity with the style and content of the *Origines*, and it is possible that the *Histories* take up approximately where Cato's *Origines* left off.<sup>66</sup> The Lactantius fragment, if we accept it as genuine, may well reflect

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60 For an account of the various sources, primary and secondary, that were available, see Wilkes (1972).

61 Literary people of the period thought history and poetry to be closely related: cf. Quint. *inst.* 10.1.31.

62 Sen. *suas.* 1.15; 6.26.

63 See *supra* n. 57.

64 Seneca is particularly attracted to Sallust's prose style; cf. *contr.* 9.1.13–14. There are occasional similarities of expression: cf. Sall. *Catil.* 11.1: ... *quod tamen vitium propius virtutem erat* ~ Sen. *contr.* 7 *praef.* 5 *nec tamen mirum est, si difficulter adprehenditur vitio tam vicina virtus*. Also, Sall. *Catil.* 12.3: *operae pretium est* ~ Sen. *suas.* 6.23: *non est operae pretium (suas. 6.23)*. There are extensive similarities also between the fragments of Sallust's preface to his *Histories* and the elder Seneca's preface to the first book of the *Controversiae*: Sall. *hist.* 1. fr. 5 Maurenbrecher = 9 La Penna/Funari: *In quis longissimo aevo plura de bonis falsa in deterius composuit* ~ Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 7: *in deterius deinde cotidie data res est*; Sall. *hist.* 1. fr. 16 Maurenbrecher: *Ex quo tempore maiorum mores non paulatim ut antea, sed torrentis modo praecipitati; adeo iuventus luxu atque avaritia corrupta, ut merito dicatur genitos esse qui neque ipsi habere possent res familiaris nee alios pati* ~ Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 7: *in deterius deinde cotidie data res est, sive luxu temporum – nihil enim tam mortiferum ingeniis quam luxuria est... ut ad summum perducta rursus ad infimum, velocius quidem quam ascenderant, relabantur*. See also Vell. 2.1.1; Klingner (1928); Clausen (1947).

65 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 9.

66 They ended apparently with the praetorship of Servius Galba (151 BC), cf. Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>) II CXXXXII. Thus the elder Seneca's *Histories* may well have had a brief reference to the third Punic

Varro's theory in his *De Vita Populi Romani* that the life span of a nation falls into periods analogous to the ages of man. However, Seneca does not mention Varro anywhere in his extant works, nor does he cite Claudius Quadrigarius, Nicolaus of Damascus, and Strabo.<sup>67</sup>

We can form some idea of Seneca's worth and reliability as an historian if we suppose that he used as major sources the historians whom he most frequently mentions. It should be noted, however, that the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* are primarily concerned with matters of style, and the historians are usually mentioned in this regard. Nevertheless, the historians whom he cites represent a broad selection in both matters of style and political philosophy. Again, a look at the sixth *Suasoria* is instructive. In it Seneca, a fierce partisan of Cicero, announces that he will strive for completeness in the depiction of Cicero's character by presenting both the positive and the negative sides.<sup>68</sup> He then proceeds to give excerpts from pro- and anti-ciceronian writers: men themselves of such diverse political points of view as the literary Republicanism of Cordus, the vehement anti-Ciceronianism of Pollio, the Republican-tinged Augustanism of Livy, the pro-Ciceronianism of the highly regarded Bassus, and the shifty sycophancy of the *delator* Brutteditius Niger. Seneca has therefore reproduced an extremely broad and impartial selection of sources, while plainly stating his own conclusion, or, if you will, his own bias.

This crucial section also provides some valuable insights into Seneca's working methods. Violently opposed to plagiarism in any form,<sup>69</sup> Seneca must have identified his sources wherever possible in the *Histories* as he did in *suas.* 6. The passage under discussion also indicates that he used a multiplicity of sources and recognized their discrepancies, which he sought to resolve by taking into account individual prejudices of the authors. In this respect he may have adopted and refined the methods of Livy.

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War, the destruction of Carthage, and the ending of the *metus Punicus*, whose absence, according to many Roman writers, contributed to the causes of the civil wars. On this see discussion *supra* nn. 18, 19.

<sup>67</sup> But Bardon (1940a) 66–67 finds considerable influence of Varro on Seneca in his vocabulary of literary critical terms.

<sup>68</sup> Sen. *suas.* 6.14ff.

<sup>69</sup> See especially Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 10–11 and *suas.* 2.19; cf. *contr.* 10.5.20. On this see also Sussman (1969) 54–55.

## 6 The elder Seneca's critical attitudes towards his sources

One of the faults most frequently ascribed to Roman historians is the improper use of secondary materials. In particular, they are often guilty of overvaluing second-rate historians, insufficient familiarity with the full range of sources available, conscious selectivity to affirm their own prejudices, reliance on a single source though obviously slanted or flawed, and suppression of contradictions among various sources. Judging from the methods employed in writing his works, and in particular *suas.* 6.14ff mentioned above, we can justifiably conclude that Seneca made a conscious effort, if not necessarily a successful one, to avoid these failings.

Of interest with regard to Seneca's critical acumen is his stated goal to aid the great men of declamation who are threatened with oblivion. He says that he intends to preserve at least a portion of their works.<sup>70</sup> For many of these, Seneca tells us, not even any lecture notes remained except counterfeits and forgeries. Such remarks typify his close attention to primary materials which, we can in turn assume, characterized the *Histories*. To be sure, Seneca adds also the conventional but probably accurate equivalent of *sine ira et studio* to this discussion: *summa cum fide suum cuique reddam*.<sup>71</sup>

In another revealing passage, Seneca reports his findings on the tradition regarding Cicero's relation to his supposed killer, Popilius. Here also he has surveyed the sources on both sides to search out the truth of the matter.<sup>72</sup> Also notable in this discussion is the division Seneca sees between declaimers and writers of history, and his apparent feeling of kinship with the latter rather than with the former in the discussion that follows. He affirms this impression in *suas.* 6.14, where he criticizes the declaimers for making up a *suasoria* theme about Cicero that violates probability and historical fact. Throughout this *suasoria*, as we have pointed out above, Seneca shows that he has obviously studied with care all the

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<sup>70</sup> Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11.

<sup>71</sup> Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11; cf. 10 *praef.* 16; *suas.* 6.14. On this ideal of historians, see Ullman (1943). To his enumeration of the influences on the memorable phrase from Tacitus (*ann.* 1.1), one could add Sall. *Catil.* 4.2: *statui res gestas populi Romani carpatim perscribere; eo magis, quod mihi a spe, metu, partibus rei publicae animus liber erat.*

<sup>72</sup> Sen. *contr.* 7.2.8: *Popillium pauci ex historicis tradiderunt interfectorem Ciceronis et hi quoque non parricidi reum a Cicerone defensum, sed in privato iudicio; declamatoribus placuit parricidi reum fuisse. Sic autem eum accusant, tamquam defendi non possit, cum adeo possit absolvi, ut ne accusari quidem potuerit.*

major sources on the death of Cicero, even the very hostile Pollio,<sup>73</sup> and in his case noted the discrepancy between his accusations against Cicero and the weight of all the other authorities. Seneca also noticed an inconsistency in two works of Pollio. This orator had made several charges in a speech against Cicero which were so outrageous that he did not dare to repeat them in his historical work. But Seneca reproduces the offending passage from the speech, despite their most unfavorable and untrue criticisms.<sup>74</sup>

Seneca praises Livy, whom he terms *natura candidissimus omnium magnorum ingeniorum aestimator*,<sup>75</sup> and quotes with approval his even-handed appraisal of Cicero. Although openly a great admirer of Cicero, Seneca is fully prepared to admit both the man's good and bad sides, and to praise even a somewhat damaging critique from a historian he admires. Of interest also are his preservation and rather full treatment of Aufidius Bassus' account of Cicero's death.<sup>76</sup> Bassus, evidently a first-rate historian, was well known to Tacitus.<sup>77</sup>

In general, these passages represent a fairly sophisticated attitude towards the use of source material, and Seneca's disclaimer of partiality rings true.<sup>78</sup> If we assume that he followed this pattern in the *Histories* of full, diligent, and impartial use of sources, then we have lost an extremely valuable account of this crucial period, a loss at least somewhat mitigated by its partial preservation in Appian and perhaps Florus.<sup>79</sup>

## 7 Criticism of Greek and Roman historians

The very nature of Seneca's extant works precludes extensive historiographic criticism, although he makes an occasional foray into the field. For instance, as

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73 Sen. *suas.* 6.15.

74 Cf. Sen. *suas.* 6.15. In *suas.* 6.18–19 Seneca interrupts a quotation from Aufidius Bassus to notice that both he and Crematius Cordus preserve a tradition that Cicero had considered seeking out either Brutus, Cassius, or Sextus Pompey, but decided finally against it and to accept death. Here Seneca has reported an additional point where two writers record information which others have not. It is plain that in regard to the life of Cicero Seneca knows his sources very well.  
75 Sen. *suas.* 6.22.

76 Sen. *suas.* 6.23; cf. 6.18.

77 See Syme (1958) I 274; Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>) II CXXV ff. Our only fragments of Bassus are the two quotations in Sen. *suas.* 6.18; 23.

78 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11 (though given in a slightly different context. See *supra* n. 71).

79 See *supra* n. 4.

we have already observed, he is quick to denounce Pollio's deliberate falsification or slanting of the facts about Cicero.<sup>80</sup> But to Seneca's credit as an impartial critic, where Pollio is fair in a summation of the great orator's life, he praises Pollio's eloquence.<sup>81</sup>

Elsewhere he mentions silliness of Tuscus, who injected anachronism<sup>82</sup> into a *suasoria* on the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylae – indicative of Seneca's standards in such criticism. Seneca also criticizes excessive freedom of speech in the historians Labienus and Timagenes.<sup>83</sup>

For the most part, however, the elder Seneca's comments center on matters of style. He makes no secret of his admiration for Sallust's brevity and considers his achievement in this aspect superior to that of Thucydides and Livy.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, Livy receives praise for his emphasis on clear diction<sup>85</sup> and his excellent *epitaphia*.<sup>86</sup> Criticism of style is implicit also when Seneca describes how Bruttedius Niger's powers of description failed him in one instance because of the magnitude of the event, and also in an unfavorable comment on Cremutius Cordus's laudation of Cicero.<sup>87</sup>

## 8 Merits and shortcomings of the elder Seneca's *Histories*

In the discussion of Seneca's sources we have already touched on his merits as an historian. He apparently did not suppress what was personally distasteful and also took care to identify the source of an account. In the case of conflicting versions he exercised his own critical judgment in an attempt to arrive at the truth.

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**80** Sen. *suas.* 6.15; 24.

**81** Sen. *suas.* 6.24–25.

**82** There is a reference to *veni, vidi, vici* (Sen. *suas.* 2.22; cf. 2.14; 4.5).

**83** In the case of Timagenes, this criticism seems more in connection with the spoken word; cf. Sen. *contr.* 10.5.22. On Labienus see *contr.* 10 *praef.* 5: *Libertas tanta, ut libertatis nomen excederet et, quia passim ordines hominesque laniabat, Rabienus vocaretur* (cf. *contr.* 10. *praef.* 8).

**84** Sen. *contr.* 9.1.13–14. The example taken from Thucydides to compare with Sallust is erroneous; see discussion *infra*. We should note, however, that Seneca reports without dissent Cassius Severus' opinion that Sallust's speeches were markedly inferior to his historical works, obviously here a judgment also of style (*contr.* 3 *praef.* 8).

**85** Sen. *contr.* 9.2.26.

**86** Sen. *suas.* 6.21–22.

**87** Sen. *suas.* 6.20–21; 23.



He appears to have made a sincere effort at impartiality and to have detested anachronisms.<sup>88</sup>

Writing an historical work was undoubtedly attractive to Seneca, since it unquestionably offered a more congenial medium of expression than an anthology. He must have imposed a thematic unity on the *Histories*, as he did in the *Controversiae*, a work less amenable to this.<sup>89</sup>

So much for the virtues of the *Histories*. There must have been shortcomings as well. First of these had to be the serious difficulties in narrating an account of the period from the Gracchi to the reign of Gaius, many of which Ronald Syme has detailed in an important article.<sup>90</sup> We may note, for example, the great complexity in the events of the early 40's BC, and the misrepresentations, subtle or striking, which partisan sources had injected into their accounts. In the Principate many of the most important transactions were shrouded in secrecy, especially those dealing with the imperial family. Also, the very size and complexity of the new government were an impediment to understanding and relating its workings for all but those most closely associated with it. Accounts of military campaigns also presented serious problems. There was always the danger of telling the truth, where it could be determined, rather than the official version. Slighted generals or their families could be vindictive. Generals related by blood to an emperor required especially careful treatment. Brilliant subordinates who actually supervised much of the campaigning could not receive too much credit. A history written to please an emperor, or, at any rate, not to displease, might prove dangerous to the author when a new *princeps* was installed. To these factors we usually attribute the failings in Livy, Velleius, Florus, and the others. There is no reason to believe that Seneca succeeded where they did not, given the state of the art in the early Empire.

In addition, Seneca's commitment to factual veracity could also be called into question. An obvious case concerns the fictional themes on Greek and Roman history that he included in the *Suasoriae*. But these, I believe, can be summarily dismissed on the grounds that the themes were traditional and conventionalized at this time. By no means were they intended to be taken as serious historical narrative.

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<sup>88</sup> On Seneca's impartiality see discussion above; cf. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11; *suas.* 6.14. On his distaste for anachronisms, see *supra* n. 82.

<sup>89</sup> See Sussman (1971) and (1977). For the apparent unifying theme of the *Histories*, see discussion *infra*.

<sup>90</sup> Syme (1959).

A more serious indictment is the apparent number of improperly ascribed quotations on historical subjects in Seneca's works, and an occasional inaccurate historical "fact". We can list the following:

1. In the introductory statements to the second *Suasoria* the numbers of Greeks at Thermopylae are inaccurately given. Seneca does not criticize these lapses.
2. Seneca does not criticize Cestius' ascription of a speech to Callisthenes<sup>91</sup> variously ascribed to Antipater,<sup>92</sup> Anaxarchus,<sup>93</sup> or Alexander himself.<sup>94</sup>
3. Arellius Fuscus' faulty ascription of a quotation to Thucydides is not criticized by Seneca.<sup>95</sup>
4. Seneca attributes a quote to Herodotus not found in his works.<sup>96</sup>
5. The content of a letter from C. Cassius to Cicero is reported as containing much urbanity, whereas the text of that letter does not quite support such an interpretation.<sup>97</sup>
6. Seneca does not call into question Porcius Latro's statement that Verres died before Cicero.<sup>98</sup> This is apparently at variance with Lactantius,<sup>99</sup> who says Verres died *after* Cicero, but in the same proscription.

Reflection reveals that these lapses are not very damaging. As for point (1), the use of historically inaccurate numbers in rhetorical enlargement was customarily allowed in rhetoric.<sup>100</sup> In any event, this *suasoria* was an old favorite, and Seneca could hardly have changed the theme.

The inaccurately ascribed quotation in point (2) is in an extract from Cestius, and point (3) is a slip on the part of Arellius Fuscus. In this case Seneca himself

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**91** Sen. *suas.* 1.5.

**92** D.C. 64.21.

**93** D. L. 9.10.60.

**94** Plut. *Alex.* 28. See Müller (1887) 523–524 *ad loc.*; Rolland (1906) 22–23; Sen. *nat.* 6.23.2–4. See also Bornecque (1902b) II 389 *ad Sen. suas.* 1.5; the speech, attributed to Callisthenes, is otherwise recorded as from Clitus: Curt. 8.1.45; 8.5.13; Plut. *Alex.* 50ff.; Arr. 4.9.4; the same comments apply.

**95** Sen. *contr.* 9.1.13; apparently from Demosthenes, either *In epist. Phil.* 13 or *Olynth.* 2.20. See Müller (1887) 380, *ad loc.*

**96** Sen. *suas.* 2.11. It closely resembles D. S. 11.9.4 and Plut. *Apoth. Lac.* 225 D, 13. Cf. Edward (1928) 109; Müller (1887) 539, and Bornecque (1902b) II 391.

**97** Sen. *suas.* 1.5; cf. Cic. *fam.* 15.19, and Edward (1928) 92, *ad loc.*

**98** Sen. *suas.* 6.3.

**99** Lact. *inst.* 2.4.36–37.

**100** Cic. *Brut.* 42; cf. Edward (1928) 101, *ad loc.*

seems somewhat unsure and qualifies the quotation: *aliquam Thucydidis sententiam*.<sup>101</sup> We should further note with regard to point (2) (the supposed misquotation of Callisthenes) that the ancient sources themselves are hopelessly confused. Seneca also qualifies his mistaken quotation from Herodotus (4) with *puto*; he is plainly unsure, but unwilling to take the time to check the reference.<sup>102</sup> Thus the misquotations are not the fault of Seneca, and we can only blame him for not taking the effort to check through cumbersome scrolls which lacked indexes and to correct each man he quotes.

Where he inaccurately reports the tone of the Cassius letter (5) there is room for more pointed criticism than in the other four cases. In point (6) we merely have a conflict between Latro and Lactantius on the relative order in which Verres and Cicero died. Lacking more precise external evidence, we plainly have a case of Latro's word against Lactantius: Latro, a contemporary of Cicero's, was certainly closer to these events than the later Christian writer.

A more damaging assessment of Seneca's value as a historian arises from his confusion over the history of declamation.<sup>103</sup> He has apparently misunderstood the role played by several types of preparatory exercises in the development of declamation and the differences between declamation of the Republic and that of the Empire. Here we can detect a serious misreading of the forces and trends in the evolution of this genre. This does not reflect well on Seneca's abilities as an interpreter of primary material, much of which was then available to him.<sup>104</sup>

How then can we estimate Seneca's reliability as an historian? An examination of quotations and data in the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* reveals few errors directly ascribable to Seneca. In fact, where we can verify him, he is generally accurate, but it is obvious that he lacks the will to track down an individual quotation or fact if unsure. If not entirely pardonable, this is somewhat understandable in view of the nature of these works. His failure to deal satisfactorily with the history of declamation and to provide a sound interpretation of its growth gives room for speculation on his ability to deal with contemporary forces and trends not treated specifically in a secondary work. But in handling secondary sources Seneca shows strength because of his ability to select widely, synthesize from conflicting accounts, reject what is obviously slanted or false, and thus usually

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**101** Sen. *contr.* 9.1.13.

**102** Sen. *suas.* 2.11: ... *sed in hac materia disertissima illa fertur sententia Dorionis, cum posuisset hoc dixisse trecentis Leonidam, quod puto etiam apud Herodotum esse.*

**103** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 12.

**104** There were apparently no secondary sources on the subject then. In general, on this point, see Bonner (1949) 1–50, and Sussman (1969) 1–48. For additional references, see Whitehorne (1969) 19–20.

provide accurate historical information. The *Histories*, a more specialized project, would display these qualities even more.

## 9 The elder Seneca's philosophy of history

In determining an historian's grand philosophy of history, the first point to examine is whether the historian himself subscribed to any philosophical system. According to his son, the elder Seneca detested philosophy and philosophers. But a critical examination of the two passages on which this assessment rests is revealing.<sup>105</sup> The passage from the *Epistles* seems to reflect more upon the political realities of the early Empire, when philosophers were often considered suspicious and dangerous by the government. Obviously, then, ostentatious adherence to a particular philosophical system would not recommend itself to a young man (in this case, the younger Seneca) preparing for a political career.<sup>106</sup> In the other passage the younger Seneca reports that his father dissuaded his own wife Helvia from extensive study of philosophy because he believed that it was unbecoming to a Roman matron.

One notices with interest, on the other hand, that the elder Seneca's attitude towards two Stoic philosophers is one of high praise and he terms the philosophy itself *tam sanctis fortibusque praeceptis*.<sup>107</sup> All this is not to argue that the elder Seneca was a Stoic, although his wife and son were obviously deeply interested in Stoicism, but rather that he was not so deeply anti-philosophical as has been

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**105** Cf. Sen. *epist.* 108.22: *In primum Tiberii Caesaris principatum iuventae tempus inciderat. Alienigena tum sacra movebantur, sed inter argumenta superstitionis ponebatur quorundam animalium abstinencia. Patre itaque meo rogante, qui non calumniam timebat, sed philosophiam oderat, ad pristinam consuetudinem redii.* See also *dial.* 12.17.3–4: *Quantum tibi patris mei antiquus rigor permisit, omnes bonas artes non quidem comprehendisti, attigisti tamen. Vtinam quidem uirorum optimus, pater meus, minus maiorum consuetudini deditus voluisset te praeceptis sapientiae erudiri potius quam inbui! Non parandum tibi nunc esset auxilium contra fortunam sed proferendum. Propter istas quae litteris non ad sapientiam utuntur sed ad luxuriam instruuntur minus te indulgere studiis passus est.*

**106** On this see Ferrill (1964) 26–27. Philosophers were expelled from Rome in AD 16 and 19.

**107** Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 1 (in the case of the Stoic philosopher Papirius Fabianus, who had given up the study of declamation to devote himself to philosophy). See also Seneca's laudatory remarks on Attalus Stoicus in *suas.* 2.12: *qui solum vertit a Seiano circumscriptus, magnae vir eloquentiae, ex his philosophis, quos vestra aetas vidit, longe et subtilissimus et facundissimus...*; cf. Weinrib (1968) 94–95.

usually thought, and also that he may well have absorbed some Stoic doctrine from his family.

The elder Seneca's own comments, and those of his son, tell us that the old man was deeply imbued with the traditional Roman virtues and morals; he was religious, conservative, industrious, patriotic, opposed to sensuality, an admirer of *gravitas*, a man whose model was the elder Cato – in short, as his son tersely states, *virorum optimus antiquo rigore maiorum consuetudini deditus*.<sup>108</sup> Thus, as is so often the case, the doctrines of Stoic virtue and the ancestral Roman ethic meet once again. So when he came to write history, his deeply held personal feelings influenced his selection of the work's central theme – the decline of *veritas*.<sup>109</sup>

## 9.1 Seneca's Politics

In a man whose philosophical outlook seems so closely linked to the Republic, there may be an implicit political motive in such a theme as the decline of *veritas* for a history, although the motif was conventional enough, and to some extent tolerated by the various imperial regimes.

But the elder Seneca's political views, for a man of his sentiments and character, are not as simple as one would expect. Perhaps this is due to his provincial origins in Cordova, a deeply Romanized colony founded in 151 BC, made up of distinguished settlers, and possessing the *ius Latii*.<sup>110</sup> Famed for its poets, prosperity, and schools, during the civil wars the city passed at various times through the hands of Pompey, Caesar, and perhaps Sextus Pompey.<sup>111</sup> Although Pompeian *clientela* seems predominant in this part of Spain, there was also a strong and distinguished Caesarian party – the position of Cordova throughout was characteristically, then, ambiguous.<sup>112</sup> Apparently the Annaei emerged from the wars

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**108** Sen. *dial.* 12.17.3, quoted *supra* (n. 105).

**109** Cf. Vell. 2.1.1–2.

**110** Strab. 3.2.15. It is referred to in the early Empire as a *colonia patricia* (Plin. *nat.* 3.1.10; cf. *CIL* II *Suppl.* 1143), and was composed of an elite group (Strab. 3.2.1). See also Hübner 1900. The inhabitants of the city vigorously asserted their devotion to Roman ways (Cic. *Arch.* 10.26).

**111** Sextus Pompey is not definitely known to have molested Cordova, though he was in the general vicinity (Broughton (1952) 329; Cic. *Att.* 16.4.2). Some trouble may have occurred fairly close to the city (*Anth. Lat.* 409 R 9–12). But Sextus was, at least for a time, harbored in Cordova (Dio 45.10.1; cf. 43.39.1).

**112** During the civil wars, Caesar summoned an assembly in Cordova, and at one time it refused entrance to Varro, a Pompeian general (Caes. *civ.* 2.19). In 48 BC Cordova begged not to be forced to move against Caesar (*Bell. Alex.* 58.4), but later it became a stronghold for Pompeians (*Bell.*

with their fortunes flourishing and, soon, imperial favor. This situation suggests Caesarian connections.<sup>113</sup> Seneca also speaks of the historian Labienus in terms suggesting that he found it distasteful and inappropriate to hold Pompeian sympathies.<sup>114</sup> However, pro-Pompeian sentiments seem to appear in the works of the younger Seneca and Lucan, but a useful study made by Wolverson shows a more balanced opinion of Julius Caesar among the Annaei than previously supposed.<sup>115</sup>

A family *clientela* of Asinius Pollio appears to be another possible political alliance and, through him, allegiance to the Caesarian cause. A long-time acquaintance of the elder Seneca, Pollio was also in Cordova during the crucial years 44–43 BC.<sup>116</sup> During this period the elder Seneca was a scant ten or twelve years old, impatient to continue his rhetorical education in Rome, but forced to remain at home because of the wars.<sup>117</sup> Then, when the wars subsided, he went to school in Rome and evidence of connection with Pollio appears shortly thereafter.<sup>118</sup> Next, Seneca enjoyed the acquaintance of and intimacy with the top literary and political luminaries of the day, including Maecenas, Messalla, Ovid, Gallio, Cassius Severus, Augustus, Labienus, and others.<sup>119</sup> Seneca had the abundant wealth, leisure, and ability necessary to become welcome in the salons of the wealthy, powerful, and talented, where declamatory exhibitions were enjoying a

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*Hisp.* 33; Cic. *fam.* 9.13.1; D.C. 43.29.3). There were still Caesarian stalwarts, however, ready to betray the city (*Bell. Hisp.* 2; 34; D.C. 43.32.3), one of whom apparently was the father of Clodius Turrinus, a friend of the elder Seneca. See on this Weinrib (1968) 32–33; 37; 54–55, and *infra* n. 113.

**113** As does the close relationship with Clodius Turrinus and his family (*Sen. contr.* 10 *praef.* 14–16); cf. Weinrib (1968) 54; 104–105. The elder Seneca was sent by his family to school at Rome soon after the events of 43 BC. Thus the basis of their wealth must have been essentially intact.

**114** *Sen. contr.* 10 *praef.* 5.

**115** Wolverson (1964) 82–88.

**116** Cf. Broughton (1952) 327; 343.

**117** *Sen. contr.* 1 *praef.* 11.

**118** We know from Seneca's own statement that Pollio did not declaim in public (4 *praef.* 2). Yet Seneca was a member of that select group which was allowed admittance to Pollio's private declamatory sessions, both at the time Pollio was in his prime and much later, when he was an old man: cf. *Sen. contr.* 4 *praef.* 3: *Audivi autem illum (sc. Pollionem) et viridem et postea iam senem cum Marcello Aesernino nepoti suo quasi praeciperet.* "Viridem" would suggest a rather young age for Pollio when Seneca saw him; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 5.295; Ov. *trist.* 4.10.17; Curt. 10.5.10. This, the detailed description which follows (*contr.* 4 *praef.* 3–6) of Pollio's declamatory and oratorical styles, and the vivid portrayal of his personal qualities testify to much more than a casual friendship between the two.

**119** See *supra* n. 59; Ferrill (1964) 13; 16–21; 34–37. The index to Kiessling (1872) provides a handy form of reference since it records not only the place where a particular name occurs, but also Seneca's remarks on that person.

surge of popularity. Such connections hint at a possible imperial post, perhaps a staff position with Augustus in Tarraconensis.<sup>120</sup> The elder Seneca's familiarity with Augustus and his high regard for him (also the tone of the younger Seneca) might indicate that the Annaei cast their lot with him early and so reaped the rewards.<sup>121</sup> Thus they take their place as another equestrian provincial family deeply imbued with old Roman traditions, upon whom the new regime depended so heavily. Ambitious for wealth, power, influence, and office, through alliances, connections by marriage, and literary prestige, the Annaei began making their way to the heights during the elder Seneca's lifespan.<sup>122</sup> This conclusion is supported by the political variety in the friends and acquaintances of the elder Seneca—it is hopeless to reconstruct his politics from a study of theirs; no clear trends emerge.<sup>123</sup>

The elder Seneca's marriage to Helvia made him brother-in-law through Helvia's sister (also named Helvia) to C. Galerius, the equestrian prefect of Egypt under Tiberius for an unprecedented 16 years, and "the most important equestrian official in the imperial administration of the Emperor Tiberius".<sup>124</sup> There is also some evidence that through Galerius the Annaei were adherents of Sejanus.<sup>125</sup> Significantly, the younger Seneca lavishly thanked his mother's sister for helping

**120** Cf. *Sen. contr.* 10 *praef.* 14; Syme (1939) 356; Weinrib (1968) 131. Perhaps Seneca was on the staff of Asilius Sabinus, since his narration of the latter's predicament on Crete sounds first-hand (*contr.* 9.4.17–21).

**121** *Sen. contr.* 2.4.13: *Tanta autem... sub divo Augusto libertas fuit...; 4 praef.* 5: *...divus Augustus, ut erat mos illi clementissimo viro...;* cf. 2.4.12; 2.5.20; 10 *praef.* 14; 10.5.21–22. The younger Seneca's opinions reflect those of his father: see *dial.* 4.3.23.7–8; *benef.* 3.27.1–4. See also Ferrill (1964) 122 and note 85. One may compare the remarks of Velleius, who saw and similarly appreciated the Principate as the reestablishment of a stable order (2.131.1); cf. Anderson (1962) 53–54 (with much citation); 56ff.; 65–66.

**122** Again, Weinrib's (1968) compilation of prosopographical evidence is valuable in ascertaining this; cf. especially 88–164 *passim*. Also, see Ferrill (1964) 29–46 for an account of the Annaei and the Sejanian "party"; cf. Stewart (1953) 70–85.

**123** Except, perhaps, for a tinge of anti-authoritarianism; e.g., Pollio, Messalla, Cassius Severus, Labienus. Cf. Weinrib (1968) 109–114.

**124** Ferrill (1964) 12; cf. Weinrib (1968) 88; 130. Other shrewd marriages of the Annaei are attested: Mela and the daughter of a prominent Cordovan orator (Weinrib (1968) 90), the younger Seneca and Pompeia Paulina, whose father was a *praefectus annonae* and whose brother was a consul (Weinrib (1968) 89), Lucan and Argentaria Polla, a wealthy, cultured lady (Weinrib (1968) 90–91). The geographic origin of the wives was diverse: "What mattered was not geographic origin but wealth, social standing, and education, and these were elements which all the women of the Annaei shared in various degrees" (Weinrib (1968) 91–92).

**125** Cf. Ferrill (1964) 29ff.; Stewart (1953) *passim*; but Weinrib (1968) 153.

him in his political career.<sup>126</sup> Sejanian connections may also explain the younger Seneca's vitriolic hatred of Tiberius. Another important though usually unnoticed connection existed between the elder Seneca and the powerful Vinicii, one of whom was briefly a candidate for emperor.<sup>127</sup>

## 9.2 The Elder Seneca's View of the Republic and the Principate

Indispensable for reconstructing the elder Seneca's *Histories* is a knowledge of his attitude towards the great political change which occurred in his lifetime. The topic of the change from Republic to Principate would comprise a large and essential share of his work. Such a knowledge is attainable, if allowances are made for the conventional pose of Republicanism assumed by most writers of the period.

Undoubtedly the experiences of his impressionable childhood spent in Spain during intense and bitter civil discord left their mark on the elder Seneca – it was a time he characterized by *furor*.<sup>128</sup> In other parts of his works, he continues to dwell on the civil wars: two *controversiae* deal with the period of the proscriptions<sup>129</sup> as do *Suasoriae* 6 and 7. Seneca describes in sympathetic tones the varying fortunes of his fellow-Spaniards, the Clodii Turrini, caused by the ebb and flow of war in that province.<sup>130</sup>

Because of his experiences there can be little doubt that the elder Seneca welcomed the stability and order of the Principate. He also appreciated the opportu-

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**126** Sen. *dial.* 12.19.2.

**127** The elder Seneca mentions several members of the Vinicii, at some length, and usually in a very complimentary way: *contr.* 1.2.3; 1.4.11; 2.5.19; 7.5.11; 7.6.11; 10.4.25. Velleius dedicated his historical work to a member of this family, M. Vinicius, cos. AD 30 and 45, who was briefly mentioned as a candidate for emperor after the death of Gaius (I. *AI.* 19.251). There is a connection between this Vinicius and the Annaei: the younger Seneca was apparently a member of his circle of friends and a political ally of his wife, Julia Livilla, with whom he was accused of conducting an adulterous liaison and therefore exiled by Claudius at Messalina's behest in AD 41. Julia Livilla was a daughter of Germanicus and a granddaughter of Tiberius (see Tac. *ann.* 6.15; *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 4.1674). The Vinicii are an extremely important family of the early Empire, and one which has not received the attention it merits. A useful and excellent beginning in this regard has been made by Sumner (1970) 288–297. The genealogy of the Vinicii offers some difficulties, compounded by textual problems in the elder Seneca. Helpful is Syme (1933).

**128** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11.

**129** Sen. *contr.* 4.8; 5.1; cf. 7.2.

**130** Sen. *contr.* 10 *praef.* 16.



nities afforded the provincial *equites* under Augustus for new prospects of enrichment, participation in the government, and advancement to the senatorial order.<sup>131</sup> We have had occasion to remark on the special affection and regard which Seneca had for Augustus.<sup>132</sup>

However, the elder Seneca also deeply admired Cicero in a period when that orator and his works were in low favor.<sup>133</sup> He surely did not forget the young Octavian's complicity in the death of his cherished hero. But Seneca was not blind to Cicero's faults,<sup>134</sup> and must have recognized that the days of the Republic were over. In any event, the idealization of such men as Cato, Cicero, or Brutus in no way forces us to concede Republican politics.<sup>135</sup>

Seneca showed a curious interplay of political forces; membership in the conservative provincial gentry; admiration of Republican ideals and politics; horror of bloodshed and civil war; deep regret at the death of men he admired during wars and proscriptions; relief at the introduction of stability and prosperity in the Principate; political ambitions for his family and the hope of senatorial rank for his descendants.

He had seen the Republic's worst possible aspect and the best face of the Principate. Yet in his old age, while he was compiling the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae*, there is detectable a disillusionment with the system and perhaps some uncovering of former (and not literary) Republicanism. He recognized the Princi-

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**131** See Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 3–4, where he dwells on the political ambitions of the younger Seneca and Novatus as opposed to their lack in Mela, who is content to remain an equestrian. Cf. the remarks of the younger Seneca on his rank, *dial.* 12.18.1–3 (echoed in a different context, Tac. *ann.* 14.53).

**132** See *supra* n. 121.

**133** Seneca frequently mentions (and censures) the *obtrectatores Ciceronis*, who were so prominent when he was writing; e.g., Cestius (*contr.* 3 *praef.* 15ff; *suas.* 7.13) and Pollio (*suas.* 6.14–15, 27; cf. Edward (1928) 140, *ad loc.*). Cicero was little read and Seneca says that it was possible to deliver a Verrine oration as one's own without detection (*suas.* 2.19). Also on the *obtrectatores* see Quint. *inst.* 9.4.1; 11.1.17; 12.1.14, 16ff; 12.10.12; Tac. *dial.* 18. Seneca sees Cicero as equal to the best orators whom Greece could offer (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 11; cf. 1 *praef.* 6–7; 7.4.6; *suas.* 6.14–27 *passim*; 7.10; also see Quint. *inst.* 10.1.105). He considered Cicero's career as marking the high point of Roman eloquence (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7; 7.4.6; 10 *praef.* 6). Seneca is also deeply indebted to Cicero's style and critical vocabulary; see Bardon (1940a) 65–67. In general, see also Sussman (1969) 152–155. Seneca's interest in Cicero is reflected also in the three declamations in his collection which deal with events in the last days of the orator's life (*contr.* 7.2; *suas.* 6 and 7).

**134** Seneca repeats and praises Livy's impartial assessment of Cicero's life (*suas.* 6.22).

**135** A point made well by Wirszubski (1950) 127–128. The younger Seneca is able to admire Brutus, Cato, and the other heroes of the Republic, yet he could criticize their inability to recognize the political realities of their day (*epist.* 14.13; *benef.* 2.20.2).

pate for what it was; not a *res publica restituta*, but an autocracy, often benevolent, but potentially and sometimes actually despotic. Although these views may possibly have been crystallized by the actions of Tiberius in the 30s AD, they may also be traced in their origins to the waning years of Augustus, when *libertas* was first curtailed, histories burned, and Seneca's friend Ovid exiled. Such a view of the Principate is gleaned from several statements:

1. The elder Seneca blames the decline of eloquence on any one of three possible causes; two of these implicate the new system:<sup>136</sup>
  - a) *The immorality of the present age*: Obviously the grand Augustan attempts at moral regeneration had failed, and Seneca's lengthy discussion of contemporary moral corruption is scathing.<sup>137</sup>
  - b) *The lack of rewards for eloquence*: This intimates that political distinction could no longer be gained in the forum through eloquence. He also remarks that because of this people were turning to other ways of gaining prestige and power, perhaps meaning delation or sycophancy, both perversions of true eloquence.
2. Seneca pointedly<sup>138</sup> warns his sons that politics in the Empire is a dangerous game.
3. He violently opposes imperial interference with *libertas* and freedom of speech, and in particular the burning of books.<sup>139</sup>
4. Some of the elder Seneca's closest acquaintances were at times critical of the regime: Cassius Severus, Labienus, Pollio, and perhaps Gallio.<sup>140</sup>
5. Some of his friends had been persecuted by Augustus or Tiberius, e.g., Ovid, Labienus, Gallio,<sup>141</sup> and Attalus Stoicus.<sup>142</sup>

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**136** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7. The last mentioned cause of decline, a natural cycle of growth and decay in all matters, is apparently without political significance. Cf. Sussman (1972).

**137** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 8–10.

**138** Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 3–4.

**139** See Sen. *contr.* 2.4.13; 10 *praef.* 5–7. Cf. 3 *praef.* 3, a veiled reference to the suppression of Cassius Severus' writings; also those of Scaurus in 10 *praef.* 3. On this general topic see Forbes (1936).

**140** See *supra* n. 123.

**141** Tac. *ann.* 6.3.

**142** Sen. *suas.* 2.12.

6. If the Lactantius fragment is genuine, we have a sixth indication of anti-imperial feelings, especially on the subject of lost *libertas*.<sup>143</sup>

These critical attitudes in no way hindered the Annaei from enjoying the advantages of influence and prosperity, not to mention public office:

The Annaei provide the best attested and most spectacular example of the advancement of provincials under the regime of the Julio–Claudians.<sup>144</sup>

Thus, the elder Seneca recognized that the day for Republicanism was past, and that the Principate, although sometimes repressive, was necessary to maintain order. The best way to deal with such a system was to accept it, work within it, and manipulate it to one's own advantage. In just this fashion the Annaei gained wealth, prestige, and power. The sons became establishment figures in literature and government through the influence of shrewd political and marital alliances and, of course, their own native abilities. The elder Seneca himself must have been a well-known figure in Rome; the ambitious, wealthy, and witty provincial, who was laying the foundation of an ill-starred dynasty which enjoyed a brief but brilliant period of political and literary ascendancy. His political views, then, may be characterized as neither Republican nor Augustan; rather, cold realism mingled with regret, and opportunism. A comparison with the politics of Tacitus is instructive.<sup>145</sup>

## 10 Grand design of the *Histories*

Given the elder Seneca's personal philosophy – adherence to the old Roman moral code (if one can call that a philosophy) – it is not surprising that he almost surely molded his *Histories* on an aspect of this theme, which has been touched on before: the decline of *veritas*. Let us discuss, then, the younger Seneca's choice of word in the *De Vita Patris*, one which must reflect his father's. Conventional Roman thought

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**143** Lact. *inst.* 7.15.16: *Amissa enim libertate, quam Bruto duce et auctore defenderat, ita consenuit, tamquam sustentare se ipsa non valeret, nisi adminiculo regentium uteretur.* Cf. Brisset (1964) 6.

**144** Weinrib (1968) 164. It is apparent that the elder Seneca saw himself as the patriarch of a growing political dynasty; cf. Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 3–4; also see Waltz (1909) 22–23, and further discussion below.

**145** See Sussman (1972).

and usage here would call for *virtus*, the more inclusive term. Instead, we find *veritas* in the sense of truth, righteousness, and integrity.<sup>146</sup> *Virtus* was a term current during the earlier Republic, in its proper sense, but with changing times and political conditions in the late Republic it had become debased. Thus the use of *veritas* signifies the elder Seneca's realization that the older term was no longer descriptive of the moral qualities which he wished to convey:

The decline of the old tradition can be measured by the debasement of *virtus* itself into merely a conventional laudatory formula, requiring the support of extreme adjectives. As such, it is accepted by Cicero and used by him from his earliest letters and speeches to his latest. In the face of this debasement two courses were possible: to reassert the old tradition or to redefine it to suit the changed circumstances. Cicero, as an admirer of the old Republican tradition and, at the same time, a *novus homo*, followed both courses, and that either was considered necessary or even desirable again underlines the decline of the original ideal. Finally, while accepting the conventional debased signification of *virtus* in his speeches, Cicero seems to have turned partly from the Roman tradition and sought his ideal standard more in the ideas of Greek philosophy.<sup>147</sup>

Thus it is greatly to Seneca's credit as an observer and historian that he not only recognized this trend, but also sought to substitute another term to replace the worn out noun which had, essentially, lost its original meaning. The use of a new term, *veritas*, therefore emphasizes his preoccupation with precise terminology and reveals again his pervasively moralistic outlook on history.

Though at times various writers have personified or deified *veritas*, here the elder Seneca's usage differs substantially from the rest.<sup>148</sup> The only close parallel in Latin literature seems to be in Martial, where he describes a personified *veritas* which rises again from the underworld after the reign of the oppressive Emperor Domitian:

*Non est hic dominus, sed imperator,  
sed iustissimus omnium senator,  
per quem de Stygia domo reducta est  
siccis rustica Veritas capillis.  
Hoc sub principe, si sapis, caveto  
verbis, Roma, prioribus loquaris.*<sup>149</sup>

**146** Tacitus' use of the term *veritas* in *hist.* 1.1 is not parallel. He is clearly referring to historical accuracy and candidness.

**147** Earl (1961) 38; see also his useful chapter, "Sallust's Concept of Virtus", 28–40.

**148** Gell. 12.11.7; Varro *Men.* 31; Hor. *carm.* 1.24.7; Plin. *paneg.* 84.1.

**149** Mart. 10.72.8–13.

In the phrases *de Stygia domo reducta est* and *verbis, Roma, prioribus loquaris* Martial's text strongly suggests a biological/cyclical conception of *Veritas* parallel to the younger Seneca's description of the *Histories* in the *De Vita Patris, unde primum veritas retro abiit*. The concept of death and then renewal is implicit in both passages. *Veritas* is a rural virtue, characterized by the peasant qualities of bluntness and candor. This is apparent from the use of *siccis... capillis*; her hair does not reek with the liquid perfumes which typify the extravagances of city life.<sup>150</sup> Again, this finds a close parallel in Seneca's denunciation of the luxurious and depraved manner in which the youth of his day is living. Their vices are those of the city dweller: laziness, dancing, singing, effeminacy, high pitched voices, elaborate hair dressings, body depilation, and, finally, dishonesty, which is to Seneca the most serious of them all<sup>151</sup> and calls to mind his preoccupation with the opposite quality of *veritas*. The similarities in both conceptions of *veritas* do not find parallels in Latin literature and suggest very strongly that Martial was familiar with the *Histories* of another fellow Spaniard whom he admired.<sup>152</sup>

That the decline of *veritas* was a predominant motif of the *Histories* is plain from the wording of the *De Vita Patris* (Appendix - T1):

*Quisquis legisset eius historias ab initio bellorum civilium, unde primum veritas retro abiit, paene usque ad mortis suae diem, magni aestimaret scire quibus natus est parentibus...*

The younger Seneca chooses to mention only three facts about the work:

1. Its inception point, a conventional rubric which often became the title, e.g., Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, the elder Pliny's *A Fine Aufidii Bassi*, Tacitus' *Annales Ab Excessu Divi Augusti*.
2. Its end limit, also obviously an important fact.
3. The starting point was coincident with a decline of morality. With this, the younger Seneca qualifies the scope of the work even more precisely. It was not a history of just the recent civil wars, but goes back to the Gracchi (discussed previously). He also reveals to us the theme which his father emphasized in the work: the collapse of old Republican morality and the effect which this had on the state.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Mart. 3.12.1; 3.63.4.

<sup>151</sup> Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 7–10.

<sup>152</sup> See discussion *supra*. Cf. again Mart. 1.61.7–8 *Duosque Senecas, unicumque Lucanum / facunda loquitur Corduba*.

The moralistic emphasis in general was closely related to the concept of cyclical history, widely accepted throughout antiquity.<sup>153</sup> One variant of this cycle started with a Golden Age, followed by progressively more degenerate stages: thus, a view of history that was not one of advancement towards an ideal state, but degeneration from it.<sup>154</sup> From the old Etruscan lore, and perhaps from eastern influences, but particularly from Stoicism came also the idea of a new cycle which began after the old one had run its course.<sup>155</sup> A third ancient viewpoint, obviously related to the cycle theory and probably one origin of it, was the metaphor of the various ages of man applied to a nation's growth. In this manner the different stages of national development could be likened to birth, infancy, childhood, young manhood, mature manhood, and old age.

In the much discussed Lactantius fragment, all three traditions are melded into a somewhat eloquent (if not pessimistic) summation of Roman history from its very beginning. Here the different periods are compared to the ages of man from birth to old age (during the civil wars), after which Rome was finally renewed into a second infancy under Augustus. If the fragment is genuine, it would be natural to assume that it came from an introductory passage in which Seneca summed up the whole of Roman history, marked off the starting point for his own particular work, and perhaps the plan and philosophy of the work. Such an assumption is consistent with our knowledge of the *De Vita Patris*, in which the *Histories* are said to begin with the civil wars, when *veritas* first began to decline. The probable date for this turning point (noted earlier) was the period following the destruction of Carthage, the emergence of the Gracchi, and the beginning of civil discord. This agrees with the dating of the decline's inception in Lactantius (*Appendix* - F2). The use of the word *retro* in the *De Vita Patris* points very convincingly not only to a cyclical conception of the *Histories*, but also to the association of a biological metaphor with it. Horace employs this word in exactly such a manner when referring to the biological aging process in man.<sup>156</sup>

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153 See Archambault (1966) 193–228, especially 193–200.

154 For references, see Archambault (1928) *passim*. Also Häußler (1964).

155 See Brisset (1964) 59.

156 Hor. *carm.* 2.11.5: *Fugit retro / levis iuventas et decor...* Thus, like Lactantius, Horace identifies *iuventus* (cf. Lact. *iuvenescere*) as the apex of the human cycle. The climb then reverses direction downward (*retro*); cf. Verg. *georg.* 2.200; 4.495; *Aen.* 4.489; 9.539. An easily recognized parallel in thought exists between *georg.* 1.199–200 (*sic omnia fatis / in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri*) and the elder Seneca's discussion of the decline of eloquence (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 7: *sive fato quodam, cuius maligna perpetuaque in rebus omnibus lex est, ut ad summum perducta rursus ad infimum, velocius quidem quam ascenderant, relabantur*).

In addition to the authority of the *De Vita Patris* and the questionable Lactantius fragment, there are two references in the *Controversiae* which reveal the elder Seneca's preoccupation with the cyclical theme and indicate also that later, in the *Histories*, he probably used it as a unifying motif.<sup>157</sup> In any event, we can determine that in the work he heavily emphasized a decline of morals and increased luxury, common enough motifs in the late Republic and early Empire.<sup>158</sup> Of interest in this regard is Sallust, a historian whose style the elder Seneca greatly admired.<sup>159</sup> Sallust regards the dispersal of the *metus Punicus* as one cause, along with increased luxury, of the decline of Roman morals, thus a dating consonant with the one deduced for the elder Seneca, and indicating that he may have used Sallust as a source.<sup>160</sup> The views of two writers who would certainly be familiar with the *Histories* of the elder Seneca, his grandson Lucan and his possible kinsman Florus are also important. Both in general reflect this cyclical-moralistic view of the elder Seneca.<sup>161</sup>

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**157** The elder Seneca described the development of Roman oratory in cyclical terms (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7; see also *supra* n. 15, 136) and traced declamation in a biological cycle, cf. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 12: *facile est mihi ab incunabulis nosse rem* [i.e., declamation] *post me natam*.

**158** Seneca himself sees that these are causes for the decline of eloquence (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7), and documents his argument by describing the then current state of low morality (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 8–10). As Hahn (1964) 203 points out, it was conventional at this time to blame the outbreak of civil wars on the lapse of morality. Elsewhere in the elder Seneca's extant works are numerous references to contemporary low morality; e.g., *contr.* 2.5.7; 2.6.2; 2.7.1; 10.4.18. The influence of this sort of thinking on the younger Seneca was profound; see Rolland (1906) 36; 42.

**159** Cf. Sen. *contr.* 9.1.13–14; *suas.* 6.21.

**160** Sall. *Catil.* 10.1: *Sed ubi labore atque iustitia res publica crevit, reges magni bello domiti, nationes ferae et populi ingentes vi subacti, Carthago, aemula imperi Romani, ab stirpe interit, cuncta maria terraeque patebant, saevire fortuna ac miscere omnia coepit*. Cf. *hist.* 1 fr. 11; 12; 16 Maurenbrecher = 15, 16, 17 La Penna/Funari; Vell. 1.12.5. Other parallels are listed by Ernout (1964<sup>6</sup>) 64. See also Hahn (1964) 203.

**161** See Lucan. 1.67–97; 158–182; cf. Brisset (1964) 49; 59–60; Marti (1945) 357–358. A concept of renewal is implicit in 1.72–80; see Brisset (1964) 59. In Florus see *epit.* 1 *praef.* 4–8, and especially *epit.* 1 *praef.* 4: *Si quis ergo populum Romanum quasi unum hominem consideret totamque eius aetatem percenseat*. Although the importance of the destruction of Carthage is not lost on Florus (*epit.* 1.31.1–6), he believes that the cause of the decline was more closely related to the conquest of Syria and its aftermath of increased luxury which then corrupted Rome (1.47.7ff). Renewal of the cycle for Florus occurs under Trajan (*epit.* 1 *praef.* 8). A contemporary of the elder Seneca offers parallels. See Vell. 1.17.5–7; 2.3.4; 2.10, in whose opinion the loss of *metus Punicus* played a vital role in the decline (2.1.1). Cf. Anderson (1962) 52–54. Tacitus also offers parallels for a cyclical-moralistic pattern of history in *ann.* 3.55; cf. *hist.* 1.16; but see also *hist.* 3.34; *ann.* 3.34; Sen. *benef.* 1.10.1. Cf. Amm. 14.6.4; Script. Hist. Aug. *Car.* 2.1–3.2. All of the preceding may have been influenced in some measure by the elder Seneca's *Histories*.

## 11 The elder Seneca's concept of historical causation

The elder Seneca touched upon the topic of historical causation in relation to the decline of oratory, mentioned above, when he tried to isolate the factors responsible: these were either (1) moral degeneracy, (2) the lack of incentives and consequent transfer of energies to other spheres, or (3) an inevitable and fated cycle (which operated in all matters) of a rise to preeminence and then an accelerated decline.

Historically speaking, the second cause is an astute insight into the effect of the Principate on public speaking,<sup>162</sup> and says much for the elder Seneca's historical sophistication.

However, the two other causes lend themselves more to a general theory of historical causation for the period embraced by the *Histories*. Interestingly enough, in the younger Seneca's fragmentary life of his father, where he is describing the extent and scope of this work, both inevitable cycle and immorality are melded into one: *...ab initio bellorum civilium unclē primum veritas retro abiit*. As we have already noted, *veritas* must be understood in its broad moral sense here, i.e., "righteousness", while *retro* refers to the downward turn of a cycle, and most probably a biological cycle.

The evidence, then, points convincingly to the use of a cyclical (if not biological-cyclical) framework for the *Histories*. What relationship did Seneca see between the decline of *veritas* and the downward turn of this cycle? It surely was not accidental that both occurred nearly simultaneously. Cause and effect are surely implied. Because of an inevitable process of senescence and a concurrent confluence of other factors certain to occur sooner or later, changes effecting decline were produced. To the Romans of the late Republic, the elder Seneca included, this change was the decline of morality. In turn, they also saw similar causes for this decline: the great conquests during the Republic, which introduced *luxuria* and *avaritia*, thus corrupting the ancient *mos maiorum*; the conquest of Greece and Asia, and the removal of the *metus Punicus*. These are the turning points generally mentioned.<sup>163</sup> We should also note that Lucan, who must have been familiar with his grandfather's *Histories*, views the decline in a similar

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**162** The elder Seneca was apparently the first to recognize this. The subject is, of course, better articulated in Tac. *dial.*, written nearly 70 years later, and may have been suggested to Seneca by certain statements of Cicero. See on this Sussman (1972) *passim*.

**163** A wealth of citation is conveniently collected in Brisset (1964) 41–42. See also *supra* n. 162.



way. He envisions an inevitable cycle of history in which the downward swing is closely linked to a lapse of morality, itself caused by the great conquests, the consequent luxury which effected neglect of the old Roman ways, and, finally, the internal sedition which arose and was occasioned by avarice and ambition.<sup>164</sup> Here also the model of causation resembles the one found in Sallust.

A Stoic origin seems likely for Seneca's reference to malign fate when he is speaking of the causes for the decline of oratory: ... *fato quodam, cuius maligna perpetuaque in rebus omnibus lex est, ut ad summum perducta rursus ad infimum, velocius quidem quam ascenderant, relabantur*.<sup>165</sup> This, too, agrees with an inevitable biological scheme.<sup>166</sup> A similar concept of *fortuna* or *fatum* appears in all the Annaei – the elder and younger Senecas, and Lucan – it is irrational, incomprehensible, and immutable.<sup>167</sup> The reason why the elder Seneca and many other Roman historians (e.g. Sallust, Caesar, Livy, Velleius, Tacitus, and Florus) resorted to *fortuna* / *fatum* as an explanation for events is simple.<sup>168</sup> As Polybius observes perceptively, it is an easy way to explain a complex chain of causes and effects.<sup>169</sup> The elder Seneca quite conceivably pointed to the immutable dictates of *fortuna* / *fatum* as an explanation for the course of Roman history during the incredibly complex and even bizarre events which he narrated. Such an explanation well complements the use of a cycle theory, whose movements are themselves predestined.

The Stoics thought that the end point of the decline cycle was a universal chaos, followed by renewal.<sup>170</sup> If we liken this chaos to the *furor* of civil war, and

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**164** Lucan. 1.159–182. Here again there is a close correspondence to the Lactantius fragment. See also Brisset (1964) 41ff. Lucan posits two causes for the fall of the Republic: (1) the decadence of the Roman state, and, more immediately, (2) the triumvirate.

**165** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 7. Convincingly argued and supported by Brisset (1964) 53–54. Cf. Hahn (1964) 203.

**166** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 7. It should further be noted that Seneca traces the history of declamation in *contr.* 1 *praef.* 12, and likens its growth to the human process.

**167** The conception is Stoic in origin according to Brisset (1964) 55–56. *Fatum* and *fortuna* are two aspects of the same fundamental force. For further references and discussion, see *ibid.* The declaimers were fond of expounding on the nature of *fortuna*. The topic constituted a stock commonplace, *de fortunae varietate locus* (Sen. *contr.* 1.8.16; cf. 1.1.3; 1.1.5; 1.1.17; 2.1.1; 2.1.7ff; 7.6.18).

**168** E.g.: Sallust *Catil.* 8.1; 41.3; 51.25; *Iug.* 102.9; *epist. ad Caes.* 1.2 (but not quite so emphatic, *Iug.* 1.3); Caes. *civ.* 3.68.1; in Livy, see Bayet/Baillet (1954) xl; cf. Brisset (1964) 56; in Velleius, e.g., 2.47.2; 2.48.1; 2.57.3; 2.75.2; 2.116.3; in Tac. *Germ.* 33; see also Lacroix (1951) 263–264; in Florus, *epit.* 1.19.2, cf. *epit.* 1.18.2.

**169** Plb. 2.38.5; see Walbank (1957) 221 *ad loc.*; cf. Brisset (1951) 57 n. 2.

**170** See *supra* n. 155.

the renewal to the restoration of order and morality under Augustus, then perhaps we have reconstructed the relationship between Seneca's concepts of historical causation and the theme of his *Histories* as preserved cursorily in the *De Vita Patris*.

## 12 Purpose and value of history as seen by the elder Seneca

Both Seneca and Tacitus (in the *Dialogus*) obviously considered history a form of eloquence superior to oratory for the time in which they were writing.<sup>171</sup> Apparently both believed that under the Empire, and in the absence of *libertas* true history could not be written.<sup>172</sup> And yet, as we know from the *De Vita Patris*, the elder Seneca persisted in writing history, even though he well realized the dangers in recording events from the beginning of the civil wars to nearly the day of his own death. Furthermore, he was to a great extent writing contemporary history, the most perilous sort; a type which Tacitus refrained from writing – with good reason – and the young Claudius had to be restrained from attempting.

There were only limited opportunities for an equestrian like Seneca to display his eloquence, and these lay chiefly in the sterile arena of declamation. Political oratory and, to a lesser extent, court oratory were closed off because of rank or the political conditions of the age, or both. That Seneca considered declamation a genre distinctly inferior to oratory and history is clear,<sup>173</sup> and one can easily detect in the *Suasoriae* his impatience to proceed with the more important historical work for which he had been doing extensive preparatory thought and research.

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**171** On Tacitus, see *supra* n. 40. Also Sen. *suas.* 6.16: *Nolo autem vos, iuvenes mei, contristari, quod a declamatoribus ad historicos transeo. Satisfaciam vobis, et fortasse efficiam ut his sententiis lectis solida et verum habentia recipiatis. Et quia hoc propositum recta via consequi non potero, decipere vos cogar, velut salutarem daturus pueris potionem, summa parte poculi.* Cf. also *suas.* 5.8.

**172** See Tac. *hist.* 1.1; cf. Kühnen (1962) 21; Klingner (1928) 199 (but he misinterprets the meaning of *veritas* in *De Vita Patris*, see *supra* n. 146); Sen. *dial.* 6.1.3–4. So much is implicit in the elder Seneca's statements regarding book-burning; see *supra* n. 139.

**173** Sen. *contr.* 1.8.16; *suas.* 5.8; 6.16. The prefaces to books 3 and 9 of the *contr.* contain exhaustive and damaging criticism of declamation: cf. 3 *praef.* (Cassius Severus speaking); 9 *praef.* (Votienus Montanus speaking). In 10 *praef.* 1, Seneca reveals fatigue with the entire subject of declamation: *iam res taedio est ... me iam pudet tamquam diu non seriam rem agam.* In general, on this see Sussman (1969) 158–168.

One motive for writing his two rhetorical anthologies helps us to understand why Seneca later wrote a history. In the very beginning of the *Controversiae* he announces his intention of undoing the damage of time so that his sons could form some idea of the great declaimers of the past.<sup>174</sup> That is, his work will preserve the memory of those declaimers whose works are no longer extant, or those whose supposed works are not genuine. He adds later: *Itaque ne aut ignoti sint aut aliter quam debent noti, summa cum fide suum cuique reddam.*<sup>175</sup> Therefore, we can assume a similar objective in the *Histories* – to preserve accurately the events of the past for future generations and also to give persons and events their due.

Seneca undoubtedly valued history as a source of moral object lessons in conduct from the past. These *exempla*, as they were called, were also an integral part of the rhetorical system of the times. The Romans linked rhetoric and history very closely, and so the historians and speakers of this period regularly supported their arguments with *exempla*. These practical Romans considered history to be particularly valuable as a source of instruction on morality and behavior. This moral-didactic emphasis so characteristic of Roman historical writing certainly must have been a predominant motif in the *Histories*. But the utility of these historical *exempla* was not limited to their didactic function. They could also be a helpful aid to orators or declaimers in ordinary persuasion by analogy.<sup>176</sup> Seneca's best friend, the famous declaimer Latro, was very well versed in history and could reel off the exploits of any great general instantaneously.<sup>177</sup> The *exemplum* could be used either as a commonplace itself, or to confirm a commonplace with an illustration drawn from history.<sup>178</sup>

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174 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 1; cf. *suas.* 6.5–6.

175 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11; cf. 1 *praef.* 20, where he states that he will try to correct a then currently erroneous impression of his friend Latro, and then proceeds to do so.

176 Quint. *inst.* 10.1.34. The use of *exempla* in ancient rhetoric is conveniently traced by Kühnen (1962) 40–41. The passion of rhetors for these often led to the use of irrelevant *exempla*, a practice denounced by Martial (6.19).

177 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 18; a rather narrow concept of the term *historiae* here – merely names and exploits: *Historiarum omnium summa notitia: iubebat aliquem nominari ducem et statim eius acta cursu reddebat.*

178 E.g., Sen. *contr.* 2.1.1; 2.1.7ff.; *suas.* 1.9; 6.8.

Naturally, the *Suasoriae* abound with *exempla* because of their historical subject matter and deliberative nature, but *exempla* are not absent in the *Controversiae*;<sup>179</sup> in fact, Seneca is himself fond of using *exempla* to prove a point.<sup>180</sup> Although they are useful primarily for persuasion by analogy, it would be hard to deny their emotional impact when a speaker recited a list of Roman heroes and their exploits. Extensive knowledge of *exempla* would also display the erudition of the speaker and so impress the audience in much the same way as Seneca's sons were astonished at Latio's wealth of historical knowledge.

The discussion so far might suggest that Seneca's primary reason for writing the *Histories* was his desire to provide his sons, now embarking on their careers, with a treasury of useful *exempla* to employ in their speeches and writings. But why, at his advanced age, would he have written a work of such relatively narrow scope, which also dealt with a period treated adequately by many writers before? Other reasons must be found.

(1) The tone permeating the *Controversiae* and the *Suasoriae* strongly conveys the impression of a man guiding the education of his sons.<sup>181</sup> Two important themes in the works are the development of a good speaking style and shedding the bad habits acquired in the rhetorical schools.<sup>182</sup> Both works are a practical guide for young men especially interested in political careers, since, in addition to instruction in public speaking, they offer the following:

- a. the exercises themselves, which were good training for young men preparing for the bar, a calling considered indispensable for building a reputation, acquiring influential friends and developing skill in public speaking;<sup>183</sup>
- b. the development of memory;<sup>184</sup>

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**179** E.g., Sen. *contr.* 1.8.12; *suas.* 2.2; 6.3. Cf. *supra* n. 183.

**180** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 19.

**181** E.g., Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 1–12; 19; 2 *praef.* 3–4; *suas.* 6.16. Note also the didactic air of *contr.* 2 *praef.* 1; 3 *praef.* 1; 9 *praef.* 1. Seneca addresses the prefaces as letters to his sons, who have been continually asking their father to tell them about the various declaimers whom he has known and heard (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 1; 4 *praef.* 1; 2; 7 *praef.* 1; 10 *praef.* 1). See also Waltz (1990) 57.

**182** See especially on this Sen. *contr.* 7 *praef.*; 9 *praef.*; also Sussman (1969) 158–168.

**183** Although the writers of the 1st Century AD talked much of a decline in eloquence, there was never any question of the importance of oratorical and rhetorical skill in pursuing a political career. The courts were still flourishing, as was political deliberation, although both, of course, not to the extent that was true during the Republic. This is the well supported and argued thesis of Parks (1945), especially 19–20, and also Bonner (1949) 42–50. The best critics of Roman oratory in the period were still convinced of its importance, e.g., Petron. 46; Quint. *inst.* 12.7.10; Plin. *epist.* 4.9; Tac. *dial.* 5–6 (Aper speaking).

**184** Not only for delivering speeches by heart, but also for the recognition of names and faces (a necessity for any politician). So much is made clear in the anecdote about Cineas, a man with

- c. moral instruction;<sup>185</sup>
- d. mental exercise (particularly in plotting argumentation in the *divisio*)
- e. familiarity with literary backgrounds and criticism,<sup>186</sup> and
- f. pride in their Spanish backgrounds.

The *Controversiae* are obviously preparatory for court oratory, but the *Suasoriae* would offer an introduction to deliberative speaking (i.e., the oratory characteristic of deliberative bodies). This explains the apparent lack of order in the composition of both works,<sup>187</sup> since the *Suasoriae* were composed after the *Controversiae*, though practice with *suasoriae* preceded the *controversiae* in the schools of rhetoric.

The function of the *Histories* in such a framework is then readily apparent. In addition to the secondary consideration of providing a fund of *exempla* for his sons' speeches, the work would mark the final stage of their education for public life – *exempla* in the broadest sense. Thus the *Histories* were a handbook for future statesmen. In the progression of his writings, the elder Seneca may have followed his much admired ideal, the elder Cato, who first wrote, among other works, a book on rhetoric and then, as an old man, a history for the education of his son.<sup>188</sup>

(2) The span of time included in the *Histories* provides a clue to another purpose the elder Seneca may have had for composing the work. This period itself

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a truly remarkable memory, whom Pyrrhus sent to negotiate with the Senate (*Sen. contr.* 1 *praef.* 19).

**185** Although some of the declamations in the collection would be considered racy, if not obscene, even by today's relaxed standards (e.g., *Sen. contr.* 1.2; 1.5; 5.6; cf. 1.2.23), nevertheless, in general, the declamations were replete with commonplaces, *exempla*, and *sententiae* of high moral tone. Note also the high moral tone of *contr.* 1 *praef.*, and the comparison of the strong Pollio with the weak Haterius in *contr.* 4 *praef.* A chance remark is also enlightening: *suas.* 2.15 (speaking of Potamon and Lesbocles): ... *in quibus quanta fuerit animorum diversitas in simili fortuna puto vobis indicandum, multo magis quia ad vitam pertinet quam si ad eloquentiam pertineret.*

**186** E.g., the discussion of Ovid in *Sen. contr.* 2.2.8–12.

**187** Cf. *Sen. contr.* 2.4.8.

**188** This is the commonly accepted reason why Cato wrote the *Origines* (e.g., Plut. *Cato* 20, cf. 25), but Peter (1914<sup>2</sup>) I CXXVIII–CXXX sees problems here, especially in regard to dating. Nevertheless, the tradition, not the truth, may have been the influencing factor in Seneca's case. The system in which the Roman father took a direct hand in the education of his sons is characteristic of the older, conservative Republican practice, as Plut. notes (*Cato* 20), and in particular its emphasis on morals. Cf. Marrou (1964<sup>3</sup>) 309–324, especially 313–315. We should also consider the slight possibility that Seneca envisioned his son Mela's turning to writing history: *contr.* 2 *praef.* 3–4.

was intrinsically interesting and exciting, including as it did the transition from Republic to Principate. Before him was the attractive task of recording a series of bitter political and military struggles in which numerous extraordinary politicians and generals played leading roles. Many authors were deeply interested in the period and wrote about it, even during the early Empire when such an inquiry into the recent past was not only difficult but dangerous.<sup>189</sup> The elder Seneca may also have believed that he had a unique explanation for events of the period in the cycle theory and his closely related concept of moral deterioration.

The events, the men, and the situations begged rhetorical amplification, especially the horrors of the civil wars and their bloody proscriptions. Seneca had undoubtedly witnessed at first-hand some of their *furor*,<sup>190</sup> and perhaps his work heavily influenced the pervasive theme of Lucan, the horror of civil war.<sup>191</sup>

Also, at the time in which the elder Seneca was writing, a whole new generation or two, his sons among them, had grown up after Actium, and they would naturally wonder at the course of events that had led to such momentous changes.<sup>192</sup> Their interest would wax as the account drew nearer to contemporary events,<sup>193</sup> particularly members of the new families, Seneca's sons included, which rose into prominence under Augustus and Tiberius. They naturally desired to know the roots of their family prosperity.

(3) The historian held in perhaps the highest esteem during the lifetime of the elder Seneca was Asinius Pollio, a rabid anti-ciceronian, as Seneca himself records.<sup>194</sup> It was a time, too, when Cicero's literary, personal, and political reputations had seriously declined. This development appalled Seneca, and thus, as his comments in the rhetorical works strongly suggest, one motive of the *Histories*

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**189** On the dangers and difficulties, see discussion *supra*; among those writing about the approximate period in question were Sallust, Livy, Varro, Pollio, Aufidius Bassus, Cremutius Cordus, Bruttidius Niger, Labienus, Lucius Arruntius, Messalla, Maecenas, Augustus, Dellius, Tuscus, Timagenes, Claudius, and Lucan. The elder Seneca was familiar with the works, if not the persons, of most of these; see discussion *supra*.

**190** Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 11.

**191** "No single quotation, or even any moderate number of lines selected for the purpose, can demonstrate the extent to which the theme of the horror of civil war underlies the poem," Sanford (1933) 124. She detects, and, a reading of Lucan confirms, the impressive effect on a man born in AD 39. Perhaps some of the color and emotion sprang from his grandfather's description.

**192** Cf. the remarks of Tacitus on the latter part of Augustus' reign: *Domī res tranquillae, eadem magistratum vocabula; iuniores post Actiacam victoriam, etiam senes plerique inter bella civium nati: quotus quisque reliquus qui rem publicam vidisset?* (*ann.* 1.3).

**193** Cf. Liv *praef.* 4. Seneca would resist their appeals to emphasize only those events closest to the present (*contr.* 4 *praef.* 1).

**194** Sen. *suas.* 6.14–15; 27.

was to restore Cicero to his rightful position.<sup>195</sup> It might be objected that Livy would have given Cicero his full due, and indeed the elder Seneca quotes him approvingly on the subject of Cicero's death and the summation of his life.<sup>196</sup> However, the young Octavian's complicity in his proscription may have dictated a somewhat jaundiced view of Cicero's career elsewhere in Livy, particularly in the later years of the orator's life.

The publication of a first-rate historical work would also tend to increase the prestige of the *gens Annaea* at the crucial period when the elder Seneca's sons were actually beginning their political careers. There may also have been a family ax to grind, or damaging political alliances to explain.

A history could contribute more directly to the fortunes of Seneca's family in the early days of Gaius's reign. As was pointed out earlier, the unifying theme for the *Histories* was a cycle describing the decline of *veritas* as an explanation of the events starting with the inception of the civil wars. If as the evidence indicates, for the unifying theme of the *Histories* the elder Seneca employed a historical cycle analogous to the ages of man and also a cycle which renewed itself, we must wonder when he dated this regeneration. He could hardly, in any event, have continued the decline after the demise of the Republic. Even if the Lactantius fragment is disregarded, the reign of Augustus must mark the rebirth from chaos. Now the cycle swings upward, and at what more opportune time could the elder Seneca mark Rome's entry into flourishing youth than at the beginning of Gaius's reign? The political atmosphere had become freer, burned and banned books could now be republished, political exiles were recalled, the Sejanian sympathizers (among them, possibly, the Annaei) came out into the open.<sup>197</sup> This era of good feeling offered greater opportunities for political advancement, and less danger. It was a time for optimism, then, in place of the veiled political cynicism apparent in the *Controversiae*.<sup>198</sup>

In this respect, as in numerous others, there is a parallel to the career of Tacitus, who came to the writing of history as an older man; he waited for *libertas et principatus*, and so he wrote under the successive reigns of Nerva and Trajan, when we hear of the *felicitas temporum*.<sup>199</sup> So the elder Seneca's account, penned

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195 He would be relatively even-handed. Cf. *supra* n. 134.

196 Especially Sen. *suas.* 6.22, cf. 6.16–17.

197 On the atmosphere of the early reign of Gaius, see *supra* n. 24; cf. Ferrill (1964) 31–33. On the possible Sejanian sympathies of the Annaei, see *supra* n. 125.

198 See discussion above.

199 Tac. *hist.* 1.1. See Syme (1957).

in this other felicitous time, calling attention to the benevolence of the new regime, and also placing it into perspective as part of the fated plan of Rome, would attract, the favor of Gaius and his party, thus ensuring the political prospects of the young Annaei.

(4) In addition to furthering the prestige of the *gens Annaea*, Seneca may also have felt the necessity to improve the standing of the Spanish provinces in Roman literary circles. He must have emphasized the deep attachment of Cordova to Roman literature and culture when narrating the important events which occurred there during the various civil wars.

But even more prominent than this emphasis on Cordova would be an attempt to dispel the prejudices and misconceptions deeply felt at Rome against the citizens from Spain.<sup>200</sup> The seeds of this defense are easily detected in the *Controversiae*, a work which pointedly attributes importance and even greatness to Spaniards in the field of eloquence.<sup>201</sup>

Bitter fighting continued in Spain through 26 and even into 13 BC, when Appian finally terminated his account of the civil war there.<sup>202</sup> The Spanish reputation for political frenzy, violence, rebelliousness, and cruelty would not highly recommend the sons of a Cordovan provincial equestrian for high political office. But the *Histories* would afford an opportunity for the *Annaei* to refute these widely held views and to record their own and their province's devotion to the *divus Augustus*, who was later looked upon as a patron deity of Spain until well into the Middle Ages.<sup>203</sup>

We can thus reasonably assume that an important purpose of the elder Seneca was to record Spanish events in more detail or in a more sympathetic light than writers such as Caesar and Pollio, or perhaps even Augustus in his autobiography. The courage of the Spaniards fighting at Munda would call for some expansion, and perhaps he provided a more revealing insight into the mysterious Aeserninus affair.<sup>204</sup> It does not seem probable that the elder Seneca played down

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**200** The subject is treated extensively, with many citations, by de la Ville de Mirmont (1912) 341–349.

**201** Seneca sets up a tetrad of the greatest declaimers (*contr.* 10 *praef.* 13), two of whom are Spanish (Latro and Gallio). Half of *contr.* 1 *praef.* 13–24 deals with Latro, and undoubtedly one of the lost prefaces discussed Gallio in some detail. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* ends with an account of the two Clodii Turrini, also Spanish. On the declaimers of Spain, see de la Ville de Mirmont (1910–1913); see especially (1912) 29.

**202** de la Ville de Mirmont 14 (1912) 344–345.

**203** de la Ville de Mirmont 14 (1912) 348. On the elder Seneca's acquaintance with and favorable opinions of Augustus, see *supra* n. 121.

**204** D.C. 42.15.



the well-known negative qualities of Spain by omission. His attitude and method in the *Controversiae* preclude this.

### 13 The style of the elder Seneca's *Histories*

In Latin literature the genre determines the style. Excellence in one genre does not predetermine greatness in another, a fact well known to the elder Seneca.<sup>205</sup> Thus, caution is required to infer the style of the *Histories* from the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae*. Except for the prefaces to the *Controversiae*, these works are primarily extracts quoted from other speakers, interspersed with Seneca's usually informal and discursive comments.<sup>206</sup> Such a style is obviously inappropriate to historical work. For this reason alone, we should neither ascribe to the elder Seneca's *Histories* the style of the anthologies nor, for this reason, the grave deficiencies of vocabulary and thought recounted by Bardon in his book on the elder Seneca's vocabulary of literary criticism.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, many of Bardon's conclusions are highly questionable and flawed by numerous errors of method and judgment.<sup>208</sup>

Of more value is Bardon's later article, which addresses itself more specifically to style.<sup>209</sup> Here he isolates several aspects of Seneca's style and notes whether or not they were mirrored in the rhetoricians (almost invariably they were). Thus Bardon is able to establish successfully that the elder Seneca's style was extensively influenced by the practices of the rhetoricians, and probably had a significant influence on his son, on his nephew Lucan, and, through them, on the literature of the period in general. For instance, Bardon describes Seneca's predilection for the following: picturesque expression (p. 6), brachylogy (7), parallelism and antithesis (7–8), architectural word grouping (8), asyndeton (8–9), *sententiae* (9), *variatio* (9–10), disjunctive word placement and word order (10–12), *tricola* and *tetracola* (12–13), use of *et* for *etiam* (13–14), lack of imagination

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**205** Sen. *contr.* 3 *prae*f. 8.

**206** The emotional outbursts in *contr.* 1 *prae*f. 8–10 and 10 *prae*f. 6–7 are notable exceptions.

**207** Bardon (1940a) especially 68–89; 106–114. The deficiencies he particularly notes are in regard to vocabulary, word-choice, and literary criticism. History was recognized as requiring a distinctly different style from oratory, and of course, from declamation. Cf. Cic. *de orat.* 2.54ff; *orat.* 66; Quint. *inst.* 10.3.7ff; Plin. *epist.* 5.8.

**208** Bardon's book (1940a) was reviewed somewhat critically by his mentor, Marouzeau (1940). But see also Cordier (1943) 221; Sussman (1969) 171–181.

**209** Bardon (1943).

in presenting quotations from the rhetoricians (14–15), sententious style (16–17), word repetition without apparent point (18–19), and, in general, sclerotic style (e.g., 15) and lack of intelligence (24).

In the main, and as far as he goes, Bardon has effectively described Senecan style, but there are several areas where his criticism is gratuitous or prejudiced. One could point out that a lack of variation in the introduction of quotations is necessitated by their vast volume, and also because in the body of the work Seneca makes no literary pretensions whatsoever. It is primarily in the prefaces to the books that Seneca is being literary, and it is on these that his style should be evaluated.<sup>210</sup> Prose rhythm is cursorily treated in Bardon's paper, and completely lacking is the stylistic analysis of a specific passage. His work suffers from the attempt to defend his controversial earlier dissertation by prejudging the case. Bardon also insults Seneca's intelligence wholly on the basis of his style and does not take into account the content of his remarks.

The style of Seneca's historical work would of necessity differ from the informal and discursive anthologies. Yet from the material contained in the extant works it is possible to draw certain conclusions about the style of the *Histories*. For instance, we can readily assume the same concern for balance and proportion in a literary piece as he called for in the architecture of a declamation.<sup>211</sup> Thus, although Seneca possessed the engaging ability to tell an interesting story (which he frequently indulged), he is nevertheless aware of this tendency and returns to the topic in time.<sup>212</sup>

The question of inserted speeches in the *Histories* must remain a puzzle. Many of those that would demand reporting were already published by their authors. In the case of the speakers who were dead, he may have followed the tactic of Tacitus, who reproduced the major points but in a shorter, more succinct

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**210** On some of the literary qualities and devices of the prefaces, see Sussman (1972).

**211** Cf. Sen. *contr.* 7 *praef.* 2 on Albius: *Erat et illud in argumentatione vitium, quod quaestionem non tamquam partem controversiae, sed tamquam controversiam implebat.... Non omnis quaestio per numeros suos implenda est? Quidni? Sed tamquam accessio, non tamquam summa. Nullum habile membrum est, si corpori par est.* Cf. 2.3.15.

**212** He usually returns to the subject quickly enough with a short apology for the digression (*contr.* 2.1.37; 7.3.8–9; 9.2.23–24; 10.5.21–22; *suas.* 1.7; 2.12–13; 2.15; 2.19–20; 2.5–7). In other instances the digressions or anecdotes are cleverly worked into the flow, and there is no return transition (*contr.* 2.2.8–12; 2.4.6–8; 2.4.13; 9.1.13–14; 9.3.12–13; 9.4.17–21; 9.5.15–17; *suas.* 1.5; 2.17; 4.4; 6.14–21; 6.21–27; 7.13–14). The number and extent of the digressions progressively increase, indicating Seneca's desire to vary the essentially monotonous format and subject matter dictated by the project. Also demonstrated is his growing impatience with the work, and perhaps his desire to proceed to a more original and creative project: the writing of history.

form.<sup>213</sup> But for those speakers still alive, the problem is more troublesome. He may well have reproduced parts of the speech if it were well known, and summarized the rest. In any event, he must have been careful to have the words fit the speaker in the speeches he composed, since he dwells on this problem at some length.<sup>214</sup>

One of the elder Seneca's most successful stylistic talents was his mastery of the brief character sketch which delved into a man's motives, psychology, and the effects of these on his actions or literary works. Such sketches, often similar to the *epitaphia* mentioned above, would naturally be a prominent feature of an historical work on a period which encompassed the careers of so many unusual and great men. The eloquent though emotional outbursts which occur occasionally in the *Controversiae*<sup>215</sup> probably occurred more frequently in the *Histories*. In this respect and others, the elder Seneca, an ardent admirer of Cicero, may well have followed his principles in writing history.<sup>216</sup> An ornate narrative style was called for, interspersed at reasonable intervals with battle or geographical descriptions, and also speeches. The object was a smooth flow (though not poetic), and not the vigorous manner used in oratory. A moderate in questions of style, Seneca would not be excessive in his use of declamatory adornment, then the current rage in Roman literary circles.<sup>217</sup>

A touch of the poetic seems a distinct possibility for the *Histories*. As noted above, Roman historical writing of the period employed extensive poetic descriptive passages. In the *Suasoriae* we find similar passages, often geographical or ethnological, as the elder Seneca himself describes them: *locorum habitus fluminumque decursus et urbium situs moresque populorum...*<sup>218</sup> These stylistically ornate descriptions were a conventional part of historical prose. One such description, that of Germanicus caught in an ocean storm, written by Albinovanus Pedo

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**213** As we know from comparing the actual text of a speech made by Claudius (recovered at Lyons in 1524) and Tacitus' version in *ann.* 11.24. See Furneaux (1907<sup>2</sup>) I 54–55; Syme (1958) I 317–319; 459–460; II 624; 709–710. Syme refers to two other studies in particular which at the time of this writing are unavailable to me: Vittinghoff (1954), and Wellesley (1954).

**214** Sen. *suas.* 1.5ff.

**215** E.g. 1 *praef.* 8–10; 10 *praef.* 6–7.

**216** Cic. *orat.* 66; cf. *de orat.* 2.54ff.

**217** Cf. Sen. *contr.* 7 *praef.* 5. In general, for his ideals of style as observable through his criticism of other writers and declaimers, see Sussman (1969) 49–190, especially the ending summary, 181–190, and also Sochatoff (1939).

**218** Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 3.

in hexameters, was particularly liked by Seneca.<sup>219</sup> Seneca genuinely admired certain poetic descriptions as he indicates elsewhere. He says that of all the very eloquent men who wrote about Cicero's death, all historians, none was more eloquent than the poet Cornelius Severus.<sup>220</sup> This underscores the close relationship envisioned in Rome between poetry and history, and strongly suggests that the *Histories* displayed poetic tone.<sup>221</sup>

Another important stylistic influence on Seneca can be inferred from his own (and his son's) admiration of Sallust's style and in particular, his brevity.<sup>222</sup> From his other remarks and criticisms, we can assume that Seneca would not be carried away to an excess of Sallustian imitation and brevity; in fact, he clearly recognizes the dangers of overly terse style, but adds that a tendency toward slightly tumid expression is preferable since it is more easily corrected.<sup>223</sup> Nevertheless, Sallustian tone is a safe guess.

Livy's Ciceronian-inspired style may also have had some effect on the *Histories*. Seneca obviously knew the works of both and admired each man's style. In one instance, he approves of Livy's dictum on the avoidance of obscure words.<sup>224</sup>

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**219** Sen. *suas.* 1.15. No disclaimer, Seneca comments, could match the *spiritus* with which Pedo described this scene. See discussion *supra*.

**220** Sen. *suas.* 6.25; cf. 6.27.

**221** Quint. *inst.* 10.1.31. In this he may have differed somewhat from the dictates of Cicero (*de orat.* 2.54ff; *orat.* 66). Seneca may have felt the influence of the many poets at home in Cordova; the town was famous for these, if not for their style (Cic. *Arch.* 10.26; cf. Sen. *suas.* 6.27). Because poetry and history were thought to be so closely related, Maternus (speaking for Tacitus in his *Dialogus*) could indicate that he was forsaking oratory for poetry, to signify Tacitus' own departure to history from that same field. On this identification, see *supra* n. 40. The elder Seneca seems preoccupied with the relationship of poetry to prose throughout his digression on Ovid, *contr.* 2.2.8–12; cf. Ov. *trist.* 4.10.23–26.

**222** Sen. *contr.* 9.1.13–14; Sen. *epist.* 20.5 (imitation of Sallust's definition of friendship; *Catil.* 20.4; cf. Sen. *epist.* 109.16); 60.4; 114.17–21. The elder Seneca preferred Sallust's brief style to Livy's less terse expression, *contr.* 9.1.14.

**223** Sen. *contr.* 9.2.26. He would not slavishly imitate Sallust because he well recognized the danger of adopting someone else's style for one's own: *Non est unus, quamvis praecipuus sit, imitandus, quia numquam par fit imitator auctori. Haec rei natura est: semper citra veritatem est similitudo.* (*contr.* 1 *praef.* 6). The lesson was not lost on his son, who specifically warns against excessive imitation of Sallust (*epist.* 114.17–19).

**224** Sen. *contr.* 9.2.26; cf. 9.1.14. Evidently Livy wrote a treatise on style, cf. Quint. *inst.* 2.5.20; 8.2.18; perhaps addressed to his son, 10.1.39. There are two extended quotations from Livy: *suas.* 6.17; 22; cf. 6.21. Castiglioni (1928) 454 would add influence from the spirit of Cordus and Labienus, but not from their styles.

Although the elder Seneca becomes increasingly discursive as he proceeds in the *Suasoriae* (and was also preparing for the task of writing an extensive history), it would not be accurate to infer from this tendency an extremely anecdotal and rambling historical work. For even in the anthologies he is always careful to digress for only a short time and then return to the subject – a collection of declamatory extracts would be extremely dull without this occasional personal touch.

In the *Controversiae* Seneca employed transitional devices from the prefaces to each of the books, and also unified thematically the prefaces with the theme of *meliores annos* and memory, thus applying a structure of general unity to the work.<sup>225</sup> The structure, unity, and a thematic progression which characterized the *Controversiae* would be even more necessary and apparent in the *Histories*.

## 14 The plan of the elder Seneca's *Histories*

The state of the evidence for the plan of the *Histories* consists primarily of inference from the meager information provided in the *De Vita Patris* and the possible influence that may be discerned in Appian and Florus. Nevertheless, the terms used by the younger Seneca in describing the work are both significant and valuable. First, there is the title itself, *Historiae*, which would tend to preclude a work in the strict old annalistic format, yet it could quite conceivably have dealt with events in a modified year-by-year fashion. Such a narrative technique would be convenient for treating a lengthy and complex series of events taking place throughout the broad expanse of the Empire. One could also more easily gloss over dangerous events, while leaving sufficient scope for introducing entertaining anecdotes, rhetorical descriptions, and, of course, elaborated speeches.

In our previous discussion of the usage of *veritas*, we touched upon the importance and novelty of the elder Seneca's emphasis on this factor. As was noted, its prominence in his son's description of the work is strong evidence for the tracing of the decline of *veritas* and its subsequent revival as a unifying thread of continuity for the work. Because of its focus, therefore, we can conclude that the work belonged more to the monographical tradition typified by Seneca's much-

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<sup>225</sup> See now Sussman (1971); (1972); (1977). In view of the elder Seneca's concern for careful transition, it is not surprising to learn of his great admiration for the master of that art, Ovid (*contr.* 2.2.8–12). He is not blind to Ovid's faults, however; e.g., *contr.* 9.5.17: ... *et Ovidius nescit quod bene cessit relinquere ... Aiebat autem Scaurus rem veram: non minus magnam virtutem esse scire dicere quam scire desinere.*

admired Sallust, with his prevalent moralistic tone, than to the universal and patriotic historical tradition of Livy. Seneca's fascination with the style of Sallust and his apparently Caesarian sympathies might well indicate a continuity of political alliance and historical style. For these reasons we could assign the elder Seneca to the politico-historiographical tradition of the Caesarians; perhaps in style (a tendency towards Atticism) and more surely in plan (the predominance of the monograph).

Although the decline of *veritas* is an important theme, the elder Seneca no doubt found it necessary to weave in other themes and events that may have been peripheral to his scheme. Hence the younger Seneca also describes the content of the *Histories* with the term *res Romanas* where the *De Vita Patris* breaks off.

There is no direct evidence to indicate how the elder Seneca divided the books of the *Histories* and the complicated, onrushing stream of events. Hahn, however, has developed a very strong argument that both Appian and Florus used the elder Seneca's *Histories* as a major source for their respective histories of the period.<sup>226</sup> Indirectly, then, it may be possible to form some idea of how the elder Seneca divided his work by looking at the respective plans of the two later writers.

One notices immediately that both men begin their account of the period of civil war with the Gracchan unrest, although there is a disagreement between them about the factors responsible.<sup>227</sup> Yet there is an essential difference between the two works. Florus was writing an epitome of Roman wars in a volume of two books, while Appian was writing a more leisurely work, an account of Rome's civil wars in the more traditional and lengthy book-by-book arrangement. In an obviously more specialized and brief work Florus can deal only cursorily with the political machinations that were so vital an element to this period of civil discord and the many great men who played so important a role. Thus, Florus begins Book 2 with an account of the Gracchan Laws (*epit.* 2.1), the *Seditio T. Gracchi* (*epit.* 2.2), *Seditio C. Gracchi* (*epit.* 2.3), *Seditio Apuleiana* (*epit.* 2.4), *Seditio Drusiana* (*epit.* 2.5), *Bellum adversus socios* (*epit.* 2.6), and so on through to the Parthian peace and the deification of Augustus. In the beginning, Florus primarily chronicles the civil wars. There is an interruption of two chapters on the Parthian wars (under Ventidius and later Antony, *epit.* 2.19–20), followed by an account of the war against Antony and Cleopatra. From there, until the end, Florus narrates the

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<sup>226</sup> Cf. Hahn (1964) 169–206 *passim*.

<sup>227</sup> Florus sees a degeneration in morals caused by the new wealth pouring into Rome and the dispersal of the *metus Punicus* as the basic factors, *epit.* 1.47.12; cf. *epit.* 1.34.19. Appian passes over these in silence; see Hahn (1964) 203–206.

various border campaigns carried on by Octavian–Augustus and his generals. The very nature of Florus’ work therefore makes it difficult to discern what the book divisions may have been in the elder Seneca. For both range of subject matter and book divisions we must turn to Appian in order to form a possible conception of those in the elder Seneca’s work:

1. From the Gracchi to the defeat of Spartacus and the reconciliation of Pompey and Crassus.
2. Pompey’s war against the pirates, Catilinarian conspiracy, events to the death of Julius Caesar (who is compared to Alexander), and events immediately thereafter.
3. Aftermath of Julius Caesar’s funeral, rise of Antony and then Octavian, the flight and killing of Decimus Brutus.
4. From the reconciliation of Antony and Octavian at Mutina, the formation of the second triumvirate and the proscriptions, to the end of the battle at Philippi.
5. Aftermath of Philippi, Antony’s trip to Egypt, his affair with Cleopatra, his expedition against Armenia and Octavian’s against Illyria, the death of Sextus Pompey.

The books after V are lacking; if these divisions reflect the elder Seneca’s, perhaps he may originally have divided the remaining books as follows:

- a. Growth of hostilities between Octavian and Antony, various political maneuvers between the two, the battle of Actium, deaths of Antony and Cleopatra.
- b. Reform measures taken by Octavian, to 27 BC and the conferral of the title Augustus.
- c. 27 BC until the death of Augustus.
- d. Tiberius, the “good” years, Sejanus.
- e. Tiberius, the declining years, the demise of Sejanus, the death of Tiberius (perhaps a rhetorical amplification of the death scene, similar to Suet. *Tib.* 73), the inception of the reign of Gaius.

Throughout the civil war period then, probably, literary Republicanism manifested itself in the *Histories*, but also as events progressed, a flavor of Caesarian leanings.<sup>228</sup> Octavian–Augustus as the first *princeps* would be treated fully and with praise for ending chaos and restoring order. Troublesome details of his life

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**228** Probably reflected in Florus: “The author [Florus] is strikingly free of any political bias, except that in the Civil War he appears to side with Julius Caesar rather than with Pompeius”. (Forster (1929) xi); cf. Florus *epit.* 2.13.37–39; 50; 80–83; 90. See discussion above.

still had to remain suppressed or portrayed in a favorable light. The Julio-Claudians were yet in power and were a proud clan. Tiberius, especially in view of the likely Sejanian connections of the *gens Annaea*, may not have fared so well.<sup>229</sup> The restored moral order of Augustus lapsed under Tiberius – the denunciation of the profligate youth during his reign in *contr. 1 praef. 8–11*, is scathing. *Veritas* began its decline for the first time at the beginning of the civil wars: *cum primum veritas retro abiit (De Vita Patris)*. The use of *primum* implies strongly that it declined, if only briefly, for a second time under Tiberius. But the accession of Gaius promised a new order, a freer, more optimistic atmosphere, and an opportunity to denounce the excesses of Tiberius. It was a good time to write history: *veritas* was restored, if only momentarily.

## 15 Reconstruction and conclusions

The evidence gathered and investigated in this study allows us to form the following tentative reconstruction of the *Histories*. The elder Seneca introduced the work with a preface as literary convention demanded and his own practices in the *Controversiae* suggest. Like the prefaces to the *Controversiae*, the preface to the *Histories* was undoubtedly addressed to his sons, now advancing into the world of politics,<sup>230</sup> and in it a moralistic attitude predominated, not unlike that of his esteemed predecessors, Livy and Sallust. Also in the preface Seneca described Roman history in terms of a cyclical progression, and likened the phases of the cycle to the ages of man, in much the same fashion as Lactantius did.<sup>231</sup> Two topics provided the unifying motif of the preface and excellent material for expansion also in the body of the *Histories*: the downward swing of the cycle, which was caused by the decline of *veritas* and which began with the inception of civil discord in the time of the Gracchi, and the subsequent upturn under Augustus.<sup>232</sup>

Preceding the preface, however, the younger Seneca as publisher appended the *De Vita Patris*, an introductory essay. In it he briefly described the historical

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**229** One thinks at once of the well-known line of Tacitus: *Tiberii Gaique et Claudii ac Neronis res florentibus ipsis ob metum falsae, postquam occiderant, recentibus odiis compositae sunt (ann. 1.1)*. Cf. Klingner (1928) 200–201.

**230** See discussion above.

**231** Cf. Hahn (1964) 177. Castiglioni (1928) 460 believes that the Lactantius fragment is a reproduction, with the exception of a few details, of the preface to the *Histories*.

**232** See Hahn (1965) 32–33.



work to follow and gave a more detailed account of the elder Seneca's life, even delving briefly into the family ancestry (*quibus natus esset parentibus ille, qui res Romanas...*).

After the preface, the work itself began briefly with events following the fall of Carthage and the conquests in the East, succeeded by the growth of luxury and avarice. Then he briefly summarized, starting with the Gracchi, the period of *seditiones* (enumerated at the beginning of Florus, Book II) until the Social War. From this point onward, Seneca examined in increasingly fuller detail the *bella civilia*, and to a lesser extent, the other external wars of the period. After Actium, while continuing the account of the various border wars, he no doubt emphasized the restoration of order under Augustus and a rebirth of the state.<sup>233</sup> Next, a momentary setback occurred for the recently reborn *veritas* in the later reign of Tiberius, but it was soon restored when Rome entered into a vigorous, promising *iuventus* under Gaius. A deeply moralistic and didactic tone dominated the *Histories* and it essentially chronicled the history of Roman *veritas*, its decline and revival, from the time of the Gracchi to Gaius.

We can presume that the elder Seneca employed many good secondary sources in a relatively fair and unbiased fashion. His moralistic approach to the writing of history seems conventional enough. Yet his preference for the term *veritas* instead of the more common Republican and Augustan slogan word of *virtus* marks a departure from the practice of previous Roman historians and displays an intentional emphasis on the absolute nature of the moral values which he espoused. From our knowledge of the elder Seneca's moral outlook in the other works, we can conclude that this was not just a conventional pose but a sincere belief. He also differed from the majority of Roman historians up to his time in the use of a biological metaphor to describe and explain the events which he narrated. This, and his concern with *veritas* mark the elder Seneca as an independent thinker for this age and we have good reason to mourn the loss of his *Histories*.

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<sup>233</sup> Cf. Syme (1959) 62–63.

Biagio Santorelli

## Bibliographical updates to Sussman’s “The lost *Histories* of the Elder Seneca” (1972–2019)

*The lost Histories of the Elder Seneca* was completed by Lewis Sussman in the early 70s; part of the conclusions reached in this work were later exploited in Sussman (1978), esp. 137–152, but the bulk of this paper remained unpublished. The publication of the proceedings of a conference devoted to the ‘re-emerging’ of Seneca’s *Histories* seemed an appropriate occasion to make Sussman’s work available to the scholarly community, in the aim of fostering new reflection on the work of Seneca the Elder; to this end, I here append to Sussman’s text a brief overview of the subsequent scholarship, with special focus on the issues addressed in the present essay.

In the original version of Sussman’s paper, all texts from Seneca the Elder’s *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* were quoted from the edition of Müller (1887); in preparing the essay for publication, however, I have quoted all texts from Håkanson (1989), which is now the standard edition of Seneca’s works. In recent years, a new critical edition of the *Suasoriae*, with introduction and commentary, is provided by Feddern (2013); as for the *Controversiae*, the only commentary available at present is Håkanson (2016): I refer to my *Aktualisierung* in that volume (Santorelli (2016) for details on recent bibliography on the elder Seneca in general.

The fragment of the *De vita patris* (fr. 15 Haase - Appendix T1), as well as the testimonies on Seneca’s *Histories* by Suetonius (*Tib.* 73.2 - Appendix F1) and Lactantius (*inst.* 7.15.14 - Appendix F1) can now be read in the commented edition of *FRHist*: see I 505–508 (introduction); II 982–985 (texts and translations); III 596–597 (commentary). Pecere (2010) 129–133 offers insights on the preservation of texts left unfinished, or unpublished, at the death of their author; on the possibility that the elder Seneca may have left other unpublished works, beside the *Histories* and the rhetorical anthology, see Lausberg (1989) 1937–1941.

While it is generally agreed upon that Seneca must have covered at least the years of Tiberius’ principate, and perhaps even the earliest years of Gaius’ reign (see *FRHist* I 506), the scholarly debate on the possible beginnings of the *Histories* is still open. Most recently, *FRHist* I 506 suggests that the *initium bellorum civilium* mentioned in the *De vita patris* as the starting point of Seneca’s *Histories* should be associated with the wars between Pompey and Caesar; on the other hand, Canfora (2000) 165–168 and (2015) 143–149, maintains that the *arché* of the political

turmoil recorded by Seneca should be dated back to the Gracchan age (see already Sussman (1978) 142. In his essay published in the present volume (see especially 9–10 and n. 3), Cornell brings new arguments in support of his view, and challenges the interpretation of *veritas* as “truth, righteousness, and integrity” suggested by Sussman (see 172–173 and n. 146); on the meaning of *veritas*, with its implications on the assessment of the most plausible beginnings of Seneca’s *Historiae*, see now in detail the essays by Mazzoli (95–100), Berti (103–104 n. 11), and Rich (348 n. 71). As for the possible date of publication of the *Historiae*, which Sussman and Canfora (2015) trace back to the early principate of Gaius, see now Damon (128–129 and n. 26).

The attitude of Seneca to history, which he considers a higher *genus scripti* than declamation, has been further analysed in Canfora (2000) 167–169 and Feddern (2013) 380; 431–432.

On Seneca’s moralistic approach to both literature and history, and on his view of history as a cycle of moral decay, see now Berti (2007) 213–2018, as well as his essay in this book (especially 109–116); the division of Roman history in phases corresponding to the ages of the human life, and the tradition of this conception in Roman historiography, are studied in depth in Bessone (2008) and Pittà (2015) 266–274. See also Canfora (2015) on the connection between Florus and the *gens Annaea*, with further insights by Mazzoli in the present volume (94). On the influence of Seneca’s experience of the horror of the civil wars on his conception of history see Danesi Marioni (2003); Mazzoli (2006).

As for Seneca’s critical use of his sources, Canfora (2000) 160–161 focuses on the case of *suas.* 6, with its survey of different accounts of Cicero’s death, considering it a case-study to understand Seneca’s working method; on the diverse historiographical traditions recorded by Seneca in this section see also Berti (2007) 326–328 (with further references in his essay in the present volume, 102 n. 3), and more recently Lentano (2016). In particular on Cremius Cordus’ account, which has Cicero deliberate whether to resort to the help of Brutus, Cassius or Sextus Pompey (almost as in a *suasoria triplex*), see now Mancini (2018). Seneca’s occasional inaccuracy in reporting facts and ascribing quotations is discussed in Feddern (2013) 62; 181–182 (*ad suas.* 1.5); 269–270 (*ad suas.* 2.11); 395–396 (*ad suas.* 6.3).

On the elder Seneca’s attitude towards philosophy see Fairweather (1981) 21–22; Gloyn (2017) 37–38; 198–199.

Stephen P. Oakley

# Point and periodicity: the style of Velleius Paterculus and other Latin historians writing in the early Principate

**Abstract:** This paper examines what may be said about the style of Latin historians who were contemporary with the elder Seneca. Most space is devoted to Velleius Paterculus, but also discussed are L. Arruntius, Pompeius Trogus, Cremutius Cordus, Bruttidius Niger, and Aufidius Bassus. There is discussion of the periodic and pointed styles, of poetical language, of the use of clausulae, and of imitation of Sallust and Livy.

‘Er [Velleius] will nicht mit Livius verglichen sein (man kann eben nicht Heterogenes vergleichen), sondern mit Nepos einerseits und Florus andererseits: jener schreibt wie ein puer für pueri, dieser wie ein insanus für insani: den Velleius liest man gern von Anfang bis zu Ende, nicht als Menschen oder als Historiker, aber als Schriftsteller, der in der Manier selten kindisch oder absurd wird.’<sup>1</sup>

To write about Latin prose-style is fraught with difficulties. First, the very notion ‘style’ is difficult to define: by what should we measure it? Second, such a small percentage of Latin prose survives. Third, even if all Latin prose survived, how far should we be able to generalize about the shared qualities exhibited by any one epoch? How far when examining our own prose-style can we distinguish between what is characteristic of our generation and what reflects own personalities? Despite these difficulties, in this paper an attempt will be made to look at what might be said about styles used in the writing of history in the two generations after the publication of the surviving books of Livy.

For the period between Caesar’s death and c.10 BC (by which date all the extant books of Livy must have been written) we have substantial remains of two historical writers, Sallust and Livy. From then until the accession of Claudius in AD 41 we have substantial remains of just one, Velleius Paterculus. If Quintus Curtius Rufus be Vespasianic or even later, then the figure remains at one for

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I thank Professor M.C. Scappaticcio for the kind invitation to speak at the conference on the elder Seneca’s *Histories*: since the style in which Seneca composed that work remains unknown, these thoughts on the styles used by his contemporaries were offered as a substitute. I thank also Professor A.J. Woodman for improving an earlier draft of this essay.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr C.L. Whitton and Professor A.J. Woodman *Norden* (1915) 1. 303.

about eighty years, rising finally to three with Tacitus in the reign of Trajan. For this reason most of this essay will be concerned with Velleius. The quantity of fragments of writers surviving only through quotation by others is pitiful, a fact illustrated more clearly by the slender scope of the second volume of Peter's *Historicorum Romanorum reliquiae* than by Cornell's *The fragments of the Roman historians* (*FRHist*), where the listing of all Roman historians together, although entirely sensible in itself, obscures the boundary in which I am interested.

The most substantial fragment, however, comes from a writer not included in either Peter's or Cornell's volumes: Pompeius Trogus. It is often forgotten that Justin, in his *Epitome* of Trogus' work, includes a full unepitomized speech in *oratio obliqua* that Trogus wrote for Mithridates (38.4.1–7.10). Otherwise, almost all the fragments about the style of which something of interest may be said come from *Suasoria* 6 of the elder Seneca, on the death of Cicero, where among historians Pollio (*FRHist* 56), Livy, Cremutius Cordus (*FRHist* 71), Bruttidius Niger (*FRHist* 72), and Aufidius Bassus (*FRHist* 78) all feature. Pollio I shall not discuss: many of the tastes of this acquaintance of Cicero and Catullus must have been formed before either Sallust or Livy wrote; and although Sallust may have had some influence on his style and manner,<sup>2</sup> his history was written too early to be influenced by Livy. Of other writers contemporary with the elder Seneca it is possible to say something about the style of Lucius Arruntius (*FRHist* 58) and a very small amount about that of Fenestella (*FRHist* 70), but almost nothing about Agrippa, Augustus, Messalla Corvinus, Labienus, Julius Hyginus, Clodius Licinus, Marathus, Drusus, Aquilius Niger, Julius Saturninus, Alfius (*FRHist* 59–69), the emperor Tiberius, the elder Seneca himself, and the emperor Claudius (*FRHist* 73–75).

I shall look in particular at five aspects of the style of these historians, although not every aspect is relevant to every historian. First, their use of the poetical and archaic language found earlier in Sallust and Livy and later in Tacitus – but this topic will feature but little, since neither the fragments nor Velleius Paterculus offer much evidence for it.

Second, their adoption of a method of narration that involves the use of extensive hypotactic subordination, often called periodicity. It is vain to seek either a compelling ancient definition of the periodic sentence or to hold up certain types as 'ideal' and to cast judgement on ancient authors as to whether or not their periodicity matched such an ideal.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Caesar, especially in the *De bello Gallico*, and Livy both made frequent use of a type of sentence which

<sup>2</sup> Woodman (1988) 127–128.

<sup>3</sup> On the difficulty of defining the periodic sentence, see Reinhardt *et al.* (2005) 7–14.

built up through a series of subordinate clauses or phrases to a climax. A good example is provided by Livy 5.27.2, which deals with the famous episode of the Faliscan schoolmaster's marching the children of the leaders of his city into the camp of the besieging Camillus:

is [the Faliscan schoolmaster] *cum in pace instituisset pueros ante urbem lusus exercendique causa producere, nihil eo more per belli tempus intermisso, modo breuioribus modo longioribus spatiis trahendo eos a porta, lusu sermonibusque uariatis, longius solito ubi res dedit progressus, inter stationes eos hostium castraque inde Romana in praetorium ad Camillum perduxit.*

Here the betrayal by the schoolmaster is narrated in one sentence, in which after a series of subordinated actions a climactic main clause takes the eyes of readers or, if the passage was ever recited, the ears of listeners through the outposts of the Romans, into the camp, into the commander's tent or building, and face-to-face with Camillus. Caesar's periods tend to have a structure that is easier to follow than those of Livy, with frequent use of the ablative absolute, Livy's one that is more challenging, and hence more exciting. Although in modern times those learning Latin have often been taught to write in this way, sentences with such structures are highly artificial.<sup>4</sup>

Third, historians' adoption of the so-called pointed style, and other techniques associated with declamation. The practice of declamation became widespread from the 40s BC onwards, and no one needs now to be reminded of its profound influence on the style of both Latin prose and Latin verse in the period between Ovid and Juvenal. Prime features of this style include a striving for point, often manifesting itself in antithesis (regularly being found together with a sentence-structure that exhibits precise balance) or ingeniously contrived terminal *sententiae* (themselves often featuring antithesis), apostrophe, a depiction of the gruesome, and purple passages of prose written in a highly ornate style and unusually replete with rhetorical figures. This style is far removed from that of Caesar or Livy. In what follows, in passages quoted that feature antithesis the words or phrases set against each other are identified by raised letters. This may be illustrated from the opening paragraph of Velleius' work (1.1.2):

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<sup>4</sup> See the excellent essay of Mayer (2005). All the sentences in Velleius that I term periodic build up to a main clause and verb through various subordinated members; but the main clause does not always end the sentence as it does in the example from Livy just quoted.

*Agamemnon . . . tres ibi urbes statuit, <sup>A</sup>duas <sup>B</sup>a <sup>C</sup>patriae <sup>D</sup>nomine, <sup>A</sup>unam <sup>B</sup>a <sup>C</sup>uictoriae <sup>D</sup>memoria, Mycenae Tegeam Pergamum.*<sup>5</sup>

Fourth, historians' adoption of the particular prose-rhythms associated most famously with Cicero, a practice that has proved notoriously difficult precisely to analyse. The habit of punctuating both sentences and internal pauses within sentences with rhythmical cadences began in Hellenistic oratory, from which it emerges in Latin prose first in Cicero and the anonymous treatise *Ad Herennium*. It becomes prevalent in the first century AD, with Mela, the younger Seneca, Petronius, Quintilian, and the younger Pliny all prime exponents of the technique.<sup>6</sup> Sallust and Livy did not use the rhythms favoured by Cicero, nor did Caesar before them. One might suspect that in Caesar's and Livy's cases avoidance of them was deliberate: drawing attention to the pauses within sentences hardly helped the onward sweep of their periodicity. In his historical works Tacitus scarcely used such rhythms, perhaps an aspect of his Sallustian imitation, but Curtius Rufus' prose is regularly clausulated.<sup>7</sup> John Briscoe has noted that such clausulae occur sporadically in the surviving fragments of early imperial historians,<sup>8</sup> and it is well known that Velleius employed them. To illustrate the practice, in the passages of Latin that are quoted below the ends of sentences that exhibit these clausulae will be marked with the standard notation of scansion and will be categorized according to the following scheme.

- 1) — u — — x = cretic + trochee or spondee
- 1a) uu u — — x
- 1b) — u uu — x
- 1c) — u — uu x
- 1d) uu u uu — x
- 2 — u — — u x = double cretic
- 2a) uu u — — u x
- 2b) — u uu — u x
- 2c) — u— uu u x
- 3) — u — x = double trochee or trochee + spondee
- 3a) — u — — u — x (the same preceded by a cretic)
- 3b) — u uu x
- 4) — — — — u x = molossus + cretic

<sup>5</sup> I cite this example simply to explain how antitheses will be marked; the sentence itself is not remarkable and could have been written by e.g. Cicero.

<sup>6</sup> These authors all show a liking for the cadences based on cretics and trochees that Cicero had employed. Naturally, within this system they have slightly different preferences.

<sup>7</sup> See especially Müller (1954) 755–782.

<sup>8</sup> Briscoe in *FRHist* I 38.

- 4a) uu — — — u x  
 4b) — uu — — u x  
 4c) — — uu — u x  
 5) — u — u x = cretic + iambus (hypodochmiac)  
 5a) uu u — u x  
 6) — — — x = double spondee or spondee + trochee

The six most favoured rhythms are numbered 1–6; variations of them caused by resolution of a heavy syllable into two light syllables are marked by a letter after the number (1a, 2a, etc.).<sup>9</sup> With this notation the end of the first surviving sentence of Velleius (1.1.1) would be marked thus: *Mētāpōntūm cōndīdīt* |<sup>4a</sup>, giving a molossus + cretic with the first heavy syllable of the molossus resolved.

Fifth, the influence of Sallust and, sixth, the influence of Livy. The most admired writers of prose tend to develop their own distinctive style, but even for them the influence of others can be hard to escape. In the ancient world the rhetorical training that allowed writers successfully to write in different styles provided them with the skills necessary for close imitation; and, in a literary culture that was so allusive, one should expect to find at least some later historians who imitate or at least who allude to these two literary giants. Since allusion may take the form of stylistic imitation, distinguishing between stylistic imitation and stylistic allusion is not always easy.

Imitation of Livy needs little discussion. That his history was much read in the century after his death is easy to demonstrate,<sup>10</sup> but no extant writer offers a sustained imitation of his style. The most Livian of extant writers is Quintus Curtius Rufus,<sup>11</sup> but, although his language is steeped in Livian expressions, his sentence-structure, his use of *clausulae*, and his general tone makes him very different to read. The famous Lyons inscription (*CIL* XIII.1668) suggests that Livy's pupil, the emperor Claudius, may have rivalled Curtius in Livian reminiscence,<sup>12</sup> but virtually nothing survives of his historical work. There is much Livian vocabulary and allusion in Tacitus (after Sallust, Livy is among extant writers perhaps

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<sup>9</sup> Although writers who use this system of *clausulae* employed the final double spondee or spondee + trochee less often than it would naturally occur in Latin, it was clearly an acceptable cadence; how far they felt that it actually enhanced the rhythmicity of their prose may be doubted.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. Oakley (2016) 165–167.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Baynham (1998) 20–25, with further bibliography.

<sup>12</sup> See Last and Ogilvie (1958).



the most important influence on Tacitus' historical style), but no one has ever thought of Tacitus as a 'Livian' writer.<sup>13</sup>

With Sallust matters are different. The the abrupt and halting style, more pronounced in the *Iugurtha* and *Histories* than the *Catiline*, would probably at any time have been an attractive target for imitation, but all the more so in a literary culture in which the declamatory style, based on antithesis and point rather than periodicity, was becoming dominant. The cynical tone must have been attractive too, although the political circumstances of the Principate may have made writers cautious about employing it. Among extant historians Sallustian expressions appear often in Velleius Paterculus (on whom more below), Tacitus, and L. Septimius' translation of 'Dictys Cretensis';<sup>14</sup> and once again no one needs to be told that Tacitus imitated and surpassed not just the expressions of Sallust but also his manner, tone, and sentence-structure. In another (but not entirely unrelated) genre,<sup>15</sup> Sallustian reminiscences are to be found in the geographical treatise of Velleius' younger contemporary, Pomponius Mela.<sup>16</sup>

## Arruntius

Consideration of the influence of Sallust leads naturally to discussion of Lucius Arruntius (*FRHist* 58), who has been made notorious by the amusing satire of the younger Seneca, writing about later imitation of stylistic vices (*epist.* 114.17–19):

*Sic Sallustio uigente anputatae sententiae et uerba ante expectatum cadentia et obscura breuitas fuere pro cultu. L. Arruntius, uir rarae frugalitatis, qui historias belli Punici scripsit, fuit Sallustianus et in illud genus nitens. est apud Sallustium: 'exercitum argento fecit', id est, pecunia parauit. Hoc Arruntius amare coepit; posuit illud omnibus paginis. dicit quodam loco 'fugam nostris fecere', alio loco 'Hiero, rex Syracusanorum, bellum fecit', et alio loco 'quae*

<sup>13</sup> On Tacitus' debt to Livy, see, in addition to the indices of the various commentaries, e.g. Syme (1958) 685–686, and Woodman (1979) 153 = (1998) 82.

<sup>14</sup> For Septimius see Brunnert (1888); Sallustian influence on Tacitus is too well known to need documentation.

<sup>15</sup> See Frick (1888) V–VII.

<sup>16</sup> Woodman (1988) 146 wrote '[i]n the sensitive political atmosphere of the first century AD, when historians and their works were equally at risk, it is hardly surprising that writers chose to follow Livy rather than Sallust.' On imitation of Sallust's cynicism and tone, I have no evidence to set against this conclusion but suspect that imitation of Sallustian phraseology and other mannerisms of his style may have been more common than Woodman allows. Note *Sallustio uigente* in the passage of Seneca quoted below (admittedly likely to refer only to the early and mid-Augustan period) and perhaps Quint. *inst.* 10.2.17.

*audita Panhormitanos dedere Romanis fecere*. (18) *gustum tibi dare uolui: totus his contexitur liber. quae apud Sallustium rara fuerunt, apud hunc crebra sunt et paene continua, nec sine causa; ille enim in haec incidebat, at hic illa quaerebat. uides autem quid sequatur ubi alicui uitium pro exemplo est.* (19) *dixit Sallustius ‘aquis hiemantibus’. Arruntius in primo libro belli Punici ait: ‘repente hiemauit tempestas’, et alio loco cum dicere uellet frigidum annum fuisse ait: ‘totus hiemauit annus’, et alio loco ‘inde sexaginta onerarias leues praeter militem et necessarios nautarum hiemante aquilone misit’. Non desinit omnibus locis hoc uerbum infulcire. quodam loco dicit Sallustius ‘dum inter arma ciuilia aequi bonique famas petit’. Arruntius non temperauit, quo minus primo statim libro poneret ingentes esse ‘famas’ de Regulo.*

Which of the two Lucii Arruntii, father and son, wrote this history is not quite certain, but Levick, who provides a lucid review of the evidence, was probably right to assume that it was the consul of 22 BC.<sup>17</sup> Such a date corresponds to a time when Sallust’s influence is likely to have been at its height (note Seneca’s *Sallustio uigente*), and suggests that Arruntius may have been born around 64 BC. He might well have known Sallust, but is unlikely to have wished to imitate a younger man such as Livy. Seneca’s paragraph should not be taken entirely at face-value:<sup>18</sup> he does show that Arruntius imitated the vocabulary of Sallust (perhaps the use of the plural *famas* is the most striking borrowing),<sup>19</sup> but not all the criticisms are fair. For example, the use of *facere* + noun instead of a verb cognate with the noun is common enough, and *bellum facere* is found in Caesar and Livy.<sup>20</sup> Sadly, Seneca provides no evidence for a Sallustian sentence-structure, and there are no other fragments of Arruntius.

## Pompeius Trogus

It is not easy precisely to date the writings of Trogus, but, if Arruntius has been dated correctly, Trogus perhaps published after him. The major difficulty in using the chapters quoted in full by Justin (38.4–7) to generalize about the style of Trogus comes from their being a speech of Mithridates in which he tries to rally his

<sup>17</sup> See Levick in *FRHist* I 448–50.

<sup>18</sup> For more on the expressions of Arruntius mentioned by Seneca, see Levick in *FRHist* III 533–534 and especially Woodman (2015) 125–126.

<sup>19</sup> It is attested before Sallust (whose use of it is attested also by the Verona scholiast on Verg. *Aen.* 4.178) only at Plaut. *Trin.* 186; as Levick says in her commentary on F7, it was perhaps an archaism for Sallust.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Caes. *Gall.* 3.29.3, 5.28.1, Liv. 1.38.3, 8.37.8. For further discussion of these expressions with *facere* see Woodman (2015) 126; he shows that our extant evidence allows us to parallel *fugam facere* in the sense ‘put someone else to flight’ in Livy but not Sallust.

troops for fighting against the Romans rather than narrative. No Roman historian wrote his speeches in quite the same style as his narrative and, in Trogus' case, Justin's observation (38.3.11) that he criticized Sallust and Livy for inserting speeches of excessive length into their works makes it very unlikely that he gave over a large proportion of his own work to speeches, whether direct or indirect. Justin's observation proves, what we should anyhow have guessed, that Trogus had read Sallust and Livy, and scholarly speculation about the nature of his history has tended to concentrate on the influence of these writers.

In Trogus' speech of Mithridates many themes occur that are very similar to those found in the letter that Sallust made Mithridates send to Arsaces (*hist.* 4.69 Maurenbrecher). These similarities have been comprehensively listed by Sellge;<sup>21</sup> I repeat just two of the similar passages from his list:

*Eumenen, quoniam amicitiam gloriose ostendant, initio prodidere Antiocho pacis mercedem; post, habitum custodiam agrum captivum, sumptibus et contumeliis ex rege miserum servorum effecere, simulatoque in pio testamento filium eius Aristonicum, quia patrium regnum petierat, hostium more per triumphum duxere; Asia ab ipsis obsessa est.*

Sallust, *hist.* 4.69.8

*sic rursus Eumenen, cuius classibus primo in Asiam fuere transiecti, cuius exercitu magis quam suo et magnum Antiochum et Gallos in Asia et mox in Macedonia regem Perseum domuerant, et ipsum pro hoste habitum eique interdictum Italia, et quod cum ipso deforme sibi putauerant, cum filio eius Aristonico bellum gessisse.*

Justin 38.6.3–4

*Omniaque non serva, et maxime regna, hostilia ducant*

Sallust, *hist.* 4.69.17

*Hanc illos omnibus regibus legem odiorum dixisse*

Justin 38.6.7

Even though anti-Roman speeches, which gave the Roman historians an opportunity to show their skill in argument and their understanding of the historical circumstances of the times, are found quite often in the Roman historians,<sup>22</sup> and even though two writers needing to find words to give to Mithridates are likely to

<sup>21</sup> Sellge (1882) 13–30.

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. Oakley (1997–2005) 3. 41.

have come up with some of the same ideas, it would still be extraordinary if Trogus had written his speech with no thought of Sallust's letter, and the number of coincidences of theme suggests that he expected his readers to recall Sallust's words.

Echoes of both Sallust and Livy have been found in the language of the speech. Perhaps the most striking is Trogus' *timidius ac diffidentius* at 38.7.4. This can be paralleled at Cic. *Cluent.* 1 *timide et diffidenter*, Sall. *Catil.* 45.4 *timidus ac uitae diffidens*, Iug. 32.5 *eique timido et ex conscientia diffidenti*,<sup>23</sup> but, even if the coupling was not rare, it is hard to believe that Trogus was not influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by Sallust. The Livian expressions are slightly less striking, but the coupling of *ferus* and *inmitis* at 38.4.15 (*ferorum atque inmitium populorum*) is paralleled before Ambrose and Jerome only at Livy 23.5.12 and Sen. *Herc.* 1280. A good example of how difficult it can be to assess the vocabulary of the historians is provided by *ferrum stringere* at 38.4.2. This expression is found very often in Latin poetry but elsewhere in prose up to Tacitus only five times in Livy and then at Vell. 2.125.2, Sen. *contr.* 1.4.1, Val. Max. 4.6.3, Plin. *epist.* 3.16.6, Quint. *decl.* 258.9, Ps. Quint. *decl.* 3.7, and Tac. *hist.* 3.10.4. It is hard to say whether Trogus has taken over a Livian mannerism or whether this is a mildly poetical expression at home in the vocabulary of the historians.<sup>24</sup>

As one would expect, Mithridates is made to express himself with the aid of a variety of rhetorical figures. We meet e.g. an amplitude in phrasing sometimes verging on redundancy (Iust. 38.4.3: *ratione ac spe*, 4.6: *aemulationis ac inuidiae*, 4.10: *longiore ac difficiliore*, 7.4: *timidius ac diffidentius*, 7.4: *rudis ac tiro*, 7.4: *periculum ac labor*), insistent anaphora (38.4.5–11: *audire . . . audire . . . audire . . . audire*, 6.2–3: *sic . . . sic . . .*, 6.5–6: *huic . . . huic . . . hunc . . . huius*), balance (7.1: *qui paternos maiores suos a Cyro Darioque, conditoribus Persici regni, maternos a magno Alexandro ac Nicanore Seleuco, conditoribus imperii Macedonici, referat*, 7.8: *rapacitas proconsulum, sectio publicanorum, calumniae litium*), chiasmus (4.2: *si nequeant pro salute, pro ultione tamen sua omnes ferrum stringere*, 4.11: *pro libertate alios, quosdam etiam pro uice imperii*), rhetorical questions (5.4, 5.6, 5.8), what Adams has termed 'verbal hyperbaton', that is, the separation of an epithet from its noun by part of a verb (4.6: *ipsam caperet urbem*, 7.2: *totam pacauit Asiam*).<sup>25</sup> But much the same could be said for most speeches in the Latin historians, and Mithridates' is hardly remarkable in this respect – rather, one may

<sup>23</sup> See Yardley (2003) 17.

<sup>24</sup> For both expressions see Yardley (2003) 21 (but for both I have added to his parallels).

<sup>25</sup> See Adams (1971); he discusses the historians on 8–10. The figure is discussed in more detail *infra* 216, on Velleius.

feel that its rhetoric is somewhat muted, perhaps by Trogus' decision to use *oratio obliqua*.

As for clausulae, most sentences end with cadences commonly used by writers of clausulated prose in the early Principate; see e.g. 38.4.1–4: *pāx hābēndā* |<sup>3</sup>, *uictōriāe cārēānt* |<sup>1c</sup>, *omnēs ferrūm stringērē* |<sup>4</sup>, *bēllā sūstinēānt* |<sup>1c</sup>, *Cappādōciā fūdērīnt* |<sup>2a</sup>. Whether such clausulae would have occurred so regularly in narrative, there is no knowing.

Further deductions about the character and style of Trogus' work have often been made from Justin's *Epitome*. The influence of Sallust on Trogus has been detected in the subject matter and judgements offered by Justin,<sup>26</sup> and many similarities to the phrasing of both Sallust and Livy have been found in his work.<sup>27</sup> A well-known example may be found at Just. 9.3.10: *quippe aduersis uulneribus omnes loca, quae tuenda a ducibus acceperant, morientes corporibus texerunt*, which recalls Sall. *Catil.* 61.2: *nam fere quem quisque uiuus pugnando locum ceperat, eum amissa anima corpore tegebat*.<sup>28</sup> That many of these similarities are owed to Trogus and not to Justin seems likely enough, but it is a frustration that for none can this be proved,<sup>29</sup> and therefore it is hard to use Justin to further discussion of Trogus' style.

## Fenestella (*FRHist* 70)

The longest fragment of Fenestella, who died at some point in the Tiberius' reign, is F2:

*itaque ut magistratum tribuni inierunt, C. Cato, turbulentus adulescens et audax nec imparatus ad dicendum, contionibus adsiduis inuidiam et Ptolomaeo simul, qui iam profectus ex urbe erat, et Publio Lentulo consuli, paranti iam iter, concitare secundo quidem populi rumōre coēpīt* |<sup>3</sup>

How typical this fragment is of his historical works as a whole, there is no knowing, but it exhibits periodicity (the sense is not complete until the final verb *coepit*) and balance (*et Ptolomaeo, qui iam profectus ex urbe erat* is balanced by *et*

<sup>26</sup> See Rambaud (1948).

<sup>27</sup> See now especially Yardley (2003) 9–78. In particular, Yardley has greatly added to the known number of similarities between the phrasing of Justin and Livy.

<sup>28</sup> It is cited by Sellge (1882) 77, Rambaud (1948) 182, Yardley (2003) 15.

<sup>29</sup> Like some other late writers, Justin may have enjoyed imitating Livy and Sallust.

*Publio Lentulo consuli, paranti iam iter*). The expressions *magistratum inire*, *turbulentus adulescens*, *inuidiam concitare*, and *imparatus ad dicendum* may all be paralleled in Cicero,<sup>30</sup> and *magistratum inire*, *turbulentus* and *assiduis contionibus* are all Livian. Whether Drummond was right to regard *secundo . . . populi rumore* as '[a] poetic, and perhaps specifically Ennian, touch' is a nice question.<sup>31</sup> The clausula is 'Ciceronian', a double trochee, the significance of which is unclear in the absence of other sentence-endings.<sup>32</sup>

## Crementius Cordus (*FRHist* 71)

Among the fragments of the Tiberian historians quoted by Seneca in his discussion of *suasoriae* on the death of Cicero,<sup>33</sup> the most interesting come from Aulus Crementius Cordus (*FRHist* 71). The first is the longer and comes from the narrative of Cicero's death:

*Quibus uisis laetus Antonius, cum peractam proscriptionem suam dixisset esse (quippe non <sup>A</sup>satiatus modo caedendis ciuibus sed <sup>A</sup>differtus quoque), super rostra exponit. itaque, quo saepius ille ingenti circumfusus turba <sup>B</sup>processerat, quam paulo ante coluerat<sup>34</sup> piis contionibus, quibus*

**30** See Drummond in *FRHist* III 572 for all but the first. *magistratum inire* is found in Cicero at *Verr.* 1.125, *p. red. in sen.* 8, *fin.* 2.74, *Phil.* 3.2, 3.7, 3.39.

**31** Up to the time of Tacitus *rumore secundo* is attested at *Enn. ann.* 24 S, Sueius, fr. 7 Blänsdorf = 7 Courtney, *Verg. Aen.* 8.90, and *Hor. epist.* 1.10.9, all verse texts. *secundo rumore* is attested at *Cic. diu.* 1.29, *rumoribus aduersa in prauitatem, secunda in casum*, and *Tac. ann.* 3.29.4; *aduerso rumore* is found at *Liv.* 27.20.9, 44.22.10, *Tac. hist.* 2.26.2, *ann.* 14.11.3, and *Suet. Tit.* 6.2. There are more instances in prose than verse but most are in the historians, who use archaic language. Ennius may have encouraged adoption of the expression in historiography, but by Fenestella's day Virgil may have been a more obvious exemplar for its use in poeticizing prose.

**32** On the language of this fragment see also Woodman (2015) 127.

**33** On the fragments quoted by Seneca see recently e.g. Feddern (2013) 426–465 (part of his commentary on all the *suasoriae*), Woodman (2015) 63–74, and Keeline (2018) 118–130. Feddern's commentary is much fuller than that offered by Levick in *FRHist* but his textual choices tend to be too conservative.

**34** The text is uncertain: I have followed Winterbottom (1974) 2. 580; Håkanson (1989) 364 prints *quae . . . caluerat* (his own conjecture), Feddern (2013) 442 *quae* [depending on *rostra*] . . . *coluerat* (the MS. reading). It seems more natural to emphasize Cicero's cultivation of his throng rather than the *rostra*.

*multorum*<sup>c</sup>capita seruauerat, tum per<sup>c</sup>artus<sup>b</sup>sublatus<sup>35</sup> aliter ac solitus erat a ciuibus suis con-  
spectus est, praependenti capillo orique eius inspersa sanie, breui ante<sup>d</sup>princeps<sup>e</sup>senatus<sup>f</sup>Ro-  
manique nominis<sup>g</sup>titulus, tum<sup>d</sup>pretium<sup>e</sup>interfectoris sui<sup>h</sup>. praecipue tamen soluit pectora om-  
nium in lacrimas gemitusque uisa ad caput eius deligata manus dextera, diuinae eloquentiae  
ministra<sup>i</sup>.<sup>3</sup> ceterorumque caedes<sup>g</sup>priuatos luctus excitauerunt, illa una<sup>g</sup>commūnem. |<sup>1</sup> (Cre-  
mutius Cordus F1)

Referring to what remained of Cremutius' work after its outspokenness had led to its bowdlerization and its author's demise, Quintilian writes (*inst.* 10.1.104) *sed elatum abunde spiritum et audaces sententias deprehendas etiam in iis quae manent*. There is plenty of 'exalted spirit' in this fragment. Its stylistic features include a series of antitheses: *satiatus* followed by *differtus* (sustaining the metaphor in the word that it balances),<sup>36</sup> *princeps* and *titulus* contrasted with *pretium* (the assonance draws attention to the antithesis), *senatus Romanique nominis* with *interfectoris sui*, *ceterorum* with *illa una*, *priuatos* with *communem*, and (perhaps) earlier *capita* and *artus*. The terminal *sententia pretium interfectoris sui* is perhaps one of those of which Quintilian was thinking.<sup>37</sup> There is 'verbal hyperbaton' in the separation of *ingenti* from *turba* by *circumfusus*, the separation mirroring the sense,<sup>38</sup> and chiasm in *princeps senatus Romanique nominis titulus*. The second sentence suggests that Cordus sometimes wrote in a periodic style. The doubling up (*non satiatus modo caedendis ciuibus sed differtus quoque; princeps senatus Romanique nominis titulus; lacrimas gemitusque*) suggests an expansiveness of style of which Cicero himself might have approved. *soluit pectora* is a poeticism,<sup>39</sup> and makes one wonder how far Cremutius followed in the tradition of Sallust and Livy in using such expressions. Like others who wrote about Cicero's death,<sup>40</sup> Cremutius included several echoes of Cicero's own language. By far the most striking of these is *quibus multorum capita seruauerat*, which echoes *de orat.* 3.10: *M. Antoni in eis ipsis rostris, in quibus ille rem publicam constantissime consul defenderat quaeque censor imperatoriis manubiis ornauerat, positum caput illud fuit a quo erant multorum ciuium capita seruata*. Since this M. Antonius was

<sup>35</sup> *Sublatus* is Gertz's conjecture; the MS. Reading *suos latus* is possible but conveys a little less effectively the notion of Cicero's being raised limbs by limb. Håkanson's *suos sublatus* is also possible.

<sup>36</sup> See Woodman (2015) 68.

<sup>37</sup> See Bonner (1949) 158.

<sup>38</sup> See Woodman (2015) 69. Such mirroring is found quite often with verbs denoting surrounding (cf. e.g. Liv. 7.10.5: *Hispano cingitur gladio*).

<sup>39</sup> For the evidence, see Woodman (2015) 68–69.

<sup>40</sup> See Woodman (2015) 66 and Keeline (2018) ch. 3 *passim*.

the grandfather of the homonymous triumvir who proscribed Cicero, Cremutius has served up a witty paradox for his readers to savour.

The second fragment comes from Cremutius' laudation:<sup>41</sup>

<sup>A</sup>*Proprias enim simultates* <sup>B</sup>*deponendas* <sup>C</sup>*interdum putabat, <sup>A</sup>publicas numquam <sup>C</sup>auide <sup>B</sup>exercendas: cuius non solum <sup>D</sup>magnitudine uirtutum sed <sup>D</sup>multitudine quoque cōspiciendūs* (Cremutius Cordus F2)

This fragment likewise exhibits antithesis: in the contrasts between *proprias* and *publicas*, *deponendas* and *exercendas*, *interdum* and *auide*, and *magnitudine* and *multitudine*. More Ciceronian language occurs with *simultates deponendas*.<sup>42</sup> It ends with the so-called heroic clausula, not an ending that followers of Cicero used often but found more often in the historians (especially with polysyllabic words),<sup>43</sup> and perhaps not inappropriate in this passage of praise.

As we shall see, almost all these features of Cremutius' style can be illustrated more amply from Velleius Paterculus.<sup>44</sup>

## Bruttedius Niger (*FRHist* 72)

With Bruttedius I shall be brief, since the fragments quoted by Seneca do not offer much scope for stylistic comment. Here is the second part of F1 (= Sen. *suas.* 6.21):

*ut uero iussu Antoni inter duas manus positum in rostris caput conspectum est, quo totiens auditum erat loco, datae gemitu et fletu maximo uiro inferiae, nec, ut solet, uitam depositi in rostris corporis contio audiuit sed ipsā nārrāuīt: |<sup>1</sup> nulla non pars fori aliquo actionis inclutae signata uestigio erat, nemo non aliquod eius in se meritū fātēbātūr. |<sup>1</sup> hoc certe publicum beneficium palam erat, illam miserrimi temporis seruitutem a Catilina dilātam in Āntōnīum |<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>41</sup> Seneca was unimpressed by the laudation; see *suas.* 6.23: *Cordi Cremuti non est operae pretium referre redditam Ciceroni laudationem; nihil enim in ea Cicerone dignum est, ac ne hoc quidem, quod paene maxime tolerabile est* (F2 follows).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Cic. *Planc.* 76, *Att.* 3.24.2, and *fam.* 2.13.2. Woodman (2015) 129 cites these passages and observes that the expression is rare elsewhere. Yet it seems in itself unremarkable and, if this judgement is correct, Cremutius may have used it without conscious reference to Cicero.

<sup>43</sup> See e.g. Woodman on Vell. 2.95.2; Bornecque (1907) 572–573 has some examples of this rhythm in Velleius.

<sup>44</sup> As can the parenthesis introduced by *quippe*, which here seems unremarkable but is a mannerism in Velleius.



The main paradoxical point inherent in *nec, ut solet, uitam depositi in rostris corporis contio audiuit sed ipsa narrauit*, that the audience narrates rather than listens to the funeral laudation, seems typical of the declamatory style.<sup>45</sup> A secondary point, later reinforced by *palam*, is that there was no body placed (*depositi . . . corporis*) on the rostra. How far the clausulae marked here were typical of the whole work there is, once more, no knowing.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, we cannot know how typical *gemitu et fletu* is in being both pleonastic and an expression used by Cicero, nor how typical is the verbal hyperbaton *aliquo ... signata uestigio*.<sup>47</sup>

## Aufidius Bassus (*FRHist* 78)

Aufidius Bassus (*FRHist* 78), of whose style Quintilian generally approved,<sup>48</sup> probably wrote last of the historians quoted by Seneca; but, as with Brutteditus, what Seneca has bequeathed us allows little scope for stylistic comment. F1 comes from his account of Cicero's death:

*Cicero paulum remoto uelo postquam armatos uidit, 'ego uero consisto' ait; 'accede, ueterane, et, si hoc saltim potes recte facere, incide ceruicem'. trementi deinde dubitantique 'quid, si ad me' inquit 'primum uenissetis?'*

*quid, si ad me . . . primum uenissetis?* introduces us to the kind of pointed utterance beloved by the declaimers that loses its obscurity only on reflection: Bassus' Cicero appears to mean that, if Cicero was the first person whom this band of veteran soldiers had been required to kill, they would never have advanced in their career.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See Keeline (2018) 138. This is not to say that earlier writers, uninfluenced by declamation, could not have produced such a paradox.

<sup>46</sup> But the first part of the fragment ends with *āntē dēfēsum āb illō* (pattern 3a).

<sup>47</sup> For discussion of such pleonasm, see *infra* 216–17, on Velleius. For Ciceronian parallels, see *S. Rosc.* 24 and Woodman (2015) 67.

<sup>48</sup> Quint. *inst.* 10.1.103 = T4 in *FRHist*.

<sup>49</sup> I pass over F2, since it offers nothing under any of the categories by which I am analysing these historians.

## Velleius Paterculus

From the meagre scraps of the historians who survive only in fragments, we come to Velleius Paterculus, much of whose summary history, published in AD 30, survives.<sup>50</sup> Velleius fascinates for several reasons: as a man, because he is a prime exemplar of the upper-class Italians who by Tiberian times had come to hold office in Rome; for his content, because a significant portion of his history deals with his own times and therefore shows how a contemporary of Tiberius wished (or thought it expedient) to write; and as a stylist, because, together with his contemporary Valerius Maximus, he shows how techniques learnt in declamation, a practice so vividly illustrated by their older contemporary, the elder Seneca, had come to influence contemporary prose-literature. In his style Velleius fuses something of the balanced oratorical smoothness and amplitude of phrasing found in Cicero with the antithetical point so beloved by the schools of declamation. The result has provoked a variety of opinions: up to 1800 Velleius' style was admired by many, including Krause, who published his edition in that year; after that year few have expressed approval, since pointed wit was not to the general taste of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>51</sup> Yet the amount of detailed scholarship devoted to Velleius' language in the nineteenth century attests to the strikingness of his style, whether or not its students approved of it.

Velleius' style is more varied than is sometimes realised, and an understanding of the form of his history is helpful for appreciating this variety. His many references to the brief compass of his work, to his *festinatio*, and to his plans to write a more expansive history in the future,<sup>52</sup> emphasize that this form is that of a summary of Roman (perhaps world)<sup>53</sup> history that moves swiftly through the earlier periods of Roman history but expands significantly for the period within the life of Julius Caesar, expands still more for the reign of Augustus, and yet more

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**50** But much has been lost: Starr (1981) 162 estimates that, if the now defective book was originally as long as the complete second, 'over 40 per cent may have been lost'.

**51** But contrast e.g. Norden (1915) 1. 303 and Woodman (1975b). For brief comment on changing responses to Velleius, see e.g. Milkau (1888) 1–4 and Woodman (1975b) 18. One may compare the views on Lucan expressed in these periods, for which see Housman (1926) VI.

**52** The import of these was seen by Milkau (1888) 8, but explained properly and fully first by Woodman (1975a) 277–288 = (2012) 208–222. For the brief compass of the work, see 1.16.1, 2.29.2, 2.38.1, 2.52.3, 2.55.1, 2.66.3, 2.86.1, 2.89.1, 2.96.3, 2.99.4, and 2.103.4; for *festinatio* 1.16.1, 2.41.1, 2.108.2, 2.124.1. For his plans for writing a more expansive history see 2.48.5, 2.89.1, 2.96.3, 2.99.3, 2.103.4, 2.114.4, and 2.119.1. All these passages are regularly cited in scholarship on Velleius; see e.g. Woodman (1975a) 277 = (2012) 206 and Lobur (2007) 214–215.

**53** Thus Starr (1981) 162–166.

again for that of Tiberius. As we shall see, the brief compass of the narrative shaped the distinctive way in which Velleius used both pointed antitheses and the periodic style. For the reign of Tiberius, and especially for 2.126.1–5 and 129.1–130.5, the narrative comes to resemble a panegyric,<sup>54</sup> and the style in turn has many features that find parallels in other panegyrics.<sup>55</sup>

Part of the distinctiveness of Velleius' style comes from his letting his authorial voice intrude into the narrative more than any other Latin historian of the classical period. It appears, for example, in those programmatic references to the compressed nature of his history, his own future plans, and his *festinatio*, in the very frequent addresses to his dedicatee and probable patron Marcus Vinicius,<sup>56</sup> in the references to his own family,<sup>57</sup> in cross-references of the *ut praediximus* kind,<sup>58</sup> and in the frequency with which he uses the historian's prerogative of passing some form of judgement on the actions or characters of the men who appear in his history. As the narrative comes close to Velleius' own day, his enthusiasm for Julius Caesar and his house is almost palpable, his criticism of their opponents firm and trenchant.<sup>59</sup>

Velleius' style and sentence-structure are far removed from the brevity of Sallust,<sup>60</sup> but like his younger contemporary Pomponius Mela he shows that even

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**54** A fact that has often been noted but is explained best by Woodman (1975a) 290–303 and (1977) 46–56 (and see his index entry for 'panegyric . . . topoi of' [285]).

**55** If the work was recited to celebrate Vinicius' consulship (thus e.g. Lobur [2007] 218, Rich [2011] 86), then the panegyric tone towards the *princeps* becomes even less surprising. Entry into the office of consul was regularly accompanied by praise, and in the Principate all had to be careful to praise the *princeps*.

**56** Vell. 1.8.1, 1.8.4, 1.12.6, 1.13.5, 2.7.5, 2.49.1, 2.65.2, 2.96.2, 2.101.3, 2.103.1, 2.104.2, 2.113.1, 2.130.4. See Woodman (1975a) 273 = (2012) 201.

**57** 2.16.2, 2.69.5, 2.76.1, 2.104.3, 2.115.1, 2.121.3, 2.124.4; see e.g. Starr (1981) 174 and Marincola (1997) 142–143.

**58** For many of these see Sauppe (1837) 176.

**59** For this prerogative in general see e.g. Oakley (1997–2005) 4. 556–557 with further bibliography; Velleius' practice is sympathetically described by Krause (1800) 19–20. Velleius' judgements are so frequent that there is no need to list them, but it is worth noting that very many of his numerous instances of superlative adjectives (on which more below) involve some kind of judgement.

**60** But Sallust might have enjoyed *Catil.* 1.7.4: *ego, pace diligentiae Catonis dixerim, uix crediderim tam mature tantam urbem [sc. Capuam] creuisse floruisse concidisse resurrexisse* and 2.101.3: *haud iniucunda tot rerum locorum, gentium urbium recordatione perfruor*. Strings of words in asyndeton are a characteristic feature of Sallust's style (but by no means unique to him); the four perfect infinitives at 1.7.4 are the most striking example in Velleius of the phenomenon. They could perhaps have been cited elsewhere in this essay as instances of balance and antithesis.

those who eschewed Sallust's manner would sometimes wish to sprinkle Sallustian phrasing throughout their work. The large number of Sallustian echoes in Velleius has been collected by A.J. Woodman;<sup>61</sup> I shall note some of these in passages of Velleius that are quoted below. As for Livy, the similarities between Velleius' comparison of the reception given to Octavius and Anicius and that given to Aemilius Paullus (1.9.5–6) and Livy's (45.45.5) is so striking that it is hard not to believe that Velleius did not have Livy's text either in front of him or at least lodged firmly in his mind.<sup>62</sup> There are expressions in Velleius for which the closest parallel is to be found in Livy,<sup>63</sup> but it is less clear that Velleius drew them from Livy himself, and they may have been part of the general store of Latin historical writing. Although, like Livy, Velleius often deploys periodic sentences in his writing,<sup>64</sup> his manner is generally fuller and smoother than Livy's energetic incisiveness and perhaps more obviously reflects, or fails to develop from, a training influenced by contemporary rhetorical fashions.<sup>65</sup> In general, Sallust seems to have been a more important influence on Velleius than was Livy.

Velleius differs from both writers in his choice of vocabulary, employing far fewer archaic and poetical expressions than they did, but there are some reminders of the grand historical manner. For example, the archaic third person plural of the past tense in *-ere* is used regularly as well as the form in *-erunt*. Before three chapters of book 1 have been finished readers have met of the former *regnauere* (1.1.4), *fuere* (1.2.1), *condidere* (1.2.2), *occupauere* (1.3.1), and *commigrauere* (1.3.1), but of the latter only *desierunt* (1.2.1) and *uixerunt* (1.3.2).<sup>66</sup>

Unlike both Sallust and Livy, Velleius regularly uses rhythmical *clausulae* of which Cicero would have approved, probably in accord with the stylistic fashion of his time.<sup>67</sup> He is the first extant Latin historian for whom sustained use of this artifice can be demonstrated, and his practice is doubtless to be explained by the

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61 Woodman (1968).

62 Thus Sauppe (1837) 178. It would be surprising if Velleius had not used Livy as a source.

63 See Woodman (1977) 285 and (1983) 285 (both index entries for notes in his commentary that draw attention to Livian influence or parallels).

64 To be discussed *infra* 226–33.

65 In this I differ from Woodman (1975b) 14; he associates Velleius' phrasal *abundantia* with Livy as well as Cicero.

66 Note too e.g. his fondness for the archaic *bellum patrare* (see Woodman on 2.114.4).

67 On Velleius' *clausulae* see especially Aili (1979) 126–127, showing that his preferred *clausulae* are – uu – – u x (molossus + cretic with resolution in the middle syllable of the molossus; my pattern 4b) and – u – – u x (double cretic; my pattern 2). Aili's statistics have been confirmed by Keeline and Kirby (2019) 189. See also Bornecque (1907) 571–574, Woodman (1975b) 24 n. 64, Woodman (1977) on 2.112.6 and 283 s.u. *clausulae*, (1983) on 2.67.1, Hellegouarc'h (1982) 1. LXXII–LXXIII.

increasing prevalence of such rhythms in the writing of all Latin prose. Presumably he learnt this skill as part of his rhetorical training. As with other writers who used *clausulae* of this kind, the rhythmical cadences that are found at the end of sentences may be found also, although less regularly, at the end of cola within sentences.<sup>68</sup>

Another figure that often affects the manner in which cola and sentences end is verbal hyperbaton. Originally a way of creating emphasis, and used for the most part in this way by Cicero, by the time of Velleius it had often become little more than an elegant literary mannerism, which Velleius uses very frequently. In the following examples the figure conveys emphasis in the first and perhaps in the second, third, and fourth, but less obviously in the others:

- 2.2.1: *immanem* *deditio Mancini ciuitatis mōiūt dissēnsiōnēm* |<sup>3a</sup>  
 2.37.2: *omnibus* *exutus copiis*  
 2.40.3: *magnificentissimumque* *de tot regibus per biduum egit triumphum*  
 2.45.1: *illum* *nisi quem uellet nosset modum*  
 2.48.3: *bello . . . et malis non alius maiorem flagrantioremque* *quam C. Curio tribunus pl. subiecit facem*  
 2.55.1: *Pompeiani* *obtinēbant exercitūs* |<sup>4</sup>  
 2.87.1: (Octavian) . . . *ultimam* *bellis ciuilibus imposuit manum*  
 2.109.1: [Marobduus] *eminens et nostro quoque imperio timendum perduxit fastigium*<sup>69</sup>

Writers who employ rhythmical clausulae often employ also an amplitude of phrasing, a feature of Velleius' style that was studied very fully by Freitag.<sup>70</sup> It is most noticeable in his love of pleonastic doubling, that hall-mark of Ciceronian style in which two virtually synonymous words are joined together.<sup>71</sup> The following instances, which could probably be multiplied fourfold, show that Velleius is willing to double up adjectives, nouns, and verbs in this way:

- 1.7.1: *uir . . . otii quietisque* *cupidissimus*  
 1.17.1: *aspera ac rudia*  
 2.1.4: *foedera . . . turpia ac detestabilia*

<sup>68</sup> However, partly to avoid cluttering the text with the insistent marking of rhythms, and partly because locating the boundaries of cola is not an extant science, I have marked clausulae inside sentences only for the two massive periods laid out schematically at the end of this essay.

<sup>69</sup> More instances may be found at e.g. 1.4.4 (twice), 1.10.2, 1.10.5, 1.11.2, 1.16.4, 1.17.7, 2.1.4, 2.6.3, 2.7.1, 2.7.3, 2.14.1, 2.15.1, 2.18.5, 2.18.6, 2.29.1, 2.54.3, 2.55.3, 2.59.6, 2.61.2, 2.120.2, 2.125.1, 2.127.1, 2.127.3, 2.129.3.

<sup>70</sup> Freitag (1942) 9–47.

<sup>71</sup> See especially Freitag (1942) 14–29; also Woodman (1975b) 13–14, Hellegouarc'h (1982) 1. LXV n. 8.

- 2.13.2: *ueluti inescandae inliciendaeque multitudinis causa*  
 2.73.3: *latrocinii ac praedationibus infestato mari*  
 2.90.1: *feris incultisque nationibus*  
 2.97.3: *aequa ac par sui aestimatio*  
 2.98.3: (on L. Piso) *hoc omnibus sentiendum ac praedicandum est*  
 2.99.2: (on Tiberius) *mira quadam et incredibili atque inenarrabili pietate*  
 2.102.3: *ultimo ac remotissimo terrarum orbis angulo*

In passing it may be noted that Velleius was addicted to alliteration and assonance.<sup>72</sup> This feature of his style naturally affects the words that he chose to pair:

- 2.11.1: *Marius . . . hirtus atque horridus*  
 2.25.3: *homine duplicis ac diuersissimi animi*  
 2.85.5: *uitam ueniamque Caesar promisit*  
 2.109.1: *uim ac uoluntatem resistendi*

Velleius' declamatory training reveals itself above all in his extreme love of balance. Much of this balance involves also antithesis, a figure of thought that is a fundamental feature of both the pointed style of the first century AD in general and Velleius' style in particular. His summary history required brief judgements, something that a style built around antithesis was well equipped to deliver, and antithesis is visible on almost every page of Velleius' work.<sup>73</sup> So resourceful was Velleius in creating it that a full examination of the techniques by which he did so would take up much space, and what follows is only a limited categorization. The use of two uncognate words opposite in meaning is ubiquitous and scarcely needs illustration; I give here just two examples:<sup>74</sup>

- 2.34.3: *M. Cicero . . . uir nouitatis nobilissimae*<sup>75</sup>  
 2.117.2: (on Syria and the governorship of Quintilius Varus) *quam pauper diuitem ingressus diues pauperem reliquit*<sup>3</sup>

More interesting examples are those in which a word is contrasted with another word that is cognate but opposite or different in meaning:<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> See especially Milkau (1888) 10–26; also Woodman (1975b) 13.

<sup>73</sup> For lists of antithetical and otherwise pointed expressions in Velleius, see Krause (1800) 26–7, Kritz (1848) XLIX–LIV, Hellegouarc'h (1982) 1. LXIX–LXX.

<sup>74</sup> Numerous others may be found in the various quotations from Velleius that follow.

<sup>75</sup> In political parlance *nouitas* and *nobilis* are virtual opposites, and so the expression is strikingly paradoxical. 2.96.1: *nouitatem suam multis rebus nobilitauerat* (on which see Woodman (1977) *ad loc.*) has the same antithesis, albeit deployed in a less striking manner.

<sup>76</sup> For more examples in this category see many of the passages cited at Milkau (1888) 12–13.

- 1.9.3: (on Aemilius Paullus) *quam tergiuersanter perniciosam rei publicae pugnam inierat, tam fortiter in ea mōrtem ōbīērāt* |<sup>3b</sup>
- 1.17.6: (on talent) *naturaliterque quod procedere non potēst rēcēdit* |<sup>3</sup>
- 2.5.3: (on Roman troops in Spain) *tantum effecit mixtus timori pudor spesque despera-  
tionē quaesita*
- 2.14.3: (on Livius Drusus' house) *cum . . . promitteret . . . ei architectus ita se eam aedi-  
ficaturum ut . . . immunis . . . ab omnibus arbitris esset neque quisquam in eam  
despicere posset, 'tu uero', inquit, 'si quid in te artis est, ita compone domum  
meam ut quicquid agam ab omnibus pērspīci possit.' |<sup>1</sup>*
- 2.23.5: (on Mithridates' victims) *cum ab inimicis tenerentur, oppugnabantur ab amicis  
potentiā sua numquam aut raro ad impotentiam usus*
- 2.29.3: *At Catilina non segnius conata obiit quam sceleris consilia inierat*
- 2.72.2: (on Brutus and Cassius) *e quibus Brutum amicum habere malle, inimicum magis  
timeres Cassium*

Or an antithesis may involve the same word being used twice:<sup>77</sup>

- 2.49.3: *Lentulus uero salua re publica saluus esse non posset*
- 2.50.2: (on Caesar) *cum alienis armis ad armā cōmpulsūs ēssēt* |<sup>3a</sup>
- 2.53.3: (on Pompey) *cui modo ad uictoriam terra defuerat, deesset ad sēpultūrām* |<sup>1</sup>
- 2.83.2: (Plancus) *in omnia et omnibus uenalis*
- 2.111.4: (on Velleius himself) *legatus eiusdem ad eundēm mīs<sūs> sūm* |<sup>6</sup>
- 2.125.1: (on the state of the nation) *neque diu latuit aut quid non impetrando passuri fuis-  
semus aut quid impetrando profēcissēmūs* |<sup>6</sup>

Sometimes the second use of the word is pointedly different in sense:

- 1.11.6–7: (on Metellus Macedonicus) *quattuor filios sustulit . . . (7) mortui eius lectum pro  
rostris sustulerunt quattuor filii*
- 1.12.7: (on hatred or an enemy) *neque ante \*\*\* inuisum esse desinit quam ēssē dēsīit*<sup>78</sup> |<sup>3</sup>
- 2.4.6: (on the death of Scipio Aemilianus) . . . eiusque corpus uelato capite elatum est,  
cuius opera super totum terrarum orbem Rōma ēxtulērāt cāpūt |<sup>4b</sup> (here both ca-  
put and efferre are used in different senses)

Sometimes Velleius plays on two parts of a verb, one in the active voice, the other in the passive:

- 2.34.3: *Cicero . . . effecit ne, quorum arma uiceramus, eorum ingenio uinceremur*
- 2.51.2: *sed inopia obsidentibus quam obsessis ērāt grāuīōr* |<sup>1c</sup> <sup>79</sup>
- 2.53.3: (an authorial comment) *quod adieci, non ut arguerem sed ne arguerer*

<sup>77</sup> Many of these passages come from the list assembled for a slightly different purpose at Milkau (1888) 11–12; others, too, could be added from there.

<sup>78</sup> Presumably to be read as *desīt*, with a long *i*.

<sup>79</sup> The contrast is standard in Latin; for another instance see 2.125.4.

2.66.2: *nihil tam indignum . . . fuit quam quod aut Caesar aliquem proscribere coactus est aut ab ullo Cicerō proscriptus est*<sup>4a</sup>

Examples in which the passive form is a gerundive may be regarded as a sub-set of the preceding:

1.12.2: *magis quia uolebant Romani, quicquid de Carthaginensibus diceretur, credere quam quia credenda adferebantur*

2.35.5: *At Catilina non segnius conata obiit quam sceleris conandi consilia inierat*

2.103.2: *neque enim quaerendus quem legeret sed legendus qui eminebat*<sup>80</sup>

Here follows an example in an antithesis that does not fit into the categories just discussed but which I quote because the juxtaposition of two words ending in *-tione* illustrates Velleius' love of assonance:<sup>81</sup>

2.108.2: *Marobduus . . . natione magis quam ratione barbarus*

This last passage also illustrates another device regularly used by Velleius to create antithesis: comparison. *Magis* is used with *quam* thirty-four times, and *potius* nine times, in the eighty-nine Teubner pages of his work.

Antithesis was particularly useful when Velleius wished to compare two people: here are Brutus and Cassius compared and contrasted:<sup>82</sup>

*fuit autem <sup>A</sup>dux <sup>B</sup>Cassius melior quanto <sup>B</sup>uir <sup>A</sup>Brutus; e quibus <sup>C</sup>Brutum <sup>D</sup>amicum <sup>E</sup>habere <sup>F</sup>malles, <sup>D</sup>inimicum <sup>F</sup>magis <sup>E</sup>timeres <sup>C</sup>Cassium; <sup>G</sup>in altero maior <sup>H</sup>uis, <sup>G</sup>in altero <sup>H</sup>uirtus; qui si uicissent, <sup>I</sup>quantum rei publicae <sup>I</sup>interfuit <sup>K</sup>Caesarem potius <sup>L</sup>habere quam <sup>K</sup>Antonium principem,<sup>I</sup> tantum <sup>L</sup>rettulisset <sup>L</sup>habere <sup>M</sup>Brütüm quām <sup>M</sup>Cässüüm |<sup>4</sup> (2.72.2)*

Note here, in addition to *potius . . . quam*, the alliterative contrast of *uis* with *uirtus* and the chiasitic balance of *Brutum amicum* and *inimicum . . . Cassium*.<sup>83</sup>

Some more extended examples of antithesis may now be examined. It was easier to effect in shorter sentences, and in general Velleius' shorter sentences

**80** A similar assonance is created by use of a gerund at 2.126.5: *nam facere recte ciues suos princeps optimus faciendo docet*.

**81** Perhaps one could say *-atione* despite the difference in vowel quantity.

**82** In this, as in other longer quotations that follow, I have used raised letters to point out antitheses.

**83** Other examples of the comparing and contrasting of two people may be found at e.g. 1.13.2 (Mummius and Scipio Aemilianus), 2.1.5 (Pompeius and Mancinus), 2.5.3 (Metellus Macedonicus and Fabius Aemilianus), 2.64.3–4 (Cicero and Cannutius, quoted below), 2.91.2 (Varro Murena and Fannius Caepio), 2.95.3 (Plancus and Paulus), and 2.102.1 (Lollius and Censorinus).



contain more antithesis than his longer periods.<sup>84</sup> When Velleius' narrative required description of a conflict between two parties (and much of his account of the late Republic was concerned with civil war) such a style was obviously useful. Here is the beginning of his account of the build-up to the Battle of Actium:

*Caesare deinde et Messalla Coruino consulibus debellatum apud Actium, ubi, longe ante quam dimicaretur, exploratissima Iulianarum partium fuit uictoria. <sup>A</sup>uigebat <sup>B</sup>in hac parte <sup>C</sup>miles atque imperator, <sup>B</sup><in> illa <sup>A</sup>mārcēbānt <sup>C</sup>ōmnīā; <sup>I</sup>⁴ <sup>D</sup>hinc re<mi>ges <sup>E</sup>firmissimi, <sup>D</sup>illinc <sup>E</sup>inōpīa ādfēctissimī <sup>I</sup>⁴<sup>a</sup>; nauīum <sup>F</sup>haec <sup>G</sup>magnitudo modica nec celeritati aduersa, <sup>F</sup>illa <sup>G</sup>specie [et] terribilior; <sup>H</sup>hinc ad <sup>I</sup>Antonium <sup>I</sup>nemo, <sup>H</sup>illinc <sup>I</sup>ad Caesarem cotidie <sup>I</sup>aliquis transfugebat . . . (2.84.1)*

Note the shortness of the antithetical clauses and sentences, and the profusion of the antitheses marked out by the raised letters. Best of all in this vein is Velleius' account of the outbreak of civil war in 49 BC:

*<sup>A</sup>Alterius ducis causa <sup>B</sup>melior <sup>C</sup>uidebatur, <sup>A</sup>alterū <sup>C</sup>ērāt <sup>B</sup>fīrmōr <sup>I</sup>²<sup>a</sup>, <sup>D</sup>hic omnia <sup>E</sup>speciosa, <sup>D</sup>illinc <sup>E</sup>ualentia; <sup>F</sup>Pompeium <sup>G</sup>senatus <sup>H</sup>auctoritas, <sup>F</sup>Caesarem <sup>G</sup>militum armāuit <sup>H</sup>fidūcīā. <sup>I</sup>⁴ <sup>I</sup>Consules senatusque <sup>I</sup>causae, <sup>I</sup>nont <sup>I</sup>Pompeio summam imperii detulerunt \*\*\*. (3) <sup>I</sup>Nihil <sup>K</sup>relictum <sup>L</sup>a Caesare quod seruandae pacis causa temptari posset, <sup>I</sup>nihil <sup>K</sup>receptum <sup>L</sup>a Pompeianis, cum <sup>M</sup>alter consul <sup>N</sup>iusto esset ferocior, <sup>M</sup>Lentulus uero <sup>N</sup>salua re publica saluus esse non posset, <sup>M</sup>autem Cato <sup>O</sup>moriendum ante quam ullam condicionem ciuis <armati><sup>85</sup> <sup>O</sup>accipiendam rei publicae contenderet. Vir <sup>P</sup>antiquus et grauis <sup>Q</sup>Pompei partes <sup>R</sup>laudaret magis, <sup>P</sup>prudens <sup>R</sup>seque- retur <sup>Q</sup>Caesaris et <sup>S</sup>illa <sup>T</sup>gloriosa, <sup>S</sup>haec <sup>T</sup>terribiliōrā dūcērēt <sup>I</sup>⁵ (2.49.2–3)*

In the structure of its sentences and the profusion of items placed in antithesis this passage is similar to the one previously quoted from Velleius. He writes from a Caesarian perspective, but shows good historical understanding; note especially the contrast between *uidebatur* and *erat*.

The next example, on the events of 43 BC, illustrates how naturally it came to Velleius to cast even narrative in antithetical mode:

*Haec sunt tempora quibus M. Tullius continuis actionibus aeternas Antoni memoriae inussit notas, sed <sup>A</sup>hic <sup>B</sup>fulgentissimo et caelesti ore, at <sup>A</sup>tribunus Camnutius <sup>B</sup>canina rabie lacerābāt*

<sup>84</sup> De Stefani (1910) analyses many instances of balance, most of it antithetical. Much of the balance and antithesis brought out in Woodman (1966) (a discussion of Velleius' account of the battle of Actium) is found in sentences that are not periodic.

<sup>85</sup> Despite the defence in Woodman's note ('conditions from an individual citizen'), the paradosis seems extremely awkward and unlikely to be what Velleius wrote. Watt's supplement restores plausible sense but is obviously uncertain: would Cato, even in Velleius' imagination, have thought of Caesar as a *ciuis* rather than a *hostis*? A bold conjecture would be to emend to *ciui* and transpose to after *moriendum*.

*Āntōnūm. |<sup>2</sup> utrique uindicta libertatis morte stetit; sed<sup>C</sup>tribuni sanguine<sup>D</sup> commissa proscip-  
tio, <sup>C</sup>Ciceronis uel<ut> satiatio Antonio<sup>D</sup> paēnē finitā |<sup>1</sup> (2.64.3–4)*

However, at times Velleius' use of antithesis can seem almost mechanical. Here is the opening of book 2, in which with Sallustian echoes<sup>86</sup> Velleius takes up the Sallustian theme of the effect of the sack of Carthage in 146 BC:<sup>87</sup>

*<sup>A</sup>Potentiae Romanorum<sup>B</sup> prior Scipio uiam<sup>C</sup> aperuerat, <sup>A</sup>luxuria<sup>B</sup> posterior<sup>C</sup> aperuit: quippe remoto Carthaginis metu sublataque imperii aemula, non<sup>D</sup> gradu, sed praecipiti<sup>D</sup> cursu<sup>E</sup> a uirtute<sup>F</sup> descitum, <sup>E</sup>ad uittā<sup>F</sup> trānscūrsūm; |<sup>1a</sup> <sup>G</sup>uetus disciplinā<sup>H</sup> dēsērtā, |<sup>1</sup> <sup>G</sup>nōua<sup>H</sup> indūctā; |<sup>88</sup> |<sup>in</sup> somnum<sup>I</sup> a uigiliis, |<sup>1</sup> ab armis<sup>I</sup> ad uoluptates, <sup>K</sup>a negotiis<sup>K</sup> in otium conuērsā cīuītās. |<sup>5</sup> tum<sup>L</sup> Scipio Nasica<sup>M</sup> in Capitolio<sup>N</sup> porticus, tum<sup>N</sup> quas praediximus<sup>L</sup> Metellus, tum<sup>M</sup> in circo<sup>L</sup> Cn. Octauius<sup>N</sup> multo amoenissimam moliti sunt, <sup>O</sup>publicamque<sup>P</sup> magnificentiam secuta<sup>O</sup> priuatā<sup>P</sup> luxūria est |<sup>c</sup> (2.1.1–2).*

As observed in the passages just quoted, so here before the first full stop the main clauses separated by semi-colons are generally short, the parallelism and balance profuse and pronounced. The sentence ends with a tricolon, whose predictability is varied by the chiasmic structure of its first two members (*in somnum a uigiliis | ab armis ad uoluptates*) and by the reversal in the third member of the *in . . . a* sequence found in the first. The second sentence is self-evidently different in manner; I quote it because it shows how antitheses (*publicam/priuatam; magnificentiam/luxuriam*) can be embedded even within one clause.

This last passage illustrates Velleius' habit, perhaps remarked upon first by Haase, of writing a pointedly antithetical expression but then following it with another that is similar in manner but varies it only slightly; Freitag regarded this as an example of his pleonastic style.<sup>89</sup> Kritz reasonably held that this habit diluted the force of Velleius' initial point,<sup>90</sup> and he appositely cited a famous passage of the elder Seneca that deplores the habit and shows that it was not uniquely the property of Velleius but belonged rather to his age:<sup>91</sup>

**86** See Woodman (1968) 787–788.

**87** Norden (1915) 1. 302 drew attention to this passage.

**88** This colon has one too few syllables to be an instance of a cretic + trochee; I have marked rhythm of the previous colon, although it comes in the middle of a sentence.

**89** Haase (1837) 202, Freitag (1942) 42–48. Haase cited 1.12.7, 1.13.5, 1.16.2, 1.17.6–7, 2.3.3–4, 2.22.5, 2.28.3, 2.92.5, 2.98.3, 2.115.5 (he also adduced 2.7.6, 2.95.3, and 2.118.4, which seem a little less apposite).

**90** Kritz (1848) LV–LVI. He quoted fully 1.13.3, 2.8.1, and many passages to be found already in Haase's list, and cited a further fourteen passages.

**91** Haase had also cited this passage but made less forceful use of it.

*habet hoc Montanus uitium: sententias suas repetendo corrumpit. dum non est contentus unam rem semel bene dicere, efficit, ne bene dixerit. et propter hoc et propter alia, quibus orator potest poetae similis uideri, solebat Scaurus Montanum 'inter oratores Ouidium' uocare; nam et Ouidius nescit quod bene cessit relinquere. ne multa referam, quae 'Montaniana' Scaurus uocabat, uno hoc contentus ero: cum Polyxene esset abducta, ut ad tumulum Achillis immolaretur, Hecuba dicit, 'cinis ipse sepulti in genus hoc pugnat.' poterat hoc contentus esse; adiecit, 'tumulo quoque sensimus hostem.' nec hoc contentus est; adiecit, 'Aeacidae fecunda fui.' aiebat autem Scaurus rem ueram: non minus magnam uirtutem esse scire dicere quam scire desinere. (contr. 9.5.17)*

An unsympathetic critic might wish to add the last passage of Velleius quoted to Haase's and Kritz's list.

*Sententiae*, often coming at the end of a paragraph, whether expressing a general moral truth or merely a comment on the action just described, are perhaps the most famous feature associated with the declamatory style of the early Principate.<sup>92</sup> Velleius shows moderate restraint with regard to both kinds.<sup>93</sup> An example the first kind is:

2.92.5: <sup>A</sup>*praesentia* <sup>B</sup>*inuidia*, <sup>A</sup>*praeterita* <sup>B</sup>*ueneratione* *prosequimur et* <sup>C</sup>*his nos* <sup>D</sup>*obruī*, <sup>C</sup>*lilis* <sup>D</sup>*instrūi* *crēdīmūs* |<sup>2</sup>

Velleius quite often uses *adeo* to introduce this kind of epiphonema, usually with some pointing of his style in the clause in which it is found:

- 1.12.7: *adeo odium certaminibus ortum ultra metum durat et ne in uictis quidem deponitur, neque ante \*\*\* inuisum esse desinit quam esse desiit*<sup>94</sup>
- 2.8.1: *adeo illi uiri magis uoluntatem peccandi intuebantur quam modum, factaque ad consilium derigebant et quid, non in quantum, admissum foret aestimābant* |<sup>3</sup>
- 2.10.1: *adeo mature a rectis [in uitia, a uitiiis] in praua, a prauis in praecipitia peruenitur*
- 2.30.3: *adeo familiare est hominibus omnia sibi ignoscere, nihil aliis remittere, et inuidiam rerum non ad causam sed ad uoluntatem personāsq̄ dērigēre* |<sup>4</sup>
- 2.67.2: (on the proscription of 43 BC) *id tamen notandum est, fuisse in proscriptos uxorū fidem summam, libertorum mediam, seruorum aliquam, filiorum nullam: adeo difficilis est hominibus utcumque conceptaē spē mōrā* |<sup>5</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Again, Krause's discussion and classification of *sententiae* ((1800) 25–26) remains well worth reading. See also Sihler (1894) XLVIII–XLIX, Norden (1915) 1. 302.

<sup>93</sup> Both, but especially the former, enhance the didactic and moralizing properties of his history. On the judgements expressed in them see Marincola (2011) 123–125.

<sup>94</sup> For scansion of the clausula, see *supra* 218 n. 78.

With regard to the pleonasm in Velleius' moralizing passages that has just been discussed, it may be noted that in three of these examples the final point is introduced by a connective (either *neque* or *et*).<sup>95</sup> In the last example, perhaps because of the virtuosity of what had preceded, Velleius writes the *sententia* in a plain style. Less conspicuously placed is a judgement like:

- 2.40.5: (on Pompey, after his victories over Mithridates and in the east) *numquam tamen eminentia inuidia carent*

Terminal *sententiae* (often marked by antithesis, assonance or alliteration) that comment on action just narrated include:

- 1.11.7: *hoc est nimirum magis feliciter de uita* <sup>A</sup>*migrārē quā* <sup>A</sup>*mōrī* |<sup>5</sup> (note the comparison and the alliteration)
- 2.4.6: (on the death of Scipio Aemilianus). The passage has been quoted on p. 218.<sup>96</sup>
- 2.19.4: *At ille adsecutus circa Aenariam filium cursum in Africam direxit inopemque uitam in tugurio ruinarum Carthaginiensium tolerauit, cum* <sup>A</sup>*Marius* <sup>B</sup>*aspiciens* <sup>C</sup>*Carthaginem*, <sup>A</sup>*illa* <sup>B</sup>*intuens* <sup>C</sup>*Marium*, <sup>D</sup>*alter* <sup>D</sup>*alteri possent ēssē sōlācīō* |<sup>2</sup> (note the precise parallelism in the antitheses)
- 2.26.2: <sup>A</sup>*optimusque sibi* <sup>B</sup>*uidebatur quī* <sup>B</sup>*fōrēt* <sup>A</sup>*pēssīmūs* |<sup>2</sup> (note the assonance, chiasmus, and antithesis)<sup>97</sup>
- 2.85.3: *Antonius* <sup>A</sup>*fugientis* <sup>B</sup>*reginae quam* <sup>A</sup>*pugnantis* <sup>B</sup>*militis sui comes ēssē mālūt* |<sup>5</sup>, *et* <sup>C</sup>*imperator*, *qui in* <sup>D</sup>*desertores saeuire debuerat*, <sup>C</sup>*desertor* <sup>D</sup>*exercitūs sūi factūs ēst* |<sup>2</sup> (note the antitheses and, once again, the use of a connecting word [*et*] before the final *sententia*)

But it is hard to draw a hard and fast line between such terminal sentences and pithy comment found in mid-sentence. Two examples of the latter (the first quoted already) are:

- 2.49.3: *Lentulus uero salua re publica saluus ēssē nōn pōssēt* |<sup>1</sup> (for the wider context of this *sententia* see above, p. 220)

<sup>95</sup> Velleius was not alone in introducing a climactic flourish in this way; from Tacitus cf. e.g. *Agr.* 21.2: *paulatimque discessum ad delinimenta uitiorum, porticus et balineas et conuiuiorum elegantiam; idque apud imperitos humanitas uocabatur, cum pars seruitutis esset*, 30.5: *auferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium atque ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant*, *hist.* 1.3.1: *corrupti in dominos serui, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus, per amicos oppressi*, and 1.49.4: (on Galba) *maior priuato uisus, dum priuatus fuit, et omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset*, and for Quintilian see Whitton (2019) 73 n. 17.

<sup>96</sup> Bonner (1949) 159–160 well compares a *sententia* of Haterius quoted at *Sen. contr.* 7.2.5: *qui modo Italiae umeris relatus est, nunc sic a Popilio refertur*. However, he regards Velleius' *sententia* as unsuccessful and forced.

<sup>97</sup> *foret* is Halm's conjecture; if one reads *fuert* with the paradosis the clausula is of type 4b.

2.97.1: *M. Lollio . . . inter summam uitiorum dissimulationēm uītīōsissimō* |<sup>4b</sup>

In general, Velleius avoids the gruesomeness and extreme sensationalism associated with declamation. But his account of Cicero's death, that favourite topic of declamatory *suasoria* and told by Velleius in a style that is universally recognized as indebted to the practices of declamation,<sup>98</sup> brings a unique lapse into apostrophe,<sup>99</sup> with the authorial voice addressing a character (Mark Antony) in a manner that it is hard to imagine Sallust, Livy, or Tacitus in his *Histories* and *Annals* doing:

*Nihil tamen egisti, M. Antoni (cogit enim excedere propositi formam operis erumpens animo ac pectore indignatio), nihil inquam, egisti mercedem caelestissimi oris et clarissimi capitis abscisi numerando auctoramentoque funebri ad conseruatoris quondam rei publicae tantique consulis incītāndō<sup>100</sup> nēcēm. |<sup>2</sup> (4) Rapuisti tu M. (Gelenius: tum test.) Ciceroni lucem sollicitam et aetatem senilem et <sup>A</sup>uitam miseriorem <sup>B</sup>te principe quam <sup>B</sup>sub te triumuiro <sup>A</sup>mortem, famam uero gloriamque factorum atque dictorum adeo <sup>C</sup>non abstulisti <sup>C</sup>ūt aūxērīs. |<sup>5</sup> (5) Viuit uiuetque per omnem saeculorum memoriam, dumque hoc uel forte uel prouidentia uel utcumque constitutum rerum naturae corpus, quod ille paene solus Romanorum <sup>D</sup>animo <sup>E</sup>uidit, <sup>D</sup>ingenio <sup>F</sup>complexus est, <sup>D</sup>eloquentia <sup>E</sup>inluminauit, manebit incolume, comitem aeuī sui laudem Ciceronis trahet omnisque posteritas <sup>F</sup>illius <sup>G</sup>in te <sup>H</sup>scripta <sup>I</sup>mirabitur, <sup>F</sup>tuum <sup>G</sup>in eum <sup>H</sup>factum <sup>I</sup>execrabitur, citiusque e mundo genus hominum quam <Ciceronis nōmēn> cēdēt |<sup>6</sup> (2.66.3–5)<sup>101</sup>*

The parenthesis in the first sentence quoted is one of those passages in which Velleius draws attention to his breaking the self-imposed boundaries of the scale of his work; it may therefore prepare us for the change in style that follows.<sup>102</sup>

**98** See e.g. Krause (1800) 25 'locus totus est oratorius', Moravsky (1876) 717 and (1882) 167, Woodman (1975b) 11–13 and his notes *ad loc.* in Woodman (1983), Keeline (2018) 118–125; Woodman's notes offer a detailed account of the language of the passage. Many scholars are derogatory when they point to this declamatory influence; Leeman (1963) 248 is particularly outspoken in his condemnation of it. For analysis of the sentence–structure of the passage, see De Stefani (1910) 23–24.

**99** The addresses to Velleius' dedicatee, Marcus Vinicius, cited *supra* 214, have a different function. Bonner (1949) 159 wrongly regards 2.32.1 'te, Q. Catule' as another example; it is a quotation.

**100** *incitando* is Woodman's conjecture; *irritāndō*, the paradosis, would give a clausula of type 4.

**101** The final pointed utterance is once more introduced by a connecting word (*-que*).

**102** See Keeline (2018) 123. The closest parallel is 1.16.1, where Velleius moves from a digression on Roman colonization to one on the phenomenon of artistic talent clustering in a particular epoch. The argumentational nature of that passage likewise makes it rather different from the style of Velleius' narrative.

Exclamation is used only moderately often at the beginning of the work, appearing first at 2.7.3: *sed M. Cato quantum differt!* and 2.25.3: *pro quanti mox belli facem!* But it was very well suited to a panegyric tone, and is used increasingly often in the final pages of the work, as in these two examples:

106.1: *Pro di boni! quanti uoluminis opera insequenti aestate sub duce Ti. [i.e. Tiberiō] Caēsārē gēssīmūs!* <sup>14c</sup>

111.4: *Quas nos primo anno acies hōstūm uīdīmūs!* <sup>12</sup> *quantis prudentia ducis opportunitatibus furentes eorum uīres uniuērsās ēuāsīmūs* <sup>14</sup>, *\*\*\* pārtībūs!* <sup>12</sup> *quanto cum temperamento simul <\*\*\*, simul> utilitatis res auctoritate imperatōris āgī uīdīmūs!* <sup>14b</sup> *qua prudentia hibērnā dispōsitā sūnt!* <sup>12c</sup> *quanto opere, inclusus custodiīs exercitus nostri, ne qua posset erumpere, inopsque copiarum et intra se furens, tūiribus hostis elanguesceret.* <sup>103</sup>

The declamatory style needs emphasis, and, although Velleius may have shown some restraint with regard to the gruesome, the sententious, and apostrophe, his love of superlatives and hyperbole knew hardly any bounds.<sup>104</sup> Few Latin texts of comparable length contain so many superlatives, and perhaps no text of comparable length and post-Augustan date contains so many instances of the first occurrence of a superlative.<sup>105</sup> A computerized word-search suggests that the eighty-nine pages of Watt's Teubner text contain 172 forms (among which I include adverbial forms and other adjectival endings) ending in *-issimus*, 35 in -

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**103** Later examples may be found at 2.114.1 and 2.129.1–130.2 (in which passage Watt prints fifteen exclamation marks). Sometimes it can be difficult to decide whether to punctuate as an exclamation or a question. Questions that are similar in tone may be found in 2.122 (Watt punctuates the chapter with four question marks) and at 2.126.3: *quando annonā moderatior? quando pax laetior?*

**104** See Krause (1800) 24 (who well puts the phenomenon in the context of Velleius' desire to move or impress his readers), Sauppe (1837) 177, Kritz (1848) XLVIII–XLIX. Milkau (1888) 39 writes: 'Velleius – id quod opus eius quamuis strictim attingenti incurreret in oculos – neque in laudando neque in vituperando ut tumidis ipsius verbis utor "aut modum norat aut capiebat terminum." Quo factum est, ut cum in rebus perquam mediocribus verbis uteretur nimis splendidis et rerum modo excedentibus, tum si singulis uiris celebrandis illustrandisque intentus erat, adiectiva participia aduerbia, in quibus superlativi vis iam inesse videtur, variaret per gradus et profuse superlatiuis adderet superlatiuis, qui plus trecenti quinquaginta apud eum inveniuntur.' It was noted *supra* 214 n. 59 that this use of superlatives may be related to Velleius' exercising of the historians' prerogative to judge and evaluate. The summary nature of his history means that new characters and judgements on them come thick and fast.

**105** Some first occurrences in Latin: *adfectissimus* (2.84.1), *caelestissimus* (2.66.3, 2.104.3), *di-strictissimus* (Bentley: *-aximus*) (2.114.1), *eminentissimus* (a particular favourite: 1.12.3, 1.16.2, 2.2.1, 2.17.3, 2.22.2, 2.43.3, 2.71.2, 2.72.3, 2.75.3, 2.99.1, 2.101.2, 2.121.3, 2.130.5), *fulgentissimus* (2.39.1, 2.64.3, 2.71.1), *impatiensissimus* (2.23.1), *mixtissimus* (2.98.3; Watt obelizes here, but in Velleius such a superlative seems possible), *uerecundissimus* (2.33.3; also Sen. *contr.* 7.7.3).

*errimus*, 12 in *-illimus*, and a further 18 of *optimus*, 7 of *pessimus*, 15 of *plurimus*, 41 of *maximus*,<sup>106</sup> 2 of *minimus*. That is 304 instances, a staggering total even if one regards some instances of *maxime* and *minime* as unremarkable. Add, too, 9 instances of *longe* modifying a comparative. Other hyperbolic expressions include the formulation *super humanam fidem*<sup>107</sup> and *per* being followed by a part of *omnis* (usually in the form *per omnia*) sixteen times, and by *tot* twice.

Bonner, more sympathetic to Velleius than many, wrote, ‘the influence of rhetoric is seen in the brevity and point which marks the style throughout, and in the avoidance of the period. When occasionally Velleius attempts a period, his inexperienced hand leads him into long, unwieldy efforts which a stylist like Livy would hardly have countenanced’.<sup>108</sup> But I have observed already that one of the most interesting features of the style of Velleius is the manner in which he combines periodicity and point, and in fact there are many periods in Velleius, most to be found in passages of narrative.<sup>109</sup> The form of the work to some extent governed his use of such sentences. His summary history is character-driven;<sup>110</sup> one may view it as a succession of small episodes which begin with the introduction of a new character. He uses periods most often at the beginning of an episode, whether one containing a character sketch<sup>111</sup> or without one.<sup>112</sup> Alternatively, the character sketch may be delivered in a sentence that is not periodic and a period that drives to the heart of the action may follow.<sup>113</sup> Occasionally a period embraces a whole event or period.<sup>114</sup> Periods tend to cluster only rarely in

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**106** I exclude instances of the proper name.

**107** Found at 2.41.1 (on Julius Caesar’s *animus*), 2.130.1 (on Tiberius’ honouring of Augustus).

**108** Bonner (1949) 160.

**109** Periodic sentences to which I shall not refer again may be found at e.g.: 2.24.3, 2.43.1, 2.51.1–2, 2.56.3, 2.62.1–3, 2.70.2, 2.94.4, 2.95.2, 2.99.1–2, 2.112.2, 2.113.2, 2.119.2, 2.123.2.

**110** See Krause (1800) 19 ‘plerumque incipit a uiris summis’, Woodman (1975b) 5.

**111** Periods introducing characters may be found at e.g. 1.11.1 (Pseudophilip), 1.12.3 (Scipio Aemilianus), 2.2.2–3 (Tiberius Gracchus), 2.3.1 (P. Scipio Nasica), 2.4.1 (Aristonicus), 2.18.1–3 (Mithridates), 2.18.4–6 (P. Sulpicius), 2.27.1–2 (Pontius Telesinus), 2.29.1 (Pompey), 2.34.3 (Cicero), 2.41.1–2 (Julius Caesar), 2.45.1 (P. Clodius), 2.68.1 (M. Caelius), 2.75.3 (Livia), 2.76.1 (C. Velleius, the historian’s grandfather), 2.83.1–2 (Munatius Plancus), 2.91.2–3 (Caepio and Murena), 2.91.3 (Egnatius Rufus), 2.92.2 (Sentius Saturninus), 2.94.1–3 (Tiberius).

**112** See e.g. 1.10.1, 1.11.1 (including a short comment on Pseudophilip’s character).

**113** See 2.13.2 (on the career of Livius Drusus; this period has an extension beyond the main clause).

**114** See e.g. 2.4.1 (on Aristonicus), 2.5.1 (on D. Brutus; in this sentence the main clause comes first but a following *qui*-clause develops into a period), 2.33.1 (a massive sentence that embraces most of Lucullus’ Asian campaign).

Velleius because the summary nature of the history that he was writing meant that his episodes tend to be short.

The internal dynamics of Velleius' periodic structures have not been much admired. Bonner's judgement has been quoted already, and similar verdicts may be found elsewhere.<sup>115</sup> Before examples of Velleian periods are analysed some general observations may be made. One is to note Velleius' fondness for parentheses, in which he generalises about an event, passes judgement on a character, or briefly mentions a tangential matter; such parentheses, found throughout Velleius' work, are often inserted into the middle of long or periodic sentences.<sup>116</sup> Another concerns the shape of those long periods which start with a character-sketch. Perhaps they may be compared to the departure of a railway train from a station: many Velleian periods move slowly at first, as the sentence makes its way through a series of balanced epithets, appositions or phrases that describe the character to be introduced,<sup>117</sup> but then the speed picks up with ablatives absolute and temporal clauses, and these lead to a climax (often in a main clause) in which the sentence reaches its destination.

Some passages give the lie to the view that Velleius could not construct excellent periods:

*Cn. Pompeius consulisque et maior pars senatus relicta urbe ac deinde Italia transmisere Dyrrhachium. (50.1) at Caesar, Domitio legionibusque quae Corfinii una cum eo fuerant potitus, duce aliisque qui uoluerant abire ad Pompeium sine dilatione dimissis, persecutus Brundisium ita ut appareret malle integris rebus et condicionibus <sup>A</sup>finire bellum quam <sup>A</sup>opprimere <sup>B</sup>fugientes, (2) cum transgressos reperisset consules, in urbem reuertitur redditaque ratione consiliorum suorum in senatu et in contione ac miserrimae necessitudinis, cum alienis <sup>C</sup>armis ad <sup>C</sup>arma compulsus esset, Hispanias pētērē dēcrēuit <sup>Ia</sup> (2.49.4–50.2)*

**115** See e.g. Sauppe (1837) 175 'Die Perioden sind ohne Rundung', Kritz (1848) LXI 'Si quando vero studet maiores periodos struere, res plerumque male ei cessit', Milkau (1888) 8 'immanes istae periodi', Duff (1927) 160, 'Where he attempts the long sentence the inferiority of his literary architecture becomes apparent: it is often an ill-built fabric of clumsy patchwork', Hellegouarc'h (1982) 1. LXVIII 'insuffisante rigueur', Mayer (2005) 207–208.

**116** For parentheses in Velleius see e.g. \*2.1.5, \*2.13.2, \*2.15.1, 2.18.3, \*2.18.4, 2.28.2, \*2.40.5, 2.41.3, \*2.42.3, \*2.43.1, 2.43.4, 2.45.1, 2.48.2, 2.58.2, 2.63.1, 2.66.3, \*2.68.1, 2.69.3–4, \*2.83.1, \*2.88.2, 2.91.2, \*2.98.2, 2.99.4, 2.100.4, 2.102.3, \*2.112.4. Examples preceded by an asterisk are introduced by *quippe*, a favourite word of Velleius', which he uses 63 times over the 89 pages of Watt's text. Velleius' fondness for parenthesis was noted by e.g. Sauppe (1837) 175 and Hellegouarc'h (1982) 1. lxxviii. Freitag (1942) 48–68 provides a full study and categorization. Since editors (reasonably) disagree as to when they should punctuate to indicate a parenthesis, it is not possible to produce a full list.

**117** Contrast the less sympathetic remark of Mayer (2005) 208.



After a brief sentence describing Pompey's abandonment of Italy, *at Caesar*, like those *at Corbulos* in Tacitus,<sup>118</sup> switches attention to a man who knew how to act decisively. What follows is one of the most powerful periods in Velleius: *inter alia* it shows Caesar, last seen crossing the Rubicon, capturing Corfinium in an ablative absolute, chasing Pompey to Brundisium in a participial phrase, and then entering the city with the first main verb; his acts there having been described with breathless haste, the second main verb brings his decision to go to Spain. Velleius never controlled the architecture of his sentences better.<sup>119</sup>

Or one may consider Marius' escape from Sulla:

*Marius, post sextum consulatum annumque LXX, nudus ac limo obrutus, oculis tantummodo ac naribus eminentibus, extractus harundineto circa paludem Maricae, in quam se fugiens consectantes Sullae equites abdiderat, iniectione in collum loro, in carcerem Minturnensium iussu duumviri perductus est.*<sup>120</sup> (3) *Ad quem interficiendum missus cum gladio seruus publicus, natione Germanus, qui forte ab imperatore eo bello Cimbrico captus erat, ut agnouit Marium, magno eiulatu exprimente indignationem casus tanti uiri abiecto gladio profugit ē cārcērē.* <sup>121</sup> (4) *Tum ciues, ab hoste misereri paulo ante principis uiri docti, instructum eum uiatico conlataque ueste in nauem impōsuerunt.*<sup>121</sup> (2.19.2–4)

Three periodic sentences in succession, each building up to a climax in a main verb, each with faultless architecture, take Marius from Minturnae to Africa.

I turn now to more detailed analysis of two of Velleius' periods, both singled out by Kritz as examples of Velleius' clumsiness,<sup>122</sup> and in the analysis will take the opportunity to draw attention to some features of Velleius' style on which comment has already been made. First, Julius Caesar's entry into the history:

*Secutus deinde est consulatus C. Caesaris, qui scribenti manum inicit et quamlibet festinantem in se morārī cōgīt.* <sup>123</sup> *Hic, nobilissima Iuliorum genitus familia et, quod inter omnes constabat, antiquissima, ab Anchise ac Venere deducens genus, forma omnium ciuium excellentissimus, uigore animi acerrimus, munificentia effusissimus, animo super humanam et naturam et fidem euectus, magnitudine cogitationum, celeritate bellandi, patientia periculorum Magno illi Alexandro, sed sobrio neque iracundo, simillimus, (2) qui denique semper et cibo et somno <sup>124</sup>in uitam, non <sup>125</sup>in uoluptatem uteretur, cum fuisset C. Mario sanguine coniunctissimus atque idem Cinnae gener, cuius filiam ut repudiaret nullo metu compelli potuit, cum M. Piso consularis Anniam, quae Cinnae uxor fuerat, in Sullae dimisisset gratiam, habuis-*

<sup>118</sup> Tac. *ann.* 11.18.2, 14.23.1, 15.26.1.

<sup>119</sup> For discussion of this sentence from the point of view of the attitude to Julius Caesar that it reveals, see Pelling (2011b) 162–163.

<sup>120</sup> The clausula here comes close to a molossus + cretic.

<sup>121</sup> On the heroic clausula, found more often in historiography than elsewhere, see *supra* 211.

<sup>122</sup> Kritz (1848) LXI–LXIII.

*setque fere XVIII annos eo tempore quo Sulla rerum potitus est, magis ministris Sullae adiutoribusque partium quam ipso conquirentibus eum ad necem, mutata ueste dissimilemque fortunae suae indutus habitum nocte urbe elapsus est.* <sup>14</sup> (2.41.1–2)

The nature of the subordination that is found in the second of these sentences may be depicted graphically as follows. Each indentation marks a layer of dependent subordination:<sup>123</sup>

*hic,*  
*nobilissima Iuliorum genitūs fāmīlīā* <sup>13b</sup>  
*et,*  
*quod inter omnēs cōnstābāt,*  
*antiquissima,* <sup>124</sup>  
*ab Anchise ac Venēřē dēdūcēns gēnūs,* <sup>14a</sup>  
*forma omnium ciuium ēxcēllētissimūs,* <sup>14</sup>  
*uigōre ānīmi ācērrīmūs,* <sup>14b</sup>  
*munificentia effusissimus,* |  
*animo super humanam | et naturam ēt fidem ēuēctūs,* <sup>1</sup>  
*magnitudine cogitatōnūm,* <sup>3</sup> *celeritatē bellāndī,* <sup>1</sup> *patientia periculōrūm* <sup>3</sup> *Magno illi*  
*Ālēxandrō,* <sup>3</sup>  
*sed sobrio neque iracundō*  
*sīmīllīmūs,* <sup>5</sup>  
*qui denique | semper et cibo ēt sōmnō* <sup>6</sup> *in uitam, non in uoluptatem ūtērētūr,* <sup>3</sup>  
*cum fuisset C. Mario sanguinē cōniunctissimūs* <sup>14a</sup> *atque idēm Cīnnaē gēnēr,* <sup>14</sup>  
*cuius filiam*  
*ūt rēpūdīārēt* <sup>1b</sup>  
*nullo metu compelli potuit |*  
*cum M. Piso cōnsulārīs* <sup>3</sup> *Anniam*  
*quaē Cīnnae ūxor fūērāt,* |  
*in Sullae dimīsissēt grātīām,* <sup>14</sup>  
*habuissetque fere XVIII [i.e. octōdēcim] ānnōs* <sup>3</sup> *eo tempore*  
*quo Sulla rerūm pōtītūs ēst,* <sup>5</sup>  
*magis ministris Sullae adiutoribusque partīūm* <sup>5</sup> *quam ipso conquirentībūs ēum ād necēm,* <sup>2b</sup>  
*mutātā uēstē* <sup>6</sup>  
*dissimilemque fortunae suae indūtūs hābitūm,* <sup>2c</sup>  
*noctē urbe elapsus est.* <sup>3</sup>

**123** The lay-out follows syntax. However, as noted earlier, I have marked both what I regard as the boundaries of cola (with |) and rhythmical clausulae found at these boundaries. These cola tend to be shorter than most clauses and many phrases and the boundaries do not always coincide with the lay-out given by syntax; since (again, as noted earlier) colometry is not a precise science and different ancients would have read and declaimed in different ways, some of these boundaries could reasonably be marked differently.

**124** The word is only one initial heavy syllable too short to give a molossus + cretic.

Twelve features of this sentence are typical of Velleius. First, as often elsewhere, he has used a period to introduce a character new to his history (the brief introductory sentence in which Velleius characteristically draws attention to the brevity of his work hardly counts as an introduction). Second, the sentence is massive. Third, it moves from a subject (*hic*) introduced at the beginning to a final climactic main clause in which the verb comes at the end. Fourth, it ends with a *clausula* of which Cicero would have approved. Fifth, there is a characteristic piling up of adjectival or participial phrases near the beginning of the period (seven in this period, and all describing Caesar's background and character), before subordinate clauses begin to introduce some narrative: (1) *nobilissima Iuliorum genitus familia et . . . antiquissima*; (2) *ab Anchise ac Venere deducens genus*; (3) *forma omnium civium excellentissimus*; (4) *uigore animi acerrimus*; (5) *munificentia effusissimus*; (6) *animo super humanam et naturam et fidem euectus*; (7) *magnitudine cogitationum, celeritate bellandi, patientia periculorum Magno illi Alexandro . . . simillimus*. Sixth, the sentence exhibits considerable internal balance, especially in the part occupied by these adjectival phrases: *excellentissimus*, *acerrimus*, *effusissimus*, *euectus*, and *simillimus* all end phrases that start with ablatives; and *magnitudine cogitationum*, *celeritate bellandi*, *patientia periculorum* constitutes a balanced tricolon with each ablative governing a following genitive. Seventh, although there are no formal parentheses, quasi-parenthetical remarks such as *sed sobrio neque iracundo* and *cum M. Piso consularis Anniam, quae Cinnae uxor fuerat, in Sullae dimisisset gratiam* perform a similar role and require concentration on any reader's part lest he or she lose the structure of the sentence. In this context it may be added that the use of the pronoun *eum* to refer to the subject of the sentence in an ablative absolute, is what a modern schoolteacher would regard as a breach of grammar, for all that there are examples of such things in Caesar himself. Eighth, there is antithesis *in uitam non in uoluptatem* and in the contrast between Caesar and Marcus Piso.<sup>125</sup> Ninth, there is alliteration, in the words just quoted. Tenth, Velleius includes seven superlatives: *nobilissima*, *antiquissima*, *excellentissimus*, *acerrimus*, *effusissimus*, *simillimus*, *coniunctissimus*. Eleventh, there are two instances of verbal hyperbaton: *nobilissima Iuliorum genitus familia* and *dissimilemque fortunae suae indutus habitum*. And twelfth *humanam et naturam et fidem* illustrates characteristic verbal *abundantia*.

The introduction of Mithridates brings a more complex sentence (2.18.1–3):

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<sup>125</sup> But, as observed above, Velleius' periods tend to contain fewer antitheses than his writing in shorter sentences, and in this respect this sentence is typical. Less typical is 2.18.1–3, quoted in this page.

*Per ea tempora Mithridates, Ponticus rex, uir<sup>A</sup> neque silendus<sup>A</sup> neque dicendus sine cura, bello acerrimus, uirtute eximius, <sup>B</sup>aliquando <sup>C</sup>fortuna, <sup>B</sup>semper <sup>C</sup>animo maximus, <sup>E</sup>consiliis <sup>F</sup>dux, <sup>F</sup>miles <sup>E</sup>manu, odio in Romanos Hannibal, occupata Asia necatisque in ea omnibus ciuibus Romanis, (2) quos quidem eadem die atque hora redditis ciuitatibus litteris ingenti cum pollicitatione praemiorum interimi iusserat, (3) quo tempore neque <sup>G</sup>fortitudine <sup>H</sup>aduersus Mithridatem neque <sup>G</sup>fide <sup>H</sup>in Romanos quisquam Rhodiis par fuit (horum <sup>I</sup>fidem <sup>I</sup>Mytilenaeorum <sup>I</sup>perfidia illuminauit, qui M'. Aquilium aliosque Mithridati uinctos tradiderunt, quibus libertas in unius Theophanis gratiam postea a Pompeio restituta est), cum terribilis Italiae quoque uideretur imminere, sorte obuinit Sullae Asia prouincia.*

It may be laid out schematically like this:

*Per ea tempora*

*Mithridātēs, |<sup>3</sup>*

*Pōntīcūs rēx, |<sup>3</sup>*

*uir neque silendus neque dicendus sine cura |*

*bello acerrimus, |<sup>126</sup>*

*uirtute eximius, |*

*aliquando fortuna, semp̄r ānīmō mākīmūs, |<sup>2a</sup>*

*consiliis dux, |*

*miles manu, |*

*odio in Rōmānōs Hānībāl, |<sup>4</sup>*

*ōccūpāta Āsīā |<sup>c</sup>*

*necatisque in ea omnibus ciuibūs Rōmānīs, |<sup>6</sup>*

*quos quidem*

*eadēm diē atque hōrā |<sup>1</sup> redditis ciuitātībūs littērīs |<sup>2</sup>*

*ingenti cum pollicitatione praēmīōrūm |<sup>3</sup> intērīmi iūssērāt, |<sup>4b</sup>*

*quo tempore | neque fortitudine aduersus Mithridātēm |<sup>3</sup> neque fide in Rōmānōs |<sup>6</sup>*

*[ quisquam Rhōdīs pār fūit |<sup>2</sup>*

*(horum fidem | Mytilenaeorum perfidia illūmīnāuit |<sup>3</sup>*

*qui M'. Aquilium aliosque Mithridati uinctos trādīdērūt |<sup>3</sup>*

*quibus libētās |<sup>6</sup> in unius Thēōphānīs grātīām |<sup>2a</sup> postea a Pompeio rēstītūta ēst), |<sup>3</sup>*

*cum terribilis Italiae quoque | uideretur imminērē, |<sup>3</sup>*

*sorte obuinit Sullae Āsīā prouīnciā. |<sup>2a</sup>*

The most striking feature of this period is that it emerges in the penultimate clause that Mithridates, whose characterization has been embraced so copiously earlier, is not the subject of the whole sentence but rather of a *cum*-clause to which virtually everything earlier turns out to be subordinate. The opening words *per ea tempora* are the only exception, and I have analysed them as part of the main clause, but even they could be placed within the *cum*-clause. The use of a

126 Virtually a molossus + cretic.

*cum*-clause at a point where one might have expected a main-clause is a phenomenon found in Livy, to whose lean and incisive periods it imparts energy.<sup>127</sup> I have divided what follows *Mithridates* into eight phrasal units: we start with units built around two nouns (*rex, uir*), then three built around adjectives (*acerrimus, eximius, maximus*), and then three more units built around nouns (*dux, miles, Hannibal*). The sequence exhibits balance: *acerrimus, eximius, and maximus* each have preceding ablatives dependent on them. Further balance and antithesis may be found in *neque silendus neque dicendus* (in which *uir ... dicendus sine cura* is a Sallustian reminiscence)<sup>128</sup> in *aliquando fortuna, semper animo*, and in the chiasmic *consiliis dux, miles manu*. The striking *Hannibal* ends the sequence and looks back to *Mithridates*. The description over, two ablatives absolute start the narrative. Upon the second a relative clause introduced by *quos* depends, which itself contains an ablative absolute inside it, and to which another clause, introduced by the relative expression *quo tempore*, is appended. In this last clause *neque fortitudine aduersus Mithridatem* is in balance and antithesis with *neque fide in Romanos*. *Fide* provides the cue for the characteristically Velleian parenthesis, which starts *horum fidem*. After the parenthesis the delayed *cum* comes as a surprise, and an even greater surprise then comes with the introduction of Sulla and the realisation that *Asia prouincia* is the subject of the whole sentence. If account is taken of the elision in *Sullae Asia*, then the final *clausula* may be analysed as a molossus + cretic, with the last heavy syllable of the molossus resolved.<sup>129</sup>

Not every long sentence in Velleius winds its way through subordinate clauses to a climax in a main clause. Also long, but strikingly different, is:

*Reliqua eius acta in urbe, nobilissimaque Dolabellae accusatio et maior ciuitatis in ea fauor quam reis praestari solet, contentionesque ciuiles cum Q. Catulo atque aliis eminentissimis uiris celeberrimae, et ante praeturam uictus <in> maximi pontificatus petitione Q. Catulus, omnium confessione senatus princeps, (4) et restituta in aedilitate aduersante quidem nobilitate monumenta C. Marii, simulque reuocati ad ius dignitatis proscriptorum liberi, et praetura quaesturaque mirabili uirtute atque industria obita in Hispania (cum esset quaestor sub Vetere Antistio, auo huius Veteris consularis atque pontificis, duorum consularium et sacerdotum patris, uiri in tantum boni in quantum humana simplicitas intellegi potest), quo notiora sunt, minus egeant stilo* <sup>5a</sup> (2.43.3–4).

127 See Oakley (1997–2005) 1.132 and Mayer (2005) 205 (both with bibliography).

128 Maurenbrecher (1891–3) 90–91, comparing our passage and others, prints *uir cum cura dicendus* as *hist.* 2.71, and refers it to Mithridates; but it is not quite certain that Sallust used the expression either of Mithridates or in the nominative. See also Woodman (1968) 791.

129 For another discussion of this sentence see Freitag (1942) 59–60.

In this sentence there are no fewer than nine nouns or equivalents (*acta, accusatio, fauor, contentiones, Q. Catulus, monumenta, liberi, praetura quaesturaque* [the last two should be counted as one unit]) that are subject to the main verb *egent*; there is extremely effective use of the possibilities for subordination offered by the past passive participle in the so-called *ab urbe condita* construction (*uictus, restituta, reuocati, obita*), and there is a characteristically Velleian parenthesis.<sup>130</sup>

I have remarked that most of Velleius' periods occur in passages of narrative, but at 1.16.1 he produces a splendid example of the kind of period that we often meet in passages of argument in Cicero and others:

*Cum haec particula operis uelut formam propositi excesserit, quamquam intellego mihi in hac tam praecipiti festinatione, quae me rotae proniue gurgitis ac uerticis modo nusquam patitur consistere, paene magis <sup>A</sup>necessaria <sup>B</sup>praetereunda quam <sup>A</sup>superuac<an>ea <sup>B</sup>amplectenda, nequeo tamen temperare mihi quin rem <sup>C</sup>saepe <sup>D</sup>agitata animo meo neque <sup>C</sup>ad liquidum ratione <sup>D</sup>perductam signem stilō. |<sup>4</sup>*

In this sentence, after an initial causal *cum*-clause, the sentence is articulated by, and balanced around, *quamquam ... tamen ...* Inside the concessive clause introduced by *quamquam*, the sense is not complete until *consistere*; and although *nequeo*, the main verb of the main clause, comes first in its clause, no full-stop could be placed before the end of the sentence: *nequeo* leads one to expect an infinitive; the infinitive (*temperare*) leads one to expect a clause of prevention; and the clause of prevention, introduced by *quin*, is not complete until its end.

There are some long sentences in Velleius about whose more ramshackle structure it is difficult to enthuse, but I prefer to put their failing down to over-ambition rather than lack of talent.<sup>131</sup>

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To return to remarks made at the beginning of this essay, a comprehensive history of Latin prose-style would be difficult to write if all the significant authors had survived and is impossible to write with the evidence that does survive. But in the style of Velleius, echoed in various ways by the fragments of other writers, especially Cremutius Cordus, we can discern many of the features that shaped the stylistic outlook of those writing history at the end of the reign of Augustus

**130** Vell. 2.52.3 is in some respects similar, only here the sentence starts with a list of six nouns in the accusative (and not nominative) before the main clause; it too has several instances of the *ab urbe condita* construction. On Velleius' use of this construction see Moravsky (1876) 716.

**131** See e.g. 2.69.1–5.

and under Tiberius: in particular, the influence of Sallust, the influence of declamation (especially in prose-rhythm and the quest for point), and the competing demands of the latter with periodicity.

Olivier Devillers

## La place de Sénèque le Père parmi les sources possibles des *Annales* 1–6

**Abstract:** Recently, the studies on the sources of Tacitus have frequently addressed the question in the terms of his originality in the rewriting of these. Primarily, I would like to highlight his originality in the selection of the material. In that matter, Tacitus had in common with Cassius Dio an annalistic source that provided them with the plot of their history. I called it here the *source fil-rouge* (“guiding source”). It could be with great caution identified with Aufidius Bassus. In order to supplement, extend or correct this *source fil-rouge*, Tacitus used massively a variety of materials drawn from several subsidiary sources. In some of these sources (Servilius Nonianus, *acta senatus*), he found mainly information that allowed him to develop the senatorial part of his history and to give consistency to some figures of senators. Simultaneously he sought other sources that enabled him to get a better understanding of the members of the dynasty as Germanicus and his family (*Commentarii* of Agrippina the Younger, *Bella Germaniae* of Pliny the Elder), of Augustus and his time (Cremutius Cordus, *Res gestae*) and of the channels of imperial self-representation (monuments, inscriptions). Seneca the Elder is most probably one of these subsidiary sources. If so, Tacitus would have consulted him especially on the government of Augustus and on the beginnings of Tiberius as an emperor. He would also have established with him a link of intertextuality.

La dernière décennie du XIX<sup>e</sup> a vu deux contributions notables à l'étude des sources de Tacite.<sup>1</sup> D'une part, E. Schwartz a expliqué l'existence de ressemblances entre les récits de Tacite et de Cassius Dion, plus ponctuellement de Suétone, par le recours, par ces auteurs, à une même source qui aurait écrit sur l'ensemble du règne de Tibère.<sup>2</sup> D'autre part, P. Fabia a posé le principe selon lequel

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<sup>1</sup> Le texte ci-dessous se situe dans la continuité de mes réflexions sur les sources de Tacite telles qu'elles sont exposées in : Devillers (2003a), spéc. 7–73. Je me suis toutefois efforcé a) de problématiser ce texte initial en le situant à l'intérieur d'une réflexion qui propose une hiérarchie mieux définie des sources, classées non selon leur nature, mais selon l'usage qu'en fait Tacite, b) d'actualiser la bibliographie, c) d'adapter le propos au thème plus général du Colloque.

<sup>2</sup> Schwartz (1899) 1716\_1717.



Tacite n'avait consulté qu'un nombre extrêmement limité de garants qu'il se contentait de "refondre" sans se livrer par lui-même à un travail de recherche.<sup>3</sup> La combinaison de ces deux théories conduit à une conclusion pratiquement imparable : pour l'hexade tibérienne, Tacite ne disposerait que d'un garant majeur, à savoir cet *ignotus* dont E. Schwartz avait postulé l'existence.

Une telle vue, cependant, a été progressivement remise en question. Certes, il est incontestable que Tacite et Cassius Dion ont une source commune, et à cet égard l'existence de l'"*ignotus* de Schwartz" a été régulièrement admise.<sup>4</sup> Pourtant, leurs récits comportent au moins autant de divergences que de ressemblances, de sorte qu'il ne paraît pas possible de limiter à ce seul *ignotus* leur dossier documentaire. Parallèlement, l'idée que Tacite ait utilisé un petit nombre de sources a été remise en cause, en particulier par R. Syme et C. Questa, lesquels ont démontré que l'auteur des *Annales* avait eu recours à un matériel varié.<sup>5</sup>

Reste que les modalités de l'utilisation de cette documentation plurielle restent à définir. Deux modèles sont notamment possibles. L'un est la confrontation récurrente de sources d'égale valeur ; certains indices donnent à penser que l'hexade néronienne a été constituée de cette manière.<sup>6</sup> L'autre possibilité serait celle d'une trame fournie par une source de référence qui aurait été par la suite enrichie d'informations tirées d'autres sources. Tel semble plutôt le cas de l'hexade tibérienne. En effet, on l'a dit plus haut, la thèse de Schwartz n'accorde sans doute pas suffisamment d'attention aux différences entre Tacite et Cassius Dion. Telle n'est pas pour autant une raison pour faire l'impasse sur leurs ressemblances. Or ces dernières rendent indéniable qu'il y a une source commune aux deux historiens (connue aussi de Suétone) qui, de l'avènement de Tibère à sa mort, leur procure des informations comparables ; qu'envisagées à la suite, ces informations forment une trame qui peut aussi avoir été, au gré de leurs lectures, enrichie à travers l'exploitation – massive dans le cas de Tacite – d'un matériel

3 Fabia (1891) 193–274.

4 Parmi ceux qui y sont le plus attachés, on citera par ex. Flach (1973a) 126–127 ; (1973b) 107 ; (1985) 170 ; Champlin (2008) 418–419 (qui voit dans cet *ignotus* un homme qui aurait bien connu Tibère).

5 Syme (1958a) 176–190 (pour les *Histoires*), 271–303 (pour les *Annales*) ; Questa (1960). Ils ont été largement suivis sur ce point ; spéc. Devillers (2003a).

6 Cf. Tac. *ann.* 13.20.2 où sont confrontés Pline l'Ancien, Cluvius Rufus, Fabius Rusticus (aussi 14.2). Leur mention ne garantit néanmoins ni qu'ils aient été abondamment utilisés – Tacite ne pouvait citer que ses sources occasionnelles – ni qu'ils l'aient été directement – il a pu exister une compilation où auraient déjà été confrontés ces trois auteurs ; l'un d'eux aurait pu se livrer à une compilation des deux autres ; par ex. Flach (1973b) 95–99 ; (1973c) 99.

hétéroclite, un matériel d'autant plus aisé à se procurer que la littérature historique, voire para-historique, pré-tacitienne, s'il elle ne nous est pas parvenue, ne semble pas moins avoir été abondante et variée, tant pour ce qui est des formes (sous)-génériques que des motifs idéologiques qui les inspiraient.<sup>7</sup>

Deux niveaux se dégageraient dès lors dans l'appréhension du dossier documentaire dont disposait Tacite. Le premier serait celui de la source commune avec Cassius Dion, qu'on pourrait qualifier, faute de mieux, de "source fil-rouge", n'étant bien entendu pas assimilable à la source pratiquement unique et exclusive qu'imaginait P. Fabia, ni même peut-être à une source principale. En effet, et c'est le second niveau, il faut compter avec l'apport cumulé de "sources subsidiaires", dont il n'est pas à exclure que la somme ait excédé l'apport de la source dite ici "fil-rouge". Enfin, dans le cadre précis de ce Colloque, il conviendra dans le panorama général ainsi esquissé de considérer le cas de Sénèque le Père.

## 1 Source "fil-rouge"

Selon E. Schwartz, la source commune à Tacite et Cassius Dion était d'une histoire écrite sous Caligula, livrant une virulente critique de Tibère et présentant avec sympathie les actions de Germanicus. D'autres éléments sont à apporter encore : il s'agirait d'une source annalistique, relatant le principat de Tibère selon un schéma de détérioration, soulignant la dissimulation de cet empereur, considérant comme significatives la mort de Germanicus, celle de Drusus, la retraite à Capri ainsi que l'ascension et la chute de Séjan ; enfin, et ce dernier point n'a pas toujours été souligné, elle prêterait quelque attention aux travaux du Sénat.<sup>8</sup> Quel auteur, parmi ceux dont le nom nous est parvenu, répondrait à ce profil ?

À lire P. Fabia, la source majeure de Tacite était Aufidius Bassus.<sup>9</sup> Dans ce cas, cet auteur pourrait être considéré comme l'*ignotus* de Schwartz,<sup>10</sup> mais aussi comme la source que nous désignons comme "fil-rouge". Mort dans la seconde moitié du règne de Néron, Aufidius avait écrit, au plus tard vers le début du règne de ce dernier, un ouvrage historique dont on il a été pensé qu'il pouvait prolonger

<sup>7</sup> Cizek (1995) 179 ; aussi Noë (1984) 78.

<sup>8</sup> Le fait est largement reconnu pour Tacite ; par ex. Syme (1958b). Sur Dion, cf. Platon (2016) 653 : "vingt chapitres sur les vingt-quatre que comprend le livre 57 et vingt-deux sur les vingt-huit du livre 58 font explicitement référence au Sénat".

<sup>9</sup> Par ex. Fabia (1893) 397.

<sup>10</sup> Dans ce sens, Marx (1936) 94–101 ; Sage (1990) 1007.

*l'Histoire romaine* de Tite-Live.<sup>11</sup> Il n'est jamais cité comme source dans ce qui nous est parvenu des *Annales*,<sup>12</sup> mais son *eloquentia* est mentionnée dans le *Dialogue des Orateurs*, dans des propos prêtés à Aper (*dial.* 23.2), et il figure dans une liste d'historiens dignes d'être lus que fournit Quintilien, même si en l'occurrence c'est son livre sur les guerres en Germanie, et non son œuvre historique, qui est mise en évidence (*inst.* 10.1.103). Son histoire avait été continuée par Pline l'Ancien (*Plin. nat., praef.* 20 ; *Plin. epist.* 3.5.6). Qu'Aufidius ait (peut-être) poursuivi Tite-Live et ait lui-même été continué par Pline est à retenir : entre le Padouan, qui produit une œuvre toujours imprégnée d'annalistique républicaine, et Pline l'Ancien, qui, de ce que nous pouvons voir d'après les remarques éparses dans son *Histoire naturelle*, aurait privilégié la figure impériale, Aufidius se serait montré à la fois encore soucieux de faire écho à l'activité du Sénat et déjà attentif à l'évolution de la personnalité du prince.

Deux arguments, pourraient néanmoins faire obstacle à une identification de la source commune avec Aufidius. Ces deux arguments doivent néanmoins à mon sens être relativisés.

1° Il n'est pas sûr qu'Aufidius ait couvert l'ensemble du règne de Tibère. Sur la base de la *Chronique* de Cassiodore (2.161), où Aufidius est utilisé comme source pour le nom des consuls de 8 a.C. à 31 p.C., on a pensé que son ouvrage s'arrêterait à cette seconde date, avec la chute de Séjan.<sup>13</sup> Pourtant, la lecture de Tacite et de Cassius Dion n'indique pas de notable changement après 31 ; elle laisse apparaître tout autant de ressemblances et semble plutôt montrer une continuité dans leurs méthodes de travail et le traitement de leurs sources. En ce cas, soit Aufidius s'arrêterait en 31 et il n'est pas la source commune aux deux historiens, soit, comme cela a été suggéré,<sup>14</sup> il poursuivait au-delà de 31. Le point demeure en tout cas insuffisamment établi pour qu'on puisse en tirer argument.

**11** Syme (1958a) 698 ; (1977) 235, 263. *Aliter* Noè (1984) 57 n. 189, 79 réfute qu'Aufidius continuait Tite-Live et estime qu'il aurait aussi traité des guerres civiles (un sujet alors à la mode), au moins depuis la mort de Cicéron dont il avait livré un récit conservé par Sénèque le Père. Contre l'idée d'une continuation de Tite-Live, aussi Swan (1987) 286 ; Zecchini (1999) 335 ; *FRHist* I 520 (Levick).

**12** Syme (1970) 104 n'exclut pas qu'il ait été mentionné dans le récit de la chute de Séjan.

**13** Cf. Klingner (1958) 199 ; Wilkes (1972) 197 ; Syme (1977) 235 ; Sage (1990) 1005 ; dans ce sens, aussi *FRHist* I 520–521 (Levick).

**14** Sur la date à laquelle s'arrêtaient les *Histoires* d'Aufidius, voir entre autres Bardon (1956) 165 ; Syme (1958a) 288, 698 ; Gascou (1984) 274 n. 36 ; Noè (1984) 80 ; Cizek (1995) 185. Par ex. D'Anna (1995) 49 évoque de manière générique les années 50–55 ; Martin (2001) 6 : "some point in the reign of Claudius" (aussi 7 : "possibly c. A.D. 50") ; Naas (2002) 87 n. 89 : "les années 50" ; Champlin (2003) 40 : "guesses as to his terminal date range from A.D. 37, through 47, to 54" ; Stadler (2015) 251 ("entre os anos 31 a 50 d.C.").

C'est surtout la position d'Aufidius entre Tite-Live et Pline l'Ancien, entre histoire annalistique et histoire centrée sur l'empereur, qui en l'occurrence, semble à prendre en compte.

2° Ensuite, il n'est pas assuré qu'Aufidius ait accompli de carrière politique et ait appartenu au Sénat.<sup>15</sup> R. Syme, estimant qu'il n'avait dès lors pu traiter de manière suffisamment significative et pertinente une matière sénatoriale, a revu à la baisse son influence<sup>16</sup> et à la hausse celle qu'aurait exercée un autre historien : Servilius Nonianus,<sup>17</sup> qui appartenait, lui, à l'ordre sénatorial.<sup>18</sup> Servilius n'est pas davantage mentionné par Tacite comme source,<sup>19</sup> mais l'auteur des *Annales* lui réserve une notice nécrologique élogieuse où il fait écho à son activité d'historien (*ann.* 14.19 : *Servilius diu foro, mox tradendis rebus Romanis celebris et elegantia uitae*) ; dans le *Dialogue des Orateurs*, aussi, il le mentionne à côté d'Aufidius comme exemple d'historien récent (*dial.* 23.2), ce que fait également Quintilien (*inst.* 10.1.102). Enfin, une anecdote connue par Pline le Jeune montre Claude se rendant impromptu à l'une de ses récitations (Plin. *epist.* 1.13.3). Mais il demeure que nous ne disposons guère d'éléments plus précis sur le contenu de l'ouvrage de Servilius. Il avait accompagné Tibère à Capri et il semble en conséquence qu'il faille lui attribuer une anecdote sur le prince que Suétone rapporte sur la foi d'un consulaire présent à Capri (*Tib.* 61.6).<sup>20</sup> Cela signifierait qu'il avait écrit sur le successeur d'Auguste.<sup>21</sup> Pour le reste, nous manquons de données, en particulier sur son format historiographique et à dire vrai, un grand nombre d'hypothèses sont possibles à son sujet, y compris qu'il ait laissé deux ouvrages, une histoire tournée autour de la période augustéenne et un *opus* plus bref, type *De Vita sua*, où aurait figuré l'anecdote sur Tibère à Capri. Un fait retient néanmoins

**15** Syme (1958a) 275 ; (1970) 91 ; Wilkes (1972) 192 ; Gascou (1984) 269 ; Talbert (1984) 333 et n. 52 ; Duret (1986) 3277 ; Martin (1989) 202 ; Cizek (1995) 185 ; *FRHist* I 518 (Levick).

**16** Syme (1958a) 276, 288. De même Giua (1975) 357 n. 22 ; Duret (1986) 3280 ; Martin (2001) 7.

**17** Syme (1958a) 275–276, 288, 700 ; (1970) 104–107 ; aussi (1977) 235. Parmi ceux qui ont suivi cette opinion, Zecchini (1982) 1278 n. 57 ; Duret (1986) 3281–3282 ; Sage (1990) 1006–1007 ; Barnes (1998) 142 ; Platon (2016) 653.

**18** Consul en 35 p.C., proconsul d'Afrique vers 47 ; *CIL*, VIII 24585a, revu dans *AE*, 1934, 24 ; aussi Plin. *nat.* 24.43 ; 28.29 : *princeps ciuitatis* ; 37.81 ; Syme (1970) 92.

**19** Syme (1970) 104 n'exclut pas qu'une telle mention ait figuré dans le récit perdu de la chute de Séjan.

**20** Syme (1958a) 276 ; (1980) 111 ; Wilkes (1972) 198 ; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 65 ; Noè (1984) 84 ; Sage (1990) 1006 ; Barnes (1998) 142. Toutefois réserves de Martin (2001) 6 n. 16.

**21** Syme (1958a) 263 suggère qu'il aurait commencé en 14 p.C. Certains hésitent néanmoins à affirmer qu'il écrivit sur l'époque impériale ; Toohey (2015) 18. Il aurait en tout cas pu déjà traiter des guerres civiles ; *FRHist* I 523 (Levick). À l'inverse Cizek (1995) 186–187 le fait aller au-delà du règne de Tibère et estime qu'il a traité de Claude.

l'attention : Quintilien, lorsqu'il signale Servilius, met en exergue son style, mais émet apparemment une réserve quant à ses qualités d'historien (*inst.* 10.1.102) : *sententiis creber, sed minus pressus quam historiae auctoritas postulat*. C'est un reproche quelque peu similaire que formule Pline le Jeune sur Fannius, auteur d'un recueil de morts d'hommes illustres victimes de Néron (Plin. *epist.* 5.5.3), écrit représentatif du sous-genre des *exitus illustrium uirorum*,<sup>22</sup> qu'il caractérise comme un mélange d'histoire et de rhétorique : *inter sermonem historiamque medios*.<sup>23</sup> Un autre trait rapprocherait Servilius de Fannius : Fannius serait un parent de Fannia, la fille de Thrasea Paetus et l'épouse d'Helvidius Priscus,<sup>24</sup> et Servilius serait le beau-père de Barea Soranus, qui fut condamné en même temps que Thrasea sous Néron.<sup>25</sup> On pourrait sur cette base considérer que l'histoire de Servilius aurait pu être une sorte de prototype de la littérature ultérieure des *exitus* : une histoire volontiers discursive dans laquelle s'exprimait l'influence d'un stoïcisme militant amené à être incarné sous Néron par Thrasea. Un tel ouvrage n'aurait pas été dans la tradition de l'annalistique, et il ne se serait pas non plus prioritairement soucié de la psychologie de l'empereur; considéré comme tel, il ne serait guère propre à avoir fourni à Tacite et à Cassius Dion la trame de leur histoire de Tibère, même s'ils ont pu ponctuellement y trouver des détails sur les derniers moments de quelques notables. Dans le livre 6 des *Annales*, notamment, le suicide de L. Arruntius (*ann.* 6.28) et à un moindre degré celui de Cocceius Nerva (*ann.* 6.26.1–2) présentent des traits qu'on tient pour représentatifs du sous-genre des *exitus* ; pour l'un et l'autre passage, du reste, une utilisation de Servilius a été proposée.<sup>26</sup> On pourrait éventuellement y ajouter la mort de Sempronius Gracchus (*ann.* 1.53.5), peut-être aussi les derniers mots de Titius Sabinus (*ann.* 4.70.1–2). Enfin, il convient de souligner que le fragment attribué à Servilius

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**22** Sur ce sous-genre, Ronconi (1968) 206–236 ; il a régulièrement été suggéré que de tels écrits influencèrent Tacite ; Marx (1937–1938) ; Guttilla (1972–1973) ; Bellardi (1974) ; aussi D'Anna (1998) 81 ; Power (2014a) 13 ; Keitel (2014). Toutefois, si l'on en connaît un autre exemple pour l'époque de Domitien (Cn. Octavius Titinius Capito ; Plin. *epist.* 8.12.4–5), il n'y a pas de certitude qu'il y en ait existé pour le règne de Tibère.

**23** Ce serait une allusion à la présence de nombreuses parties dialogues ; Ronconi (1968) 222 ; aussi Alfonsi (1975) 46–47.

**24** Syme (1958a) 92 n. 3 ; Wilkes (1972) 188–189 ; Cizek (1995) 199–200 ; Zehnacker/Méthy (2011) 169.

**25** Syme (1970) 96–101 ; Wilkes (1972) 198–199 ; Sage (1990) 1006 ; aussi Noè (1984) 83 ; Zecchini (1999) 335 ; *FRHist* I 522 (Levick). Pour une autre généalogie Aigner (1972). Des liens avec les Stoïciens sont aussi attestés par l'influence qu'il exerça sur Perse (Prob. *vita Pers.* 5 : *coluit ut patrem Seruilium Nonianum*).

**26** Pour L. Arruntius, Syme (1958a) 276 n. 5 ; Wilkes (1972) 199 ; vue nuancée par Sage (1990) 1006. Pour Nerva, Syme (1970) 104–105 ; Wilkes (1972) 199 ; Sage (1990) 1006.

sur la base d'un passage de Suétone (*Tib.* 61.6) concerne la décision de tuer un certain Paconius; or il se pourrait bien que ce dernier fût le père de Paconius Agrippinus, cité par Tacite dans le cadre de son récit de la mort de Thræsea Paetus (*ann.* 16.28.1).<sup>27</sup>

En somme, l'appartenance de Servilius à la classe sénatoriale, si elle est le gage que Tacite le tenait en estime et l'a lu, n'apporte aucune garantie que son ouvrage, dont le format historiographique reste non défini, ait fourni la trame des *Annales*.<sup>28</sup> Il est plus vraisemblable que celle-ci soit issue d'un prédécesseur dont la probabilité est plus grande qu'il ait montré un équilibre entre événements traditionnels de l'annalistique (affaires intérieures, extérieures) et prise en compte du poids du prince (affaires dynastiques, cour impériale). Venant après Tite-Live et continué par Pline l'Ancien, fidèle de surcroît au format annalistique, Aufidius pourrait avoir été un tel auteur, quitte, pour Tacite, à chercher ailleurs (et notamment chez Servilius) le matériel de nature à renforcer la dimension sénatoriale de sa propre histoire.

## 2 Sources subsidiaires

La mention du nom du garant n'est pas fréquente dans l'historiographie ancienne dans la mesure où les historiens sont réticents à écorner, en se plaçant sous l'*auctoritas* d'autrui, l'*auctoritas* sur laquelle repose leur rapport avec leurs lecteurs. Lorsqu'ils le font, des enjeux d'auto-représentation interviennent : suggérer le sérieux de leur enquête, se donner des garants (ou des rivaux) prestigieux, s'inscrire dans une norme sociale ou littéraire...<sup>29</sup> Dans les *Annales* 1–6, à côté de renvois à des sources anonymes,<sup>30</sup> sont nommés Pline l'Ancien pour ses *Bella Germaniae* (*ann.* 1.69.2) et Agrippine la Jeune pour ses *Commentarii* (*ann.* 4.53.2) : dans les deux cas,<sup>31</sup> des sources subsidiaires, puisqu'elles ne couvraient pas la totalité de la période traitée. Dans le premier cas, l'information qu'apporte Tacite, à savoir qu'Agrippine l'Ancienne, se tenant à l'entrée du pont, remerciait

<sup>27</sup> Sur cette identification, Devillers (2003b) 613–614.

<sup>28</sup> Déjà dans ce sens Devillers (2003b) spéc. 616.

<sup>29</sup> Spéc., à propos des *Annales*, Devillers (2016a).

<sup>30</sup> Pour une liste Martin (1989) 200–208 ; Sage (1990) 998 n. 742.

<sup>31</sup> On pourrait y ajouter des *Graecorum annales*, évoqués à propos d'Arminius (*ann.* 2.88.3). Dans l'hexade néronienne sont cités Fabius Rusticus, Cluvius Rufus, les *Mémoires* de Corbulon et à nouveau Pline l'Ancien (mais cette fois pour son histoire *A Fine Aufidii Bassi*).

et louait les légions qui revenaient de Germanie, semble illustrer et dans une certaine mesure amplifier un trait – la mise en avant d’Agrippine l’Ancienne – qui aurait déjà figuré dans la source qu’il suivait. Dans le second cas, il apporterait une information non signalée dans sa source,<sup>32</sup> à savoir qu’Agrippine l’Ancienne demanda à Tibère l’autorisation (refusée) de se remarier. On peut en inférer deux types d’utilisation des sources subsidiaires : soit pour compléter, nuancer ou développer une information déjà consignée dans la source fil-rouge (mode-confrontation) ; soit pour introduire une information absente dans celle-ci (mode-insertion). Les grands événements, comme l’avènement de Tibère ou d’autres pour lesquels sont citées des variantes (mort de Drusus, installation à Capri...), se prêtent plutôt à voir se reproduire la première de ces façons de procéder. La narration de type annalistique, impliquant la constitution d’unités narratives qui correspondent à des années et consistant en la réunion d’une matière hétéroclite, se prête plutôt à la seconde.

En vue de préciser ces diverses exploitations des sources subsidiaires, la confrontation avec les autres historiens, et surtout Cassius Dion<sup>33</sup> – en particulier pour les années 14–16 et 32–37, pour lesquelles ce dernier est conservé en entier –, est capitale. Les deux auteurs sont en égale capacité de faire preuve d’initiative par rapport à un dossier documentaire partiellement identique – il leur arrive ainsi de livrer la même information dans le récit d’années différentes<sup>34</sup> –, et il est nécessaire de cerner au plus près l’intention de chacun. En outre, l’un et l’autre devaient être conscients des tendances de leurs sources,<sup>35</sup> ce qui les mettait en mesure de se tourner vers telle ou telle de celles-ci selon le type d’information, ou plutôt de complément d’information, qu’ils recherchaient en vue de souligner les orientations de leurs récits. Si, à cet égard, il est probable que Tacite et Cassius Dion aient procédé de cette manière sélective, il n’est pas assuré, par contre – et cela explique leurs différences –, qu’ils aient toujours recherché la même chose.

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**32** Dans la manière dont il dit avoir trouvé dans les commentaires de la jeune Agrippine un fait non repris chez les autres annalistes (*ann.* 4.53.2 : *id ego a scriptoribus annalium non traditum repperi in commentariis Agrippinae filiae*), Tacite laisse entendre qu’il a conscience d’une hiérarchie entre des annales, qui sont le fruit d’une collecte et d’une mise en récit d’informations diverses, et des ouvrages du type *commentarii*, qui sont pourvoyeurs de telles informations.

**33** Sur ce dernier, par ex. Kemezis (2014) ; Fromentin *et all.* (2016) ; Lange/Madsen (2016).

**34** Pour un exemple relatif à l’année 33, Devillers (2016b) 322–323. Dans de tels cas, il pourrait s’agir d’“informations flottantes”, provenant de sources subsidiaires qui ne suivaient pas une stricte trame chronologique (recueils d’anecdotes ou de citations...) ; cf. Power (2014b) 73 ; Duchêne (2018) 248, 252–255.

**35** Cf. Tac. *ann.* 13.20.2 (à propos de Fabius Rusticus) : *Sane Fabius inclinat ad laudes Senecae cuius amicitia floruit.*

En particulier, il ne semble pas qu'ils soient intéressés au Sénat de la même façon. L'intérêt de Dion est plutôt institutionnel ; c'est le Sénat dans son ensemble qui le retient et les relations avec cette assemblée constituent un critère dans son évaluation de l'action d'un empereur. Tacite, revisitant et adaptant la tradition des *exempla*,<sup>36</sup> est davantage attentif aux sénateurs eux-mêmes, à leur comportement face au prince. Cet intérêt pour la personnalité des sénateurs aurait poussé Tacite à compléter la source fil-rouge par un matériel "sénatorial" que Dion n'aurait pas ignoré, mais qu'il aurait exploité soit à une moindre échelle, soit dans une perspective différente, moins individualisée. Cela expliquerait parallèlement que figurent dans les *Annales* de nombreux discours de sénateurs absents chez Dion.<sup>37</sup>

Dans son évocation de l'année 32, qui présente le second plus haut pourcentage de matériel sénatorial dans les livres 1–6,<sup>38</sup> Tacite précise avoir consigné des procès non relatés par d'autres (*ann.* 6.7.5 : *Neque sum ignarus a plerisque scriptoribus omissa multorum pericula et poenas, dum copia fatiscunt aut, quae ipsis nimia et maesta fuerant, ne pari taedio lecturos adficerent uerentur ; nobis pleraque digna cognitu obuenerent quamquam ab aliis incelebrata*). Cette remarque, qui vient après qu'il dit avoir cherché en vain l'origine d'un accusé, donne à penser qu'il se réfère à un effort heuristique particulier.<sup>39</sup> On a alors songé en premier lieu à une consultation des *acta senatus*. En effet, même si Tacite ne les signale comme source qu'à une seule reprise (*ann.* 15.74.3) et même si d'autres documents ne sont pas à négliger (*acta diurna*,<sup>40</sup> notamment), un acquis des dernières années, principalement depuis les travaux de R. Syme,<sup>41</sup> et malgré les nuances qui ont pu être apportées,<sup>42</sup> a été d'établir un recours significatif à ces archives

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**36** Turpin (2008).

**37** Sur cette différence entre Tacite et Dion, par ex. Platon (2016) 658.

**38** Woodman (2017) 118 ; le plus haut pourcentage est observable pour l'année 22.

**39** Woodman (2017) 118 voit toutefois dans le lieu commun de la recherche infructueuse un procédé de l'historien pour accroître son *auctoritas*. Pour ce qui est de *ann.* 6.7.5, si certaines des affaires que Tacite rapporte avant et après cette déclaration – celles qui sont évoquées aussi par Suétone (Cotta Messalinus, Vitia) ou par Cassius Dion (Terentius) – pourraient avoir figuré dans la tradition littéraire antérieure, plusieurs autres semblent effectivement lui avoir été propres.

**40** Les *acta diurna* sont cités comme sources en *ann.* 3.3.2 et mentionnés, mais non comme sources, en *ann.* 16.22.3. Cf. Devillers (2003a) 64–67.

**41** Par ex. Syme (1958a) 186–188 (pour les *Histoires*), 278–285 (pour *ann.* 1–6), 295–296 (pour *ann.* 11–16) ; (1958b) 192 ; (1970) 81 ; (1974) 489–490 ; (1977) 235, 248 (spéc. pour *ann.* 3) ; (1982)... Sur la question avant R. Syme, Devillers (2003a) 56 n. 488, avec bibliographie.

**42** Parmi ceux qui ont remis, dans quelque mesure, en question un usage abondant des *acta Senatus* Momigliano (1961a) ; Townend (1962) 358–368 ; Flach (1973a) 60, 71–72 ; (1973b) 93 ; (1973c) 101 n. 58.



sénatoriales (cf. annexe 1).<sup>43</sup> On leur devrait en particulier la profusion dans les *Annales* de noms et de précisions sur le déroulement des séances du Sénat qui ne sont pas signalés par ailleurs.<sup>44</sup>

Plusieurs observations indiquent le caractère subsidiaire de ces recours aux *acta senatus*, utilisés en complément d'une information issue des sources littéraires.<sup>45</sup> Ainsi, le seul renvoi explicite qui y est fait (*ann.* 15.74.3) intervient à propos d'un détail relatif à la conjuration de Pison, épisode pour lequel Tacite dispose de nombreux autres garants (Fabius Rusticus, *exitus*, témoignages oraux...).<sup>46</sup> De même, en *ann.* 1.72–81, passage pour lequel un recours aux *acta Senatus* a été suggéré, l'historien s'inspire également de sources littéraires, ainsi qu'il le dit lui-même (*ann.* 1.76.4 ; 80.2 ; 81.1) et que le montre la comparaison avec Cassius Dion et Suétone.<sup>47</sup> Un autre exemple serait le procès de Clutorius Priscus (*ann.* 3.49–50) : dans les *Annales* est produit un discours de Lepidus qui ne figure pas chez Cassius Dion (*Epit. Xiph.* 57.20.3–4) et que lui aurait inspiré la consultation des *acta senatus*,<sup>48</sup> soit qu'il ait trouvé dans ceux-ci un tel discours qu'il reproduit ou réélabore, soit même que la seule mention d'une prise de parole de Lepidus, personnage qui dans l'hexade a valeur d'*exemplum*,<sup>49</sup> lui ait donné l'idée de prêter à celui-ci un discours de son propre cru. Pour le procès de Pison, aujourd'hui mieux connu à la suite d'une découverte épigraphique,<sup>50</sup> le recours à des informations autres que documentaires a été également constaté,<sup>51</sup> expliquant la connaissance par l'historien d'arguments favorables à Pison (*spéc. ann.* 2.70.2 ; 3.16.1).<sup>52</sup>

Pour subsidiaire qu'elle fût, la consultation des *acta*, qui impliquait à un stade ultérieur la réécriture et la mise en récit des informations connues par ce

43 Sur les *acta senatus*, de façon générale, Coudry (1994).

44 Talbert (1984) 329 note que plus de 200 noms apparaissent dans les relations que fait Tacite de débats sénatoriaux. Pour l'année 15, pour ce qui regarde les rubriques qui regroupent des événements d'ordre intérieur, Tacite produit dix-neuf noms de personnes, Cassius Dion un seul ; toutefois sur la tendance générale de Cassius Dion à ne pas préciser les noms (ou les nombres), Hose (2007) 464.

45 Dans ce sens Barnes (1998) 142–143.

46 Par ex. Paratore (1951) 705–706 ; Devillers (1999) 50.

47 On notera la ressemblance entre 1.75.1 et Suet., *Tib.*, 33 ; D.C. 57.7.6. Sur la comparaison avec Cassius Dion, Swan (1987) 282–285 ; (1997) 2531–2532.

48 Syme (1977) 248.

49 Strunk (2010) 123–125 ; aussi Sinclair (1995) 164–184.

50 Eck *et al.* (1996) ; Damon/Takács (1999).

51 Seewald (1998) ; Talbert (1999) 89–90 (qui hésite même à penser que les *acta* sont la principale source pour l'épisode) ; Flower (1999) 110 ; Giua (2000) 265, 272–274 ; aussi Potter (1999) 40.

52 Zecchini (1999) 317, 326, 332.

biais, n'en aurait pas moins été un aspect “novateur” du travail de Tacite.<sup>53</sup> Elle lui procurait matière à alimenter une réflexion sur le comportement des sénateurs, lui permettait de se singulariser d'une historiographie impériale focalisée sur le prince et contribuait à souligner sa propre qualité de sénateur. Au demeurant d'autres écrits auraient été lus dans le même souci de renforcer une dimension sénatoriale peut-être sous-représentée dans la source fil-rouge: des (auto)biographies d'hommes éminents incluant le cas échéant l'évocation de leur commandement proconsulaire (Poppaeus Sabinus, Caecina, P. Pomponius Secundus...) <sup>54</sup> et des archives familiales, <sup>55</sup> notamment.

Cela dit, si une préoccupation pour le Sénat semble avoir conduit Tacite vers des sources complémentaires de facture sénatoriale, les deux seules mentions par leur nom de sources de type subsidiaire dans les *Annales* 1–6 concernent un membre de la *domus Augusti*, en l'occurrence Agrippine l'Ancienne (*supra*). Cela est symptomatique d'un intérêt pour Germanicus et sa famille. <sup>56</sup> Ainsi, pour les campagnes en Germanie, Tacite se serait tourné vers les *Bella Germaniae* en 20 livres de Pline l'Ancien (Plin. *epist.* 3.5.4). L'ouvrage, cité par Tacite en *ann.* 1.69.2, rédigé sous Claude et entrepris après que Drusus I père de Germanicus fut apparu en rêve à l'auteur (Plin. *epist.* 3.5.4), aurait fait la part belle à ces deux personnages : il aurait culminé avec les guerres de Drusus I (4–7 p.C.) <sup>57</sup> et aurait donné plus de relief à Germanicus. <sup>58</sup> Corolairement, il aurait diminué la part de Tibère, <sup>59</sup> lequel aurait été en avant dans d'autres ouvrages sur les campagnes germaniques, y compris le *Bellum Germanicum* d'Aufidius Bassus. <sup>60</sup> En tout cas, le

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53 Talbert (1984) 326–334, spéc. 333, sur l'idée de “novateur”, à laquelle fait écho Giua (1998) 40).

54 Pour Poppaeus Sabinus, Pfordt (1998) 58. Pour Caecina, Koestermann (1963) 184, 219 ; Hurley (1989) 335 n. 43. Une biographie de P. Pomponius Secundus, avait été écrite par Pline l'Ancien (Plin. *epist.* 3.5.3) ; sur le portrait favorable de ce personnage dans les *Annales*, Pfordt (1998) 103–104, 147.

55 Par ex. Marsh (1926) 289–310 ; Franco (2007) 100 ; aussi Walker (1952) 92–93, 98 n. 1.

56 Voir aussi évocation d'une enquête sur un homme qui usurpa l'identité de Drusus III, un fils de Germanicus, *ann.* 5.103 : *neque nos originem finemue eius rei ultra comperimus*.

57 Marincola (1997) 47–51.

58 Syme (1958a) 288 ; Sallmann (1984) 578–601 ; Hurley (1989) 333–334 ; Cizek (1995) 191 ; *FRHist* I 530 (Levick). C'est à l'influence de ce texte de Pline l'Ancien qu'on devrait le contraste établi, dans le récit des campagnes, entre Germanicus et Vitellius ; Duchêne (2014) 180–181.

59 On relève à cet égard que, dans l'*Histoire naturelle*, dans aucun des deux passages où il évoque Tibère en relation avec la Germanie (*nat.* 7.84 ; 19.90), Pline n'évoque d'action militaire de celui-ci ; de Oliveira (1992) 223.

60 Sur l'éloge de Tibère dans cet ouvrage, Syme (1958a) 274–275, 698 ; aussi Cizek (1995) 191 ; *FRHist* I 519 (Levick). Pour sa part, Noè (1984) 82 suggère qu'il y était livré un jugement équilibré

récit de la bataille d'Idistavise laisse voir la connaissance de plusieurs traditions (spéc. *ann.* 2.17.5). D'autres textes, que Tacite connaissait, valorisaient également Germanicus: on citera la poésie de Pedo Albinovanus,<sup>61</sup> ainsi qu'une propagande dite "germanicenne" ou "julienne", qui aurait largement pénétré la tradition historiographique.<sup>62</sup>

Cette attention portée à Germanicus participe d'un intérêt plus vaste pour les questions dynastiques. Dans cet esprit, l'historien aurait consulté des autobiographies impériales,<sup>63</sup> qui devaient s'en préoccuper largement. Les *commentarii* d'Agrippine la Jeune, cités en *ann.* 4.53, relèvent de cette catégorie. Le fait qu'en relation avec cet écrit, Tacite présente Agrippine comme *Neronis principis mater*, pourrait du reste apporter une indication sur son caractère dynastique.<sup>64</sup> L'ouvrage aurait également été utilisé par Cassius Dion,<sup>65</sup> les deux historiens n'ayant pas seulement en commun la source "fil-rouge", mais aussi diverses sources subsidiaires.

L'intérêt de Tacite pour la dynastie inclut un Jugement cohérent et bien informé sur Auguste. Pour ce faire, il disposait d'une historiographie augustéenne, qu'il distingue des autres productions de l'historiographie impériale dès la préface des *Annales* (1.1.2) : *temporibusque Augusti dicendis non defuere decora ingenia, donec gliscente adulatione deterrentur*. On retiendra M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (consul en 31 a.C.), dont le travail d'historien est signalé en *ann.* 4.34.1, ainsi que Cremutius Cordus, pour autant qu'il ait traité, totalement ou partiellement, d'Auguste.<sup>66</sup> Cremutius fut traîné devant les tribunaux sous Tibère et Tacite lui prête un discours (*ann.* 4.34–35), dont il n'est pas aisé de déterminer l'origine

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sur le successeur d'Auguste. Certains ont même Jugé possible que l'origine du portrait favorable de Germanicus dans les *Annales* 1–2 se soit trouvée dans ce *Bellum Germanicum* d'Aufidius Bassus; Questa (1957) 313 n. 85; Tandoi (1967) 41–46. Sur l'utilisation d'Aufidius Bassus pour le récit des campagnes en Germanie, *FRHist* I 521 (Levick).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Devillers (2003a) 53. Ajouter Berlan-Bajard (2018).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Devillers (2003a) 46–47. Ajouter Pettinger (2012) *passim*. Par ailleurs, sur la base de *ann.* 2.43.5–6, où Tacite parle de l'existence de clans à la cour de Tibère, certains favorisant Germanicus et d'autres Drusus II, C. Questa a fondé une partie de ses recherches sur la distinction entre un filon "germanicien" et un filon "drusien" dans les sources des *Annales* 1–6. Voir aussi Giua (2000) 265.

<sup>63</sup> Sur celles-ci, voir Lewis (1993).

<sup>64</sup> Malloch (2014) 8.

<sup>65</sup> Sordi (1999) 16.

<sup>66</sup> Dans ce sens Noè (1984) 72; Cizek (1995) 183. De même, Syme (1958a) 141 n. 5 voit en lui la source possible d'Appien pour le triumvirat et le règne d'Auguste. Pour plus de prudence: Rich (1990) 92 n. 20; Marincola (1999) 402; *FRHist* I 499 (Levick).

(*acta senatus*? archives familiales ? recueil de discours sénatoriaux ? pure élaboration taciteenne ?), ce qui illustre les nombreuses formes et voies que peut emprunter l'information subsidiaire taciteenne. Les *Res gestae Diui Augusti* ont aussi été utilisées,<sup>67</sup> davantage sur le mode de l'allusion signifiante<sup>68</sup> que comme source d'information.

Enfin, Tacite, outre l'information fournie par des sources littéraires, avait accès aux canaux de l'auto-représentation impériale : monnaies, monuments, inscriptions,<sup>69</sup> etc. En joignant ceux-ci à des textes émanant du prince – commentaires, *laudes*, discours, lettres<sup>70</sup> –, il pouvait connaître la version pro-impériale des événements et celle-ci était à même de nourrir sa narration, ne serait-ce qu'à travers le souci de la nuancer, de la détourner, d'en prendre le contre-pied.

C'est dans ce cadre que nous évoquerons Velleius Paterculus (un cas qui pourrait fournir un point de comparaison pour Sénèque le Père).<sup>71</sup> Il est, sur Tibère, une source potentielle, et pourtant Tacite ne le sollicite guère comme tel,<sup>72</sup> principalement sans doute en raison de sa posture pro-tibérienne. Ainsi, son évocation du chef germain Maroboduus ne comprend pas un certain nombre d'informations connues par Velleius dont l'évocation l'aurait amené à signaler les succès de Tibère en Germanie.<sup>73</sup> Son influence pourrait avoir été plus sensible lorsque les circonstances de la narration amenaient Tacite à être moins sévère envers Tibère, ainsi dans la digression sur la situation de l'empire au début du livre 4,<sup>74</sup> encore qu'on ne puisse pas en l'occurrence vraiment parler d'un emprunt. En fait, si Tacite noue un rapport avec Velleius, il se situe au niveau d'une

**67** Par ex. Syme (1958a) 272 ; Urban (1979) ; O'Gorman (1995) 101 ; Giua (1998) 58 ; aussi (2000) 263.

**68** Bérard (1991) 3030. Pour prendre un exemple, en *ann.* 4.6.4, à propos de l'annone, *impedio diligentiaque* renverrait à *RGDA* 5.2 : *impensa et cura* ; Woodman (2006) 180.

**69** Devillers (2003a) 71–73.

**70** Tacite se réfère très fréquemment aux missives de Tibère et leur donne un grand rôle dans sa représentation de ce prince ; Morello (2006) ; Galtier (2008) ; il reste néanmoins peu sûr que la correspondance officielle de celui-ci ait jamais été publiée ; Bardou (1940b) 118 ne le pense pas ; aussi Morello (2006) 332–333. De toute manière, même si un recueil de lettres et de discours de ce prince avait existé, il aurait été nécessairement sélectif. Il demeure par contre que la diffusion des discours prononcés par les empereurs, notamment dans le cadre de débats sénatoriaux, ait été une pratique qui se serait répandue au cours du Principat ; Buongiorno (2016) 43.

**71** Sur quelques rapprochements entre Velleius et Sénèque le Père, Sussman (1972) 207.

**72** Syme (1958a) 367–368 ; Benario (1975) 81 ; Martin (1989) 202, 246 n. 30 ; (2001) 6.

**73** Gowing (1990) 322–325. En *ann.* 2.63.4, la proximité entre la formulation de Tacite (*tutam [...] honoratamque sedem in Italia*) et Vell. 129.3 (*ut honorate ita secure*) a été expliquée par le recours par les deux auteurs à un même discours impérial ; Woodman (2010a) 307.

**74** Paratore (1949) 110.

intertextualité : ressemblances du portrait de Sallustius Crispus (*ann.* 3.30.2–3) avec celui de Mécène chez Velleius (2.88.2–3),<sup>75</sup> entre le pseudo-Agrippa Postumus (*ann.* 2.39.2 : *ad maiora et magis praecipitia conuersus*) et Agrippa Postumus lui-même (Vell. 2.112.7 : *in praecipitia conuersus* (2.112.7),<sup>76</sup> à propos des actions de Tibère (*ann.* 1.6.1 : *Primum facinus noui principatus* ; cf. Vell. 2.124.3 : *primum principalium eius operum*).<sup>77</sup>

D'autres sources pourraient assurément être évoquées, mais au total, nous retiendrons qu'à partir d'une source fil-rouge qui aurait été un récit annalistique, à la fois intéressé au Sénat et attentif à la personnalité du prince, Tacite, en vue de forger le type d'"histoire sénatoriale" qui est sienne, se serait tourné de préférence vers deux types de documents subsidiaires : ceux qui lui permettraient, d'une part, de donner plus de consistance aux figures individuelles de sénateurs, d'autre part, pour ce qui est de l'empereur, de bien apparaître le phénomène dynastique, en restant notamment critique de l'auto-représentation impériale (Annexes 2 et 3).

### 3 Sénèque le Père

Pour ce qui est de l'ouvrage historique de Sénèque le Père,<sup>78</sup> il est prudent de renoncer à le voir comme la source fil-rouge : faute de références dans la littérature antique ou de certitude quant à son format historiographique, et aussi parce que le seul fragment relatif à Tibère qui pourrait lui être attribué (*infra*) contient une version de la mort de ce prince qui ne figure ni chez Tacite, ni chez Cassius Dion. Il reste possible néanmoins, compte tenu de son antériorité probable par rapport à cette source fil-rouge, qu'il ait été connu de celle-ci et que, par ce biais, il ait exercé une influence indirecte sur l'historiographie impériale. Cela n'exclurait par ailleurs pas que, sur certains points, Tacite l'ait également consulté directement.<sup>79</sup>

Pouvons-nous être plus précis et faire l'hypothèse d'une influence sur certains thèmes, sur certains passages ? Nous ne disposons en fait que de peu d'éléments sur l'ouvrage historique de Sénèque le Père et des opinions contrastées, voire contradictoires, ont été émises quant à sa vision du Principat, d'Auguste ou

<sup>75</sup> Byrne (1999) 344.

<sup>76</sup> Woodman (2009) 2–3 ; Tamás (2014) 292–293.

<sup>77</sup> Klingner (1965) 505 n. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Sur celui-ci, spéc. Sussman (1978), 137–152.

<sup>79</sup> Pour l'idée que l'ouvrage historique de Sénèque influença Tacite, Syme (1958a) 277.

de Tibère.<sup>80</sup> Traditionnellement, les principales pièces du dossier sont : a) le témoignage de Sénèque le Philosophe établissant l'existence d'un écrit historique de son père (*Appendix* - T1) ; b) un fragment de Lactance (*inst.* 7.15.14), qu'on ne sait à quel Sénèque attribuer,<sup>81</sup> établissant un parallèle entre les phases de la vie d'un homme et celles de l'histoire de Rome ;<sup>82</sup> c) les *Suasoires* et les *Controverses*, dans lesquelles sont abordées ou perceptibles quelques thématiques de type historique ;<sup>83</sup> d) un passage de Suétone relatif à la mort de Tibère, dans lequel le biographe produit de multiples versions,<sup>84</sup> dont l'une sur la foi d'un Sénèque (Suet. *Tib.*, 73.2 ; *Appendix* - F1).<sup>85</sup>

Un thème semble revenir dans la plupart des pièces de ce dossier : les guerres civiles, évoquées dans le témoignage de Sénèque le Philosophe (*ab initio bellorum civilium*) ainsi que dans le passage de Lactance (*bellis lacerata civilibus*) et bien présent dans les *Controverses* et *Suasoires*.<sup>86</sup> Admettant qu'une telle thématique ait tenu à cœur à Sénèque le Père, il est possible qu'elle se soit répercutée dans son histoire dans le récit d'événements postérieurs à l'instauration du Principat. Un des moments les plus propices à la réactivation du thème aurait été précisément la première succession impériale, qui drainait son lot d'incertitudes. Il

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**80** Pour ce qui est du Principat, dans le sens d'une critique : Rostagni (1964) 410–412 ; Klingner (1958) 201 ; Sage (1990) 997. Dans le sens d'une opinion plus favorable : Noè (1984) 63–64, 67–68. Pour ce qui est d'Auguste, dans le sens d'une évaluation positive : Griffin (1972) 13–14 ; Fairweather (1984) 529 ; aussi Klingner (1958) 199 ; André (1999) 172. Pour la présence de réticences, voire de critiques : Torri (2002–2003) ; Petrovicova (2015). Pour ce qui est de Tibère, dans le sens d'une forme d'hostilité : Gascou (1984) 265, 274–275 ; *aliter* Sussman (1978) 144.

**81** Griffin (1972) 9–12 (+ 19, pour une bibliographie) attribue le fragment à Sénèque le Philosophe ; aussi Archambault (1966) ; Sussman (1972) 201 n. 19, 206 ; Noè (1984) 68 ; Inglebert (1996) 130 n. 277 ; Mineo (2006) 100 n. 102 ; Woodman (2010b) 58–59 ; déjà Klotz (1901) ; prudence chez Wilkes (1972) 184. Bibliographie aussi chez Fairweather (1984) 528 n. 57.

**82** Pour une discussion du passage, Castiglioni (1928) 454–475 ; aussi Noè (1984) 64–68. Sur ce schéma organique dans l'historiographie romaine, Archambault (1966).

**83** Ces ouvrages ne recensent toutefois que quatre brèves mentions de Tibère ; *contr.* 7.1.27 ; 7.5.11 ; 9.4.19 ; *suas.* 3.6. Il convient de plus de rester conscient de leur spécificité, en particulier des *Controverses* dont la structure n'est pas en soi historique (contrairement notamment au *Brutus* de Cicéron) ; Guérin (2009) spéc. 9–22. Cela n'empêche pas qu'il s'y trouve une vision historique de l'évolution de la rhétorique, comme un déclin continu, ainsi que cela apparaît en particulier dans la préface du livre 1 ; Guérin (2009) 29–38 ; aussi Sussman (1972).

**84** Gascou (1984) 380–381 (aussi 795).

**85** Pour une identification avec Sénèque le Père, Wilkes (1972) 184 ; Noè (1984) 70 et n. 270 ; dans ce sens Sussman (1972) 201, n. 18 ; *FRHist* III 596 (Levick). Avec Sénèque le Philosophe, Syme (1958a) 277 n. 4 ; Griffin (1972) 10, 19.

**86** Voir par ex. analyse de *contr.* 1, par Danesi Marioni (2003).

en va en tout cas ainsi dans le récit que les *Annales* tacitéennes consacrent à l'avènement de Tibère, une section de laquelle tout rappel des guerres civiles n'est pas absent et dans laquelle il est manifeste que Tacite recourt à plusieurs sources (ce qui ouvre la possibilité d'une consultation, parmi d'autres, de Sénèque le Père). Au-delà, cela pourrait être aussi sous l'influence d'un Sénèque le Père particulièrement marqué par les conflits civils que, dans son évocation des premières années du règne de Tibère, Tacite se montre particulièrement sensible aux dangers qui auraient alors menacé la stabilité de l'empire. On songe au procès de Libo Drusus et à la tentative d'un pseudo-Agrippa Postumus. Suétone (qui connaîtrait l'œuvre historique de Sénèque le Père, pour autant que soit à elle qu'il se réfère en *Tib.* 73.2) écrit que ces deux événements causaient l'hésitation de Tibère à accepter le pouvoir (*Tib.* 25.1 : *cunctandi causa erat metus undique imminentium discriminum*). Or à la fois quand il parle de Libo (*ann.* 2.29.2) et quand il parle du pseudo-Agrippa Postumus (*ann.* 2.40.2), Tacite fait écho à des variantes dans la tradition. Cela entend l'existence de plusieurs sources ; à nouveau, Sénèque le Père pourrait être l'une d'elles. C'est dans le même sens que va l'hypothèse qui fait figurer Sénèque le Père parmi les historiens qui auraient pu écrire sur la mort d'Agrippa Postumus.<sup>87</sup> On rappellera en outre que le passage dans lequel Suétone invoque le témoignage d'un Sénèque se situe également dans un contexte de succession impériale (celle de Tibère, cette fois).

Par ailleurs, l'histoire de Sénèque le Père aurait couvert l'ensemble du règne d'Auguste. Bien qu'il faille user de prudence – Tacite connaissait d'autres historiens de l'époque augustéenne –, on se demandera si Sénèque n'a pas, dans son histoire, conservé un intérêt, y compris dans son évocation du règne de Tibère, pour certains personnages – hors dynastie<sup>88</sup> – qui étaient attachés à l'époque d'Auguste. Un exemple en serait Sallustius Crispus ; celui-ci, traité avec quelque connotation augustéenne (il est comparé à Mécène), apparaît dans deux épisodes pour lesquels on a déjà évoqué la possibilité d'un recours à Sénèque le Père : l'avènement de Tibère et la tentative du faux Agrippa Postumus. Ces évocations de Sallustius Crispus ont conduit à imaginer l'existence d'une (auto)biographie de cet homme.<sup>89</sup> Pourquoi ne pas l'attribuer à l'intérêt particulier qu'aurait pu lui accorder une source qui avait traité l'âge d'Auguste, tel Sénèque le Père ? Dans ce même registre, on citera, toujours dans le récit de l'avènement, la mention de

<sup>87</sup> Pettinger (2012) 178 n. 28.

<sup>88</sup> Sur la discrétion de Sénèque le Père sur les membres de la famille impériale, Torri (2002–2003) 128.

<sup>89</sup> Furneaux (1896) 21 n. 1 ; cf. Pettinger (2012) 178 n. 28. L'hypothèse demeure néanmoins fragile, vu le goût de Sallustius Crispus pour le secret ; *ann.* 1.6.3.

la *ferocia* d'Asinius Pollion (*ann.* 1.12.4),<sup>90</sup> et plus, encore, à la fin du livre 3, pointé dans la construction de l'hexade, les évocations successives de Labeo et Capito (*ann.* 3.75.1), puis de Iunia, sœur de M. Brutus (*ann.* 3.76). Tous ces passages peuvent remonter à une source subsidiaire attentive au sort de personnages d'époque augustéenne et rien n'interdit de penser qu'il s'agit de Sénèque le Père. On pourrait ajouter le procès de Cremutius Cordus ; Tacite fait prononcer à celui-ci un discours sur la liberté de parole de l'historien (*ann.* 4.34–35) qui ne figure pas chez Cassius Dion et dont le propos est tel qu'il est loin d'être assuré qu'il ait été produit dans les *acta senatus*.<sup>91</sup> Tacite pourrait l'avoir inventé, à tout le moins il l'a fortement retravaillé. Il reste qu'un prototype aurait pu s'en trouver chez Sénèque le Père qui produit des extraits de Cremutius dans ses *Suasoires* et semble avoir été attentif à la question de la vérité historique (cf. Sen. *vita patr.* F 15 Haase : *unde primum ueritas retro abiit*).

Enfin, il faut envisager un recours à Sénèque le Père sur le mode de l'allusion. Dans ce sens, l'expression *unde primum ueritas retro abiit* par laquelle Sénèque le Philosophe se réfère à l'ouvrage de son père et qui pourrait avoir été reprise à la préface de celui-ci, a été rapprochée du prologue des *Histoires* (*ueritas [...] infracta* : Tac. *hist.*, 1.1 ; cf. aussi D.C. 53.19).<sup>92</sup> Nous suggérerons pour notre part un autre exemple possible d'intertextualité. Au terme du livre 6, une notice nécrologique de Tibère (*ann.* 6.51) revient sur l'évolution de Tibère. La fin du passage, qui est aussi celle du livre, en décrit la dernière étape (*ann.* 6.51.3) : *postremo in scelera simul ac dedecora prorupit posquam remoto pudore et metu suo tantum ingenio utebatur*. Dans ces mots, une allusion à Salluste a été reconnue : les mots *remoto pudore et metu*, qui signifient ici que Tibère, n'éprouva plus ni honte ni crainte après que ses rivaux, et en particulier Germanicus, eurent disparu, rappellent Sall. *hist.* 1.12 : *postquam remoto metu Punico*, où est affirmé le déclin des mœurs des Romains après l'élimination de Carthage. Tacite applique ainsi le motif du *metus hostilis* non plus à la collectivité, mais à un seul homme : le prince.<sup>93</sup> Mais les mots qui viennent ensuite et clôturent le livre, *suo tantum ingenio utebatur*, reprennent eux aussi une idée qui se trouve dans le contexte de la chute de Carthage, et avec le même verbe, *uti*, non plus chez Salluste, mais précisément

<sup>90</sup> Zecchini (1982) 1278 n. 57 y voit une insertion, mais l'attribue à Servilius.

<sup>91</sup> Canfora (1993) 236, lequel a pensé à un discours conservé par les descendants de Cremutius.

<sup>92</sup> Klingner (1958) 199 ; Damon (2003) 179 ; aussi, mais de manière moins explicite Horstkotte (1989) 116 n. 26.

<sup>93</sup> Mac Culloch (1984) 65–66 ; Noè (1984) 98 ; Martin (1989) 226 ; (2001) 195 ; Devillers (1994) 304 ; Vielberg (1996) 452 ; Woodman (2017) 299 : “Sallust’ theory has been transferred from Roman society as a whole and applied significantly to the individuals who now dominated and represented Roman society: the *princeps*”.



dans le passage que Lactance prête à un “Sénèque” et qui compare le destin de Rome à celui d’un homme : *sublata enim Carthagine [...] cum iam bellorum materia deficeret, uiribus suis male uteretur, quibus se ipsa confecit*. Bien entendu, ce n’est qu’avec une extrême prudence, et sous réserve d’identifier le “Sénèque” cité par Lactance avec le Père, que nous suggérerions de voir un écho à ce dernier : la similitude d’idée est certes incontestable,<sup>94</sup> mais c’est un lieu commun ; de même, il est loin d’être avéré que la citation de Lactance est littérale<sup>95</sup> et donc que le verbe *uti* est bien celui qu’avait utilisé “Sénèque”. Ces deux restrictions valent aussi pour un autre rapprochement entre le passage de Lactance et un autre passage “historico-moral” significatif des *Annales*, l’exkursus sur les lois en *ann.* 3.26.3 : *postquam regum pertaesum, leges maluerunt*, cf. *Lact. inst.* 7.15.14 : *maluisse legibus obtemperare quam regibus*. Néanmoins, si l’on dépassait ces réticences, on trouverait assurément sens, en fin d’hexade, à cette conjonction de deux échos, l’un à Salluste (*remoto [...] metu*), l’autre à Sénèque le Père (*suo [...] ingenio uteretur*) : deux auteurs, historiens de surcroît, qui ont évoqué la déchéance de la République<sup>96</sup> et que Tacite évoquerait ici à propos de la déchéance du prince.

## Annexe 1

**Tab. 2:** Utilisations possibles des *acta senatus* en *Annales*, 1–6. Quelques hypothèses ; liste non exhaustive ; cf. Devillers (2003a) 56–62, complété

Ensemble des notices nécrologiques consacrées à des personnages de haut rang  
 Diverses affaires relatives à la Germanie  
 Honneurs funèbres à Auguste (1.8.3–4)  
 Seconde session du Sénat après la mort d’Auguste (1.10.8–15.2)  
 Triomphe décerné à Germanicus (1.55.1)  
 Affaires traitées au Sénat durant l’année 15 (1.72–81)  
 Échange de courrier entre Tibère et Germanicus (2.26.2–4)

<sup>94</sup> On retrouve chez les deux passages l’idée d’une division en périodes (*tempora*) : *morum quoque tempora illi diuersa* (Tacite sur Tibère) ; *non inscite Seneca Romanae urbis tempora distribuit in aetates* (Lactance sur l’histoire de Rome).

<sup>95</sup> Par ex. Klotz (1901) 431.

<sup>96</sup> Au demeurant l’approche de la décadence de la rhétorique, considérée elle aussi selon un angle politico-moral, telle qu’on la perçoit dans les *Controverses* ne serait pas sans présenter de ressemblances avec le modèle que met en évidence le *Dialogue des Orateurs* (spéc. discours de Maternus) ; cf. Sussman (1972).

- Procès de Libo Drusus (2.27–32), notamment décisions prises à l’issue de celui-ci (2.32)
- Réactions du Sénat et de l’empereur au tremblement de terre qui détruisit douze villes d’Asie (2.47)
- Guerre contre Tacfarinas (2.52 ; 3.20–21 ; 73–74 ; 4.23–26)
- Drusus II en Germanie et sort réservé à Maroboduus après sa soumission (2.62–63)
- Rapports entre Germanicus et Pison en Syrie (2.69.2–3)
- Derniers moments et ultimes paroles de Germanicus (2.71)
- Honneurs décernés à Germanicus après sa mort (2.83)
- Mesures contre les superstitions égyptiennes et judaïques (2.85.4)
- Choix d’une vestale (2.86)
- Procès de Pison (3.12–19), spéc. les décisions prises à l’issue du procès (3.17.4 ; 18.2)
- Procès d’Aemilia Lepida (3.22–23)
- Débat sur l’adoucissement de la loi Papia Poppaea (3.25.1)
- Honneurs en faveur de Néron, fils de Germanicus (3.29.1)
- Affaires traitées à Rome par Drusus II (3.31)
- Désignation d’un proconsul en Afrique (3.32 ; 35)
- Débat sur le séjour des femmes de gouverneurs de province (3.33–34)
- Procès de Caesius Cordus (3.38.1 ; 70.1)
- Procès d’Antistius Vetus (3.38.2)
- Troubles en Thrace (3.38.2–39)
- Certaines informations sur le soulèvement de Florus et Sacrovir (3.40–47)
- Funérailles nationales pour Sulpicius Quirinus (3.48.1)
- Procès de Clutorius Priscus (3.49–50)
- Mesures contre le luxe (3.52)
- Message de Tibère demandant la puissance tribunicienne pour Drusus II (3.56.3–4) et propositions successives de sénateurs (3.57)
- Informations relatives au *flamen Dialis* (3.58–59 ; 71 ; 4.16)
- Cérémonies décrétées pour la puissance tribunicienne de Drusus II (3.59.2)
- Débat sur le droit d’asile dans les temples de Grèce et d’Asie (3.60–63)
- Procès de C. Silanus (3.66–68)
- Maladie de Livie et organisation de jeux (3.64 ; aussi 71.1)
- Débat sur le luxe (3.69)
- Restauration de la basilique de Paulus demandée par Aemilius Lepidus (3.72.1)
- Restauration du théâtre de Pompée (3.72.2)
- Vote des ornements triomphaux à Blaesus (3.72.4)
- Récit des années 24 et 25 p.C. (4.1–33)

Décrets et discours à l'occasion de la prise de la toge virile par Drusus (4.4.1)  
 Intention de Tibère de visiter les provinces (4.4.2)  
 Députations de cités grecques sur le droit d'asile (4.14.1–2)  
 Décisions prises après le procès et le suicide de C. Silius (4.20.1–2)  
 Acte d'accusation du procès de Cremutius Cordus et noms des accusateurs (4.34.1)  
 Discours de Tibère sur le rejet du culte impérial (4.37–38)  
 Requête de Séjan pour recevoir comme épouse la veuve de Drusus II et refus de l'empereur (4.39–40)  
 Affaires traitées par le Sénat durant l'année 25, impliquant Lacédémone, Messène, Ségeste et Marseille (4.43)  
 Campagnes de Poppaeus Sabinus contre les Thraces (4.46–51)  
 Choix de la cité d'Asie où serait construit un temple à Tibère (4.55–56)  
 Écroulement du théâtre de Fidènes (4.62–63), spécialement mention d'Atilius (4.63.1)  
 Incendie du Caelius et propositions sénatoriales successives (4.64) ;  
 Digression sur le Caelius (4.65)  
 Propositions de sénateurs contre Livie et Séjan ; réaction de Tibère (6.2)  
 Accusations de Sextius Paconianus contre Lucanius Latiaris (6.4.1)  
 Discours de M. Terentius, accusé pour son amitié avec Séjan (6.8)  
 Information relative à un livre sibyllin (6.12)  
 Digression sur l'usure (6.16)  
 Mort d'Asinius Gallus et permission demandée à Tibère de l'ensevelir (6.23.1)  
 Conditions de détention de Drusus III au Palatin (6.24.1)

## Annexe 2

**Tab. 3:** Sources subsidiaires possibles pour *Annales* 1–6. Quelques hypothèses (hors Aufidius Bassus ; hors *acta senatus*)

1.4.3–4	Rumeurs défavorables à Tibère avant son avènement	Agrippine II	Mac Culloch (1984) 22
1.5–6	Mort Agrippa Postumus	Sallustius Crispus	Furneaux (1896) 21 n. 1 ; cf. Pettinger (2012) 178 n. 28
1.9–10	<i>Totengericht</i>	- Cremutius Cordus - <i>Res Gestae</i>	- Tränkle (1969) 123 ; (1980) 241 - Velaza (1993)

1.12.4	<i>Ferocia</i> d'Asinius Pollion	Servilius Nonianus	Zecchini (1982) 1278 n. 57
1.13.2–3	<i>Capaces imperii</i>	- Servilius Nonianus - Agrippine II	- Bosworth (1977) 185–186 - Syme (1970) 46 n. 3 ; (1977) 257
1.53.1	Mort de Julie	<i>acta diurna</i>	Salvo (2010) 144 n. 41
1.63–68	Retraite de l'armée commandée par Caecina	Caecina	Koestermann (1963) 184, 219 ; Hurley (1989) 335 n. 43
1.53.6	Mort de Sempronius Gracchus	mémoires de Tibère	Pettinger (2012) 182
2.1–4	Affaires parthes	Cluvius Rufus	Gowing (1990) 317–318 n. 8
2.16–18	Bataille d'Idistavise	Pline l'Ancien	Walser (1951) 65 ; Miltner (1952) 343
2.23–24	Tempête qui décime la flotte romaine	Pedo Albinovanus (intertextualité)	Bongi (1949) ; Tandoi (1967) ; Benario (1973) ; (1975) 62 ; Rocca (1989) 110, 117 ; Hurley (1989) 329 n. 25, 335 n. 43 ; Berlan-Bajard (2018) 193–194
2.39–40	Faux Agrippa Postumus	- Agrippine II - Sallustius Crispus	- Pettinger (2012) 209 n. 42 - Furneaux (1896) 21 n. 1 ; cf. Pettinger (2012) 178 n. 28
2.41.1	Dédicace d'un arc en l'honneur de Germanicus	<i>acta publica</i>	Bérard (1991) 3024, 3029 n. 59
2.72.1	Dernières paroles de Germanicus à son épouse	Agrippine II	Koestermann (1963) 389 ; (1965) 167
3.10–18	Procès de Pison	Pline l'Ancien	Zecchini (1999) 335
3.22–23	Procès d'Aemilia Lepida	Servilius Nonianus	Syme (1970) 104 ; Wilkes (1972) 199 ; aussi <i>FRHist</i> I 523 (Levick)
4.1	Portrait de Séjan	Salluste, portrait de Catilina (intertextualité)	Kraus (2007) §4 (notant aussi un lien avec le portrait de Iugurtha, <i>Iug.</i> , 6 ; 8) ; Levick (2015) 116 ; cf. Formicola (2013) 97 n. 3, 6 et 9 ; 98–99
4.10	Tibère donnant lui-même le poison à Drusus II	archives des Asinii	Syme (1958a) 301
4.39–40	Entretien entre Tibère et Séjan	Agrippine II	Koestermann (1965) 134

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4.34–35	Procès Cremutius Cordus	Discours de Cremutius conservé par sa famille	Canfora (1993) 236–237
4.46–51	Campagne en Thrace	- Poppaeus Sabinus - archives familiales	- Pfordt (1998) 58 - Koestermann (1965) 154
4.65	Digression sur le Caelius	- Claude  - une périégèse de Rome	- Questa [1960] (1963) 231 ; Briquel (1988) 227 ; cf. De Vivo (1980) 72 n. 59 ; Formicola (2013) 227 - Hahn (1933) 60
4.72–73	Révolte des Frisons	Pline l’Ancien	Koestermann (1965) 212–213
5.10	Faux Drusus III	Poppaeus Sabinus ou <i>acta diurna</i>	Townend (1962) 368 n. 29
6.18.1	Attitude C. Pomponius Secundus	Pline l’Ancien (biographie de P. Pomponius)	Syme (1958a) 297 + n. 11
6.20.2–21	Anecdote sur Thrasylle et prédiction sur Galba	- Ti. Claudius Balbillus - un traité <i>de divinatione</i>	- Townend (1960) 115–116 ; (1961b) 241 - Oliver (1980) 142
6.21.1	Maison de Tibère à Rhodes	autopsie	Syme (1982) 69
6.26.2	Suicide de Cocceius Nerva	Servilius Nonianus	Koestermann (1968) 61 ; Syme (1970) 104–105 ; Wilkes (1972) 199 ; Sage (1990) 1006
6.28	Digression sur le phénix	- Ti. Claudius Balbillus - un ouvrage anti-quaire	- Townend (1960) 118–119 - Hahn (1933) 63
6.31–37	Digression sur les Parthes	Servilius Nonianus	Ash (1999) 115 n. 7
6.48.2	Mort de L. Arruntius	Servilius Nonianus	Syme (1958a) 276 n. 5 ; Wilkes (1972) 199

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## Annexe 3

**Tab. 4:** Tacite, *Annales* 1–6. Propositions pour l'emploi de quelques sources

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source “fil-rouge” (= Aufidius Bassus ?)	trame annalistique: succession affaires intérieures (dont sénatoriales)/affaires extérieures sur cette trame se superpose celle du développement personnel (détérioration) de Tibère mettant en avant des étapes liées à des événements au sein de la dynastie
<i>acta senatus</i>	matériel complémentaire pour séances du Sénat
Servilius Nonianus (?), archives familiales	matériel complémentaire sur les relations (hors Sénat) entre sénateurs et empereurs
<i>Mémoires</i> d'Agrippine, <i>Bella Germaniae</i> de Pline l'Ancien, propagande “julienne/germanicienne”	matériel complémentaire sur Germanicus et sa famille
historiographie augustéenne, <i>Res gestae Divi Augusti</i>	matériel complémentaire sur Auguste et la génération d'Auguste
autobiographies des empereurs, inscriptions, monuments, monnaies etc.	matériel complémentaire sur l'auto-représentation de Tibère (matériel traité souvent sur le mode du contre-pied)

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Arturo De Vivo

## Seneca padre, Tacito e Germanico

**Abstract:** In this paper, Drusus and, in particular, Germanicus are the key-figures to whom attention is offered through an in-depth examination of the historiographical works of the Early Imperial age. The text of the historiographical works by Seneca the Elder known through *P.Herc.* 1067 is analysed together with and in parallel what emerges from his *Suasoriae* and *Controversiae* in order to highlight the negative traits characterizing Germanicus, son of Antonia Minor.

I frammenti superstiti del *P.Herc.* 1067, pur nella loro modesta consistenza, sono la testimonianza manoscritta, unica a noi pervenuta, di un'opera storiografica di cui è autore un *Lucius Annaeus Seneca*, che è verosimilmente il padre del filosofo, noto per aver composto nella tarda vecchiaia la silloge di *Controversiae* e *Suasoriae*, raccolte sotto il titolo di *Oratorum et rhetorum sententiae, divisiones, colores*. La notizia contenuta nel frammento del perduto *De vita patris* (*Appendix - T1*) di Seneca filosofo, che ricordava le *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*, scritte dal padre che aveva narrato la storia di Roma giungendo quasi fino al giorno della sua morte (avvenuta tra il 37 e il 41 D.C.),<sup>1</sup> può finalmente trovare una importante conferma, soprattutto se la *subscriptio* del papiro ricostruita da Piano<sup>2</sup> fosse nella sua interezza, disposta su tre righe: *L. Annaei Senecae | Ab initio bellorum civilium | Historiae*.

L'altro dato fondamentale che si ricava dal *P.Herc.* 1067 è che tutti i frammenti di questo testo storiografico si riferiscono credibilmente al regno di Tiberio, esplicitamente menzionato nel rotolo e perciò punto di riferimento cronologico ineludibile. Su questo assunto Maria Chiara Scappaticcio ha condotto la sua importante ricostruzione esegetica della narrazione contenuta nel papiro, formulando con metodica cautela una serie di ipotesi dalle quali sarà necessario partire.<sup>3</sup> La studiosa pone, tra l'altro, il legittimo interrogativo se il *P.Herc.* 1067 debba essere considerato il solo rotolo contenente le *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*, opera che trattava la storia di Roma forse, secondo alcuni, già a partire

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1 Per l'unica testimonianza superstite del *De vita patris*, cf. Vottero (1998) 75–81, 210–211, 355–356. Si veda, per una valutazione complessiva della testimonianza ai fini dell'interpretazione delle *Historiae* di Seneca padre, Sussman (1978) 137–152; cf. anche Fairweather (1981) 14–16.

2 Piano (2017a) 241–250.

3 Ringrazio Maria Chiara Scappaticcio, Principal Investigator del progetto ERC-PLATINUM (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II), per avermi fatto leggere nel 2017 il suo studio sul *P.Herc.* 1067, ora di prossima pubblicazione (Scappaticcio 2018).



dalla *seditio Graccana* (133 a.C.)<sup>4</sup> e almeno fino alla morte di Tiberio.<sup>5</sup> La questione non può trovare risposte certe, anche perché non ci sono testimonianze esplicite sul tipo di narrazione che Seneca padre abbia adottato. Non si può comunque trascurare che gli storici di Roma, anche gli annalisti che partivano dalla fondazione, tendevano sempre a diffondersi molto più ampiamente sui fatti meno remoti e soprattutto su quelli di cui l'autore avesse una documentazione diretta o fosse stato testimone.<sup>6</sup> Questo aspetto strutturale delle opere storiografiche di impostazione annalistica potrebbe aver avuto un impatto determinante sulla composizione e sulla distribuzione della materia nelle *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*, il cui autore, nato intorno al 50 a.C., era vissuto circa novanta anni e, oltre ad avere assistito a molti degli avvenimenti narrati, aveva avuto anche la possibilità di accedere ad una documentazione ancora integra e di ascoltare testimoni diretti di buona parte dei fatti salvati (circostanza ancora più significativa per chi era dotato di una memoria straordinaria e in vecchiaia serbava vivido ricordo del passato).<sup>7</sup>

Il *P.Herc.* 1067 ci consente perciò di accedere a un pezzo importante di quella storiografia di età augustea e tiberiana precedente agli *Annali* di Tacito, che a essa largamente attingeva;<sup>8</sup> è pur vero che la precarietà della tradizione del testo acuisce il rimpianto per tutto ciò che sembra irrimediabilmente perduto. Tuttavia la certezza della trattazione del principato tiberiano nelle tracce superstiti delle *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* ci autorizza a ipotizzare che i fatti che a quel periodo storico si riferiscono, ricordati nelle *Controversiae* e nelle *Suasoriae*, e poi negli stessi scritti di Seneca filosofo (che delle *Historiae* aveva curato la pubblicazione all'inizio del regno di Caligola) possano essere indizi importanti della visione che nell'opera storica di Seneca padre trovava compiuta espressione e con la quale Tacito dovette verosimilmente confrontarsi.

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4 L'ipotesi del 133 a.C., come inizio dell'opera storica di Seneca padre, è di recente sostenuta con forza da Canfora (2015) 138–147, in continuità con la posizione espressa in Canfora (2000) 165–167. Altri studiosi pensano invece che le *Historiae* senecane partano dal 49 a.C. o, al più tardi, dal 43 a.C., così Levick in *FRHist* I 506–508 e Zecchini (2016) 153.

5 Suet. *Tib.* 73.2 (*Appendix* · F1); cf. anche *Cal.* 12.2–3.

6 Valga come esempio la struttura della *Storia* di Velleio Patercolo, che parte dalla narrazione dei fatti successivi alla distruzione di Troia e giunge agli anni a lui contemporanei del principato di Tiberio (29–30 d.C.). Una materia così vasta è distribuita in due libri, il primo dei quali si ferma al 146 a. C., l'anno della distruzione di Cartagine e della presa di Corinto; quasi un terzo del secondo libro è dedicato a Tiberio (II 94–131).

7 Sen. *contr.* 1 *praef.* 1–4.

8 Un vero e proprio inventario delle fonti che Tacito ha verosimilmente utilizzato è costruito con precisione da Devillers (2003), 7–73.

In questa ottica ho scelto di proporre alcune riflessioni sugli avvenimenti relativi alla figura di Germanico, il figlio di Druso e di Antonia minore, l'antagonista di Tiberio, in fondo designato a questo ruolo dallo stesso Augusto. Il vecchio imperatore, infatti, essendo stato indotto dalle circostanze e dalle pressioni della moglie Livia ad adottare il figliastro Tiberio, impose a questi, che pure aveva già un figlio, Druso Giulio Cesare (nato intorno al 13 a.C.), di adottare nello stesso anno (4 d.C.) il giovane nipote Germanico (nato nel 15 a.C.), destinato perciò alla futura successione imperiale.

L'attenzione dello storico Seneca padre per Germanico, così come avviene in Tacito Svetonio e Dione Cassio, poteva essere ancora più accentuata in un autore che aveva scelto le guerre civili come chiave di lettura privilegiata della storia romana, giacché il collegamento tra Germanico e i conflitti civili è evidente in almeno due circostanze.

A lui Augusto aveva affidato il comando delle otto legioni sul Reno (13 d.C.),<sup>9</sup> perché vendicasse la dolorosa sconfitta che i Germani di Arminio avevano inflitto alle legioni di Quintilio Varo, nella foresta di Teutoburgo (9 d.C.). Alla morte del vecchio principe (14 d.C.), Tiberio ebbe il timore che Germanico non intendesse aspettare oltre, ma facesse valere la forza dei suoi eserciti e il favore popolare di cui godeva per impadronirsi dell'impero. I timori non sembrano senza fondamento, dal momento che all'annuncio della fine di Augusto sono proprio le legioni in Germania a ribellarsi, nella speranza che Germanico rifiuti di obbedire a un altro principe e si ponga alla loro testa per conquistare il potere. Il giovane comandante, impegnato nel censimento delle Gallie, pur consapevole secondo Tacito<sup>10</sup> dell'astio di Tiberio e di Livia nei confronti suoi e della moglie Agrippina (la nipote di Augusto), preferì mostrarsi leale verso l'imperatore suo padre, affrontò i soldati ribelli e minacciò il suicidio piuttosto che venire meno alla fede giurata. Con fermezza e decisione riesce a domare la ribellione e a evitare il dilagare di una vera e propria guerra civile; affronta con successo anche la rivolta delle legioni che svernavano a Vetera e, ricompattati i suoi eserciti, li guida alla

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<sup>9</sup> Tacito, nel riferire che Augusto affidò a Germanico le otto legioni sul Reno, ha modo di ricordare anche che aveva imposto a Tiberio di adottare il figlio del fratello Druso: *at hercule Germanicum, Druso ortum, octo apud Rhenum legionibus imposuit adscirique per adoptionem a Tiberio iussit, quamquam esset in domo Tiberii filius iuvenis, sed quo pluribus munimentis insisteret* (ann. 1.3.5). Su questi avvenimenti e, più in generale, sulle relazioni tra Tiberio e Germanico, secondo la tradizione storiografica, è utile la sintesi di Baar (1990) 116–124.

<sup>10</sup> Ho seguito per la narrazione di questi avvenimenti la drammatica ricostruzione di Tacito in ann. 1.31–52, su cui, insieme al commento puntuale, si veda l'introduzione di Goodyear (1972) 239–241.

vittoria sulle popolazioni germaniche, che tentavano di approfittare della morte di Augusto e delle discordie tra le legioni romane.

Il pericolo della guerra civile è uno dei temi su cui si gioca la complessa rivalità tra Germanico e Cn. Pisone, negli avvenimenti che segnano la missione in Oriente del figlio dell'imperatore, che aveva anche nominato governatore della Siria il nobile Pisone, uomo violento e orgoglioso della propria tradizione familiare (*ann.* 2.43.2–4). Tutte queste vicende sono dominate – come è ben noto – dal sospetto che la morte di Germanico, avvenuta ad Antiochia nel 19 d.C., sia stata causata dal veleno somministrato dal rivale, in aderenza ai *mandata* ricevuti direttamente da Tiberio.<sup>11</sup> Il testo del *senatus consultum de Cn. Pisonem patre*,<sup>12</sup> che contiene le deliberazioni finali del processo a Pisone, suicidatosi prima della conclusione del dibattimento, dimostra che non ebbe alcun rilievo penale l'accusa di veneficio (che si fonda unicamente sulla convinzione di Germanico l. 28: *quoius mortis fuisse caussam Cn. Pisonem patrem ipse testatus sit*), ma che i capi di imputazione più gravi contro Pisone fossero la violazione del diritto pubblico e soprattutto il tentativo di provocare una rivolta militare e di risuscitare una nuova guerra civile (ll. 45–49: *bellum etiam civile excitare conatus sit, iam pridem numine divi Aug(usti) virtutibusq(ue) Ti. Caesaris Aug(usti) omnibus civilis belli sepultis malis repetendo provinciam Syriam post mortem Germanici Caesaris quam vivo eo pessumo et animo et exemplo reliquerat, atq(ue) ob id milites R(omani) inter se concurrere coacti sint...*).

Il *P.Herc.* 1067 purtroppo non conserva traccia del nome di Germanico, né di quello di Druso, i due figli di Tiberio (il primo adottivo, il secondo naturale), tuttavia nel suo prezioso lavoro di scavo e di ricostruzione congetturale Maria Chiara Scappaticcio<sup>13</sup> propone di restituire un importante riferimento cronologico che si fonda sull'integrazione *IJun* (cr. 1 pz. Il sov. 2 l. 8), forma abbreviata dell'aggettivo derivante dal mese *Iunius*, che, a scorrere i *Fasti Ostienses* e *Amiternini* tra la metà del I secolo a. C. e la morte di Tiberio, la inducono a ipotizzare almeno tre avvenimenti rilevanti nella storia di Roma, che si collocano tra gli ultimi quindici giorni di maggio e i primi quindici di giugno (aventi come riferimento calende e idi di giugno): il 26 maggio del 17 d.C. Germanico celebra il suo trionfo sulle popolazioni germaniche, pur non essendosi ancora conclusa la guerra alla quale

<sup>11</sup> Rinvio, per questo argomento, a quanto ho trattato in De Vivo (2003).

<sup>12</sup> Da ricordare, per il testo del senatoconsulto e il suo commento, il lavoro di Eck *et all.* (1996), anche in edizione spagnola, Caballos *et all.* (1996).

<sup>13</sup> Scappaticcio (2018) 1058–1060.

Tiberio lo aveva sottratto;<sup>14</sup> il 28 maggio del 20 d.C. Druso era tornato vincitore dall'Illyrico proprio nei giorni in cui si svolgeva il processo contro Pisone, e aveva preferito che si rinviasse l'ovazione in suo onore che il Senato in precedenza aveva deliberato per lui e il fratello Germanico,<sup>15</sup> del quale si erano appena svolti i funerali; il 7 giugno dello stesso anno 20 d.C. Nerone Cesare, figlio di Germanico, indossa la toga virile, una notizia che è tramandata unicamente da Dione Cassio (57.18.11).

Scappaticcio per la presenza nel papiro di uno *Cn/* su un sovrapposto allineato a *IJun(ias)* è incline – e credo a ragione – a ritenere che lo Gneo di cui c'è traccia possa essere Gneo Calpurnio Pisone, del quale si svolgeva il processo nei giorni in cui Druso faceva ritorno a Roma nell'anno 20 d.C., i cui avvenimenti sarebbero perciò al centro della narrazione di Seneca padre in questa parte del rotolo. Negli *Annales* (3.11.1) la notizia relativa al ritorno di Druso dall'Illyrico e alla sua decisione di rinviare l'*ovatio* quasi si insinua, come una sorta di intermezzo, nella narrazione del processo contro Pisone; ma essa vale a confermare il forte legame che esisteva tra i due figli ufficiali di Tiberio, al di là degli schieramenti che intorno ad essi si erano subito creati. Tacito, nello stesso contesto (*ann.* 2.43) in cui ricorda la decisione di Tiberio di inviare Germanico in Oriente e di nominare Pisone governatore della Siria secondo alcuni con il mandato segreto di ostacolare ogni velleità del figlio adottivo,<sup>16</sup> osserva anche che la corte si divideva tra le simpatie per Germanico o per Druso e che la predilezione di Tiberio per il figlio naturale accresceva il favore nei riguardi del principe adottato imposto da Augusto, superiore peraltro anche per la nobiltà della famiglia della madre e per le qualità della moglie Agrippina rispetto a quella di Druso (*ann.* 2.43.5–6: *divisa namque et discors aula erat tacitis in Drusum aut Germanicum studiis. Tiberius ut proprium et sui sanguinis Drusum fovebat; Germanico alienatio patrum amorem apud ceteros auxerat, et quia claritudine mater<ni> generis anteibat, avum M. Antonium, avunculum Augustum ferens. Contra Druso proavus eques Romanus Pomponius Atticus dedecere Claudiorum imagines videbatur. Et coniunx Germanici*

<sup>14</sup> Tac. *ann.* 2.41.2: *C. Caelio L. Pomponio consulibus Germanicus Caesar a. d. VII. Kal. Iunias triumphavit de Cherscis C<h>attisque et Angrivariis quaeque aliae nationes usque ad Albim colunt. Vecta spolia, captivi, simulacra montium fluminum proeliorum; bellumque, quia conficere prohibitus erat, pro confecto accipiebatur.*

<sup>15</sup> Tac. *ann.* 3.11.1: *atque interim Drusus rediens Illyrico, quamquam patres censuissent ob receptum Maroboduum et res priore aestate gestas ut ovans iniret, prolato honore urbem intravit; ann.* 2.64.1: *Simul nuntiato regem Artaxian Armeniis a Germanico datum decrevere patres, ut Germanicus atque Drusus ovantes urbem introirent.* Su alcuni problemi interpretativi posti da *ann.* 3.11.1 cf. il commento di Woodman/Martin (1996) 132–135.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. De Vivo (2003) 84–87.

*Agrippina fecunditate ac fama Liviam, uxorem Drusi, praecelebat*). Eppure, conclude lo storico, i fratelli/cugini erano in pieno accordo e non si lasciavano toccare dalle beghe dei loro familiari (*ann. 2.43.6: sed fratres egregie concordēs et proximorum certaminibus inconcussi*).

Il confronto continuo, per alcuni aspetti quasi il parallelismo, tra Germanico e Druso si ripropone in altre circostanze, delle quali potrebbero esserci indizi nel papiro ercolanese. Almeno un accenno merita l'ipotesi della narrazione di un avvelenamento realizzato in un clima di timore, ricostruito da Scappaticcio a proposito di *P.Herc. 1067 cr. 3 pz. I sov. 8 ll. 7 e 10*, dove si leggono in particolare *potur[- e metu]*.<sup>17</sup> I casi o i sospetti di avvelenamento in età tiberiana sono molteplici, ma non si possono trascurare quelli relativi proprio a Germanico e a Druso, o allo stesso Tiberio.

Di grande interesse è infine, a mio avviso, l'esegesi che Scappaticcio propone per *Jeneam* in *P.Herc. 1067 cr. 2 pz I sov. 3 col 1 l. 4*, accettando la congettura *Aeneam*, già proposta da Piano.<sup>18</sup> Si tratterebbe della *imago* di Enea, capostipite della *gens Iulia*, che come ricorda Tacito aprì la *imagineum pompa* che in lungo corteo sfilò durante il funerale di Druso, morto – per avvelenamento come poi fu rivelato<sup>19</sup> – il 14 settembre del 23 d.C. (*ann. 4.9.2: funus imagineum pompa maxime inlustre fuit, cum origo Iuliae gentis Aeneas omnesque Albanorum reges et conditor urbis Romulus, post Sabina nobilitas, Attus Clausus ceteraeque Claudiorum effigies longo ordine spectarentur*). È sempre Tacito a osservare in premessa che per Druso furono decretati gli stessi onori funebri stabiliti per Germanico (*ann. 2.83*), con una serie di aggiunte che sono proprie degli adulatori che pensano di superare quelli che li hanno preceduti: *memoriae Drusi eadem quae in Germanicum decernuntur, plerisque additis, ut ferme amat posterior adulatio* (*ann. 4.9.2*).

È inevitabile la tentazione di formulare ipotesi sulla valutazione delle *Historiae* di Seneca padre relativamente alla narrazione degli avvenimenti del principato tiberiano, e per noi, in questa sede, alla narrazione delle vicende di Germanico e, per le evidenti interferenze, di quelle di Druso, anche con l'obiettivo di congetturare in che misura le *Historiae* senecane siano state utilizzate da Tacito. Il *P.Herc. 1067*, per i limiti obiettivi delle sue condizioni, smorza gli entusiasmi e impone di procedere con cautela, tuttavia ci dà la certezza che Seneca attendeva a una storia di Roma comprendente un ampio periodo di anni, fino a quelli a lui contemporanei, mentre lavorava all'opera antologica *Oratorum et rhetorum sententiae, divisiones, colores*, in cui raccoglie il meglio che avevano prodotto oratori

<sup>17</sup> Scappaticcio (2018) 1068–1070.

<sup>18</sup> Piano (2017a) 205–206.

<sup>19</sup> Tac. *ann.* 4.8–11.

e retori attivi tra l'età augustea e quella tiberiana. Non è perciò arbitrario cercare nella raccolta declamatoria qualche risposta sui personaggi storici e sugli avvenimenti di età tiberiana che Seneca padre ricordava. Per i figli di Tiberio, osserviamo che, se è assente Druso, compare invece Germanico, citato una volta nelle *Controversiae* (1.3.10) e una nelle *Suasoriae* (1.15). Prima di analizzare questi due luoghi, occorre tuttavia prendere atto che Germanico non è mai preso in considerazione come oratore, pur rientrando pienamente nei limiti temporali e generazionali degli oratori e declamatori selezionati<sup>20</sup> e godendo anche di una certa fama. Ovidio nei *Fasti* (1.22–23) e soprattutto nelle *Epistulae ex Ponto* (2.5.53–56)<sup>21</sup> ne esalta l'eloquenza divina, degna di un principe; Svetonio (*Cal.* 3.1–2)<sup>22</sup> ricorda che eccelleva nella lingua greca e latina per eloquenza e cultura e che anche dopo aver ottenuto il trionfo perorò cause. Germanico, infatti, tra gli onori funebri che gli furono attribuiti ottenne che il suo ritratto fosse inserito tra le *imagines clipeatae* (medaglioni in forma di scudo) dei grandi oratori, che come quelle degli autori più illustri di ogni genere letterario erano conservate nella biblioteca del Palatino. La notizia, presente nei documenti ufficiali (*Tabula Hebana* 1–4; *Tabula Siarensis* Ilc 13–17), è riportata da Tacito, il quale riferisce anche l'intervento di Tiberio contrario alla proposta inopportuna di utilizzare per l'*imago* del figlio materiale e dimensioni differenti dal solito.<sup>23</sup>

Fatta questa premessa, rileviamo che in *contr.* 1.3.10 Seneca padre ricorda che Quintilio Varo, figlio del comandante delle legioni massacrate nel 9 d.C. da Arminio, era genero di Germanico, quando declamò in pretesta la controversia sul tema della sacerdotessa incestuosa precipitata dalla rupe (*declamaverat apud illum hanc ipsam controversiam Varus Quinti<li>us, tunc Germanici gener, ut praetextatus*). Si tratta, come si vede, di una presenza molto marginale, di tipo puramente referenziale.

Di ben altro valore è l'altra occorrenza del nome di Germanico in *suas.* 1.15, sebbene neanche in questo caso Seneca padre parli direttamente del figlio adottivo

<sup>20</sup> Utile quadro di sintesi degli oratori presentati da Seneca padre, in particolare nelle *Suasoriae*, in Migliario (2007) 22–31.

<sup>21</sup> *Ov. fast.* 1.21–22: *quae sit enim culti facundia sensimus oris, / civica pro trepidis cum tulit arma reis*; *Pont.* 2.53–56: *mox, ubi pulsa mora est atque os caeleste solutum, / hoc superos iures more solere loqui, / atque 'Haec est' dicas 'facundia principe digna': / eloquio tantum nobilitatis inest.*

<sup>22</sup> Suet. *Cal.* 3.1: *ingenium in utroque eloquentiae doctrinaeque genere praecellens*; 3.2: *oravit causas etiam triumphalis.*

<sup>23</sup> Tac. *ann.* 2.83.3: *cum censeretur clipeus auro et magnitudine insignis inter auctores eloquentiae, adse<ve>ravit Tiberius solitum paremque ceteris dicaturum: neque enim eloquentiam fortuna discerni, et satis inlustre, si veteres inter scriptores haberetur.* Cf. Goodyear (1981) 436–437; Oniga (2003) 1119.

di Tiberio. Il dibattito della prima delle *Suasoriae* ha al centro Alessandro, che è chiamato a decidere se affrontare la navigazione ignota dell'Oceano, sulle cui rive è giunto quando ormai ha conquistato l'intero mondo conosciuto. Tutti i declamatori ricordati, che nel tempo (a cominciare almeno dal 35 a.C.) avevano declamato intorno a questo tema, concordano nel ritenere che l'Oceano rappresenti un limite invalicabile posto dalla natura e che perciò il Macedone avrebbe dovuto fermarsi. Seneca padre, dopo un'ampia rassegna, ha tuttavia modo di osservare che i declamatori latini non ebbero grandi capacità nella descrizione dell'Oceano, come dimostra il confronto con la felice ispirazione del poeta Albinovano Pedone nel narrare la navigazione di Germanico (*suas.* 1.15: *Latini declamatores in descriptione Oceani non nimis vigerunt, nam aut tumi<de> descripserunt aut curiose. Nemo illorum potuit tanto spiritu dicere quanto Pedo, qui <in> navigante Germanico dicit*). Segue la lunga citazione di ben 23 versi, tratta dal componimento epico di Pedone di cui non si conservano altri frammenti; il senso di sgomento degli audaci marinai, che si muovono in mezzo a tenebre misteriose e a spaventose improvvise difficoltà, nei versi finali si traduce nelle parole accorate di uno di quegli uomini, che ammonisce a non trasgredire i divieti naturali posti dalle stesse divinità: *quo ferimur? Fugit ipse dies orbemque relictum / ultima perpetuis claudit natura tenebris. / Anne alio positas ultra sub cardine gentes / atque alium bellis intactum quaerimus orbem? / Di revocant rerumque vetant cognoscere finem / mortales oculos. Aliena quid aequora remis / et sacras violamus aquas divumque quietas / turbamus sedes?* (*suas.* 1.15 vv. 16–23).

Albinovano Pedone è il poeta amico di Ovidio, che a lui dedica *Pont.* 4.10,<sup>24</sup> ma è anche il prefetto di Germanico che era con lui nelle campagne contro i Germani degli anni 14–16 d.C., menzionato da Tacito in *ann.* 1.60.2 (*equitem Pedo praefectus finibus Frisiorum ducit*). Egli sembra essere l'autore di un poema epico-celebrativo delle imprese del giovane principe, erede di Tiberio, che utilizzava per la costruzione della sua immagine di politico e capo militare il motivo, a Roma ben noto e già usato in passato, della *imitatio Alexandri*.<sup>25</sup> Il tema non è ideologicamente neutrale, giacché anche allora è strettamente collegato alla politica dell'espansione dei confini dell'impero, che Augusto aveva abbandonato e che

<sup>24</sup> Ovidio lo ricorda anche in *Pont.* 4.16.6: *sidereusque Pedo*; come amico di Ovidio è citato dallo stesso Seneca padre (*contr.* 2.2.12); Seneca filosofo lo definisce *fabulator elegantissimus* in *epist.* 122.15; tra i poeti epici lo annovera Quintiliano (*inst.* 10.1.90: *Rabirius ac Pedo non indigni cognitione, si vacet*).

<sup>25</sup> Fondamentale per Albinovano Pedone è il contributo di Tandoi (1964, 1967). Tra gli studi più recenti si segnalano Berti (2007) 340–358 e Migliario (2007) 51–72.

Tiberio aveva, in continuità, messo da parte, nella convinzione che Roma avesse già raggiunto la massima estensione possibile.

Le campagne militari di Germanico, prima in Occidente e poi in Oriente, sembravano dimostrare invece che l'imperialismo romano poteva avere nuove mire espansionistiche, piuttosto che conservative, e perciò l'*imitatio Alexandri* diventava la cifra della propaganda germaniciana, cui dava impulso il poema di Albinovano Pedone. La vera e propria identificazione con il Macedone, vissuta consapevolmente dallo stesso principe e alimentata dal circolo dei suoi amici (e dalla stessa moglie Agrippina), trova l'espressione più alta nei comportamenti di Germanico durante il suo viaggio in Oriente<sup>26</sup> e ha il suggello nella *synkrisis* esplicita che, come racconta Tacito anche prendendone le distanze, gli uomini a lui vicini istituiscono tra Alessandro e il loro principe, che di tutti i difetti e gli eccessi di Alessandro sarebbe stato tuttavia privo.<sup>27</sup>

Seneca padre, in una selezione di declamazioni decisamente orientata a convincere Alessandro a non violare il limite invalicabile dell'Oceano e a porre un freno alle sue ambizioni di conquista, innesca un arbitrario cortocircuito con la citazione di un poeta, che ha descritto la navigazione dell'Oceano da parte di Germanico. Peraltro, da un componimento epico a noi ignoto, egli ha scelto alcuni versi che riproducono le argomentazioni propriamente declamatorie sulla inviolabilità dei confini della natura. Il salto narrativo trova la sua giustificazione nel motivo della *imitatio Alexandri* cui Albinovano Pedone ha ispirato il suo poema celebrativo.

La nuova contestualizzazione della citazione poetica ne modifica profondamente il senso e soprattutto condiziona la chiave di lettura della *imitatio Alexandri* e dell'impresa di Germanico, che peraltro nelle campagne militari dell'estate del 16 d.C., pur senza compromettere il successo finale, aveva subito ingenti perdite dei suoi legionari che aveva imbarcato sulla flotta per attraversare l'Oceano e accelerarne il trasferimento. Tacito, che narra queste drammatiche operazioni

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Questa (1963<sup>2</sup>) 271–306.

<sup>27</sup> Tac. ann. 2.73.1–3: *et erant qui formam aetatem genus mortis, ob propinquitatem etiam locorum, in quibus interiiit, magni Alexandri fatis adaequarent. Nam utrumque corpore decoro, genere insigni, haud multum triginta annos egressum, suorum insidiis externas inter gentes occidisse: sed hunc mitem erga amicos, modicum voluptatum, uno matrimonio, certis liberis egisse, neque minus proiliatorem, etiam si temeritas afuerit praepeditusque sit percussas tot victoris Germanias servitio premere. Quod si solus arbiter rerum, si iure et nomine regio fuisset, tanto promptius adsecutorum gloriam militiae, quantum clementia temperantia, ceteris bonis artibus praestitisset.* Cf. Goodyear (1981) 416–419.



(*ann.* 2.23–26),<sup>28</sup> scrive che Tiberio nel richiamare il figlio adottivo a Roma gli riconosce le grandi vittorie ma gli ricorda anche le gravi perdite provocate dai venti e dal mare e, soprattutto, gli rammenta che lui stesso, inviato da Augusto nove volte in Germania, aveva conseguito i risultati maggiori con le trattative diplomatiche piuttosto che con l'uso della forza.<sup>29</sup>

Nella prima *Suasoria*, d'altra parte, Seneca padre non tralascia di porre un'altra questione di fondo, quale quella di definire il tipo di comportamento che a un oratore conviene osservare quando parla dinanzi a un re per persuaderlo. Si affida, come in molte altre circostanze, a Cestio Pio (*suas.* 1.5–7), il quale ammette che a un sovrano assoluto come Alessandro, tra i più superbi e arroganti,<sup>30</sup> bisogna parlare con grandissima venerazione, come dimostra il fatto che questi non esitò a uccidere lo storico Callistene, suo precettore e cugino di Aristotele, per una battuta di spirito (*suas.* 1.5: *itaque nihil dicendum aiebat nisi cum veneratione regis, ne accideret idem quod praeceptori eius, amitino Aristotelis, accidit, quem occidit propter intempestive liberos sales*).<sup>31</sup> Cestio, tuttavia, raccomandava anche che l'adulazione nei confronti di un signore assoluto deve comunque mantenere una certa misura, per evitare quello che accadde agli Ateniesi, puniti per le eccessive servili lusinghe. Seneca padre ricorda che ad Antonio, che entrava ad Atene nelle vesti di Dioniso, i cittadini offrirono in matrimonio la loro Minerva e ricevettero in cambio la richiesta di una dote di mille talenti, che si aggiungeva ai tributi richiesti; di qui si diffonde in una serie di aneddoti (*suas.* 1.6–7), per poi ritornare al tema in questione, la *divisio* proposta da Cestio (*suas.* 1.7: *longius me fabellarum dulcedo produxit; itaque ad propositum revertar*). È evidente che, al di là della *fabellarum dulcedo*, Seneca padre ha introdotto una delle figure chiave responsabili delle guerre civili che portarono alla tragica fine della *res publica*<sup>32</sup>

**28** Anche per il confronto con i versi di Albinovano Pedone, citati da Seneca padre in *suas.* 1.15, rinvio a Goodyear (1981) 243–262 e a Oniga (2003) 1074–1076.

**29** Tac. *ann.* 2.26.2–3: *sed crebris epistulis Tiberius monebat, rediret ad decretum triumphum: satis iam eventuum, satis casuum. Prospera illi et magna proelia: eorum quoque meminisset, quae venti et fluctus, nulla ducis culpa, gravia tamen et saeva damna intulissent. Se novies a divo Augusto in Germaniam missum plura consilio quam vi perfecisse.*

**30** Sen. *suas.* 1.5: *Alexandrum ex iis esse, quos superbissimos et supra mortalis animi modum inflatos accepimus. Denique, ut alia dimittantur argumenta, ipsa suasoria insolentiam eius coarguit: orbis illum suus non capit.*

**31** Secondo gli storici di Alessandro Callistene fu ucciso perché rifiutò un atto di sottomissione al re, mentre fu Clito ad essere ucciso per motivi simili a quelli ricordati da Cestio, cf. Migliario (2007) 67–72.

**32** La negatività assoluta della figura del triumviro Marco Antonio è più volte ribadita nell'opera di Seneca padre; basti ricordare al riguardo il contenuto delle *Suasoriae* 6 e 7, entrambe dedicate agli avvenimenti che portarono alla morte di Cicerone, cf. Mazzoli (2006) 54–57; Migliario (2007)

ed è significativo che associ la figura del triumviro ad Alessandro, entrambi tiranni dinanzi ai quali non c'è libertà di parola.

L'avvenimento al quale si riferisce, l'ingresso e il soggiorno ad Atene di Marco Antonio nell'inverno del 39–38 a.C., è un *exemplum* tratto dalla storia passata anch'esso ideologicamente non indifferente, soprattutto per il contesto alessandro con cui interagisce. Se, infatti, il motivo della *imitatio Alexandri* è esplicitamente collegato ai comportamenti di Germanico, evocati dalla citazione dei versi di Albinovano Pedone, non meno significativa è l'eredità antoniana che il successore designato di Tiberio rivendicava. La testimonianza di Tacito è ancora una volta importante. Durante il suo viaggio verso l'Oriente, nel 18 d.C. Germanico si era fermato a Nicopoli, la città fondata da Augusto sul luogo dove aveva posto i propri accampamenti prima della battaglia di Azio, e di qui aveva visitato il golfo in cui si era svolta la battaglia, i trofei che Augusto aveva consacrato e il campo di Antonio. Quei luoghi, commenta lo storico, erano legati ai ricordi dei suoi antenati, il prozio Augusto e il nonno Antonio, e quei ricordi erano per lui tristi e lieti allo stesso tempo (Tac. *ann.* 2.53.2: *simul sinus Actiaca victoria inclusus et sacratas ab Augusto manubias castraque Antonii cum recordatione maiorum suorum adiit. Namque ei, ut memoravi, avunculus Augustus, avus Antonius erant, magnaue illic imago tristium laetorumque*). L'eredità augustea e quella antoniana sono poste sullo stesso piano, ed è questa la premessa importante per valutare l'avvenimento immediatamente successivo: Germanico giunge ad Atene e in segno di omaggio per l'antica città alleata rinuncia a farsi accompagnare dai dodici littori; viene accolto con ricercate forme di onori e manifestazioni pur sempre di adulazione (Tac. *ann.* 2.53.3: *hinc ventum Athenas, foederique sociae et vetustae urbis datum, ut uno lictore uteretur. Excepere Graeci quaesitissimis honoribus, vetera suorum facta dictaque praeferentes, quo plus dignationis adulatione haberet*). In questa occasione Germanico si comporta come l'erede di Antonio, replicando il suo acclamato ingresso ad Atene (ricordato da Seneca padre). Va oltre, nel racconto di Tacito, Gneo Pisone, che nel suo violento discorso agli Ateniesi attacca indirettamente Germanico, insinuando che egli, in spregio dell'onore di Roma, aveva voluto rendere omaggio a un'accozzaglia di genti, che,

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121–149 e anche Berti (2007) 108–109; 325–332. Non è difficile ritenere che questo giudizio ispirasse anche le *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*, soprattutto se si ammette che Seneca filosofo derivi dalla ricostruzione storica del padre le riserve espresse per i comportamenti dello stesso Augusto in occasione di quegli avvenimenti in cui è stato coinvolto con Antonio, cf. Canfora (2000); Berno (2013); Canfora (2015) 164–201.

già alleata di Mitridate contro Silla, si era schierata ad Azio al fianco di Antonio contro Augusto.<sup>33</sup>

La strategia compositiva della prima *Suasoria* che converge sulla lunga citazione tratta dal poema epico-celebrativo di Albinovano Pedone ha effetti corrosivi della credibilità dei modelli ideologici sui quali Germanico e i suoi sostenitori avevano costruito l'alternativa politica alla linea dominante augustea e tiberiana. L'accostamento ad Alessandro e ad Antonio colloca pericolosamente Germanico in quella scia di tiranni superbi e arroganti che Seneca padre, attraverso la selezione declamatoria, non può che condannare e censurare. E non crediamo che il suo giudizio possa essere stato diverso nell'opera storica, alla quale stava lavorando e che il figlio avrebbe pubblicato.

Proprio l'apprezzamento che Seneca filosofo mostra per le *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*, ha indotto gli studiosi concordi a ritenere che la storiografia paterna (come già l'antologia declamatoria) abbia certamente influenzato il figlio.<sup>34</sup> Sarà utile, per questo, una rapida ricognizione di alcuni temi e figure su cui ci siamo finora soffermati, a cominciare da Alessandro e Antonio, per le implicazioni che hanno in relazione alla politica di Germanico.

Partirei dalla constatazione che il filosofo condivide, come è ben noto, il giudizio negativo sulla figura di Alessandro.<sup>35</sup> Per limitarci a due esempi, potremmo citare *Naturales quaestiones* 6.23.2–3, dove Seneca figlio ricorda (come già Cestio in *suas.* 1.5) l'assassinio di Callistene, che è per Alessandro un'accusa perenne, che nessuna virtù o impresa militare potrà mai riscattare (6.23.2: *hic est Alexandri crimen aeternum, quod nulla virtus, nulla bellorum felicitas redimet*).<sup>36</sup> Interes-

<sup>33</sup> Tac. *ann.* 2.55.1: *at Cn. Piso, quo properantius destinata inciperet, civitatem Atheniensium turbido incessu exterritam oratione saeva increpat, oblique Germanicum perstringens, quod contra decus Romani nominis non Athenienses tot cladibus extinctos, sed conluviem illam nationum comitate nimia coluisset: hos enim esse Mithridatis adversus Sullam, Antonii adversus Augustum socios.* Sulla valutazione da parte di Tacito di questa denuncia di Pisone e delle pretese di Germanico di farsi erede della tradizione antoniana, cf. Questa (1963<sup>2</sup>) 277–284.

<sup>34</sup> Ne discute ampiamente Canfora (2015) 164–202. È opportuno comunque aver presente che la concezione della storia in Seneca si fonda sempre sul legame inscindibile con la morale, cf. Cogitore (2012).

<sup>35</sup> Per un quadro dei giudizi di Seneca su Alessandro Magno, cf., anche per un orientamento bibliografico, Vottero (1989), 380–381; De Vivo (1998) 179–180; De Vivo (2012) 104–106.

<sup>36</sup> Sen. *nat.* 6.23.2–3: *hanc etiam Callisthenes probat, non contemptus vir (fuit enim illi nobile ingenium et furibundi regis impatiens; hic est Alexandri crimen aeternum, quod nulla virtus, nulla bellorum felicitas redimet; nam quotiens quis dixerit 'occidit Persarum multa milia', opponetur ei 'et Callisthenes'; quotiens dictum erit 'occidit Darium, penes quem tunc maximum regnum erat', opponetur ei 'et Callisthenes'; quotiens dictum erit 'omnia Oceano tenus vicit, ipsum quoque temptavit novis classibus et imperium ex angulo Thraciae usque ad orientis terminos protulit', dicitur*

sante poi per l'uso di molti temi declamatori presenti nella prima *Suasoria* è *De beneficiis* 7.2.5–6: Alessandro, spintosi fino al Mar Rosso, sempre insaziabile manda a esplorare l'Oceano per cercare nuove terre e nuove guerre, oltre i confini della natura; a nulla valgono per la cieca avidità i tanti regni conquistati: *tantum illi deest, quantum cupit*.<sup>37</sup>

Per quanto riguarda Marco Antonio, nelle opere del filosofo il giudizio è sicuramente negativo. Nel *De clementia* il triumviro è colui che ha dettato l'editto di proscrizione ad Ottaviano mentre erano a cena (*clem.* 1.9.3: *iam unum hominem occidere non poterat cui M. Antonius proscriptionis edictum inter cenam dictarat!*).<sup>38</sup> Nelle *Epistulae ad Lucilium* (83.25) Seneca offre un ritratto di Antonio che, accogliendo alcuni temi della propaganda augustea, attribuisce al vino e alla passione per Cleopatra la causa della degenerazione verso vizi e atrocità ignote, che lo portarono a banchettare mentre gli venivano esibite teste e mani dei cittadini proscritti.<sup>39</sup>

Una sola apparente eccezione nella rappresentazione di Antonio ci introduce alla presenza invero limitata di Germanico nelle opere del filosofo. Nella *Consolatio ad Polybium*, il testo più discusso di Seneca scritto dall'esilio in Corsica, il filosofo immagina quale possa essere stato il discorso pronunciato da Claudio al fine di consolare il suo potente liberto per la perdita del fratello (*dial.* 11.14.2–16.3). Claudio, nella *factio* senecana, offre quale motivo consolatorio gli esempi più nobili dei personaggi romani che hanno subito lo stesso lutto, diffondendosi infine su quelli tratti dalla *domus* imperiale. Dopo Augusto, Gaio Cesare, Tiberio, il principe che Seneca – con imbarazzanti toni adulatori – ha presentato come

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'sed Callisthenen occidit': *omnia licet antiqua ducum regumque exempla transierit, ex his quae fecit nihil tam magnum erit quam scelus*).

37 Sen. *benef.* 7.2.5–6: *et, ne illum existimes parvo esse contentum, omnia illius sunt, non sic, quemadmodum Alexandri fuerunt, cui, quamquam in litore rubri maris steterat, plus deerat, quam qua venerat. Illius ne ea quidem erant, quae tenebat aut vicerat, cum in oceano Onesicritus praemissus explorator erraret et bella in ignoto mari quaereret. Non satis apparebat inopem esse, qui extra naturae terminos arma proferret, qui se in profundum inexploratum et immensum aviditate caeca prosus immitteret? Quid interest, quot eripuerit regna, quot dederit, quantum terrarum tributo premat? Tantum illi deest, quantum cupit.*

38 Cf. Berno (2013) 182–183.

39 Sen. *epist.* 83.25: *M. Antonium magnum virum et ingeni nobilis, quae alia res perdidit et in externos mores ac vitia non Romana traiecit quam ebrietas nec minor vino Cleopatrae amor? Haec illum res hostem rei publicae, haec hostibus suis inparem reddidit; haec crudelem fecit, cum capita principum civitatis cenanti referrentur, cum inter apparatusissimas epulas luxusque regales ora ac manus proscriptorum recognosceret, cum vino gravis sitiret tamen sanguinem. Intolerabile erat quod ebrius fiebat cum haec faceret: quanto intolerabilius quod haec in ipsa ebrietate faciebat!*

*publicum omnium hominum solacium* (*dial.* 11.14.1), adduce alla fine come argomenti più autorevoli il caso del nonno Marco Antonio e quello suo personale. Antonio, inferiore a nessuno se non ad Augusto, quando era impegnato a dare un nuovo ordine allo stato ed era arbitro della vita e della morte dei suoi concittadini, subì la perdita del fratello Gaio, ucciso nel 42 a.C. per ordine di Bruto; sopportò questo dolore con la stessa grandezza d'animo con cui aveva sopportato i tanti colpi della fortuna e il suo pianto si realizzò nel sacrificare al fratello con il sangue delle venti legioni di Bruto e Cassio massacrato a Filippi.<sup>40</sup>

Seneca traduce i pensieri di Claudio su Marco Antonio, la cui memoria egli – in continuità con Caligola – intese riabilitare celebrandone anche l'anniversario della nascita.<sup>41</sup> Il filosofo per 'triste' convenienza e necessità adulatoria sembra adeguarsi, ma non rinuncia a lasciar trasparire l'orrore per un personaggio che avrebbe inteso fare sacrifici in memoria del fratello con il sangue civile versato a Filippi. Non è inverosimile pensare che il punto di vista di Claudio si identificasse con quello di Germanico e del suo *entourage*; in questa direzione sembra spingere l'intenzionale accostamento di Claudio, colpito dalla perdita del fratello, al ricordo del nonno: l'eredità antoniana, diretta attraverso la madre, è il valore ideologico prevalente che prima Germanico e poi Claudio intendevano rivendicare. Del figlio adottivo di Tiberio nel testo della *Consolatio ad Polybium* non si ricorda nient'altro se non il sentimento di affetto ricambiato dal fratello rimasto in vita.<sup>42</sup>

Se poco significativa è la menzione di Germanico in *Naturales quaestiones* 1.1.3, a proposito del portento di una palla di fuoco che nel cielo si osservò in

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**40** Sen. *dial.* 11.16.1–2: *M. Antonius avus meus, nullo minor nisi eo a quo victus est, cum rem publicam constitueret et triumphali potestate praeditus nihil supra se videret, exceptis vero duobus collegis, omnia infra se cereret, fratrem interfectum audivit. Fortuna impotens, quales ex humanis malis tibi ipsa ludos facis! Eo ipso tempore, quo M. Antonius civium suorum vitae sedebat mortisque arbiter, M. Antonii frater duci iubebatur ad supplicium! Tulit hoc tamen tam triste vulnus eadem magnitudine animi M. Antonius, qua omnia alia adversa toleraverat et hoc fuit eius lugere, viginti legionum sanguine fratri parentare.*

**41** Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 11.3: *ne Marcum quidem Antonium inhonoratum ac sine gratia mentione transmisit, testatus quondam per edictum, tanto impensius petere se ut natalem patris Drusi celebrarent, quod idem esset et avi Antoni.* Si veda al riguardo il commento di Guastella (1999) 155.

**42** Sen. *dial.* 11.16.3: *sed ut omnia alia exempla praeteream, ut in me quoque ipso alia taceam funera, bis me fraterno luctu aggressa fortuna est, bis intellexit laedi me posse, vinci non posse. Amisi Germanicum fratrem, quem quomodo amaverim intellegit profecto quisquis cogitat, quomodo suos fratres pii fratres ament: sic tamen affectum meum rexi, ut nec relinquerem quicquam, quod exigi deberet a bono fratre, nec facerem quod reprehendi posset in principe.*

occasione della sua morte, come al tempo della morte di Augusto e della condanna di Seiano,<sup>43</sup> certamente di grande interesse è un luogo della *Consolatio ad Marciam* (*dial.* 6.15.3) che ha come protagonista Tiberio, che perse e chi aveva generato e chi aveva adottato (i nomi di Druso e di Germanico non compaiono): *Ti. Caesar et quem genuerat et quem adoptaverat amisit*. Seneca, tuttavia, aggiunge che egli lodò personalmente solo il figlio, stando in piedi dinanzi al suo cadavere coperto da un velo, senza piegare il volto dinanzi al popolo in lacrime e dimostrando a Seiano, al suo fianco, come riuscisse a sopportare la perdita dei suoi cari.<sup>44</sup> Druso è il figlio, l'unico che Tiberio evidentemente considera e ai cui funerali partecipa; di Germanico, anche in questa circostanza, Seneca non dice altro se non *quem adoptaverat*.

L'analisi degli scritti del filosofo dimostra come in essi, analogamente a quanto avviene nell'opera del padre, Germanico abbia poco spazio e come qualche informazione si possa ricavare dall'esame dei contesti, piuttosto che dal commento dell'autore. Non so quanto sia azzardato parlare di reticenza, ma bisogna registrare la scelta di Seneca figlio di non pronunciare mai giudizi diretti sul personaggio Germanico, anche nelle poche occasioni (tre) in cui compare. Questo atteggiamento potrebbe forse anche essere messo in relazione con la tendenza di Seneca figlio di non riferirsi mai esplicitamente alla propria esperienza di uomo politico, durante la quale certamente fece i conti con gli ambienti politici germanicani,<sup>45</sup> con cui intrattenne rapporti molto complessi che in parte i libri superstiti degli *Annali* di Tacito consentono di recuperare.

La prima menzione di Seneca in quel che resta degli *Annali* coincide con il suo richiamo dall'esilio in Corsica (*ann.* 12.8.2), disposto da Claudio e da Messalina, e con la sua nomina alla pretura, per iniziativa di Agrippina la figlia di Germanico, la quale voleva affidare al famoso uomo di lettere l'educazione del figlio, nella convinzione che un tale maestro, riconoscente a lei e ostile a Claudio, con i

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43 *Sen. nat.* 1.1.3: *vidimus nos quoque non semel flammam ingentis pilae specie, quae tamen in ipso cursu suo dissipata est. Vidimus circa divi Augusti excessum simile prodigium, vidimus eo tempore quo de Seiano actum est, nec Germanici mors sine denuntiatione tali fuit.*

44 *Sen. dial.* 6.15.3: *Ti. Caesar et quem genuerat et quem adoptaverat amisit: ipse tamen pro rostris laudavit filium stetitque in conspectu posito corpore, interiecto tantummodo velamento, quod pontificis oculos a funere arceret et flente populo Romano non flexit vultum. Experiendum se dedit Seiano ad latus stanti, quam patienter posset suos perdere.*

45 Sulla composizione e sul ruolo del cosiddetto partito di Germanico, influente in tutte le questioni dinastiche di età giulio-claudia, mi limito a segnalare Pani (1991) 221–252, che all'argomento ha dedicato contributi importanti nello studio qui citato richiamati.

suoi consigli avrebbe giovato a lei e al giovane Domizio nella conquista del potere.<sup>46</sup> Gli avvenimenti successivi dimostrarono che il comportamento politico di Seneca andò in una direzione diversa rispetto ai piani di Agrippina.

Lo scontro diretto si verifica, allorché la donna, infuriata per la relazione di Nerone con la liberta Atte, si rende conto che il figlio si sottrae sempre più alla sua autorità e si affida a Seneca. E quando il figlio si libera del potente liberto Pallante, su cui la madre poteva contare, Agrippina non esitò a usare Britannico, figlio legittimo di Claudio, come rivale di Nerone e a minacciare di rivelare i delitti da lei commessi e di recarsi con Britannico davanti ai pretoriani, per contrapporre la voce della figlia di Germanico a quella di Burro e di Seneca, entrambi nominati con disprezzo: *audiretur hinc Germanici filia, in<de> debilis Burrus et exul Seneca, trunca scilicet manu et professoria lingua generis humani regimen expostulantes* (*ann.* 13.14.3).

Un attacco violento contro Seneca viene da Suillio, con alcuni argomenti comuni a quelli usati da Agrippina. Questi rivendica di essere stato questore di Germanico, mentre accusa il filosofo di aver commesso adulterio nella famiglia di lui, insinuando ambiguamente che fosse stato l'amante anche di Agrippina (*ann.* 13.42.3: *se quaestorem Germanici, illum domus eius adulterum fuisse*).<sup>47</sup>

Nel tragico momento del fallito attentato di Nerone contro la madre, quando il principe chiede aiuto a Seneca e a Burro, essi si convincono che la situazione sarebbe precipitata se non fosse stata eliminata Agrippina. Seneca, risoluto, ritiene che si debba fare ricorso ai soldati, ma Burro gli obietta che i pretoriani, legati alla memoria di Germanico, mai avrebbero osato alcuna crudeltà contro la sua progenie (*ann.* 14.7.4: *illi praetorianos toti Caesarum domui obstrictos memoresque Germanici nihil adversus progeniem eius atrox ausuros respondit*).

Il partito germaniciano, il consenso che si riversa sulla figlia Agrippina rappresentano, nel racconto di Tacito, un ostacolo all'indirizzo politico che Seneca intende dare al principato di Nerone. E non è casuale che anche nel discorso di congedo che il filosofo rivolge a Nerone in *ann.* 14.53–54 non faccia mai riferimento alla discendenza da Germanico, né il principe nella replica di *ann.* 14.55–56 trovi l'occasione per riferirsi ad essa.

È utile, a questo punto, sintetizzare i dati emersi dall'analisi fin qui condotta:  
– alcuni frammenti del *P.Herc.* 1067 sembrano verosimilmente riferirsi agli avvenimenti che videro protagonisti Germanico e Druso, del quale in particolare

<sup>46</sup> Tac. *ann.* 12.8.2, cf. Oniga (2003) 1325–1326.

<sup>47</sup> L'accusa è anche in Dione Cassio (61.10.1), cf. Questa (1963<sup>2</sup>) 185–188; Oniga (2003) 1411.

Seneca padre potrebbe avere trattato il ritorno vittorioso dall'Ilirico (20 d.C.), durante lo svolgimento del processo contro Pisone, e i solenni funerali del 23 d.C. ai quali partecipò lo stesso Tiberio;

– nelle *Controversiae* e nelle *Suasoriae* Seneca padre non parla di Germanico come oratore; nel contesto più ampio della prima *Suasoria* in cui cita alcuni versi tratti dal poema celebrativo di Albinovano Pedone, l'accostamento di Germanico ad Alessandro Magno e a Marco Antonio, suoi dichiarati modelli di riferimento, ha effetti assolutamente negativi perché entrambi i personaggi incarnano la figura del tiranno;

– Seneca filosofo condivide i giudizi negativi espressi su Alessandro e Marco Antonio nell'antologia declamatoria del padre; nei soli tre luoghi di tutti i suoi scritti in cui accenna a Germanico, non esprime commenti diretti ma ne accosta il ricordo a quello di Marco Antonio nell'imbarazzante *oratio ficta* di Claudio della *Consolatio ad Poybium* (*dial.* 11.16.1–2), e nella *Consolatio ad Marciam* (*dial.* 6.15.3) rileva la predilezione di Tiberio per Druso, l'unico figlio considerato tale, rispetto all'altro, Germanico (neanche nominato), la cui adozione Augusto gli aveva imposto;

– la narrazione di Tacito negli *Annales* dimostra come nella sua azione politica, a cominciare dal ritorno dall'esilio, Seneca filosofo perseguì una linea contraria a quella del partito germaniciano, solidale con Agrippina, che attraverso il figlio Nerone (ma anche contro di lui) avrebbe voluto impadronirsi del potere imperiale.

Proprio su Tacito vorrei concludere per un problema, che Cesare Questa aveva riproposto nel suo libro ancora fondamentale *Studi sulle fonti degli Annales di Tacito*,<sup>48</sup> relativamente al cosiddetto *Wendepunkt*, che caratterizza la divisione politica (e anche narrativa) del regno di Tiberio. La scansione in due periodi del principato tiberiano, comunemente riconosciuta dagli storici e dallo stesso Seneca filosofo (*clem.* 1.1.6),<sup>49</sup> è collocata da Tacito nel 23 d.C. dopo la morte del figlio Druso: *congruens crediderim recensere ceteras quoque rei publicae partes, quibus modis ad eam diem habitae sint, quoniam Tiberio mutati in deterius principatus initium ille annus attulit* (*ann.* 4.6.1); *quae cuncta non quidem comi via, sed horridus ac plerumque formidatus, retinebat tamen, donec morte Drusi verterentur: nam dum superfuit, mansere, quia Seianus incipiente adhuc potentia bonis consiliis*

<sup>48</sup> Questa (1963<sup>2</sup>) 127–138.

<sup>49</sup> Sen. *clem.* 1.1.6: *nemo iam divum Augustum nec Ti. Caesaris prima tempora loquitur nec, quod te imitari velit, extra te quaerit.*



*notescere volebat et ultor metuebatur non occultus odii, sed crebro querens incolumi filio adiutorem imperii alium vocari* (*ann.* 4.7.1).<sup>50</sup> Questa scelta di Tacito contrasta con l'altra tradizione che poneva il *Wendepunkt* nel 19 d.C., dopo la morte di Germanico: è questa la linea soprattutto di Dione Cassio (57.19.1 e 7–8; 7.1; 13.6), testimoniata anche da Svetonio (*Cal.* 6.3 e *Tib.* 39.1). Si tratta di una tradizione germaniciana, alimentata verosimilmente dal suo *entourage* e dalla stessa Agrippina, di cui anche Tacito era a conoscenza (*ann.* 6.51.3: *morum quoque tempora illi diversa: egregium vita famaue, quoad privatus vel in imperiis sub Augusto fuit; occultum ac subdolum fingendis virtutibus donec Germanicus ac Drusus superfuere*). Eppure lo storico per il cambiamento di Tiberio preferì adottare la tradizione drusiana, che secondo Cesare Questa doveva trovare in qualche fonte a noi ignota che lo precedette nella trattazione degli anni di Tiberio.

L'ipotesi che quella fonte o una di quelle fonti fosse la *Storia* di Seneca padre, di cui ci dà certezza il *P.Herc.* 1067, alla luce dei riscontri evidenziati con l'antologia declamatoria e con gli scritti di Seneca filosofo, potrebbe forse non essere troppo lontana dal vero.

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<sup>50</sup> Utili osservazioni nel commento di *ann.* 4.6.1 e 7.1 in Martin/Woodman (1989) 104–105, 113–114.

Antonio Pistellato

## Seneca Padre e il ‘canone dei tiranni’ romani: una questione di famiglia?

**Abstract:** This paper elaborates on the early development of a ‘canon’ of Roman tyrants in imperial Rome. Testimonies from Flavius Josephus, Quintilian, Lucan, Seneca the Younger, Seneca the Elder and Cicero are taken into account in reverse order, toward the origins of the ‘canon’. The autocracy experienced under Caligula and Nero especially stimulated the process. At the beginning, Roman autocrats were recognized among the main leaders of late Republican Rome, notably Caesar, and Sulla before him. In the background, Alexander the Great provided an inspirational model. Furthermore, Seneca the Elder’s anti-alexandristic may imply a concealed critic against Augustus. Finally, in the authorial series Lucan and the two Senecas show that the Annaei played a distinguished role in the process. Their influence may be confirmed by the attribution to Seneca the Elder of the text of *P.Herc.* 1067, significantly found in the villa of the Calpurni Pisones at Herculaneum.

La paternità senecana dell’opera *ab initio bellorum ciuilium*, la cui *subscriptio* è recata dal *P.Herc.* 1067,<sup>1</sup> sollecita a considerare un campo d’indagine più ampio, che includa la retorica e altri generi della letteratura e che, con essi, guardi al rapporto fra *milieu* intellettuale, ambiente senatorio e potere imperiale. Merita attenta cura, in particolare, la circolazione delle idee intorno al cuore del problema che accompagna l’intera storia del Principato, e che è già chiaro a Cicerone al tempo del dissesto dello stato tardo-repubblicano: l’asimmetria non componibile tra l’*unus* (il *princeps*) alla guida dello stato e i *plures* (i senatori) che lo hanno scelto e lo coadiuvano nell’arte del governo.<sup>2</sup>

In tal senso può rivelarsi utile delineare il percorso genetico di quello che si potrebbe definire, pur con la dovuta cautela, un ‘canone dei tiranni’ romani. Esso sembra svilupparsi intorno a nomi fissi durante il I secolo d.C.; si cristallizzerà però in modo stabile solo tra II e III secolo. In questo percorso la produzione retorica di Seneca Padre occupa un posto degno di rilievo. Nelle *Controuersiae* e nelle *Suasoriae*, infatti, diversi elementi testimoniano una riflessione ancora in

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1 Piano (2016); e soprattutto Piano (2017a).

2 Cic. *rep.* 2.14–15.

*fieri* sull'autocrazia romana e sui suoi modelli che, nel corso dell'epoca imperiale, maturerà a fronte dei ripetuti casi di deriva dispotica del potere di principe.

L'opera di Seneca Padre costituisce, in effetti, una tappa di un iter che in questa sede verrà considerato nella sua prima evoluzione, senza superare il limite del I secolo d.C. A tale proposito, anzi, si procederà *à rebours*. Dalla fine del secolo si risalirà indietro nel tempo, per toccare la pagina del retore di Corduba, e ancora un poco oltre. È infatti nel collasso dell'ordinamento repubblicano consumatosi nel I secolo a.C. che le basi del ragionamento sull'autocrazia furono gettate, nel modo più incisivo, dallo stesso Cicerone.

Tuttavia, questo itinerario renderà evidente anche lo svolgimento di un'elaborazione familiare intorno al problema. Vi sono coinvolti tutti i letterati appartenenti alla casa degli Annei: dal poeta Lucano al capostipite Seneca Padre, passando attraverso la potente testimonianza di Seneca figlio.

## 1 *Puppen eines Marionettentheaters?*

Si può iniziare da una fonte grecofona, che ci informa di un tempo assai vicino a quello di Seneca Padre. Flavio Giuseppe, attivo sotto Domiziano, opera in un'epoca nella quale il problema dell'autocrazia è tornato in auge a Roma. Non è detto che l'autore giudaico vi sia stato personalmente coinvolto, data la relativa marginalità cui il suo operato letterario lo confinava.<sup>3</sup> Nondimeno, un importante passo del libro 19 delle *Antichità giudaiche*, consacrato alla fine del principato di Caligola, concerne un discorso tutto incentrato sul tema del dispotismo del potere imperiale. A pronunciarlo è il console del 41 d.C., Gneo Senzio Saturnino.<sup>4</sup> Il sommo magistrato parla dinanzi al senato, riunito in Campidoglio in condizioni di assoluta emergenza, senza che ancora sia stato designato un successore dopo l'assassinio di Caligola, consumatosi il 24 gennaio. Claudio salirà al potere il giorno dopo.

Il lungo discorso, storiograficamente interessante da molti punti di vista,<sup>5</sup> presenta un notevole impianto retorico, che attinge ampiamente al repertorio delle declamazioni consacrate alla tirannide e all'opposizione alla tirannide (*AI* 19.167–180). L'impressionante frequenza del tema nelle declamazioni minori

<sup>3</sup> Più ottimista al proposito den Hollander (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Sul 'repubblicanismo' di Senzio Saturnino: Troiani (2004), Pistellato (2015a) 148–181.

<sup>5</sup> Galimberti (2001) 137–200, Wiseman (2013), Pistellato (2015a) 182–195.

pseudo-quintilianee ne conferma la fortuna.<sup>6</sup> Al di là della questione relativa alla storicità dell'orazione – certamente opinabile, data la sua connotazione, ma niente affatto da escludere –,<sup>7</sup> Senzio Saturnino menziona i prodromi della 'tirannide' romana, incarnata nella sua ultima versione dal testé defunto Caligola.<sup>8</sup> Spicca il nome di Giulio Cesare. Evocato quale sconvolgitore della *res publica* e padre spirituale della serie degli autocrati che hanno distrutto la *libertas* appartenuta ai senatori, egli figura come responsabile morale e insieme modello di comportamento che ha prodotto la crisi dello stato a guida consolare.

È il collegamento con il piano storico che interessa qui particolarmente sottolineare. Chi scrive è incline a pensare che nemmeno le esercitazioni retoriche più astratte, che in epoca imperiale vertevano sulla figura del tiranno come vizio comportamentale, fossero del tutto estranee alla realtà.<sup>9</sup> E la nota contrapposizione fra tiranno e *res publica*, praticatissima nella storiografia, non può essere inquadrata come un semplice tema di scuola. Nel merito, a ragione Diego Lanza ravvisava una plausibile incidenza del piano evenemenziale relativo all'epoca proto-imperiale nella frequentazione del tema testimoniata dalle nostre fonti.<sup>10</sup> Se così fosse, saremmo lontani dal trovarci dinanzi a *silhouettes* di un'etica deteriorata prive di concreta sostanza storica, che Friedlaender ebbe a screditare quali *Puppen eines Marionettentheaters*.<sup>11</sup> Fossero anche stati animati da un maestro di arte retorica, siffatti 'pupazzi' sembrano riflettere un problema esistente, e anzi tanto conosciuto da essere sublimato negli esercizi dei retori e nelle esibizioni degli oratori. Ciò appare tanto più cogente se il tema della tirannide è a chiare lettere allacciato alla storia di Roma e alle azioni dei suoi più discussi protagonisti.

Che la relazione 'privilegiata' tra la figura di Giulio Cesare e la tirannide fosse usata come motivo retorico è ben dimostrato ancora in età flavia, e sempre sotto

<sup>6</sup> Ps.Quint. *decl.* 253, 267, 269, 274, 282, 288, 293, 329, 345, 351, 352, 374, 382 Winterbottom. Sulla figura del tiranno nelle declamazioni di scuola gli studi sono numerosi. Basti, a titolo di esempio, il riferimento a Tabacco (1985).

<sup>7</sup> Vi si possono apprezzare, per esempio, significativi echi sallustiani che, da soli, meritano una trattazione approfondita. Anticipazioni in Pistellato (2016).

<sup>8</sup> I. *AI* 19.167–180 (ed. Niese): [...] ἄφ' οὗ γὰρ Ἰούλιος Καῖσαρ φρονήσας ἐπὶ καταλύσει τῆς δημοκρατίας καὶ διαβιασάμενος τὸν κόσμον τῶν νόμων τὴν πολιτείαν συνετέραραξεν, κρείσσων μὲν τοῦ δικαίου γενόμενος, ἥσων δὲ τοῦ κατ' ἰδίαν ἡδονὴν αὐτῷ κομιοῦντος, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅ τι τῶν κακῶν οὐ διέτριψεν τὴν πόλιν, φιλοτιμηθέντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀπάντων, οἱ ἐκείνῳ διάδοχοι τῆς ἀρχῆς κατέστησαν, ἐπ' ἀφανισμῷ τοῦ πατρίου καὶ ὡς ἂν μάλιστα τῶν πολιτῶν ἐρημίαν τοῦ γενναίου καταλείποιεν. [...]

<sup>9</sup> Come invece voleva, per esempio, già Fleskes (1914).

<sup>10</sup> Lanza (1977) 203–207.

<sup>11</sup> Friedlaender (1862) 19.

Domiziano, da un professore di retorica come Quintiliano. Diversi passi della *Institutio oratoria* permettono tuttavia di ampliare il quadro e di apprezzare un ventaglio tematico più ricco, nel quale Cesare non compare isolatamente. Si tratta di modelli topici, intorno ai quali le esercitazioni retoriche potevano svolgersi toccando i temi sensibili dell'amministrazione della *res publica*, della problematica tensione verso la *dominatio*, dell'estrema degenerazione verso la *tyrannis*. Il repertorio esibito da Quintiliano è evidentemente rodato, allo scopo di fornire esempi – o, se si vuole, casi di studio – al servizio di una esigenza innanzitutto didattica. Oltre a quello di Cesare (*inst.* 3.8.46–47; 8.2.9), ricorrono il nome di Silla, carico di densità ideologica (3.8.53; 5.10.30, 71), e quello di Cinna, un 'tiranno' rimasto a uno stadio potenziale, le cui mire di *dominatio* non ebbero sufficiente fortuna politica (5.10.30).<sup>12</sup>

Insieme ai e al tempo stesso al di là dei nomi, si registrano temi maggiori e tra loro paralleli, parte di un corredo argomentativo che il retore riservava al problema della tirannide: il dualismo oppositivo *res publica/tyrannis* (3.5.8); l'*adfectatio regni* imputata a Cesare (*inst.* 3.8.47), accusato da un riconosciuto campione del repubblicanesimo senatorio, Catone Uticense, quale eversore dello stato (8.2.9), e posto in diretto contrasto con la figura di Cicerone salvatore dello stato (3.8.46); l'ineluttabilità dell'*unus* quale reggitore dello stato (3.8.47), argomento usato in seguito da Tacito;<sup>13</sup> la *depositio* della dittatura da parte di Silla (3.8.53), motivo che si contrappone a quello della sete sillana di una *dominatio* armata (5.10.71); l'accostamento topico e deteriore di Silla e Cinna, oggetto persino di responsi oracolari (5.10.30).

*Arma, depositio dictaturae* (= *tyrannidis*), *euersio rei publicae* risuonano dunque in Quintiliano come esempi circolanti che, soprattutto, scorrono ormai da tempo nelle menti e nelle parole degli oratori e del loro pubblico.<sup>14</sup>

## 1.1 Il teatro della storia

Su tali basi è possibile risalire indietro nella storia del Principato. Se si assume che, fra altri, Wiseman abbia avuto ragione nell'individuare in Cluvio Rufo la fonte cui Flavio Giuseppe si rifà per la narrazione del libro 19 delle *Antichità Giudaiche*, avremmo a che fare con informazioni provenienti da un testimone diretto degli eventi relativi al 'tirannicidio' consumatosi con la morte di Caligola nel 41

<sup>12</sup> Lovano (2002) 53–77.

<sup>13</sup> Tac. *ann.* 1.9.4.

<sup>14</sup> Tabacco (1985) 51–65.

d.C.<sup>15</sup> Senatore al tempo di Caligola come pure in seguito sotto Nerone, Cluvio Rufo potrebbe aver composto la sua opera storiografica in epoca flavia, fresco testimone anche della esperienza neroniana e dunque particolarmente attento alla questione della degenerazione autocratica del potere di principe. Un'epoca, quella seguita alle guerre civili del 68–69, nella quale la riflessione di tipo memorialistico sulle vittime del dispotismo neroniano fiorì in modo straordinario e della quale, purtroppo, possediamo solo tracce frammentarie e indirette.<sup>16</sup>

L'autocrazia con Caligola e Nerone si acuì al punto da minare la stabilità della *res publica* augustea nel suo fondamentale assetto dualistico: aveva rotto l'equilibrio, sia pure apparente, del rapporto fra imperatore e senato. La circostanza non poté che stimolare il tema politico e polemico della serie degli autocrati. Un tema che nella produzione letteraria latina è destinato a evolversi fino a raggiungere esiti spettacolari. Nella tarda *Historia Augusta*, accanto a numerose menzioni dei modelli supremi e cristallizzati della 'tirannide' a Roma (Silla, Caligola, Nerone, Domiziano, Commodus, Eliogabalo, Massimino il Trace, Gallieno, per fare alcuni nomi in diacronia),<sup>17</sup> leggiamo interi libri dedicati ai tiranni: la *Quadriga tyrannorum* e le *Vitae dei triginta tyranni*.<sup>18</sup>

## 1.2 Gli Annei, parte 1: Lucano e Seneca filosofo

Quello dell'autocrazia è però un tema su cui, senza sorpresa, si ragiona molto in epoca neroniana, e non solo nell'ambito della prosa.<sup>19</sup> Lucano concepisce un poema epico imperniato su Cesare e Pompeo, individuandoli come motori primi delle guerre civili a Roma. Perciò stesso, del resto, a Cesare e – in misura minore – a Pompeo il poeta sembra voler accostare l'ombra di Alessandro il Grande.<sup>20</sup> Lucano ha altresì chiaro, tuttavia, come la crisi sia ancor più risalente: *olim uera fides Sulla Marioque receptis / libertatis obit* (9.204–205).<sup>21</sup> Per il poeta, anzi, Silla – assai più di Mario – è un prototipo di tiranno romano. Al dittatore egli dedica largo spazio nel libro 2 del *Bellum ciuile* (vv. 139–236).<sup>22</sup> Bastino pochi esametri esemplificativi: *ille quod exiguum restabat sanguinis urbi / hausit* (140–141); *tum data libertas*

<sup>15</sup> Wiseman (2013) XIV–XVI, 109–116.

<sup>16</sup> Per una panoramica generale: *FRHist* I 525–586.

<sup>17</sup> *Hist. Aug. Marcus* 28.10; *Comm.* 19.2.

<sup>18</sup> Spunti sulle istanze antitiranniche nella *Historia Augusta* in Mastandrea (2017).

<sup>19</sup> Cogitore (2011) 140–152.

<sup>20</sup> Kimmerle (2015) 30–58, 65–73.

<sup>21</sup> Cogitore (2011) 145.

<sup>22</sup> Kimmerle (2015) 187.

*odiis, resolutaque legum / frenis ira ruit. non uni cuncta dabantur / sed fecit sibi quisque nefas* (145–147); *colla ducum pilo trepidam gestata per urbem / et medio congesta foro* (160–161); *omnia Sullanae lustrasse cadauera pacis / perque omnis truncos, cum qua ceruice recisum / conueniat, quaesisse, caput* (171–173); *intrepidus tanti sedit securus ab alto / spectator sceleris: miseri tot milia uulgi / non timuit iussisse mori* (207–209); *hisne salus rerum, felix his Sulla uocari, / his meruit tumulum medio sibi tollere Campo? / haec rursus patienda manent, hoc ordine belli / ibitur, hic stabit ciuilibus exitus armis* (221–224).

Lucano costruisce con finezza il tessuto epico richiamando temi di indiscutibile pregnanza politica, piegandoli a un'esigenza poetica che sembra diventare istanza ideologica. Così la *libertas*, concetto-cardine del *milieu* senatorio in chiave anti-autocratica,<sup>23</sup> appare rovesciata rispetto all'ordine naturale, e viene associata all'odio che tormenta la tetra età di Silla. Così l'*unus* reggitore dello stato si scinde in molteplici e nefasti sovvertitori della *res publica*. Il punto di vista del versificatore è quello di un uomo abituato al Principato come sola forma di governo, peraltro in un'epoca nella quale essa inclina verso scenari sempre più cupi.<sup>24</sup> Sul sovvertimento dell'ordine naturale Lucano insiste con vigore (148–151), disegnando un quadro straordinariamente fosco del predominio sillano e di sapore tragico, che si risolve in un mare di sangue (220) quasi presagendo gli eventi della guerra civile che verrà (68/69 d.C.). La *Sullana pax* è costruita su un cumulo di cadaveri, dove il figlio del grande rivale di Silla, Gaio Mario, si distingue come vittima di una efferatezza (*saeuum crimen*) intrinseca all'azione tirannica<sup>25</sup> e che lascia senza fiato (173–187). Non è difficile intuire che alla base delle scelte espressive lucanee sia la cruda materialità della tragediografia senecana.<sup>26</sup>

Con Lucano si compie un passo importante nell'economia di questa indagine, poiché si entra nella casa degli Annei, cui appartennero anche i due Seneca, padre e figlio. Il più giovane fra gli illustri letterati esponenti della famiglia di Corduba non conobbe miglior sorte dello zio, Seneca filosofo, in ordine al rapporto con il potere imperiale – ancorché risulti impossibile dire una parola conclusiva su come esattamente avvenne il compimento del suo destino.<sup>27</sup>

Sul fronte della prosa, la stessa testimonianza di Seneca filosofo si distingue nella sua singolare, ambigua monumentalità. Nella sua opera più matura, le epi-

<sup>23</sup> Cogitore (2011).

<sup>24</sup> Sulla sempre discussa relazione fra Lucano e Nerone: Biondi (2003).

<sup>25</sup> Tabacco (1985) 89–116.

<sup>26</sup> Si veda anche Sen. *dial.* 4.3.18.1. Sull'impatto della tragediografia senecana: Schiesaro (2000). Sulla dipendenza della poetica di Lucano da Seneca: Castagna (2003).

<sup>27</sup> Narducci (2002).

stole a Lucilio, segnate da anni tra i più difficili del principato neroniano (ca. 63–65 d.C.), Seneca affronta il problema dell'autocrazia a Roma con limpida amarezza. Egli rovista nella crisi della Repubblica, trovando modelli di autoritarismo indietro nel tempo fino a Gaio Mario, e includendo per via Pompeo e Crasso compagni di Cesare nel primo triumvirato, cui contrappone il repubblicano irriducibile Catone Uticense (14.12–13; 94.65–67; 104.29–32).<sup>28</sup> Eroe stoico per antonomasia, celebrato come fautore solitario delle *rei publicae partes* (104.30), Catone per Seneca promosse con la sua *uox libera* una strenua difesa dello stato dalla rapacità dei capiparte (95.70).<sup>29</sup> Una figura-chiave la sua, tanto più in età neroniana allorché beneficia di attenzione biografica da parte di un martire dello stoicismo antineroniano quale Trasea Peto, e coltivata nella stessa casa degli Annei: occupa infatti un posto di assoluto rilievo nel pressoché contemporaneo *Bellum ciuile lucaneum*.<sup>30</sup>

Seneca procede tuttavia ancora più indietro nel tempo per individuare la sorgente del problema, evocando dichiaratamente la figura di Alessandro il Grande. Destinato a comparire ancora nel nostro itinerario, egli è l'ispiratore della tensione verso l'assolutismo, fondata sull'incapacità di trattenere il desiderio irrazionale di andare oltre il limite (94.62–63). Siamo di fronte a un'argomentazione nota, e coincidente con la diffusa rappresentazione della tirannide, specchio di una vulgata che ravvisa nel Macedone e nella sua fortuna come conquistatore universale la genesi dei mali del potere di principe a Roma. Seneca conosce bene il dispotismo, non solo in quanto diretto testimone della piega assunta dal principato neroniano negli anni 60 d.C.<sup>31</sup> Il ruolo di Seneca Padre in tale elaborazione è infatti patente.

Le lettere a Lucilio costituiscono in verità solo l'ultimo, più calibrato e più disilluso stadio della riflessione del filosofo sul tema. Prima della redazione delle epistole ricorrono gli stessi nomi di anelanti al dominio personale a danno dello stato. Nella pagina senecana la fissazione dei nomi si apprezza in stretto rapporto con la perdita della *libertas* senatoria, cui consegue un odioso asservimento, e il tradimento della patria condotta all'*exitium*. In tale quadro, più di Mario, più di Silla, più di Pompeo, Giulio Cesare spicca. Ne dà prova intelligente il testo del *De beneficiis* (5.16.2–5): senza essere menzionato *nominatim*, Cesare assume le colpe degli *ingrati* predecessori che hanno spinto Roma alla rovina. L'espedito

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Costa (2013) 256 n. 711.

<sup>29</sup> Isnardi Parente (2000).

<sup>30</sup> Kimmerle (2015) 59–65.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Rimell (2015).



retorico della *praeteritio* pone enfasi sui crimini imputati a Cesare che, nella medesima opera, Seneca apertamente associa alla tirannide (2.21.5). Senza sorpresa, il grande contrafforte all'esiziale esuberanza del despota è Catone Uticense, unico a ergersi contro i semi della tirannide (*dial.* 2.1.3).<sup>32</sup>

Vi è posto, in Seneca, anche per il dispotismo di un imperatore, recentissimo ma già ben sedimentato nella memoria collettiva, nonché destinato a entrare stabilmente nel 'canone dei tiranni' romani ricorrente nella *Historia Augusta*.<sup>33</sup> Il *De constantia sapientis* e il *de ira* sono luoghi idonei a ospitare ritratti di Caligola. Le descrizioni indulgono nel grottesco (*dial.* 2.18.1–3; *dial.* 4.3.18.4), suonando familiari ai lettori della *Apocolocyntosis* che, dal canto suo, condanna Claudio al ridicolo nell'aldilà. Qui interviene l'astio di Seneca contro il responsabile del suo temporaneo esilio da Roma; nei *dialogi* invece Caligola è rappresentato come funambolico attore del male, con ricchezza aneddotica.<sup>34</sup>

Seneca testimonia, dunque, la fase di consolidamento della 'tassonomia' degli autocrati di Roma. Il processo, però, non è solo frutto del suo sforzo intellettuale. Il filosofo raccoglie e sviluppa elementi che, in un modo che appare più cauto, sono già emersi alla dignità letteraria. All'interno della casa degli Annei, occorre infatti osservare quanto ci è pervenuto della produzione retorica di Seneca Padre. Risaliamo così fra le età di Tiberio e Caligola.

### 1.3 Gli Annei, parte 2: l'apporto di Seneca Padre

Elementi del costituendo 'canone' dei distruttori della *libertas* senatoria sono presenti tanto nelle *Controversiae* quanto nelle *Suasoriae*. Nelle prove retoriche del retore figurano, in particolare, Cesare e Pompeo. Nondimeno, per lo più essi non vengono evocati in modo apertamente negativo. Nel caso di Cesare, può aver influito il fatto che Seneca sia stato un testimone diretto, già professionalmente attivo, dell'epoca augustea. Allora contestare la memoria cesariana era insidioso, al netto della tolleranza di Augusto in materia di opinione, che Seneca Padre celebra a più riprese (*contr.* 2.4.13; 2.5.20; 4 *praef.* 7), ma anche in virtù del perno ideologico rappresentato dal padre adottivo del *princeps* nella genealogia della *domus Augusta*. Ciò resta vero negli anni successivi alla morte di Augusto, dopo

<sup>32</sup> Seneca menziona insieme a Cesare e Pompeo, quale polo di confronto peggiore, Publio Vatinio. Sulla sua controversa figura politica e sulla sua fortuna letteraria: Pistellato (2015b). Si veda anche *infra* p. 289.

<sup>33</sup> *Hist. Aug. Auid.* 8.3; *M. Aur.* 28.10; *Heliog.* 1.1, 33.1, 34.1; *Aurel.* 42.6.

<sup>34</sup> Si veda anche più diffusamente Sen. *dial.* 4.2.33.3–4.

la presa del potere da parte di Tiberio. D'altro canto, la memoria politica di Pompeo già alla fine della Repubblica fu oggetto di contesa. La sua figura oscilla a lungo tra connotazioni positive e connotazioni negative, ora martire della crisi, ora despota al pari di Cesare.<sup>35</sup>

Tuttavia in Seneca Padre si distingue con netta evidenza Silla, evocato nel quadro della crisi d'identità della *res publica* (*contr.* 2.4.4; 9.2.19; *suas.* 6.3). Il nome del dittatore si può indicare con sicurezza quale seme costitutivo del 'canone'. Il suo ricordo attraversa il I secolo d.C. costantemente associato alla *crudelitas* generata dalla sete della *dominatio*, equivalente alla *crudelitas* che le declamazioni di scuola attribuiscono al tiranno. Come in Seneca filosofo, in Seneca Padre le azioni sillane hanno fondato il potere autocratico a Roma. In quanto ottimato, Silla sconta la responsabilità morale della rovina del primato senatorio, che avrebbe invece dovuto tutelare.

Vi sono elementi più generali da esaminare. Potrebbe apparire solo incidentale che nelle *Controuersiae* Seneca sia attento al motivo generale della tirannide (*contr.* 1.7.13; 2.5.12; 9.4.4–6). Anche in tal caso, però, non si può trattare di un semplice interesse di scuola. Vale la pena di soffermarsi, in particolare, su *contr.* 9.4. Seneca non cita personaggi storici, ma muove la *controuersia* tutt'intorno al tema dell'uccisione di un tiranno. Di per sé il *topos* appare certamente scolastico – studiatissimo in tutta la sua estensione nel mondo greco-latino.<sup>36</sup> Nondimeno, proposto da un uomo nato al tempo dei capiparte della fine della Repubblica e pienamente maturo sotto i primi *principes*, esso sollecita pensieri allusivi alla tensione assolutistica del potere individuale. È anche, se si vuole, profetico, giacché la morte di Seneca Padre dovette precedere di uno o due anni l'uccisione di Caligola. Nel testo senecano, il richiamo alla *restituta libertas* (9.4.4: *rogo uos per securitatem publicam, per modo restitutae libertatis laetitiam, per coniuges liberosque uestros*) si dimostra peraltro in accordo con il ripristinato onore della libertà che apre il discorso del console Senzio Saturnino nel 41 d.C. (I. *AI* 19.167: εἰ καὶ ἄπιστον, ὧ Ῥωμαῖοι, διὰ τὸ χρόνῳ πολλῶ ἤκειν ἀνέλπιστον οὔσαν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' οὖν ἔχομεν τοῦ ἐλευθέρου τὴν ἀξίωσιν).

La genericità del dettato senecano oblitera riferimenti che invitino a identificare in Seneca Padre un osteggiatore del principato, tanto più se è vero che il retore fu un ammiratore di Augusto. Ma lo fu davvero? Che egli fosse uomo attento al problema dell'autocrazia non solo lontano da Roma – nell'astratta Grecia

<sup>35</sup> Si veda ad esempio Ginsberg (2013).

<sup>36</sup> Per esempio, nel modo più coerente, da Tabacco (1985).

dei tiranni – ma anche in Roma si può dedurre per altra via.<sup>37</sup> Il suo marcato accento antialessandro è dimostrato da due fattori interconnessi: da un lato, la celebre *Suasoria* 1, incardinata sulla figura del Macedone e sull'alessandrinismo, cioè l'essere tesi a una conquista universale del mondo; dall'altro lato, al suo interno, lo splendido frammento di Albinovano Pedone, relativo alla fallita navigazione settentrionale di Germanico (15 o 16 d.C.).<sup>38</sup> Dietro la costruzione senecana si può scorgere una scarsa propensione verso le ambizioni germanicane, ma anche l'eco ancora recente della catastrofe di Teutoburgo (9 d.C.), viva nella memoria collettiva e determinante nel porre un limite all'ecumenismo romano in generale, augusteo in particolare. Un tema, questo, che si sposa facilmente alla percezione dell'autocrazia di matrice ellenistica come fonte dei mali dello stato romano. La disfatta di Teutoburgo, però, con il suo immenso impatto mediatico incise non solo nella riflessione sui limiti dell'espansione di Roma, ma anche sui rischi di un *princeps* romano come nuovo Alessandro.

L'audace *insolentia* di Alessandro, cui non basta il mondo,<sup>39</sup> è richiamata da Seneca insieme alla battuta fatta da Cassio, già ricordata da Cicerone, sul giovane Pompeo Magno. Questi rimediò, da inesperto, una magra figura nella battaglia di Munda (45 a.C.) ma tornò in auge, *gladio*, da uomo forte, anzi quasi da *rex* e, ancor peggio, da *tyrannus* (*suas.* 1.5).<sup>40</sup> Pompeo è un *tyrannus* pronto a vendicare lo scherno subito. Sullo sfondo sta il limite posto alla libertà di parola in presenza dell'autocrate, dell'uomo forte che, a sua volta, perde ogni nozione di limite. Una interpretazione, questa, fatta propria da Seneca filosofo: in *epist.* 94.62–63 (cf. *supra* p. 283) Alessandro è animato da *furor* – mentre altrove è *uesanus*.<sup>41</sup> Egli è dunque dialmetralmente opposto al modello del saggio stoico.<sup>42</sup> La bulimia del Macedone, che non si trattiene dall'oltrepassare ogni limite, è un tratto, ancora una volta, squisitamente tirannico, che ritroveremo nel Cesare tratteggiato dal filosofo.

Ora è assai probabile che dietro la maestosa figura di un Alessandro-tiranno, così come descritto nella *Suasoria* 1, si celi sin dalla tarda Repubblica e ben dentro il I secolo d.C. l'allusione a Giulio Cesare. L'allusione è chiara in modo forse non casuale. Ragioniamo genealogicamente e restiamo all'interno della casa egli Annei: la ritroveremo squadrata nei versi di Lucano composti in età neroniana.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Si veda Torri (2002–2003).

<sup>38</sup> Tandoi (1964); Mastandrea (2002).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *suas.* 1.3.

<sup>40</sup> L'associazione diretta fra *gladius* e *tyrannus* è posta in rilievo in *contr.* 1.7.4.

<sup>41</sup> Sen. *benef.* 1.13.3; 2.16.1; *epist.* 91.17.

<sup>42</sup> Berti (2007) 344.

<sup>43</sup> Berti (2007) 346–347.

Se Seneca Padre redige i suoi testi tra l’epoca di Tiberio e quella di Caligola, i suoi accenni, il suo spirito antialessandro e, per contro, ‘repubblicanista’ (che cioè ha a cuore l’equilibrio dello stato minacciato dall’autocrate irrispettoso del senato, esperienza testimoniata dagli ultimi anni di Tiberio come dal principato di Caligola)<sup>44</sup> costituiscono una tappa significativa dell’elaborazione di quello che appoderà all’esito di ‘canone dei tiranni’ romani.

Come anticipato, Cesare al pari di Pompeo non sembra descritto da Seneca Padre così negativamente come il disilluso figlio farà nella difficile età di Nerone. Ma le *Suasoriae* offrono spunti di riflessione che aiutano ad andare oltre l’apparenza. I poli di riferimento per ambedue sono fra loro precisamente e storicamente contrapposti: quello positivo è Cicerone, quello negativo è Silla. La *Suasoria* 7 si rivela illuminante in tal senso.<sup>45</sup> Seneca affida alle parole di Cestio Pio quello che è stato definito un “martirologio repubblicano” (*suas.* 7.3).<sup>46</sup> Si tratta di una celebrazione di vittime della *turpis societas* tra Pompeo e Cesare, che è lungi dall’essere un esercizio di scuola. Seneca usa esempi che la prassi retorica e il suo ricordo personale gli suggeriscono, sin dal tempo dei primi anni vissuti in Spagna.<sup>47</sup> Spicca l’unico momento di biasimo nei confronti di Cesare e Pompeo, entrambi uniti in una *turpis societas* che suona quasi come un urlo nel silenzio del retore sui ‘tiranni’ romani. Si tratta di un silenzio davvero solo apparente: il nesso sembra richiamare la *sancta societas* che Ennio vedeva vittima del *regnum*<sup>48</sup> e che Cicerone riprese in un passo del *De officiis* avendo Cesare come obiettivo polemico. Se anche questa fosse una casualità, Seneca fa comunque vibrare le ombre della guerra civile che ha distrutto la *res publica*: chiama in causa il capostipite degli autocrati romani Silla; evoca altri *vilains* di fama riconosciuta, tra i quali Catilina e Marco Antonio; onora il modello intellettuale e filosofico del repubblicano di ferro Cicerone, nemico di tutti loro. Non manca, peraltro, nella medesima *Suasoria* un’immediata attenzione per Catone Uticense come *restitutor* dell’*antiquus rei publicae senatus* (*suas.* 7.4).

Su tali basi, le linee ispiratrici del ragionamento retorico che anima il dettato senecano si pongono con evidenza sufficiente alla base della successiva elaborazione di Seneca filosofo e dell’epos politico di Lucano. Filtreranno poi, in misura non disprezzabile, nel prontuario oratorio allestito da Quintiliano, com’è lecito

<sup>44</sup> Piano (2017a) 250 propende per una data “intorno al 37 d.C.”.

<sup>45</sup> Sen. *suas.* 7.1–3.

<sup>46</sup> Migliario (2007) 132–133.

<sup>47</sup> Sussman (1978) 31.

<sup>48</sup> Enn. *trag. frag.* 381–382 Ribbeck (in Cic. *off.* 1.26).

attendersi in virtù del comune terreno professionale. Ciononostante, Seneca Padre non può intendersi come un fondatore della corrente ideologica in seno alla quale si produce il repertorio canonico oggetto di questa indagine. Si colloca, piuttosto, nel flusso di tale corrente, forse con qualche cautela specchio di un'epoca in cui dichiarare apertamente il proprio dissenso determina conseguenze amare.<sup>49</sup> Si può invece risalire ancora più indietro verso le radici del fenomeno a Roma, immergendosi nella transizione fra Repubblica e Principato.

## 2 La riflessione ciceroniana

In epoca proto-augustea Silla è già rappresentato come tiranno. La voce greca di Dionigi di Alicarnasso, che tratta della comparsa a Roma dei primi dittatori, ricorda con vigore il recente esempio sillano.<sup>50</sup> A beneficio del suo pubblico, egli usa la categoria a lui culturalmente familiare della tirannide, ma la descrizione di Silla appartiene a una vulgata che non circola solo in ambito grecofono. E, certo, non solo riguardo a Silla.

Prima ancora dell'età augustea, la ricchissima gamma delle opere ciceroniane conserva segmenti polemici che in effetti costituiscono il cuore ideologico dei motivi ricorrenti nel nostro itinerario a ritroso. Centrale nella riflessione di Cicerone è Cesare, che l'Arpinate cerca di ostacolare con la forza della parola anche dopo le Idi di marzo del 44 a.C. Egli non lesina nell'insistere su Cesare come tiranno. Nel *De officiis* (ott.-dic. 44 a.C.), infatti, cesariano è l'egotismo irresponsabile che fonda il *principatus* (1.26); cesariano è il *tyranni uultus* che l'Uticense non

<sup>49</sup> Sussman (1978) 31–32; Canfora (1993a); Rohr Vio (2000); Cogitore (2011) 133–140.

<sup>50</sup> D.H. 5.77.4–5: Ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς κατὰ τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ἡλικίας ὁμοῦ τι τετρακοσίων διαγενομένων ἐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Τίτου Λαρκίου δικτατορίας διεβλήθη καὶ μισητὸν ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις ἐφάνη τὸ πρᾶγμα Λευκίου Κορνηλίου Σύλλα πρώτου καὶ μόνου πικρῶς αὐτῆ καὶ ὡμῶς χρησαμένου· ὥστε τότε πρῶτον αἰσθῆσθαι Ῥωμαίους, ὃ τὸν ἄλλον ἅπαντα χρόνον ἠγνόουν, ὅτι τυραννίς ἐστὶν ἢ τοῦ δικτάτορος ἀρχή· βουλὴν τε γὰρ ἐκ τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων ἀνθρώπων συνέστησε καὶ τὸ τῆς δημαρχίας κράτος εἰς τοῦλάχιστον συνέστειλε καὶ πόλεις ὅλας ἐξώκισε καὶ βασιλείας τὰς μὲν ἀνείλε, τὰς δ' αὐτὸς ἀπέδειξε, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ αὐθάδη διεπράξατο, περὶ ὧν πολλὸ ἂν ἔργον εἶη λέγειν· πολίτας τε χωρὶς τῶν ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ἀπολομένων τοὺς παραδόντας αὐτῷ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς οὐκ ἐλάττους τετρακισμυρίων ἀπέκτεινε, ὧν τινὰς καὶ βασάνοις πρῶτον αἰκισάμενος· εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀναγκαίως ἢ συμφερόντως τῷ κοινῷ πάντα ταῦτ' ἔπραξεν, οὐχ ὁ παρῶν καιρὸς ἐξετάζειν· ὅτι δὲ διὰ ταῦτ' ἐμισήθη καὶ δεινὸν ἐφάνη τὸ τοῦ δικτάτορος ὄνομα, τοῦτό μοι προῦκειτο ἐπιδείξαι· ἐφρυκε δ' οὐ ταῖς δυναστείαις τοῦτο μόναις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις συμβαίνειν τοῖς περιμαχῆτοις καὶ θαυμαζομένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ κοινῷ βίου πράγμασι· καλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντα φαίνεται καὶ συμφέροντα τοῖς χρωμένοις, ὅταν τις αὐτοῖς χρεῖται καλῶς, αἰσχρὰ δὲ καὶ ἀσύμφορα, ὅταν πονηροὺς λάβῃ προστάτας.

sopporta di vedere oltre, preferendogli la morte (1.112). Nell'immediato seguito del Cesaricidio, d'altronde, con amarezza Cicerone scrive ad Attico da Puteoli (28–29 apr. 44 a.C.): *sublato enim tyranno (scil. Caesare) tyrannida manere uideo [...] contenti Idibus Martiis simus; quae quidem nostris amicis, diuinis uiris, aditum ad caelum dederunt, libertatem populo Romano non dederunt* (14.14.2–3).

Che poi il modello sul quale la 'tirannide' cesariana è plasmata sia costituito da Silla è reso evidente dalle testimonianze che precedono l'acme del cesarismo. Un'altra lettera ad Attico, inviata da Formia (18 marzo 49 a.C.), menziona Silla in compagnia di Mario, mentre Cinna è evocato come esempio di *crudelitas*. La medesima lettera reca la neoformazione verbale *sullaturit*, riferita in modo poco benevolo a Pompeo. Essa, seppur destinata a rimanere *hapax*, è di così suggestiva incisività che sarà ripresa da Quintiliano.<sup>51</sup>

Pochi anni prima il *De re publica* (54–51 a.C.) mostra il diretto portato della tirannide: più ancora che uno stato inquinato,<sup>52</sup> la cancellazione dello stato (3.43). Da solo il trattato meriterebbe un'indagine dedicata e ad ampio spettro, dal momento che la sua influenza sembra decisiva nell'evoluzione del conservatorismo senatorio di epoca imperiale. Subito prima di attendere alla redazione del *De re publica*, Cicerone usa le sue idee in una celebre, violentissima orazione per aggredire Publio Vatino (56–54 a.C.), un avversatore tra i responsabili dell'esilio dell'Arpinate da Roma (58 a.C.), raffigurato come uno squallido tirannello (*Vatin.* 23).<sup>53</sup> Questo però dà la misura non solo della voga della parola *tyrannus*, ma anche del tormento politico del tempo, che alimenta la tirannide e schiaccia la *res publica* squassata da *Gracchorum ferocitas*, *audacia Saturnini*, *colluuii Drusi*, *contentio Sulpici*, *crur Cinnanus* e *Sullana arma*. Si tratta di una sintesi efficace dell'avvio del declino dello stato, pressoché coincidente con l'inizio della cosiddetta 'rivoluzione romana'. Nondimeno, Silla predomina su tutti come padre di ogni tiranno romano: nella terza orazione *de lege agraria* (63 a.C.) la ratifica dei suoi atti, disposta dall'*interrex* Lucio Valerio Flacco dopo la deposizione della dittatura, significò per Cicerone la genesi 'costituzionale' del 'tiranno romano' (3.5); e con ciò probabilmente l'irreversibilità della crisi della *res publica* senatoria.

Non stupisce, dunque, l'orgoglioso ricordo del proprio esordio nelle *causae publicae* che l'Arpinate esibisce nel *De officiis*. L'orazione per Sesto Roscio Amerino pronunciata nell'80 a.C. fu anche, e forse ancora di più, un'orazione contro la *dominatio* di Silla:

<sup>51</sup> Quint. *inst.* 8.3.32, 6.32. Si veda Shackleton Bailey (1968) *ad loc.*

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Cic. *rep.* 1.27–28; 2.23, 43–44.

<sup>53</sup> Pistellato (2012).

*maxime autem et gloria paritur et gratia defensionibus eoque maior si quando accidit ut ei subueniatur qui potentis alicuius opibus circumueniri urgerique uideatur ut nos et saepe alias et adulescentes contra L. Sullae dominantis opes pro Sex. Roscio Amerino fecimus quae ut scis extat oratio (2.51).*

### 3 Conclusione

Giunti a questo punto, e alla luce delle ricerche in corso grazie all'acquisizione derivata dal *P.Herc.* 1067, le conclusioni che è il momento di trarre debbono intendersi come contributo parziale a un quadro di studi ampio, foriero di significativi, e non pochi, sviluppi. Nel merito di questa indagine, come solo accennato, la *Historia Augusta* fornisce l'esito più spettacolare della sedimentazione di un 'canone dei tiranni' di Roma, che risalta come se l'autore avesse in mente un vero e proprio *index* di autocrati.<sup>54</sup> A monte del processo, e prima ancora dell'avvio del Principato, la riflessione ciceroniana imprime una spinta di fondamentale importanza, ispiratrice di un filone di lunga durata, che l'età dei principi rinsalderà progressivamente.

In questa trafila Seneca Padre sembra collocarsi in una fase ancora mobile, che tuttavia prelude al suo primo consolidamento maturato con la fine dell'epoca giulio-claudia, operando in ambito retorico e, dunque, influenzando anche nella consuetudine scolastica e nella circolazione della memoria dei protagonisti della storia della *res publica*. Sussman ha parlato del nostro retore come di un realista, un non-repubblicanista e nel contempo non-augusteo, consapevole dei beni e dei mali recati dal Principato, e disposto ad accettarne l'ordinamento per quello che è.<sup>55</sup> È tuttavia lecito porsi una domanda, se cioè dietro l'attenzione per la figura di Alessandro il Grande, dietro i richiami a Catone in contrapposizione a Cesare e Pompeo non si debba ravvisare un sommesso spirito vetero-repubblicano conservato da Seneca Padre. Non si tratta di uno spirito nostalgico, ma ancorato alla lezione dello stoicismo politico, che darà frutti maturi con le azioni politiche e le riflessioni letterarie del tempo di Nerone e poi con la memorialistica di epoca flavia. Seneca filosofo (pur con tutte le sue contraddizioni di uomo coinvolto nella gestione del potere al più alto livello) e Lucano sono in tal senso due facce della stessa medaglia, eredi di una tradizione di famiglia alimentata dal neronismo. Perciò stesso si è qui inteso attribuire al ragionamento sulla degenerazione autocratica del potere anche i lineamenti di una 'questione di famiglia'.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Hist. Aug. Aurel.* 42.3.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Sussman (1978) 31–33.

L'incidenza del retore di Corduba nell'iter costitutivo del 'canone dei tiranni' è solo apparentemente (e tenendo conto solo di ciò che possediamo) blanda. Eppure è evidente che Seneca Padre più di chiunque altro ispirò la riflessione del figlio intorno all'autocrazia, in particolare sull'autocrazia di marca alessandrea. Sarebbe allora illuminante poter leggere qualche linea dei libri *ab initio bellorum ciuillium*;<sup>56</sup> tanto più se si considera che il papiro ercolanese che ne conserva i resti proviene dalla biblioteca latina della Villa dei Papiri, già latrice del testo pure frammentario ma di fronda antiaugustea del *Carmen de bello Actiaco*.<sup>57</sup> Può trattarsi di una circostanza del tutto fortuita. Nondimeno, la coincidenza invita alla riflessione, se si ricorda che la Villa appartenne ai Calpurni Pisoni, famiglia il cui nome è profondamente intrecciato all'opposizione nei confronti della deriva autocratica del potere a Roma; e ciò non solo sotto Nerone, ma sin dal tempo di Tiberio, quando Germanico e il legato di Siria Gneo Calpurnio Pisone entrarono in un gravissimo contrasto tra poteri legittimi ma di peso ben diverso.<sup>58</sup>

Se la connessione tra Annei e Calpurni Pisoni dura nel tempo, è plausibile ravvisare una rete gentilizia saldamente operante nel cuore del *milieu* politico e intellettuale di Roma, che del contrasto ai 'tiranni romani' fa non già, e non più solo, una questione di famiglia, ma una questione di famiglie, cioè un fenomeno plurale. In tal senso, i nuovi studi che si stanno compiendo non potranno che dare impulso ulteriore all'approfondimento di uno scenario così articolato.

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<sup>56</sup> Si vedano i contributi di Valeria Piano e Maria Chiara Scappaticcio in questo volume, rispettivamente a p. 31 e a p. 75.

<sup>57</sup> Zecchini (1987), Piano (2017a) 188, 250.

<sup>58</sup> Hofmann-Löbl (1996) 241–288, 350–353. Sulla posizione 'legalista' del legato di Siria contro la 'prevaricazione' di Germanico, messa in luce da Tacito, si veda in particolare Pistellato (2015a) 123–128. Si veda inoltre il contributo di Arturo De Vivo in questo volume, p. 259.





Chiara Torre

# Seneca vs Seneca: generazioni e stili a confronto tra oratoria, filosofia e storiografia

**Abstract:** This paper aims to offer a fresh reading about Seneca's epistle 100 to Lucilius about the stylistic portrait of Papirius Fabianus. As we know, this portrait is drawn on the sketch that Seneca the father had already traced in the preface to *Controversiae* book 2. So, epistle 100 too could be read as a little 'literary memoir', just like Seneca the father's prefaces should be interpreted.

Two nodal points will be highlighted in this paper: 1) Seneca evaluates Fabianus' eloquence from a technical point of view, that is his *compositio*; in so doing, he reuses some critical patterns that Cicero had applied to historical writings, as well as he sets a comparative judgement between philosophy and rhetoric in the same way Seneca the father had set the supremacy of history on the rhetoric. 2) Both the father and the son consider Papirius Fabianus as a sort of a 'cultural icon', useful to represent the crucial and changeable crossing of literary genres in the first imperial Age.

## 1 Sulle orme del padre (I): l'epistola 100 come *literary memoir*

Il titolo del mio contributo allude al confronto implicito (ma non troppo) che Seneca, nella lettera 100 indirizzata a Lucilio, ingaggia a distanza con il padre in merito al giudizio sullo stile del declamatore e filosofo Fabiano,<sup>1</sup> di cui, come è noto, Seneca padre aveva tracciato un vivido ritratto nella prefazione al secondo libro delle *Controversiae*. Al centro dell'epistola sta una questione, con una lunga e intricata tradizione alle spalle, che non è storiografica, ma piuttosto retorica e filosofica: quale stile per il filosofo?

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<sup>1</sup> Su Papirio Fabiano rimando al sintetico ma esaustivo Berti (2018) 313–315 (con rassegna bibliografica). Mazzoli (1967) 252–259 colloca il *tirocinium* di Seneca presso la scuola dei Sestii, dove egli ebbe anche Fabiano tra i suoi maestri, all'inizio della sua formazione filosofica, presumibilmente nel periodo compreso tra il 13 e il 19 d.C. (anno dell'editto di Tiberio contro i culti stranieri, che determinò la chiusura della *secta sestiana*).

In questa sede, però, non è mia intenzione affrontare il problema del rapporto tra filosofia e retorica in relazione alla teoria e alla prassi della *parenese* senecana. Piuttosto, vorrei proporre una lettura retrospettiva dell'*epist.* 100 come documento storico-culturale relativo a quel *milieu* nel quale si svolse la formazione giovanile di Seneca, fortemente influenzata dall'impronta paterna; e, più specificamente, vorrei provare a evidenziare, nel giudizio sulla *compositio* di Fabiano, alcuni tratti che potrebbero alludere, tra l'altro, allo stile dello storico, da leggersi in filigrana dietro alle considerazioni sullo stile del filosofo.

Prima, però, di sviluppare il confronto tra l'epistola 100 a Lucilio e la seconda *praefatio* delle *Controversiae* è opportuno rimarcare come lo sguardo retrospettivo, che si intende ora adottare, ricalchi in realtà un atteggiamento analogamente retrospettivo di Seneca, che a sua volta lo eredita dalla scrittura di Seneca padre: non già, però, dalla scrittura storiografica di quest'ultimo (l'epistola 100 non è, com'è ovvio, figlia delle *Historiae*), bensì da quei 'memorial writings', a metà tra autobiografia e critica letteraria, rappresentati appunto dalle *praefationes* ai libri delle *Controversiae* (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10), che Seneca padre dedica ai figli adottando, per primo tra gli scrittori latini di retorica, proprio la forma epistolare.<sup>2</sup>

Nella prefazione al primo libro, rispondendo a una precisa richiesta dei figli e pur lamentando la fragilità della sua memoria, Seneca afferma di voler riportare per iscritto tanto i ritratti letterari dei declamatori che ha ascoltato in gioventù, quanto le loro parole, in modo che i figli stessi possano preservarne il ricordo ed esercitare il loro personale giudizio critico.

È questa, come mi pare, la traccia del modello della lettera 100. L'analisi dello stile di Fabiano vi è condotta a due voci: da un parte (nell'*incipit*), la voce di Lucilio, di cui Seneca riferisce alcune perplessità scaturite dalla recente lettura degli scritti di Fabiano; dall'altra (in chiusura), la voce di Seneca stesso, che tenta una rivalutazione dello stile del maestro, basandosi su un ricordo personale, ma ormai datato e dunque sfocato, del suo insegnamento orale.<sup>3</sup> La memoria autobiografica, venata di intima gratitudine per un maestro che suscitava nei suoi giovani allievi non

<sup>2</sup> La particolare caratura 'memorialistica' delle *praefationes* senecane è stata adeguatamente valorizzata da Sussmann (1971) 285–291 e, soprattutto, da Citti (2005) 173–187.

<sup>3</sup> Sen. *epist.* 100.1: *Fabiani Papiri libros qui inscribuntur civilium legisse te cupidissime scribis et non respondisse expectationi tuae; epist.* 100.12: *talia esse scripta eius non dubito, etiam si magis reminiscor quam teneo haeretque mihi color eorum non ex recenti conversatione familiariter sed summatim, ut solet ex vetere notitia; cum audirem certe illum, talia mihi videbantur, non solida sed plena, quae adulescentem indolis bonae attollerent et ad imitationem sui evocarent sine desperatione vincendi, quae mihi adhortatio videtur efficacissima. Deterret enim qui imitandi cupiditatem fecit, spem abstulit.*

solo il desiderio di imitarlo ma anche la fiducia di poterlo superare, viene per così dire riattivata dalle osservazioni critiche di Lucilio sugli scritti di Fabiano e sul suo stile. Si tratta, a ben vedere, della stessa dinamica che innesca la scrittura memoriale di Seneca padre; tale dinamica, e relativo modello, garantiscono perciò all'epistola 100 una posizione assai peculiare all'interno del nutrito gruppo di lettere dedicate, nel medesimo epistolario, a dibattere vari aspetti dello stile in senso generale o in rapporto alla filosofia: lettere che, come è noto, intrattengono una fitta e conclamata serie di rapporti con la nostra epistola su Fabiano,<sup>4</sup> ma la cui *facies* è in realtà diversa proprio per l'assenza del filtro del ricordo personale e dell'esperienza di scuola.

Viceversa, per questo aspetto 'memoriale', l'epistola 100 va piuttosto accostata all'epistola 108, la bella lettera delle rimembranze<sup>5</sup> in cui Seneca traccia anzitutto un vivido ricordo della sua esperienza alla scuola dei Sestii e presso lo stoico Attalo, e poi affronta alcuni problemi di critica letteraria e di interpretazione dei testi in rapporto al magistero filosofico. Seneca dunque, per discutere di questioni critico-letterarie, sceglie di conferire l'aspetto di 'literary memoirs' a due epistole in cui si menzionano scuole e maestri aventi un rapporto diretto, nel bene o nel male, proprio con Seneca padre: Fabiano (nella 100) e la scuola dei Sestii (nella 108), da cui il giovane Seneca, come egli stesso ricorda, fu strappato dalla volontà del severo genitore.<sup>6</sup>

Venendo ora al ritratto letterario di Fabiano, già molti studiosi hanno scrupolosamente annotato le riprese puntuali, da parte di Seneca filosofo, della *praefatio*

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4 Penso naturalmente alle epistole 40 e 114, basate sul medesimo principio della corrispondenza tra lo stile e l'*animus*, tra il modo di vivere e il modo di esprimersi (cf. *epist.* 114.1: *talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita*): un principio al quale Seneca, forse più di ogni altro scrittore antico, conferì molta importanza e rielaborò in maniera originale, arrivando a sfiorare l'idea (alla quale non fu estraneo, peraltro, l'influsso del padre) che lo stile di ogni scrittore fosse qualcosa di irripetibile e dotato di leggi sue proprie. Sul tema, assai dibattuto, risultano fondamentali gli studi di Setaioli (2000) 111–217 e Berti (2018).

5 Sulla caratura autobiografica della lettera 108 rimando a quanto scriveva Lana (1955) 53: "Questo ricordo carico di affetto sincero, che riappare vivo solo quando Seneca è – e sa di essere – sulla soglia della morte, significa ritorno alle origini, agli ideali di allora. Perché non si tratta di una menzione frettolosa e generica, come a tutti avviene di fare quando il discorso incidentalmente cade su persone accanto a cui si sia vissuti tanti e tanti anni addietro: ma è sentimento di vita vissuta, è nostalgia di beni perduti, è fedeltà riaffiorante [...] a regola di vita troppo a lungo negletta: è insomma la riscoperta delle proprie origini, il ritrovamento della fede di un tempo nel cammino a ritroso sulle vie della memoria".

6 Sen. *epist.* 108.22.

paterna.<sup>7</sup> Da parte mia, come già accennato, vorrei affrontare due questioni che, a quanto mi risulta, non hanno finora ottenuto sufficiente attenzione. In primo luogo, partendo dal tema dell'epistola 100, incentrata su un aspetto tecnico dello stile di Fabiano, cioè la sua *compositio*,<sup>8</sup> tenterò di dimostrare che nel giudizio senecano emerge in filigrana un tratto peculiare dello stile storico, rintracciabile nella tradizione retorica antica. Nel costruire il ritratto di Fabiano come modello di stile filosofico, Seneca sembra alludere alla scrittura storiografica e quasi invitare il lettore a riflettere su tale sovrapposizione, proponendo un insolito quartetto di filosofi (Cicerone, Asinio Pollione, Livio e Fabiano stesso), che forse si potrebbe spiegare, una volta ancora, come un celato riferimento a Seneca padre. In secondo luogo, partendo da alcune corrispondenze *strutturali* tra il ritratto di Fabiano in Seneca padre e quello presente in Seneca filosofo, proverò a evidenziare il significato di 'icona culturale' che il secondo conferisce a Fabiano, recependo una feconda intuizione paterna ma sviluppandola in maniera autonoma.

## 2 Tra filosofia e storiografia: *la mollis compositio* di Fabiano

Nel dibattito tra Lucilio e Seneca sullo stile di Fabiano, così come si articola nell'epistola 100, mi sembra di poter cogliere traccia di un'antica riflessione stilistico-retorica sulla *compositio*, di cui la più cospicua testimonianza si legge nel Περὶ ἑρμηνείας attribuito a Demetrio.

Con un'avvertenza preliminare: non si intende qui stabilire alcun tipo di rapporto diretto fra il trattato di Demetrio e Seneca né tantomeno ipotizzare una dipendenza del secondo dal primo, dal momento che lo vietano sia la natura del Περὶ ἑρμηνείας (un manuale è, per definizione, un bacino collettore di più ampie e composite tradizioni confluite nella pratica didattica) sia soprattutto le forti e persistenti incertezze di attribuzione e di datazione sussistenti al suo riguardo. Piuttosto, considerata anche la ricca polifonia che caratterizza la riflessione senecana sullo stile,<sup>9</sup> si intende suggerire la possibilità di una convergenza, magari

<sup>7</sup> Limitandomi ai contributi recenti, segnalo in particolare Cizek (2002), Laudizi (2005), Garbarino (2006), Berti (2018) 211–224; 303–397.

<sup>8</sup> Seneca lo usa in senso tecnico, come equivalente del greco σύνθεσις, per intendere la disposizione delle parole nel periodo tanto sotto l'aspetto sintattico quanto rispetto alle qualità ritmiche ed eufoniche: cf. anche *epist.* 114.15–16, su cui Berti (2018) 151–162.

<sup>9</sup> La cui matrice polivalente è magistralmente ricostruita da Setaioli (2000), in particolare 126–197.

tramite un serbatoio comune di fonti e di tradizioni di scuola, con alcune specifiche teorie attestate da Demetrio.<sup>10</sup>

Si consideri al proposito la prima sezione del *Περὶ ἑρμηνείας* (1–35) che, insieme a un passo del terzo libro della *Rhetorica* aristotelica<sup>11</sup> costituiscono la testimonianza più cospicua per ricostruire nelle sue linee principali la teoria del periodo (*περίοδος*).<sup>12</sup>

In Demetrio il periodo, inteso come unione di *cola* e di *commata* e caratterizzato da una struttura perfettamente circolare,<sup>13</sup> viene strettamente connesso al concetto di *σύνθεσις*, di cui rappresenta una forma peculiare.<sup>14</sup> Ad esso, come si è accennato, è specificamente dedicata la parte introduttiva (1–35, in particolare 10–22), seguita, nel resto dell'opera, dalla più ampia trattazione dei quattro stili e relative degenerazioni (stile grande: 36–127; stile elegante: 128–189; stile semplice: 190–239; stile veemente: 240–304), di ciascuno dei quali si analizzano, in

**10** Un'esauriente e documentata discussione sull'attribuzione e la datazione del trattato si può leggere in Chiron (1993) XI–XL. L'ipotesi qui suggerita, se pur con molte cautele, è che esso sia opera di Demetrio di Siria (identificabile con il Demetrio d'Alessandria citato in Diogene Laerzio come ottavo nella lista degli omonimi di Demetrio Falereo) e risalga dunque alla fine del II a.C. o all'inizio del I a.C. L'autore, formatosi ad Alessandria, avrebbe lavorato ad Atene su Aristotele e Teofrasto grazie ai testi confluiti nella biblioteca di Apellicone di Teo e lì avrebbe insegnato retorica fino ad età avanzata, avendo tra i suoi allievi anche il giovane Cicerone. Tale ipotesi, come anche la valorizzazione (*ibidem*) della presenza di un'influenza stoica nel trattato (in particolare, di teorie stilistiche riconducibili a Panezio), accanto alla matrice aristotelica e peripatetica, sono compatibili con la possibilità di una convergenza con Seneca, tramite un serbatoio comune di fonti e di tradizioni scolastiche.

**11** Arist. *rh.* 3.9.1409a–1410b.

**12** Per il complesso rapporto con Aristotele, che non si limita alla massiccia influenza dello Stagirita sul *Περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, ma implica un attento lavoro critico di Demetrio sul testo della *Rhetorica*, percepibile soprattutto nell'introduzione (1–35) e volto a emancipare le teorie stilistiche dal dominio filosofico, si rimanda ancora all'esauriente discussione in Chiron (1993) LXVII–LXXVIII.

**13** Il periodo viene paragonato alla pista di un circo, che può essere abbracciata dallo sguardo in qualsiasi momento del percorso, mostrando fin dall'inizio il suo punto di svolta e l'ultima curvatura: Demetr. *eloc.* 10–11: ἔστι γὰρ ἡ περίοδος σύστημα ἐκ κώλων ἢ κομμάτων εὐκαταστροφῶς πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν τὴν ὑποκειμένην ἀπρητισμένον [...] αὕτη γὰρ ἡ περίοδος ἐκ τριῶν κώλων οὕσα καμπὴν τέ τινα καὶ συστροφὴν ἔχει κατὰ τὸ τέλος. Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ ὀρίζει τὴν περίοδον οὕτως· 'περίοδος ἐστὶ λέξις ἀρχὴν ἔχουσα καὶ τελευτήν', μάλα καλῶς καὶ πρεπόντως ὀρισάμενος· εὐθὺς γὰρ ὁ τὴν περίοδον λέγων ἐμφαίνει ὅτι ἤρκται ποθεν καὶ ἀποτελευτῆσαι ποτε κατεπίγεται εἷς τι τέλος, ὥστε οἱ δρομεῖς ἀφεθέντες· καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνων συνεμφαίνεται τῇ ἀρχῇ τοῦ δρόμου τὸ τέλος. Ἐνθεν καὶ περίοδος ἄνομασθη, ἀπεικασθεῖσα ταῖς ὁδοῖς ταῖς κυκλοειδέσι καὶ περιωδευμέναις. Sull'originalità di questa immagine e il suo ruolo determinante nel superamento della teoria aristotelica del periodo cf. Chiron (1993) LXIX–LXX.

**14** Demetr. *eloc.* 11: καθόλου δὲ οὐδὲν ἡ περίοδος ἐστὶ πλὴν ποιά σύνθεσις.

ordine vario, la σύνθεσις (disposizione e connessione delle parole), la λέξις (scelta delle parole) e la διάνοια (il contenuto o pensiero).<sup>15</sup>

Uno schema analogo, ma abbreviato e in miniatura, mi sembra potersi rintracciare anche nell'epistola 100: nella parte introduttiva (1–2) trovano posto alcune considerazioni sul tipo di periodo che contraddistingue la prosa di Fabiano; nel prosieguo della lettera, l'analisi si amplia al suo stile (*oratio*), considerato dapprima nell'insieme (3–4), quindi nella scelta delle parole e dei pensieri (5) e poi, più distesamente, negli aspetti della *compositio* (6–10), riprendendo alcuni punti già esposti nei paragrafi introduttivi e svolgendo un confronto con altri autori.<sup>16</sup>

Rileggere i primi paragrafi dell'epistola senecana alla luce della parte iniziale del Περί ἔρμηνείας può suggerire ulteriori e inedite riflessioni.

Nell'introduzione di Demetrio vengono elencati tre tipi (γένη / εἶδη) di periodo: quello della narrazione storica (π. ἱστορική), quello del dialogo (π. διαλογική) e quello dell'oratoria (π. ῥητορική). Procedendo dalla maggiore alla minore complessità del periodo, la trattazione può essere così sintetizzata: la forma del periodare oratorio è concentrica e circolare e richiede una pronuncia rotonda e una mano che batta il tempo. Il periodare della storia non deve essere né tanto allentato (ἀνειμένη) da compromettere la propria σεμνότης, né tanto rotondo (περιηγμένη), da sostituire al ritmo dei fatti esposti il ritmo artificiale di una eccessiva circolarità. Il periodare del dialogo è ancora più allentato e più semplice del periodare della narrazione storica, e poiché i suoi *cola* sono per così dire 'aggettati' l'uno all'altro, soltanto in chiusura (e quasi a stento) esso si lascia percepire come un periodo in senso proprio; il periodo dialogico, insomma, è definito come una sorta di intersezione tra lo stile spezzato (cioè non periodico o sciolto, διηρημένη ἔρμηνεία) e lo stile ravvolto (o periodico, κατεστραμμένη ἔρμηνεία).<sup>17</sup> Poco sopra, per illustrare la differenza tra questi due fondamentali tipi di stile, Demetrio era ricorso

<sup>15</sup> Sulla struttura dell'esposizione dei quattro stili in Demetrio e sulla genesi complessa di questa teoria (che non ha un preciso corrispondente nella retorica antica) cf. Chiron (1993) XLI–LXI.

<sup>16</sup> Chiudono l'epistola due paragrafi (11–12) che tornano a svolgere considerazioni di insieme sullo stile di Fabiano, la sua funzione rispetto al magistero filosofico e il rapporto tra oralità e scrittura.

<sup>17</sup> Demetr. *eloc.* 19–21: τρία δὲ γένη περιόδων ἐστίν· ἱστορική, διαλογική, ῥητορική. Ἰστορική μὲν ἢ μήτε περιηγμένη, μητ' ἀνειμένη σφόδρα, ἀλλὰ μεταξὺ ἀμφοῖν, ὡς μήτε ῥητορική δόξειε καὶ ἀπιθανὸς διὰ τὴν περιαγωγὴν, τὸ σεμνόν τε ἔχουσα καὶ ἱστορικὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀπλότητος [...] Τῆς δὲ ῥητορικῆς περιόδου συνεστραμμένον τὸ εἶδος καὶ κυκλικὸν καὶ δεόμενον στρογγύλου στόματος καὶ χειρὸς συμπεριαγομένης τῷ ῥυθμῷ [...] Σκεδὸν γὰρ εὐθύς ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἡ περίοδος ἢ τοιαύδε συνεστραμμένον τι ἔχει καὶ ἐμφαίνον ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἀπολήξειεν εἰς ἀπλοῦν τέλος. Διαλογική

(secondo un uso tradizionale nell'ambito della critica letteraria)<sup>18</sup> a un paragone architettonico: i *cola* dello stile periodico assomigliano alle pietre che puntellano e tengono uniti i tetti sferici,<sup>19</sup> i *cola* dello stile sciolto assomigliano a pietre che siano state solo gettate, piuttosto che ben collocate, l'una vicina all'altra.<sup>20</sup>

Tornando ora all'epistola 100, il giudizio espresso da Lucilio nei confronti della *compositio* di Fabiano sembra costruito in modo tale da suggerire un accostamento allo stile periodico del dialogo, tendente decisamente verso uno stile 'sciolto'. Lucilio ritiene infatti che nella *compositio* di Fabiano le parole siano gettate via, e non siano 'ben conficcate' nell'insieme della frase (*effundi verba, non figi*): l'immagine, qui adombrata, mi sembra non lontana da quella delle pietre, a copertura delle volte, presente in Demetrio.<sup>21</sup>

Seneca, dal canto suo, non ritiene la *compositio* di Fabiano così allentata, come vuole Lucilio (*Fabianus mihi non effundere videtur orationem sed fundere*) né la considera priva di un suo ritmo e di uno sviluppo ampio e continuato (*adeo larga est et sine perturbatione, non si cursu tamen veniens*); ma, d'altra parte, afferma che essa non è modellata né eccessivamente ripiegata in circolo come vuole il periodare oratorio (*illud plane fatetur et praefert, non esse tractatam nec*

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δέ ἐστι περίοδος ἢ ἔτι <μᾶλλον> ἀνειμένη καὶ ἀπλουστέρα τῆς ἱστορικῆς, καὶ μόλις ἐμφαίνουσα ὅτι περίοδος ἐστίν [...] Ἐπερριπται γὰρ ἀλλήλοις τὰ κῶλα ἐφ' ἑτέρῳ ἕτερον ὡσπερ ἐν τοῖς διαλελυμένοις λόγοις, καὶ ἀπολήξαντες μόλις ἀν ἐννοηθεῖμεν κατὰ τὸ τέλος ὅτι τὸ λεγόμενον περίοδος ἦν. Δεῖ γὰρ μεταξύ διηρημένης τε καὶ κατεστραμμένης λέξεως τὴν διαλογικὴν περίοδον γράφεσθαι, καὶ μεμιγμένην ὁμοίαν ἀμφοτέροις.

**18** Chiron (1993) 7 (cf. anche Demetr. *eloc.* 14, 33, 108). Il paragone con le pietre si ritrova anche in D.H. 22.148 (II 96, 15 U.-R.).

**19** In questi 'tetti ricurvi' (περιφερεῖς στέγαι: si veda *infra* n. 20) è stato ravvisato un indizio per la datazione del trattato di Demetrio al I a.C.: l'aggettivo potrebbe infatti avere un valore tecnico e alludere ai tetti a cupola, conosciuti in Occidente solo a partire da questa data: Lombardo (1999) 97 n. 44 (citando K. Paffenroth).

**20** Demetr. *eloc.* 12–13: τῆς ἐρμηνείας ἢ μὲν ὀνομάζεται κατεστραμμένη, οἷον ἢ κατὰ περιόδους ἔχουσα [...] Ἡ δέ τις διηρημένη ἐρμηνεία καλεῖται, ἢ εἰς κῶλα λελυμένη οὐ μάλα ἀλλήλοις συνηρημένα [...] Ὡσπερ γὰρ σεσωρευμένοις ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις τὰ κῶλα εἴοικε καὶ ἐπερριμένοις καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσι σύνδεσιν οὐδ' ἀντέρεισιν, οὐδὲ βοθηοῦντα ἀλλήλοις ὡσπερ ἐν ταῖς περιόδοις. Ἔοικε γοῦν τὰ μὲν περιοδικὰ κῶλα τοῖς λίθοις τοῖς ἀντερείδουσι τὰς περιφερεῖς στέγας καὶ συνέχουσι, τὰ δὲ τῆς διαλελυμένης ἐρμηνείας διερριμμένοις πλησίον λίθοις μόνον καὶ οὐ συγκειμένοις.

**21** Sen. *epist.* 100.1: [...] *compositionem eius accusas. Puta esse quod dicis et effundi verba non figi*. La metafora architettonica torna anche in seguito, quando Seneca paragona la *compositio* di Fabiano a una *domus* ben fondata ma priva delle raffinatezze e dei lussi all'ultima moda.



*diu tortam*).<sup>22</sup> La posizione mediana che Seneca riconosce alla *compositio* di Fabiano è dunque affine a quella che Demetrio assegna al periodare di tipo storico, equidistante sia dalla rotondità del periodo oratorio sia dalla scarsa coesione di quello dialogico.

Un riscontro in tal senso è fornito da un passo del *De oratore*, che chiude la sezione del secondo libro del dialogo dedicata da Cicerone al rapporto tra storiografia e oratoria: la descrizione, per bocca di Antonio, delle principali caratteristiche dello stile storico (non limitate però alla *compositio*) presenta una significativa corrispondenza con alcuni passaggi dell'epistola 100 riferiti allo stile di Fabiano: anche in Cicerone lo stile della storiografia si caratterizza per la sua ampiezza e fluidità (*genus orationis fusum atque tractum*) e scorre regolare senza andare a scapito della sua scorrevolezza (*cum levitate quadam aequabiliter profluens*).<sup>23</sup>

Ci si può domandare, a questo punto, la ragione di questa sovrapposizione del periodare di Fabiano alla *compositio* di tipo storico. Una prima considerazione è che Seneca possa aver recepito le importanti indicazioni ciceroniane, contenute in un luogo dell'*Orator*,<sup>24</sup> secondo cui lo stile del filosofo, nettamente distinto da quello dell'oratore, va accostato piuttosto a quello di altre categorie di scrittori, come i sofisti (cioè gli oratori del genere epidittico), i poeti e, appunto, gli storici. Un tratto comune a tutti questi generi è una *oratio* più distesa, priva della tensione e dell'energia dell'oratoria; ma in particolare, tra le caratteristiche dello stile storiografico,<sup>25</sup> Cicerone annovera in tale contesto l'ampiezza e la fluidità (*tracta et fluens*), già menzionate (sempre a proposito della scrittura storica)

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22 Sen. *epist.* 100.2: *Fabianus mihi non effundere videtur orationem sed fundere; adeo larga est et sine perturbatione, non sine cursu tamen veniens. Illud plane fatetur et praefert, non esse tractatam nec diu tortam.* Anche i due verbi *fatetur* e *praefert* mostrano una significativa convergenza con quanto Demetrio (*eloc.* 11) afferma sulla intrinseca natura del periodo: un periodo è tale se mostra fin dall'inizio il suo punto di svolta e l'ultima curvatura.

23 Cic. *de orat.* 2.64: *verborum autem ratio et genus orationis fusum atque tractum et cum levitate quadam aequabiliter profluens sine hac iudiciali asperitate et sine sententiarum forensibus aculeis persequendum est.* Il passo si può confrontare con Sen. *epist.* 100.2 e, inoltre, 100.8: *non sunt enim illa humilia sed placida et ad animi tenorem quietum compositumque formata, nec depressa sed plana. Deest illis oratorius vigor stimulative quas quaeris et subiti ictus sententiarum.* Sull'accezione retorica di *fundo* e relativi luoghi paralleli: Berti (2018) 320.

24 Cic. *orat.* 62–64.

25 Cic. *orat.* 66: *huic generi historia finitima est, in qua et narratur ornate et regio saepe aut pugna describitur; interponuntur etiam contiones et hortationes, sed in his tracta quaedam et fluens expetitur, non haec contorta et acris oratio.*

nel passo del *De oratore* sopra citato,<sup>26</sup> e aggiunge che esso non ha un andamento ‘curvato’ o ‘ritorto’: proprio l’aggettivo *contortus* (il cui esatto valore in questo contesto è oggetto di discussione tra gli interpreti)<sup>27</sup> a mio parere potrebbe serbare una (più tecnica) allusione alla struttura circolare e concentrica del periodare oratorio, segnato da una accentuata circonduzione (περιαγωγή) alla quale, viceversa, il periodare storico deve rinunciare, per non sostituire al ritmo dei fatti esposti il ritmo artificiale di una pronunciata circolarità.<sup>28</sup> Se tale lettura fosse corretta, la convergenza con quanto nell’epistola 100 si dice della *compositio* di Fabiano (*non esse tractatam nec diu tortam*) risulterebbe ancora più pregnante, saldando più tenacemente la *compositio* del filosofo alla *compositio* dello storico, secondo un’unica linea interpretativa da Cicerone a Seneca.

La seconda considerazione riguarda i modelli che Seneca, nell’epistola 100, adduce a sostegno del fatto che sulla *compositio* non esiste una vera e propria regola<sup>29</sup> e con i quali mette a confronto l’*oratio* di Fabiano: Seneca intende così dimostrare a Lucilio che questi, pur inferiore ai grandi nomi citati, viene subito dopo di loro ed è pertanto uno scrittore di tutto rispetto. Seneca ci offre dunque una sorta di ‘quadriga’ dei migliori scrittori latini di filosofia<sup>30</sup> composta da Cicerone, Asinio Pollione, Tito Livio e appunto Fabiano. Tale quartetto risulta alquanto singolare poiché di Asinio e Livio non sono altrimenti noti scritti filosofici e la notizia senecana è stata pertanto variamente interpretata.<sup>31</sup>

Non è mia intenzione discutere ora tale questione, che peraltro, allo stato attuale delle ricerche, ritengo destinata a rimanere irrisolta. Mi limito pertanto a

**26** Queste caratteristiche denotano anche la *compositio* di Fabiano, secondo il giudizio di Seneca.

**27** Berti (2018) 321 (più spesso viene inteso nel senso di ‘vibrato’, con un’immagine che richiama il lancio del giavellotto).

**28** Demetr. *eloc.* 19–20.

**29** Un principio, peraltro, che egli condivide con Seneca padre (cf. *contr.* 9.6.11: *tantus autem error est in omnibus quidem studiis, maxime in eloquentia, cuius regula incerta est, ut vitia quidam sua et intelligent et ament*): Setaioli (2000) 162–168; Berti (2007) 183–186.

**30** Sul problema della definizione antica di un canone di filosofi romani si veda Berti (2018) 355–356.

**31** Se Garbarino (2003), sulla base dell’epistola 100, include anche Pollione e Livio nella raccolta di filosofi romani di cui restano frammenti o *testimonia*, altri studiosi pensano piuttosto che i nomi fatti da Seneca siano chiamati in causa come prosatori in generale o come rappresentanti di tipi diversi di *compositio* o di differenti maniere stilistiche; una soluzione di compromesso, fondata sul titolo dell’opera di Fabiano citato nell’epistola 100 (*Civilium libri*, equivalente al greco Πολιτικὰ), consiste nell’attribuire anche a Livio e ad Asinio uno o più scritti di filosofia politica, dove fosse concesso ampio spazio alla trattazione storica. Per una sintesi della questione si veda Berti (2018) 355–360.

qualche osservazione in linea con il tema che stiamo sviluppando: anzitutto, la proposta di una quadriga nell'ambito di una discussione stilistico-letteraria è di per sé un omaggio alla maniera dei 'literary memoirs' di Seneca padre;<sup>32</sup> in secondo luogo, Asinio e Livio furono due celebri storiografi e Cicerone era altresì famoso per aver fornito contributi teorici di grande importanza sulla scrittura della storia (anzi, nel *De legibus*, come è noto, egli veniva investito da Attico del ruolo di fondatore latino del genere storiografico, pur *in absentia* di opera);<sup>33</sup> non solo, ma Cicerone, Asinio e Livio furono anche declamatori, come ci ricorda Seneca padre nelle *Controversiae*; infine, nella sesta *Suasoria*, dedicata alla morte di Cicerone, Asinio e Livio risultano rispettivamente il primo e il secondo degli autori i cui brani, dopo una serie di declamatori, vengono citati da Seneca per fornire ai figli un esempio di scrittura più solida e veritiera (pur sapendo che questi preferiscono di gran lunga i declamatori agli storici).<sup>34</sup>

Concludendo la prima parte del mio contributo e ricapitolando il ragionamento fin qui svolto, ritengo di poter affermare che Seneca nell'epistola 100 abbia voluto affrontare la questione del rapporto tra retorica e filosofia con sguardo retrospettivo, optando per un recupero, nel nome di Fabiano, della scrittura memorialistica del genitore, a metà tra autobiografia e critica letteraria; e abbia inteso saldare insieme, secondo una linea già ciceroniana, lo stile della filosofia e lo stile della storiografia. Tale dibattutissima questione viene qui affrontata da Seneca sul versante tecnico della *compositio*: egli situa quella di Fabiano in una posizione mediana, affine a quella del periodo storico, a metà tra il periodo oratorio e l'andamento dialogico. A proposito di questa sorta di triangolazione tra *compositio* storica, filosofica e dialogica, non sarà forse un caso che, di Tito Livio, Seneca citi due tipi di opere, quelle a contenuto espressamente filosofico e i dialoghi, definiti come una forma ibrida tra storia e filosofia.<sup>35</sup>

In tale contesto, Seneca sembra inoltre recuperare allusivamente, attraverso la menzione di Cicerone, Asinio e Livio, il tema del rapporto tra la declamazione

32 Alludo al *tetradeum* dei migliori declamatori in Sen. *contr.* 10 *praef.* 12 (Latrone, Fusco, Albucio, Gallione).

33 Cic. *leg.* 1.5–9. Sul tema del rapporto di Cicerone con la storiografia, di portata troppo vasta da esaurire in una nota, mi limito a segnalare Leeman (1974) 221–230; Cape (1997) 211–228; Marchese (2011) 152–162.

34 Sen. *suas.* 6.16: *nolo autem vos, iuvenes mei, contristari, quod a declamatoribus ad historicos transeo. Satisfaciam vobis, et fortasse efficiam, ut his sententiis lectis solida et verum habentia recipiatis. Et quia hoc statim recta via consequi non potero, decipere vos cogar, velut salutarem daturus pueris potionem, summa parte poculi.*

35 Sen. *epist.* 100.9: *nomina adhuc T. Livium; scripsit enim et dialogos, quos non magis philosophiae adnumerare possis quam historiae, et ex professo philosophiam continentis libros.*

e la scrittura storiografica (e quello, ad esso connesso, della nuova gerarchia dei generi letterari), già affrontato da Seneca padre nella sesta *Suasoria*.<sup>36</sup> Seneca figlio rivisita e aggiorna questo tema, piegandolo a esprimere il problema del rapporto tra retorica e filosofia, che del resto, proprio a partire dagli anni della sua formazione, con la comparsa di filosofi professionisti in latino da una parte, e il successo della declamazione dall'altro, aveva assunto una nuova e aggiornata *facies*.<sup>37</sup>

### 3 Sulle orme del padre (II): il ritratto letterario di Fabiano

Passando ora a sviluppare il secondo punto dell'analisi, proverò a evidenziare il rapporto *strutturale* intercorrente tra i ritratti letterari di Fabiano, presenti nei due Seneca, e a riflettere sul significato che tale rapporto riveste per l'interpretazione dell'epistola 100.

Entrambi i ritratti presentano una struttura a dittico: Seneca padre delinea (positivamente) lo stile del declamatore mediante il procedimento della σύγκρισις con lo stile del maestro, Arellio Fusco, di cui si evidenziano soprattutto i difetti; in Seneca figlio lo stile di Fabiano viene descritto mediante il confronto tra il punto di vista di Lucilio (negativo) e quello di Seneca (positivo). Per ciascuno dei due ritratti, dunque, si configurano quattro 'tipi' stilistici, accoppiati a due a due (positivo vs negativo; positivo vs negativo). La caratterizzazione dei quattro tipi avviene secondo un certo numero di tratti ricorrenti, i quali, al di là della generica convenzionalità del linguaggio critico letterario cui appartengono, nell'uno o nell'altro autore si compongono variamente e, talvolta, sono cambiati di segno. È su questa dinamica combinatoria, giocata su corrispondenze o scarti, che vale la pena di riflettere, senza poter qui entrare nel merito della ricostruzione e della valutazione di tutti i tratti e delle varie sfumature dello stile di Fusco e di Fabiano.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Berti (2007) 220–222.

<sup>37</sup> In sintesi, sui rapporti tra declamazione e filosofia (partendo dal caso di Papirio Fabiano) rimando a Guérin (2012–2013) 21–43 (si veda anche qui *infra* n. 52); Del Giovane (2015) 175 n.554 (con ulteriori riferimenti bibliografici); Torre (2017) 102–107.

<sup>38</sup> Per cui rimando a Berti (2007) 30–31; 67; 180 n.1; 205–206; 273–278; su Fabiano, in particolare, cf. Berti (2018) 221–223; 314–380.

La σύγκρισις presente nel ritratto di Seneca padre può essere così schematizzata:

Tab. 5: Confronto tra Fusco e Fabiano: Sen. *contr. 2 praef.*

	Seneca padre	
	Arellio Fusco	Fabiano
Continuità	<i>Obscuritas</i> <sup>a</sup> (-)	<i>Obscuritas</i> <sup>a</sup> (-)
	Mancanza di vigore oratorio <sup>b</sup> (-)	Mancanza di vigore oratorio <sup>b</sup> (-)
	Ricchezza delle descrizioni <sup>c</sup> (+)	Ricchezza delle descrizioni <sup>c</sup> (+)
Discontinuità	Mollezza della <i>compositio</i> <sup>d</sup> (-)	Fortezza dell' <i>animus</i> / dei <i>praecepta</i> <sup>d</sup> (+)
	<i>Cultus nimius, luxuria</i> <sup>e</sup> (-)	<i>simplicissima facultas dicendi, non elaborata oratio, voluntarius splendor</i> <sup>e</sup> (+)

Come risulta dalla tabella,<sup>39</sup> in Seneca padre vige anzitutto una continuità tra Fusco e Fabiano per quanto riguarda tre tratti: due di essi vengono considerati difetti (la *obscuritas* e la mancanza di vigore oratorio), il terzo viene giudicato come un pregio (l'eccellenza e la ricchezza delle *descriptiones*). Fusco e Fabiano presentano invece una discontinuità per quanto riguarda due difetti del maestro, che l'allievo ha ripudiato: anzitutto, la mollezza della *compositio*, che Fabiano rifiuta in quanto incompatibile con la forza e l'austerità dei precetti filosofici a cui si è convertito (*compositio verborum mollior quam ut illam tam sanctis fortibusque*

39 (N.B.: le lettere riprendono quelle in tabella poste in apice) a) *contr. 2 praef. 2*: [Fa] < [Fu] *obscuritatem non potuit evadere, haec illum usque in philosophiam prosecuta est; saepe minus quam audienti satis est eloquitur [...] antiquorum [...] vitiorum remanent vestigia*. b) *contr. 2 praef. 1*: [Fu] *nihil acre*; *contr. 2 praef. 2*: [Fa] *et quotiens inciderat aliqua materia, quae convicium saeculi reciperet, inspirabat magno magis quam acri animo. deerat illi oratorium robur et ille puginatorius mucro*. c) *contr. 2 praef. 1*: [Fu] *nimia licentia vaga et effusa [...] in descriptionibus extra legem omnibus verbis, dummodo niterent, permissa libertas*; *contr. 2 praef. 3*: [Fa] *suasoriis aptior erat: locorum habitus fluminumque decursus et urbium situs moresque populorum nemo descripsit abundatius. Numquam inopia verbi substitit, sed velocissimo ac facillimo cursu omnes res beata circumfluebat oratio*. d) *contr. 2 praef. 1*: [Fu] *Fusci Arelli [...] compositio verborum mollior quam [Fa] ut illam tam sanctis fortibusque praeceptis praeeparans se animus pati posset*. e) *contr. 2 praef. 1*: [Fu]: *erat explicatio Fusci Arelli splendida quidem se operosa et implicata, cultus nimis acquisitus [...] splendida oratio et magis lasciva quam laeta*; *contr. 2 praef. 2*: [Fa]: *in summa eius ac simplicissima facultate dicendi [...] splendor vero velut voluntarius non elaboratae orationi aderat*.

*praeceptis praeparans se animus pati posset*); in secondo luogo, la *luxuria* espressiva di Fusco (*erat explicatio Fusci Arelli splendida quidem se operosa et implicata, cultus nimis adquisitus [...] splendida oratio et magis lasciva*), che Fabiano abbandona in nome di una *simplicissima facultas dicendi* e di una *non elaborata oratio*, cui si accompagna una sorta di spontanea brillantezza (*splendor vero velut voluntarius non elaboratae orationi aderat*).

Azzardando una prima conclusione, si può affermare che in Seneca padre lo stile di Fabiano ricalchi il paradigma tradizionale, senz'altro ciceroniano nella sua formulazione, del *sermo* filosofico: uno stile sprovvisto della potenza offensiva e della carica dello stile oratorio, ma austero e del tutto coerente sia con la funzione del *docere* e del *probare* che con la dignità dei precetti filosofici e, cosa ancora più importante, perfettamente adeguato alla virtù interiore di un animo sereno, composto e padrone di sé. Particolarmente cogente risulta, pertanto, il confronto con il 'manifesto' dell'*Orator*, già sopra menzionato.<sup>40</sup> Seneca padre sembra aver selezionato alcuni tratti della descrizione ciceroniana dello stile filosofico per attribuirli a Fabiano: nello specifico, la mancanza di *vigor oratorius*; la compostezza che nasce dal dominio delle passioni, quelle proprie e di un pubblico di dotti (in Cicerone: *loquuntur cum doctis, quorum sedare animos malunt quam incitare*); la 'scelta di castità' (in Cicerone: *casta, verecunda, virgo incorrupta quodam modo*), rispetto alle lusinghe e agli adescamenti della splendida e *luxuriosa oratio*. In Fabiano rimangono tutt'al più, come (piccoli) difetti congeniti, alcuni tratti derivati dal tirocinio presso uno dei migliori declamatori del tempo, il cui stile asiatico esercitava un indubbio fascino tra gli *scholastici* e il loro pubblico più giovane ma al quale, peraltro, Seneca padre guarda con una certa indulgenza, pur riconoscendone la natura viziosa.<sup>41</sup>

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40 Cic. *orat.* 62–64: *quamquam enim et philosophi quidam ornate locuti sunt, si quidem Theophrastus divinitate loquendi nomen invenit et Aristoteles Isocratem ipsum lacessivit et Xenophontis voce Musas quasi locutas ferunt et longe omnium quicumque scripserunt aut locuti sunt exstitit <et suavitate> et gravitate princeps Plato – tamen horum oratio neque nervos neque aculeos oratorios ac forenses habet. Loquuntur cum doctis, quorum sedare animos malunt quam incitare, et de rebus placatis ac minime turbulentis docendi causa non capiendi loquuntur, ut in eo ipso, quod delectationem aliquam dicendo aucupentur, plus nonnullis quam necesse sit facere videantur. Ergo ab hoc genere non difficile est hanc eloquentiam de qua nunc agitur discernere. Mollis est enim oratio philosophorum et umbratilis nec sententiis nec verbis instructa popularibus nec vincita numeris, sed soluta liberius; nihil iratum habet, nihil invidum, nihil atrox, nihil miserabile, nihil astutum; casta, verecunda, virgo incorrupta quodam modo. Itaque sermo potius quam oratio dicitur. Quamquam enim omnis locutio oratio est, tamen unius oratoris locutio hoc proprio signata nomine est.*

41 Berti (2007) 205–206.

Se ora passiamo a considerare l'epistola 100, noteremo che sia Lucilio sia Seneca ripropongono per Fabiano tratti di continuità o di discontinuità rispetto al giudizio di Seneca padre, ma li valutano in modo antitetico tra loro e, talora, anche rispetto al modello.

**Tab. 6:** Confronto tra Sen. *contr. 2 praef.* e Sen. *epist.* 100

Seneca padre		Seneca figlio	
Fusco	Fabiano	Fabiano (per Lucilio)	Fabiano (per Seneca)
<i>Cultus nimius</i> (-)	<i>non elaborata oratio</i> (+)	Mancanza di ricercatezza formale (-)	Mancanza di ricercatezza formale (+)
	Mancanza di <i>oratorium robur</i> e di <i>pugnatorius mucro</i> (-) →	Mancanza di <i>oratorius vigor</i> (-)	Mancanza di <i>oratorius vigor</i> (-)
<i>summa inaequalitas</i> (-)		Mancanza di varietà (-)	
<i>Mollis compositio</i> (-)		<i>Mollis compositio</i> (-)	<i>Mollis compositio</i> *

Come si evince dalla seconda tabella, le critiche di Lucilio a Fabiano riprendono, e talora manipolano, alcuni tratti della prefazione al secondo libro delle *Controversiae*: Lucilio ribalta di segno un tratto positivo che Fabiano aveva in Seneca Padre (la mancanza di ricercatezza);<sup>42</sup> ne recepisce un difetto come tale (la mancanza di vigore oratorio);<sup>43</sup> e, infine, lamenta in Fabiano l'assenza di un tratto dello stile di Arellio (la *summa inaequalitas* della sua *oratio*), che in Seneca padre costituiva un difetto, ma che ora viene invece giudicato positivamente: Lucilio desidererebbe infatti in Fabiano una più varia tavolozza di stili.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Sen. *epist.* 100.5: *videbimus quid parum recisum sit, quid parum structum, quid non huius recentis politurae*; 100.8: *humilia praeterea tibi videri dicis omnia et parum erecta*; 100.11: *non erunt sine dubio singula circumspecta nec in se collecta*.

<sup>43</sup> Sen. *epist.* 100.8: *deest illis oratorius vigor stimulative quos quaeris et subiti ictus sententiarum*; 100.10: *sed non praestat omnia: non est fortis oratio eius [...] non est violenta [...]. 'Desideres' inquis 'contra vitia aliquid asperae dici, contra pericula animosae, contra fortunam superbae, contra ambitionem contumeliosae. Volo luxuriam obiurgari, libidinem traduci, impotentiam frangi'*.

<sup>44</sup> Sen. *epist.* 100.10: *sit aliquid oratorie acre, tragice grande, comice exile*. Come nota giustamente Berti (2018) 366, in questa frase non si deve cogliere un'allusione alla teoria dei *tria genera dicendi*, ma piuttosto l'insistenza sulla varietà dei toni dello stile della *parennesi filosofica* e la proposta di un ideale di stile filosofico "che, in funzione di una maggiore efficacia *parennetica*, comporta il superamento dei confini tra i tradizionali generi letterari, ma anche tra prosa e poesia".

Seneca, da parte sua, controbatte alle critiche di Lucilio recuperando il principale tratto positivo che Fabiano aveva nella seconda prefazione e che, per Seneca padre, rappresentava un tratto di discontinuità rispetto al *vitium* fondamentale di Arellio, ovvero l'assenza di *cultus* e di *luxuria* nell'espressione.<sup>45</sup> Seneca conclude la lettera affermando che lo stile di Fabiano è nel complesso magnifico anche se non estremamente ricercato e lavorato nei singoli particolari e, talora, sprovvisto di forza.<sup>46</sup> Come si può vedere, nel controbattere alle critiche di Lucilio, Seneca si rifà al medesimo paradigma ciceroniano utilizzato dal genitore: lo stile di Fabiano, specchio del suo *animus compositus*, procede in perfetto equilibrio e senza alcuna difformità.<sup>47</sup> Ma c'è almeno un punto che pare sfuggire alla fitta griglia delle corrispondenze, fin qui stabilita, tra la seconda prefazione alle *Controversiae* e l'epistola 100.<sup>48</sup>

Dal paradigma ciceroniano proposto nell'*Orator*, Seneca ha selezionato, attribuendolo allo stile di Fabiano, un tratto che Seneca padre aveva invece obliato, cioè appunto la *mollis compositio*. In Cicerone, come già si è accennato, essa rappresenta il marchio distintivo dello stile del filosofo che, coltivato all'ombra della *schola*, si può definire più come una conversazione (*sermo*) che come discorso (*oratio*) in senso proprio.<sup>49</sup>

Nella prefazione al secondo libro delle *Controversiae* una *mollior compositio* viene attribuita ad Arellio Fusco e rappresenta proprio quel tratto dello stile del maestro che Fabiano ripudia perché non più adeguato alla costituzione di un animo che si prepara a ricevere i forti precetti filosofici.<sup>50</sup> Viceversa, nell'epistola 100 un tipo di *compositio* 'allentata' viene attribuita *tout-court* a Fabiano da Lucilio ed è il principale oggetto del dibattito tra questi e Seneca; essa non viene mai negata di per sé e, anzi, Seneca finisce per rivalutarla come marca stilistica del

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45 Sen. epist. 100.6 (il paragone con la *domus*): *desit sane varietas marmorum et concisura aquarum cubiculis interfluentium et pauperis cella et quidquid aliud luxuria non contenta decore simplici miscet: quod dici solet, domus recta est.*

46 Sen. epist. 100.11: *non erunt sine dubio singula circumspecta nec in se collecta nec omne verbum excitabit ac punget, fateor; exhibunt multa nec ferient et interdum otiosa praeterlabetur oratio, sed multum erit in omnibus lucis, sed ingens sine taedio spatium*; 100.12: *sine commendatione partium singularium in universum magnificus.*

47 Sen. epist. 100.8: *non sunt enim illa humilia sed placida et ad animi tenorem quietum compositumque formata, nec depressa sed plana.*

48 In Tab. 6 esso è contrassegnato da asterisco.

49 Cic. orat. 64: *mollis est enim oratio philosophorum et umbratilis nec sententiis nec verbis instructa popularibus nec vincita numeris, sed soluta liberius [...]. Itaque sermo potius quam oratio dicitur.*

50 Sen. contr. 2 praef. 1: *Fusci Arelli [...] compositio verborum mollior quam ut illam tam sanctis fortibusque praeceptis praeeparans se animus pati posset.*



maestro appellandosi, tra l'altro, alla *compositio sine infamia mollis* di Cicerone, quale autorevolissimo modello che la legittimerebbe.<sup>51</sup>

La domanda che sorge inevitabile a questo punto è perché mai Seneca padre abbia eliminato dallo stile filosofico di Fabiano la *mollis compositio*, che risulta perciò l'unico (e fondamentale) tratto, tra quelli presenti nel suo modello ciceroniano, a non essere recepito; e perché, viceversa, Seneca figlio la recuperi, come oggetto del dibattito tra lui e Lucilio e, pur in forma indiretta, cioè attraverso il complicato intreccio di obiezioni e contro-obiezioni, la attribuisca a Fabiano come precipua marca di stile filosofico, legittimata dall'esempio di Cicerone e pertinente, come sopra abbiamo visto, allo stile della storiografia.

Credo che una possibile risposta vada cercata nella sempre più accentuata pervasività della retorica nelle varie forme di discorso e di comunicazione intellettuale nella prima età imperiale, e nelle diverse modalità di percepirla e di rappresentarla da parte del padre e del figlio.

Una certa osmosi tra retorica e filosofia viene avvertita come già in atto da Seneca padre.<sup>52</sup> Nella seconda prefazione Fabiano viene presentato come l'esempio perfetto di tale osmosi: infatti, tentando di convincere il figlio Anneo Mela (cui è

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51 Sen. *epist.* 100.7: *lege Ciceronem: compositio eius una est, pedem curvat lenta et sine infamia mollis*. Il giudizio sulla *compositio* di Cicerone corrisponde a *epist.* 114.16 (*quidquid illa in exitu lenta, qualis Ciceronis est, devexa et molliter detinens nec aliter quam solet ad morem suum pedemque respondens?*): cf. Berti (2018) 344–345.

52 Sul gioco di influenza reciproca e, insieme, di differenziazione tra le due pratiche concorrenti del discorso, quello declamatorio e letterario da un lato e quello filosofico dall'altro, così come emerge dall'opera di Seneca padre, si rimanda all'analisi di Guérin (2012–2013: 41–42), le cui conclusioni sono sostanzialmente condivisibili: la declamazione, diventata, da semplice intrattenimento che era, una vera e propria esibizione retorica pubblica, inaugura un tipo di eloquenza tutta stilistica, in cui l'*inventio*, che tradizionalmente costituiva un potenziale spazio di espressione per i saperi intellettuali, perde importanza e diventa del tutto marginale rispetto alla cura esclusiva delle innovazioni formali a discapito dei contenuti; la declamazione orienta in profondità le percezioni e i gusti del pubblico e diventa un quadro estetico di riferimento, capace di indirizzare tutte le forme di discorso: il grado di influenza della declamazione sui vari generi letterari può essere vario, ma la testimonianza di Seneca padre (e di altri autori più tardi) non lascia dubbi sul fatto che nel I d.C. la declamazione pretende di influenzare l'intera produzione in prosa; nasce quindi una forma di concorrenza sociale tra i due mondi intellettuali, quello dei declamatori e quello dei filosofi, in cui la posta in gioco è il favore del pubblico e il successo mondano. Ciò che, dello studio di Guérin, non mi pare condivisibile è la valutazione molto riduttiva del ruolo di Seneca filosofo (con particolare riferimento all'epistola 100) in questo ampio dibattito culturale, come un semplice ritorno a una posizione di rigida separazione tra le due sfere, in linea con la (superata) posizione ciceroniana. Come dirò a breve, il quadro a mio parere è più complesso e Seneca filosofo si rivela molto meno conservatore di quanto ci si possa aspettare.

dedicata la *praefatio*) a non trascurare del tutto la pratica della declamazione, pur dopo aver intrapreso gli studi filosofici, Seneca gli indica in Fabiano l'esempio di una perfetta conciliazione tra i due ambiti (*facilis ab hac in omnes artes discursus est: instruit etiam quos non sibi exercet*). Già declamatore di scuola, quando ormai era diventato un disertore (*transfuga*), cioè era passato alla scuola sestiana, Fabiano continuava tuttavia a declamare come esercizio propedeutico per la filosofia; e lo faceva così diligentemente che si sarebbe potuto pensare che si esercitasse proprio in vista della declamazione, non della filosofia stessa.<sup>53</sup> Seneca padre, però, rappresenta questa transizione ancora in una forma tradizionale, ammettendo sì la possibilità di un facile *discursus*, ma attenendosi ancora al paradigma ciceroniano di una corretta e sostanziale separatezza di ambiti. Tale paradigma viene al più aggiornato, sostituendo implicitamente uno dei due ambiti concorrenti (l'oratoria) con un'altra forma retorica più alla moda (la declamazione appunto). In quest'ottica Seneca padre non può dunque fare a meno di eliminare dallo stile di Fabiano il tratto della *mollis oratio*: infatti, nell'evolversi delle pratiche declamatorie, questo tratto aveva assunto uno spettro di significati e di forme artistiche molto più ampie rispetto al recente passato ed era diventato a tutti gli effetti una caratteristica, se non un *vitium* dello stile moderno.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef. passim*: *cum repeterem, quos umquam bene declamantes audissem, occurrit mihi inter alios Fabianus philosophus, qui adulescens admodum tantae opinionis in declamando, quantae postea in disputando fuit. exercebatur apud Arellium Fuscum [...] Haec eo libentius, Mela, fili carissime, refero, quia video animum tuum a civilibus officiis abhorrentem et ab omni ambitu aversum hoc unum concupiscentem, nihil concupiscere, ut eloquentiae tamen studeas. Facilis ab hac in omnes artes discursus est; instruit etiam quos non sibi exercet. Nec est, quod insidias tibi putes fieri, quasi id agam, ut te bene cedentis studii favor teneat; ego vero non sum bonae mentis impedimentum: perge quo inclinatus animus, et paterno contentus ordine subduc fortunae magnam tui partem. [...] Sed proderit tibi in illa, quae tota mente agitas, declamandi exercitatio, sicut Fabiano profuit. Qui aliquando, <cum> Sextium audiret, nihilominus declamabat et tam diligenter, ut putares illum illi studio parari, non per illud alteri praeeparari. [...] Apud Blandum diutius quam apud Fuscum Arellium studuit, sed cum iam transfugisset, eo tempore quo eloquentiae studebat non eloquentiae causa. Cf. Citti (2005) 187–189; Berti (2007) 219–220; Guérin (2012–2013) 21–43.*

<sup>54</sup> Berti (2018) 105 (a proposito della caratterizzazione di Mecenate come *mollis* in Sen. *epist.* 114.7): “D'altra parte *mollis* è anche un termine della critica letteraria, che analogamente al gr. μαλακός si applica a un *genus dicendi* dolce e gradevole (cf. ad es. Cic. *de orat.* 2.95; *Brut.* 38; 132; 274), ma che, volto in *malam partem*, definisce uno stile languido e snervato, con la solita connotazione di effeminatezza (cf. ad es. Sen. *contr.* 2 *praef.* 1; 9.2.24 [...]); 345 (a proposito della *compositio* di Cicerone in Sen. *epist.* 110.7): “L'accusa di praticare una *mollis compositio* era stata notoriamente rivolta a Cicerone dai suoi avversari atticisti, come attesta Quint. *inst.* 12.10.12: *quem* [sc. Ciceronem] *tamen et suorum homines temporum incessere audebant ut tumidiorem et Asianum et redundantem [...] et in compositione fractum, exultantem ac paene, quod procul absit,*

A rendere ormai irricevibile, per Seneca padre, la *mollis oratio* del filosofo ciceroniano può aver contribuito, tra l'altro, l'epiteto *umbratilis*, ad essa associato nel passo più volte citato dell'*Orator*.<sup>55</sup> Già altrove, in Cicerone, tale aggettivo designava i declamatori (che tengono i loro discorsi nel chiuso delle scuole, all'opposto degli oratori, che parlano all'aria aperta del *forum*);<sup>56</sup> a Seneca padre doveva suonare senz'altro come etichetta specifica della *schola* di retorica, risultando del tutto inutilizzabile per la professione del filosofo.

Una controprova può essere fornita da un altro ritratto di Seneca, quello dedicato ad Albucio Silo nella *praefatio* al settimo libro: costui è un declamatore che si atteggia a filosofo e che appare come la brutta copia di Fabiano (anzi, un pessimo imitatore in senso proprio, visto che ne aveva frequentato assiduamente le lezioni).<sup>57</sup> In apparenza, Albucio appare preoccupato di che cosa dire e non di come dirlo (“tanto da poter applicare a se stesso il motto *cum rem animus occupavit, verba ambiunt*, ovvero acuta variazione del precetto rivolto da Catone al figlio Marco [...] *rem tene, verba sequentur*”),<sup>58</sup> ma solo per il timore di sembrare un declamatore in cerca di successo; infarcisce il discorso di concetti filosofici ma in modo intempestivo, sviluppando oltre misura le *quaestiones*; incostante e mutevole, *sollicitus* e non affatto *securus*,<sup>59</sup> si rivela in pieno uno *scholasticus*: a un certo punto della sua carriera, dopo essere incorso in uno spiacevole incidente, decide di non parlare più nel foro, giudicando la declamazione l'unica forma in grado di conferire un sicuro successo.

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*viro molliorem*; forse è per questo, oltre che per la connotazione negativa comunemente assunta da *mollis* come termine della critica letteraria [...] che Seneca, in un contesto in cui non vuole insistere sui difetti della *compositio* ciceroniana, aggiunge la precisazione *sine infamia*, così da togliere all'aggettivo ogni risonanza peggiorativa”.

55 Cic. *orat.* 64: *mollis est enim oratio philosophorum et umbratilis*.

56 Cic. *de orat.* 1.157: *educenda deinde dictio est ex hac domestica exercitatione et umbratili medium in agmen, in pulverem, in clamorem, in castra atque in aciem forenses; subeundus visus hominum et periclitandae vires ingenii, et illa commentatio inclusa in veritatis lucem proferenda est*; sul passo e la sua eredità in Seneca padre cf. Berti (2007) 128–132.

57 Su Albucio in Seneca Padre: Citti (2005) 193–198; Berti (2007) 143–149; Guérin (2012–2013) 28–32.

58 Citti (2005) 195–196.

59 Sulla contrapposizione tra *sollicitus* e *securus* in Seneca padre (*contr. 7 praef.* 6) e in Seneca filosofo (*epist.* 100.4) in relazione allo stile come espressione dell'animo, cf. Setaioli (2000) 123–124.

Seneca pare dunque costruire il ritratto, letterario e psicologico, di Albucio in antitesi a quello di Fabiano (al quale peraltro lo accomunano eleganza e brillantezza espressiva);<sup>60</sup> e, se letta sullo sfondo della seconda, la settima prefazione rivela una chiara percezione della differenza tra declamatori e filosofi e l'intenzione, che mi pare altrettanto netta, di smascherare indebiti tentativi di sconfinamenti o, peggio, di contraffazioni.<sup>61</sup>

Venendo ora all'epistola 100, Seneca recupera allo stile di Fabiano il tratto ciceroniano della *mollis compositio* già obliterato dal padre; anzi, il recupero avviene nel nome stesso dell'Arpinate, che lo incarnerebbe nella sua prosa.<sup>62</sup> Per trovare la motivazione di un simile recupero, dobbiamo anzitutto rimarcare che, nell'*incipit* della lettera, al termine *compositio* viene attribuita una valenza tecnica in relazione alla teoria retorica del periodo e che, tramite il carattere più allentato del periodare di Fabiano, si stabilisce un'intrinseca affinità (anch'essa, peraltro, riconducibile a una matrice ciceroniana) tra scrittura storiografica e scrittura filosofica.

Ed è appunto il ricorso al *medium* della storiografia, a mio parere, a garantire che il recupero apparentemente nostalgico della posizione ciceroniana non sia espressione, da parte di Seneca, di un più o meno pronunciato conservatorismo.<sup>63</sup>

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**60** Sen, *contr.* 2 *praef.* 2: *splendor vero velut voluntarius non elaboratae orationi aderat* (Fabiano); *contr.* 7 *praef.* 2: *splendor orationis quantus nescio an in ullo alio fuerit*.

**61** Si leggano al proposito le giuste considerazioni di Guérin (2012–2013) 36–37: “Chez Sénèque le père comme chez Sénèque le jeune, la figure de Papirius Fabianus est utilisée pour décrire cette frontière entre le deux modes d'expression déclamatoire et philosophique. Mais contrairement à Albucius, Fabianus – ancien déclamateur et philosophe reconnu – représente le versant positif de cette rupture en ce qu'il incarne la capacité à manier les deux types de parole, sans pour autant les confondre [...] À partir de ce constat, nous voudrions montrer que Sénèque le père, tout en affirmant l'hétérogénéité stylistique de la philosophie et de la déclamation, parvient à penser une forme d'enrichissement d'une pratique par une autre, mais dans un sens qui n'est pas celui qu'aurait souhaité Cicéron: pour le rhéteur, c'est la déclamation qui rendra le philosophe éloquent, pourvu, une fois encore, qu'il sépare fermement les différents genres de discours qu'il pratique”.

**62** Sen. *epist.* 100.7.

**63** Come sostengono, pur con varietà di accenti, diversi interpreti, tra cui ad es. Setaioli (2000) 118–122; 160–172 e Guérin (2012–2013), parlando di un allineamento della posizione senecana su quella di Seneca padre o anche di un suo arretramento rispetto al genitore e, sicuramente, rispetto a Lucilio, schierato su una linea più modernista. Più convincente mi pare, al proposito, Garbarino (2006) 69–71, che rivaluta la struttura a dittico nell'epistola e ritiene pertanto la divergenza di opinioni tra Seneca e Lucilio nient'altro che un espediente letterario per esporre in una forma dialetticamente più efficace le idee dell'autore in merito allo stile filosofico. Le due voci dell'epistola, secondo la studiosa, non rispecchiano due diverse posizioni (pro e contro lo stile di Fabiano) ma, piuttosto, due diverse prospettive, espresse su due piani diversi. Lucilio assume

Al contrario, fatta salva l'assoluta priorità per il filosofo delle *res sui verba*, Seneca mi pare qui registrare, con lucida consapevolezza, la fluidità dei confini tra declamazione e filosofia, inserendosi a pieno titolo nel dibattito coevo sulla ridefinizione dei generi letterari e seguendo, ancora una volta, per poi superarle, le orme del genitore.

Come infatti Seneca padre, nella sesta *Suasoria*, proponeva alcuni brani degli storici per competere con i declamatori su un tema alla moda (la morte di Cicerone), garantendo nel contempo la maggiore solidità dei primi sui secondi, così nell'epistola 100 Seneca pare aggiornare sulla falsariga del genitore la discussione sul problema di quale stile per il filosofo, proponendo come modelli un insolito quartetto di filosofi, che erano stati tutti anche declamatori, tre dei quali anche storici e, non da ultimo, protagonisti della sesta *Suasoria*.

Se letta in tal senso, allora, l'epistola 100 sembra testimoniare molto più la percezione di una osmosi di fatto tra i generi della prosa, con la quale bisogna certamente fare i conti per stabilire delle gerarchie ma da cui non si può affatto prescindere, che un miope arroccamento su posizioni di assoluta (e astratta) separazione tra filosofia e retorica.

## 4 Conclusioni

Dall'analisi dell'epistola 100, che ho proposto in questa sede, il retore e filosofo Fabiano risulta a tutti gli effetti un *trait-d'union* generazionale, che Seneca eredita dalla scrittura memoriale del padre e utilizza quale strumento per interpretare, anzi rappresentare alcuni tratti significativi della storia della cultura nella prima età imperiale, lasciando per così dire 'a vista' varie tensioni irrisolte che la percorrono. Il movimento retrospettivo, adottato nell'epistola, non mi pare pertanto un passo indietro ma, piuttosto, una voluta strategia per aggiornare un lungo dibattito sullo stile filosofico, alla luce delle contraddizioni a lui contemporanee, nella consapevolezza della veloce evoluzione dei modelli culturali. Se

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il punto di vista del critico letterario e accetta, quale suo presupposto, di applicare i criteri retorici alla formulazione e alla valutazione di uno stile proprio del filosofo; la difesa di Fabiano da parte di Seneca poggia invece su premesse non già retoriche ma filosofiche e proclama il principio della assoluta prevalenza dei contenuti sulla forma. Pur condividendo le premesse di questa interpretazione, credo tuttavia che il gioco delle voci sia ancora più complesso di quello descritto da Garbarino e che la posizione di Seneca, anche come *persona loquens* nel contesto dell'epistola, non sia riducibile a quella del filosofo attestato su un piano 'altro' rispetto al declamatore e, in questo, riveli il suo tratto più moderno.

neca ripropone, *mutatis mutandis*, le dinamiche del dibattito sullo stile storiografico già presente in Cicerone e, in tempi a lui più vicini, in Seneca padre, allo scopo, certamente, di ribadire la supremazia della filosofia sulla declamazione, ma condividendo lo stesso orizzonte di istanze culturali.

Queste istanze e queste contraddizioni, nate in senso alla modernità, in Seneca non vengono mai né celate né semplificate, ma danno vita nel suo epistolario a una posizione estremamente variegata, che coinvolge inevitabilmente anche il tratto antitetico alla *mollis compositio*, cioè quel vigore espressivo che Lucilio ricerca inutilmente in Fabiano e che viene specificamente connesso all'efficacia del magistero etico perché identificato come lo strumento più idoneo alla parenesi del filosofo. In questo caleidoscopico scenario, che nell'epistola 100 viene espresso mediante l'intreccio delle voci – non solo quelle di Lucilio e di Seneca, ma anche di Seneca padre e di Cicerone –, anche la distinzione e la complementarità tra *sermo* (cui pertiene la *mollis compositio*) e *admonitio* (cui si connette il vigore espressivo), di antica e illustre tradizione (e altrove adottata, come è noto, da Seneca stesso)<sup>64</sup> vengono incessantemente rinegoziate e mai definitivamente stabilite.

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<sup>64</sup> Sen. *epist.* 38.1–2; Berti (2018) 215–219; Setaioli (2000) 111–141.



Chiara Renda

## Di *aetas* in *aetas*: considerazioni sulla storiografia di Seneca Padre e Floro

**Abstract:** The partition of the history of Rome by *aetates* is a feature shared by both the historical work of Seneca the Elder and Florus' historiography. By providing fresh comparison between the texts of these two authors, this study corroborates Canfora's thesis that Seneca the Elder set the beginning of civil wars in 133 BCE too. As concerns their evaluation of the Augustan Age the comparison between Seneca's and Florus' works, along with a new reading of some passages by Florus dedicated to Augustus, shows that the two authors held opposite views on the transition from Republic to Principate. Florus, in fact, seems to ascribe this phenomenon to the wiser and more mature phase almost the acme of the Roman people's life.

### Premessa

Delle sole tre testimonianze relative alle *Historiae* di Seneca Padre in nostro possesso, fino alla riscoperta del papiro *P.Herc* 1067, due sono da tempo messe in relazione all'opera di Floro, che, nella struttura<sup>1</sup> e nella divisione per *aetates*, scelta come criterio narrativo per il racconto della storia di Roma dalle origini ad Augusto,<sup>2</sup> può aiutare a chiarire alcuni punti relativi ai dati dei testi senecani;

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1 L'aspetto certamente più interessante per il confronto con Seneca Padre, sul piano della struttura narrativa, è la divisione netta tra *bella externa*, narrate tutte nel primo libro fino alle campagne di Gallia di Cesare e la campagna partica di quegli stessi anni, e le "guerre civili", narrate nel secondo libro. Esse iniziano con i moti graccani e finiscono con la battaglia di Azio. La narrazione tuttavia prosegue inglobando parte dell'età Augustea, con un confine cronologico difficile da tracciare perché, fermandosi apparentemente alle campagne di Spagna di Augusto, tratta con un'inversione cronologica anche la disfatta di Varo, di molto successiva rispetto al 27 a.C., anno della consacrazione di Augusto, con cui si chiude l'opera. Tutte le moderne edizioni assumono la partizione dell'opera rappresentata dal solo codice Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek E III 22 (IX sec.), mentre la seconda recensione, a cui appartengono tutti gli altri codici, presenta una divisione in quattro libri. La preferenza per B, che presenta il testo più corretto, ha il pregio di trovare conferma nelle parole dello stesso Floro.

2 Sui problemi relativi alla ripartizione per blocchi di anni e sui problemi testuali dei luoghi che riportano le cifre, cf. in particolare l'introduzione di Jal (1967), quella di Salomone Gaggero



essa costituisce inoltre una sorta di superamento della periodizzazione di Seneca Padre, in un'epoca diversa, con una cronologia da adeguare, anche in chiave ideologica, alla suddivisione della storia proposta nell'età di Caligola, quando l'opera di Seneca sembra essere circolata.<sup>3</sup>

Il testo del *De vita patris*, infatti, è stato oggetto di diversi studi, soprattutto perché offre un indizio in merito all'inizio delle *Historiae* di Seneca: nel ricordare orgogliosamente le doti letterarie del padre, infatti, Seneca figlio aggiunge che l'opera partiva *ab initio bellorum civilium*, espressione che viene generalmente ricondotta o alla guerra civile tra Cesare e Pompeo<sup>4</sup> oppure, più recentemente da Canfora, all'età dei Gracchi,<sup>5</sup> grazie anche alla disposizione degli eventi nell'opera di Floro che colloca l'inizio del secondo libro e delle *seditiones* interne proprio nel 133 a.C.

Sebbene infatti la Levick, nell'edizione Cornell, adduca fondamentalmente la spiegazione che da Silla alla guerra civile tra Cesare e Pompeo ci sarebbero anni di stasi senza guerre civili e che dunque l'inizio dell'opera senecana dovesse ricadere in un punto più significativo della storia di Roma,<sup>6</sup> non si possono trascurare gli argomenti di Canfora, che in sintesi afferma: 1. Appiano e Floro, più o meno negli stessi anni, raccontano le guerre civili partendo dai Gracchi e considerano come tappe di esse i tumulti di Saturnino, la guerra sociale, la congiura

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(1981), il commento di Facchini Tosi (1997), *passim*. Una ricapitolazione dei principali problemi connessi alle fonti e ai modelli di Floro per questa concezione biologica della storia in Bessone (2008).

**3** Sulla cronologia relativa alla composizione delle *Historiae* cf. Vottero (1998) 76–77, che ricorda la terza testimonianza relativa all'opera di Seneca Padre che non è utile nel confronto con l'opera di Floro e dunque non sarà oggetto della nostra attenzione perché si riferisce alla morte di Tiberio (riportata da Suet. *Tib.* 73.2 - *Appendix F1*), collocazione suffragata da *suas.* 3.7 in cui l'uso dei tempi sembra confermare che l'imperatore non fosse più in vita mentre Seneca padre scriveva. Per la data della morte di Seneca invece si considera il 41 come *terminus ante quem* perché il figlio dichiara che la notizia del suo esilio è giunta alla madre già vedova (*dial.* 12.2.4–5). Se dunque la morte di Seneca padre si colloca tra il 37 e il 41, il termine del suo racconto dovrebbe ricadere in quegli anni, visto che nella testimonianza del *De vita patris* il figlio dice del padre che ha scritto fino quasi alla sua morte (*paene usque ad mortis suae diem*, F 97 Peter). La discussione sui tempi e l'effettiva pubblicazione dell'opera in Levick in *FRHist* I 507.

**4** Ampia la bibliografia sulle diverse periodizzazioni proposte. Cf. Lausberg (1989) 1939 con la bibliografia relativa; contro l'ipotesi dei Gracchi Klotz (1901) 437–438; incerto Sussman (1978) 142–143 (cfr. anche 147 n. 18 nel presente volume); possibilista Castiglioni (1928) 458–460, che pur ammettendo quale inizio le guerre civili tra Cesare e Pompeo, pensa ad una visione retrospettiva ad eventi precedenti per l'individuazione dell'*initium*, la causa prima, per usare la terminologia di Canfora (2015) 138, che si scaglia invece fortemente contro l'ipotesi accolta in *FRHist*.

**5** Canfora (2015) 148 e ss. Cf. anche (2000) 165–168.

**6** Levick in *FRHist* I 506: “the work would lack a crisp starting point”.

di Catilina, la rivoluzione degli schiavi di Spartaco e Crisso, il primo triumvirato, creando quindi un filo continuo dalla *seditio Graccana* alla battaglia di Azio che di fatto chiude per Floro le guerre civili e apre l'età augustea; 2. l'appartenenza di Floro agli *Annaei* testimoniata dalla tradizione dell'Epitome rafforza l'ipotesi che Floro possa aver avuto come modello Seneca Padre<sup>7</sup> e dunque da quest'ultimo avrebbe ereditato l'impostazione della sua storiografia, che individua sostanzialmente un secolo di guerre civili.

Nei manoscritti dell'opera storiografica di Floro l'indicazione *Annaeus* non è unica, perché la tradizione più autorevole del testo, rappresentata dal codice B (Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek E III 22) riporta come autore dell'opera storiografica *Iulius Florus*.<sup>8</sup> Sebbene sia un caso unico, contro la maggior parte dei testimoni, si tratta del testo assunto da tutte le edizioni moderne, perché presenta la divisione dell'opera in due libri anziché quattro, ritenuta la più verosimile e dunque interessante ai fini della valutazione dell'opera di Seneca Padre proprio perché divide la storia in *bella externa* e *clades domesticae*. Tuttavia a causa della massiccia presenza del nome *Annaeus* negli altri codici e per gli indubbi legami presenti tra i due Seneca, Lucano e Floro,<sup>9</sup> mi sento di propendere per la soluzione di Canfora che peraltro disgiunge di conseguenza l'opera storica dal resto della produzione ascritta dalla tradizione ad Annio Floro.<sup>10</sup> Nell'ottica dunque di

7 Ad una dipendenza diretta di Floro, con originalità nel fissare i limiti cronologici pensa già Jal (1967) LXXIV–LXXV e Giaccone Deangeli (1969) nell'introduzione al testo di Floro (308); pensa invece ad una fonte comune ai due autori Salomone Gaggero (1981) 47, come già Klotz (1901) che avanza l'ipotesi di una fonte di età augustea.

8 La questione è discussa da Malcovati (1950) 276–279.

9 Molto convincente la posizione di Hahn (1964) 169–206.

10 Sul problema dell'identità di Floro abbiamo cinque attestazioni, giunteci separatamente, di autori con questo nome: a. l'autore dell'epitome compare nei manoscritti come *L. Annaeus* o *Annaeus Florus*, mentre in uno dei più importanti manoscritti, B (Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek E III 22), che prevede la divisione in due libri dell'opera adottata da tutte le edizioni più recenti, troviamo *Iulius Florus*. b. un *P. Annius Florus* autore del dialogo *Vergilius orator an poeta* c. un poeta *Florus* protagonista di uno scambio di poesie con l'imperatore Adriano. d. un funzionario di Adriano citato due volte da Carisio, una volta come *Annius Florus* e la seconda come *Florus* e. un poeta di nome Floro, autore di carmi tramandati in un codice dell'*Anthologia Latina*. Oggi si tende a ritenere che lo stesso autore abbia scritto l'opera storica, il dialogo e la serie di componimenti variamente tramandati, cosicché alcune notizie biografiche contenute nel discorso *Vergilius orator an poeta* vengono automaticamente considerate utili per meglio comprendere la personalità del Floro storico. Di questa idea già Malcovati (1937) 69–94; 289–307; (1938) 46–64 e soprattutto (1950) 276–279; successivamente Bessone (1996) 123 (idea che ritorna naturalmente anche nei molti altri scritti dell'autore, tra cui (1993b) 80–117, proprio su questo tema); Facchini Tosi (1998) 9; Havas, nella più recente edizione critica (1997) 2, che peraltro sceglie di chiamare l'autore "Annio". Sul problema e i casi presi in esame cf. Baldwin (1988) 134–142. Di recente

un'appartenenza di Floro alla *gens Annaea*, un ulteriore confronto tra Seneca Padre e Floro potrà confermare, come vedremo, un elemento affine, che farebbe propendere per la coincidenza dell'incipit dell'opera senecana con l'inizio delle guerre civili del secondo libro di Floro.<sup>11</sup>

Non mi sembra, del resto, che le “prove” a favore di un *initium* collocabile al 49 siano inoppugnabili: l'incipit del *Bellum Civile* di Lucano non è prova certa che anche Seneca considerasse quella tra Cesare e Pompeo la guerra civile vera e propria, né le testimonianze relative alle guerre civili disseminate nelle *Controversiae* e nelle *Suasoriae*, certo cronologicamente vicine all'esperienza personale dell'autore,<sup>12</sup> rappresentano una prova dirimente del fatto che il conflitto tra Cesare e Pompeo, peraltro non citato che indirettamente e in modo generico, sia l'incipit dell'opera storica. Certo si può ipotizzare, più cautamente, proprio guardando all'opera di Floro, che l'incipit fossero le *seditiones Graccanae* cui seguivano tutti gli altri disordini, magari raccontati in modo più sintetico e che poi l'attenzione si attestasse in modo più particolareggiato sulle fasi più vicine alla vita e all'esperienza dell'autore, secondo un uso frequentissimo della storiografia antica.

## 1 Il punto di svolta

Potrebbe aggiungere qualcosa alle precedenti riflessioni la seconda testimonianza ascritta a Seneca Padre, non sempre “ammessa” dagli studiosi,<sup>13</sup> che secondo me,

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sembra incline all'identificazione Perrelli (2017) 131–146. Probabilista, ma con forti perplessità Jal (1967) VII, nella sua introduzione all'edizione.

**11** Restano convincenti gli elementi evidenziati da Roszbach (1888) 163–173, ripresi sinteticamente nell'introduzione all'edizione di Floro (1896).

**12** Come è noto, le guerre civili fanno in alcuni casi da sfondo ad alcuni testi della raccolta di Seneca Padre. Oltre alla famosa testimonianza biografica, che colloca Seneca Padre lontano da Roma negli anni in cui ancora operava Cicerone (*contr. 1 praef. 11*), in molti casi la guerra civile è rappresentata attraverso lo scontro tra parenti; la cifra di fondo del dibattito è l'incertezza sull'applicabilità delle norme consuete in un momento in cui, come per altro avviene sempre nelle declamazioni, la verità non sembra più una sola. Forte è la tentazione di ritrovare anche sullo sfondo delle declamazioni l'idea che la verità sia arretrata irrimediabilmente nella storia come la retorica (cf. *1 praef. 6: nescio qua iniquitate naturae eloquentia se retro tulerit*). Sulle declamazioni e le guerre civili, cf., tra gli altri, Danesi Marioni (2003) 151–170, Mazzoli (2006) 45–57; Touahri (2010) 55–64.

**13** Jal (1967) LXXV, come già Peter (1906) II 68–69, ricorda la teoria, ormai superata, secondo cui Lattanzio, leggendo sul testo di Floro *Annaeus*, avrebbe ripreso la divisione di Floro attri-

dialogando con la prima, può offrire ulteriori chiarimenti e generare un confronto utile con Floro.

Nelle *Divinae Institutiones* di Lattanzio, infatti, troviamo delineata la concezione biologica della storia, attribuibile a Seneca Padre, forse premessa per le *Historiae*, in cui la divisione per *aetates* non sempre è definita da termini cronologici precisi, ma consente forse di capire meglio quando per lo storico è iniziata quella fase di decadenza che ha portato alla rovina di Roma e alla necessità di un cambiamento di regime, inaugurato dall'età augustea: nella divisione in cinque fasi, infatti, il passaggio dalla *adulescentia* alla *iuventus* è sancito dalla fine delle guerre puniche e porta alla conquista di tutto il mondo (*Appendix - F2*).<sup>14</sup>

Come si può notare, l'età delle vittorie, la *iuventus*, sembra coincidere con un periodo che va dalla presa di Cartagine alla conquista dell'orbe, ma questa determinazione è generica e offre soprattutto la possibilità di sviluppare un tema etico importante per Seneca come anche per Floro: l'idea cioè che i successi militari, evidentemente rappresentati in modo iperbolico dall'idea che fosse finita la *bellorum materia*, (corrispondente alla *nimia felicitas* raggiunta da Roma, per Floro, a seguito delle grandi conquiste) abbiano prodotto all'interno un fenomeno degenerativo segnato dagli scontri civili.<sup>15</sup> Anche la *iuventus* di Floro,<sup>16</sup> pur iniziando con le guerre puniche, si configura come una età a due facce, divisa addirittura dall'autore internamente in cento anni aurei, quelli delle grandi conquiste, e cento anni ferrei, in cui nonostante le conquiste continuassero, i Romani erano afflitti dalle guerre civili: a *epit.* 1.19, infatti, egli individua nella presa di

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buendola ad un imprecisato Seneca. Troppe tuttavia, come vedremo, le differenze nelle due periodizzazioni, anche se dubbi restano sulla formalizzazione del testo, per alcuni più vicino alla prosa di Lattanzio, come in Hartke (1951) 393, e per altri caratterizzato dalla numerosa presenza del *quasi*, su cui cf. Bessone (2008) 35. Una ricognizione delle principali posizioni, con ampia bibliografia in Griffin (1972) 19. Molto sommaria la discussione e la bibliografia offerta da Levick in *FRHist* I 597. Resta prevalente oggi la linea che ascrive la testimonianza a Seneca Padre: cf. Castiglioni (1928); Lausberg (1970) 3, e (1989) 1957; Bocciolini Palagi (1978) 220, Vottero (1998) 75–81 (che infatti non inserisce il testo nei frammenti di Seneca figlio) e naturalmente Canfora (2000) 165 e (2015) 158.

<sup>14</sup> Lact. *inst.* 7.15.14.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. anche la lettura di Sussman (1978) 149: “The date for the beginning of the decline is the destruction of Carthage and the emergence of the Gracchi”; cf. anche lo stesso Sussman *supra* 175–177.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Flor. *epit.* 1.18: *domita subactaque Italia populus Romanus prope quingentissimum annum agens cum bona fide adolevisset, si quod est robur, si qua iuventas, tum ille vere robustus et iuvenis et par orbi terrarum esse coepit. Ita – mirum et incredibile dictu – qui prope quingentis annis domi luctatus est – adeo difficile fuerat dare Italiae caput – his ducentis annis qui secuntur Africam, Europam, Asiam, totum denique orbem terrarum bellis victorisque peragravit.*

Numanzia il termine cronologico di una fase della *iuventus* tutta positiva, nei cento anni dedicati alla conquista di Africa, Macedonia, Sicilia e Spagna (264–133), mentre i successivi, precisa:

*centum sequentes ferreos plane et cruentos et si quid inmanius; quippe qui Iugurthinis, Cimbricis, Mithridaticis, Parthicis, piraticis bellis, Gallicis atque Germanicis, quibus caelum ipsum gloria ascendit Gracchanas Drusianasque caedes, ad hoc servilia bella miscuerint et, ne quid turpitudini desit, gladiatoria. Denique in se ipse conversus Marianis atque Sullanis, novissime Pompei et Caesaris manibus, quasi per rabiem et furorem – nefas! – semet ipse laceravit.* (1.34.19)<sup>17</sup>

Si pone dunque un discrimine tra le conquiste che ruota comunque intorno al 133, data della battaglia di Numanzia e dell'eredità di Attalo III, che costituiscono senza dubbio il culmine di successo all'estero dell'impero romano conquistatore, ma anche, per Floro, quel raggiungimento di un'eccessiva prosperità che ha generato le guerre civili; a *epit.* 1.47, infatti, Floro argomenta:

*posterius centum, quos a Carthaginiis, Corinthi Numantiaequae excidiis et Attali regis Asiatica hereditate deduximus in Caesarem et Pompeium secutumque hos, de quo dicemus, Augustum, ut claritate rerum bellicarum magnifici, ita domesticis cladibus miseri et erubescendi.* (*epit.* 1.47.3)

Il momento di crisi è individuato e commentato nella volontà di conquista:

*ac nescio an satius fuerit populo Romano Sicilia et Africa contento fuisse, aut his etiam ipsis carere dominantibus in Italia sua, quam eo magnitudinis crescere, ut viribus suis conficeretur. Quae enim res alia civiles furores peperit quam nimia felicitas? Syria prima nos victa corrupta, mox Asiatica Pergameni regis hereditas.* (*epit.* 1.47.6)

Il testo di Floro è indubabilmente vicino alla considerazione di Seneca Padre: tutti e due colgono la volontà di conquista del mondo come inizio della *iuventus* (*manus suas in totum orbem terra marique porrexit*, in Seneca e *orbe toto arma circumtulit*, in Flor. *epit.* 1.47.3), ma successivamente si evidenzia la conseguenza della scelta: *donec regibus cunctis et nationibus imperio subiugatis cum iam bellorum materia deficeret, viribus suis male uteretur, quibus se ipsa confecit*, afferma Seneca, sottolineando così che, terminate le guerre esterne, Roma ha distrutto se stessa; su questa idea concorda anche Floro: *ac nescio an satius fuerit populo Romano Sicilia et Africa contento fuisse, aut his etiam ipsis carere domi-*

<sup>17</sup> Il testo seguito è quello di Malcovati (1972<sup>2</sup>).

*nanti in Italia sua, quam eo magnitudinis crescere, ut virtutibus suis conficere-tur*<sup>18</sup> che riprende la stessa espressione per indicare l'inizio della crisi; entrambi infine stigmatizzano i conflitti interni che si sono generati: *Et haec fuit prima eius senectus, cum bellis lacerata civilibus atque intestino malo pressa rursus ad regimen singularis imperii recidit quasi ad alteram infantiam revoluta*, afferma Seneca seguito da Floro, che approfondisce ed elenca tutte le *seditiones* partendo dai Gracchi e anticipando la definitiva soluzione con l'avvento di Augusto (*epit.* 1.47.8–14). Se dunque Floro segnala un cambiamento importante nelle conquiste esterne databile al 133, per valorizzare il nesso di passaggio con la rivolta dei Gracchi,<sup>19</sup> anch'essa di quell'anno, e per stabilire un punto di svolta nella storia di Roma, continuando a raccontare (relegate nel primo libro) le successive conquiste, potremmo cogliere anche nella generica riflessione del Seneca riportata da Lattanzio una condanna etica affine a quella di Floro, di cui potrebbe essere stato il modello, che potrebbe riflettere dunque il momento di inizio della decadenza proprio nel 133. Questo dato potrebbe accrescere la credibilità della proposta, sostenuta da Canfora, di individuare nella *seditio Graccana* del 133 l'inizio della *prima senectus*, in cui peraltro l'aggettivo mi sembra rafforzare l'idea di *ab initio bellorum civilium* espressa dalle parole del figlio. D'altronde non mi sembra possibile proporre una periodizzazione senecana che consideri una effettiva conclusione delle conquiste esterne, visto che esse non ebbero mai fine praticamente, se non riconoscendo un momento storico che attivi una riflessione etica e che dunque conferisca la giusta dignità all'*incipit* narrativo scelto per la propria opera storica.

## 1.1 Il passaggio all'età augustea

Nella definizione delle *aetates* lo scarto forse maggiore tra i due scrittori riguarda proprio il passaggio al principato, che, oltre a tradire un atteggiamento ideologico assolutamente opposto, consente a Floro una periodizzazione più congruente con l'angolazione da cui un uomo dell'età degli Antonini può effettivamente valutare l'evoluzione della storia di Roma.<sup>20</sup>

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**18** Il concetto è già in Liv. *praef.* 4: *res est praeterea et immensi operis, ut quae supra septingentesimum annum repetatur et quae ab exiguis profecta initiis eo creverit ut iam magnitudine laboret sua; et legentium plerisque haud dubito quin primae origines proximaque originibus minus praebitura voluptatis sint, festinantibus ad haec nova quibus iam pridem praevalentis populi vires se ipsae conficiunt.*

**19** Cf. Havas (1994) 27.

**20** Garzetti (1964) 136–156.

Nel passo riportato da Lattanzio, infatti, quella *prima senectus* iniziata in un tempo lontano e caratterizzata dall'autodistruzione delle guerre civili, prosegue *rursus ad regimen singularis imperii*, costringendo il popolo romano a riacquistare l'ordinamento della sua *infantia* (*quasi ad alteram infantia revoluta*). La regressione, con conseguente perdita della libertà, contiene un evidente giudizio polemico, come si può cogliere dall'espressione finale: *amissa enim libertate, quam Bruto duce et auctore defenderat, ita consenuit, tamquam sustentare se ipsa non valeret, nisi adminiculo regentium niteretur*. La necessità di un *adminiculum regentium*, senza il quale la *senectus* non è in grado di sostenersi, genera il rimpianto per la perdita di quella libertà conquistata proprio in un movimento inverso a quello che ha portato al principato, quando in un lontano passato si era passati dai *reges* alla *res publica*: mi sembra infatti molto più naturale pensare che l'allusione in questo luogo sia a Lucio Giunio Bruto che a Marco Bruto,<sup>21</sup> perché l'autore crea un parallelo tra il passato e il futuro, posti in direzioni opposte. Nella prima *infantia*, infatti, si assiste ad una crescita, nella seconda ad un'involuzione verso la condizione di schiavitù faticosamente combattuta con la cacciata di Tarquinio. L'idea della *amissa libertas* e l'obbligo nei confronti dei "reggitori" naturalmente si associa all'idea di una *veritas* perduta (come dice Seneca nel *de vita patris: unde primum veritas retro abiit*) quando il motore delle azioni del popolo romano non è stato più unitario, ma legato all'interesse personale di alcuni. Naturalmente Seneca, che "attraversa" l'età augustea, doveva avere ben chiaro in che termini la *libertas* e la *veritas* al suo tempo fossero fortemente limitate dietro la facciata del ritorno alla *res publica*. È lui stesso a darcene testimonianza a proposito di Augusto nelle *Controversie*: se infatti Seneca ricorda la libertà di parola dell'epoca, tanto da mostrare un *princeps* indulgente quando un po' a sproposito emergono in un discorso le origini oscure di Agrippa (*contr.* 2.4.12–13), ricorda anche il giro di vite del *princeps* sulla produzione letteraria, quando proprio

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<sup>21</sup> Pensa a Marco Bruto Castiglioni (1928) 460, ma come sottolineano Griffin (1972) 19 e Levick in *FRHist* I 597, sembra più giusto propendere per Lucio. Mi sento di aggiungere che a torto è stato invocato proprio Floro a sostegno dell'ipotesi di Marco Bruto, nei riguardi del quale per esempio Bessone (2004–2005) 305–324, ritiene che Floro abbia una particolare propensione. In realtà nel racconto di Floro i cesaricidi sembravano aver restaurato la libertà perduta con l'omicidio di Cesare, ma, aggiunge l'autore, *libertatem quam maxime restitutam voluerunt, illo ipso parricidio perdidierunt* (*epit.* 2.17.1). L'azione di Ottaviano, inoltre, è tutta mossa a vendicare la morte del padre e la sconfitta dei cesaricidi è motivata dall'agire della Fortuna che favorisce la sua ascesa (*stabat tamen pro partibus invicta fortuna et ultoris et qui vindicabatur ut exitus proelii docuit, epit.* 2.17.10) e che nella circostanza ha la meglio sulla virtù (*sed quanto efficacior est fortuna quam virtus!*, *epit.* 2.17.10) nel percorso di affermazione di Ottaviano. Su *virtus* e *fortuna* in Floro cf. Nordh (1952) 111–128 e Cupaiuolo (1984) 34–35.

un'opera storiografica, come quella di Labieno, ben più incisiva perché scritta per orientare la memoria, il pensiero, e dunque il consenso,<sup>22</sup> fu data alle fiamme e il suo autore si seppellì vivo nella tomba di famiglia.<sup>23</sup>

Mentre dunque la periodizzazione di Seneca sembra includere Augusto nella *senectus*, di cui il principato è logica conseguenza, di tutt'altro segno appare la divisione per *aetates* di Floro,<sup>24</sup> che a proposito della *iuventus* e dei tempi successivi scrive:

*deinceps ad Caesarem Augustum centum et quinquaginta anni, quibus totum orbem pacavit. Hic iam ipsa iuventus imperii et quaedam quasi robusta maturitas. A Caesare Augusto in saeculum nostrum haud multo minus anni ducenti, quibus inertia Caesarum quasi consenuit atque decoxit, nisi quod sub Traiano principe movit lacertos et praeter spem omnium senectus imperii quasi reddita iuventute revirescit. (epit. 1 praef. 7–8)*

Anche questo passaggio presenta diverse difficoltà: la *iuventus*, altrove più volte conteggiata in 100 anni *aurei* e 100 *ferrei*, arriva ad includere anche Cesare Augusto, a cui è del resto dedicata larga parte del secondo libro.<sup>25</sup> Floro stabilisce però con chiarezza che la battaglia di Azio chiude l'età delle guerre civili, creando un nesso di passaggio importante per gli eventi dell'età augustea: sebbene non si debba intendere una vera e propria periodizzazione interna a questa età, l'espressione *hic iam ipsa iuventus imperii et quaedam quasi robusta maturitas* consente una riflessione ulteriore che definisce in modo perspicuo gli anni di Augusto. Per spiegare il passaggio dalla repubblica al principato, infatti, Floro parte da una considerazione importante: dopo la morte di Cesare, Roma sarebbe potuta tornare all'antica libertà, se questi non avesse lasciato degli *heredes* smaniosi di proseguire il cammino ormai iniziato. Dopo questa breve concessione nostalgica, che rivela peraltro una lucida valutazione politica e sembra tradire l'avversione per il principio ereditario del potere, "il suo giudizio su Ottaviano risulta ampiamente positivo, come d'altronde lo sarà sul *princeps*".<sup>26</sup> Sebbene non si possa esaurire in queste pagine l'analisi del racconto del principato augusteo di Floro,<sup>27</sup> bisogna ricordare che per l'autore, dopo i disordini seguiti alla morte di Cesare,

<sup>22</sup> De Vivo (1998) 9–27.

<sup>23</sup> Borgo (2012) 33–53. Sull'immagine di Augusto nell'opera di Seneca Padre, cf. Cogitore (2016) 195–208.

<sup>24</sup> Sullo schema biologico di Floro Hahn (1965) 21–38 e in relazione ad altre periodizzazioni nella storiografia Paschoud (2002) 323–321.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Bessone (2008) 21.

<sup>26</sup> Bessone (2004–2005) 307.

<sup>27</sup> Manca uno studio complessivo sul tema, per alcuni aspetti trattato da Bessone (1993a) 93–100; (2002–2003) 21–36; (2004–2005) 305–324; Jal (1965) 358–383; Havas (1994) 21–29.



non vi era altro esito che il passaggio alla servitù,<sup>28</sup> fortunatamente nelle mani di Ottaviano, ritratto come uomo di grande saggezza, che inizia una nuova fase di stabilità e di pace:

*gratulandum tamen ut in tanta perturbatione est, quod potissimum ad Octavium Caesarem Augustum summa rerum redit, qui sapientia sua atque sollertia perculsum undique ac perturbatum ordinavit imperii corpus, quod haud dubie numquam coire et consentire potuisset, nisi unius praesidis nutu quasi anima et mente regeretur. (epit. 2.14.5)*

Il richiamo alla metafora del corpo, già premessa necessaria a quella delle *aetates* del popolo Romano, si rafforza con l'idea che tale *corpus* sia nelle mani di uno solo, che lo gestisce con il cenno del capo; è un passaggio importante, l'inizio di una fase nuova, come sembra confermato dall'ultimo capitolo dell'opera, interamente dedicato alla *consecratio Augusti*:

*sic ubique cuncta atque continua totius generis humani aut pax fuit aut pactio, aususque tandem Caesar Augustus septingentesimo ab urbe condita anno Ianum geminum cludere, bis ante se clusum sub Numa rege et victa primum Carthagine. Hinc conversus ad pacem primum in omnia mala et in luxuriam fluens saeculum gravibus severisque legibus multis coercuit, ob haec tot facta ingentia dictator perpetuus et pater patriae.<sup>29</sup> (epit. 2.34.64–65).*

In quest'ottica la riflessione del primo passo e le considerazioni della conclusione dell'opera potrebbero ridare valore e spiegare meglio l'espressione *et quaedam quasi robusta maturitas* della *praefatio*, generalmente schiacciata sulla *iuventus*, così da non costituire un ulteriore frazionamento delle *aetates*. Facchini Tosi, infatti, argomenta: “Per Floro *maturitas* è sinonimo di *iuventas*...l'irruenza dell'adolescenza lascia ora il posto alla pacatezza della *maturitas*, di un rigoglio di forze”.<sup>30</sup> Pur concordando sul fatto che *iuventas* e *maturitas* si trovino entrambe

<sup>28</sup> Flor. *epit.* 2.14.4: *nam aliter salvus esse non potuit, nisi confugisset ad servitatem*. Il luogo è in realtà compromesso da una lacuna immediatamente precedente a *nam*, per cui il soggetto, per la maggior parte degli editori un sottinteso *populus Romanus*, non è del tutto certo. Segnaliamo per completezza le osservazioni e le proposte di integrazione di Bessone (2004–2005) 318–320.

<sup>29</sup> Sul concetto di “dittatore perpetuo” da intendersi come errore di Floro mutuato forse da una sua fonte, già in età imperiale avvertito come corrispondente all'istituzione del principato, cf. Bessone (1978) 421–431.

<sup>30</sup> Facchini Tosi (1998) 105. A favore di un'età unica “robusta” anche Flor. *epit.* 1.18.1(1): *domita subactaque Italia populus Romanus prope quingentesimum annum agens cum bona fide adolevisset, si quod est robur, si qua iuventas, tum ille vere robustus et iuvenis et par orbi terrarum esse coepit*. La *maturitas* compare invece come età a sé stante nella più tarda periodizzazione proposta da Tertulliano, secondo Tibiletti (1959) 339–342 influenzato dal modello di Seneca e Floro.

nella terza età di Floro, in cui per ammissione di tutti gli studiosi va inteso anche il principato augusteo,<sup>31</sup> potremmo cogliere una raffinata “evoluzione interna”, volutamente espressa dall’autore nel passaggio alla *maturitas*, intesa dagli antichi come una fase particolare della vita. Il concetto di *maturitas*, infatti, è tecnicamente legato all’evoluzione delle piante, come è facile immaginare,<sup>32</sup> ma sorprendentemente poco attestato per indicare un momento preciso della vita umana. Si tratta di una parola usata in tale accezione da Cicerone, in passi in cui questa fase è definita in opposizione ad altre: nella *pro Caelio*, per esempio, è l’età della saggezza, contrapposta all’*adulescentia*:

*sed ego non loquor de sapientia, quae non cadit in hanc aetatem; de impetu animi loquor, de cupiditate vincendi, de ardore mentis ad gloriam; quae studia in his iam aetatibus nostris contractiora esse debent, in adulescentia vero tamquam in herbis significant, quae virtutis maturitas et quantae fruges industriae sint futurae. (Cael. 76.10)*

Cicerone sottolinea l’evoluzione dall’irruenza della gioventù alla pacatezza della maturità,<sup>33</sup> un aspetto che nella periodizzazione di Floro si riferisce meglio all’età augustea della *pax* che agli anni irruenti delle guerre di conquista e a quelli burrascosi delle guerre civili (*iuventus* di Floro). Così la *maturitas* diviene nel *Cato*

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**31** Uno dei problemi più spinosi della periodizzazione di Floro è stabilire il confine “storico” tra la fine della *iuventus* e l’inizio della *senectus*; se infatti l’età augustea va inserita nella terza età, non si comprende bene la determinazione generica della *praefatio*, che fa giungere ad Augusto la giovinezza (*epit. 1 praef. 7: deinceps ad Caesarem Augustum centum et quinquaginta anni, quibus totum orbem pacavit. Hic iam ipsa iuventus imperii et quaedam quasi robusta maturitas*), ma fa anche ripartire la *senectus* dall’età di Augusto (*epit. 1 praef. 8: a Caesare Augusto in saeculum nostrum haud multo minus anni ducenti, quibus inertia Caesarum quasi consenuit atque decoxit, nisi quod sub Traiano principe movit lacertos et praeter spem omnium senectus imperii quasi red-dita iuventute revirescit*). Se consideriamo i limiti effettivi della narrazione, arriviamo all’assunzione del titolo di Augusto nel 27 a. C., ma ci sono riferimenti alle leggi emanate in anni successivi. Si tratta di un dato importante da calcolare, perché implica anche la determinazione dell’epoca di Floro (*a Caesare Augusto in saeculum nostrum*). Gli studiosi di Floro hanno valutato una serie di ipotesi, coincidenti con le date importanti connesse al principato: la data di nascita di Ottaviano, il 43, età del primo consolato, gli anni 30–27, in cui assunse il potere assoluto, e il 14 d.C., data della morte. Jal (1967) XCIV–CII, ridiscutando queste opzioni, si dice convinto del 43 come data di inizio del regime augusteo (percepita anche da altri importanti storici) e la sceglie per calcolare l’età di composizione dell’*Epitome*. Resta la perplessità relativa alla scelta di completare la narrazione al 27, che sembrerebbe concretamente il discrimine storico avvertito da Floro come più importante per indicare il potere assoluto di Augusto.

**32** Cf. *ThLL* VIII col. 493 l. 16 – col. 495 l. 31.

**33** Cf. la stessa opposizione in *Cic. orat.* 30.107: *sunt enim omnia sic ut adulescentis non tam re et maturitate quam spe et expectatione laudati. Ab hac etiam indole iam illa matura.*

*Maior* una prerogativa quasi della senilità, con cui viene indissolubilmente connessa e appare dunque lontanissima da quella *iuventus* cui viene, nelle considerazioni su Floro, impropriamente sovrapposta:

*cursus est certus aetatis et una via naturae, eaque simplex, suaque cuique parti aetatis tempestivitas est data, ut et infirmitas puerorum, et ferocitas iuvenum et gravitas iam constantis aetatis et senectutis maturitas naturale quiddam habeat, quod suo tempore percipi debeat.*  
(Cato 33)

Ma il passo forse più interessante con cui confrontare le *aetates* di Floro è Cic. *Brut.* 2.8:

*ita nobismet ipsis accidit ut, quamquam essent multo magis alia lugenda, tamen hoc doleremus quod, quo tempore aetas nostra perfuncta rebus amplissimis tamquam in portum confugere deberet non inertiae neque desidiae, sed otii moderati atque honesti, cumque ipsa oratio iam nostra canesceret haberetque suam quandam maturitatem et quasi senectutem, tum arma sunt ea sumpta, quibus illi ipsi, qui didicerant eis uti gloriose, quem ad modum salutariter uterentur non reperiebant.*

Cicerone, parlando della sua esperienza personale, riferendo il frazionamento per *aetates* alla sua propria oratoria, dice che nella maturità, *quasi senectus*, l'attività non dovrebbe tramutarsi in *inertia*, ma in un ozio moderato ed onesto. In questo caso la presenza di *maturitas* e *senectus* sembra indicare due fasi contigue in un momento di trapasso dall'una all'altra come nel caso della *iuventus et quaedam quasi maturitas* di Floro, in cui non c'è soluzione di continuità certo, ma nemmeno una coincidenza precisa, per la presenza intenzionale di *et* con valore disgiuntivo e, soprattutto, del *quaedam*, che compare in entrambe i passi e dissolve i confini di una sovrapposizione certa, ma anzi rafforza in Floro il momento di transizione delle due fasi. Va segnalato che l'ambito "metaforico" da cui parte il concetto di *maturitas* può meglio spiegare il senso del suo uso per la vita umana: Gellio (10.11.2–3), infatti, richiamandosi a Nigidio e proprio alle fasi di maturazione del frutto, dà la definizione più compiuta del termine:

*P. Nigidius, homo in omnium bonarum artium disciplinis egregius: 'mature' inquit 'est quod neque citius est neque serius, sed medium quiddam et temperatum est'. Bene atque proprie Nigidius. Nam et in frugibus et in pomis 'matura' dicuntur, quae neque cruda et inmitia sunt neque caduca et decocta, sed tempore suo adulta maturataque.*

Gellio dice infatti che la *maturitas* si colloca tra la fase acerba e aspra e quella ormai cadente e appassita (*decocta*) del frutto. Floro assume il lessico della botanica e sovrappone alla metafora delle *aetates* dell'uomo, per spiegare le fasi della

storia di Roma, la crescita di un frutto,<sup>34</sup> così da dare concretamente il senso dell'evoluzione alle diverse fasi della "vita" del popolo Romano: se infatti la *iuventus* viene determinata "nel fiore degli anni" (*ut quasi ad quandam iuventae frugem pervenerit*, Flor. *epit.* 1 *praef.* 5), questa stessa età trascorre fino ad una *robusta maturitas*, coincidente con gli anni del potere di Augusto e si configura come momento di passaggio limitrofo alla vecchiaia, in cui il popolo *decoxit*, letteralmente "appassì" (cf. Gell. 10.11.3: *neque caduca et decocta*) nell'*inertia* dell'età giulio-claudia, per "rinvire" (miracolosamente: *praeter spem omnium*) con l'avvento di Traiano.

Se consideriamo il particolare approccio di Floro alla periodizzazione storica, spesso più orientato a dare una veste retorica alla sua opera che non alla precisione cronologica, con la "fioritura" di immagini che colpiscono l'immaginario del lettore, la *maturitas* rappresenta per Floro il "ponte" tra l'ultima fase della *iuventus* e la successiva *senectus* di cui, secondo le testimonianze del suo uso, costituisce il momento immediatamente precedente e con cui talvolta quasi si identifica.<sup>35</sup> Essa potrebbe dunque rappresentare la fase della storia romana segnata dall'avanzata di Ottaviano, risolutore delle guerre civili e fondatore dell'età dei Cesari, anche se non è però conteggiato tra essi, perché collocato in una "fase precedente", cioè la *maturitas* della *praefatio*. Il primo principato viene dunque a rappresentare un momento indefinibile tra due "età", come appaiono del resto nel racconto di Floro gli anni del potere di Ottaviano/Augusto, i cui confini anche cronologici restano difficilmente delineabili. Certo la prospettiva dell'età degli Antonini, in cui al modello augusteo già Adriano sembra richiamarsi fortemente, può forse spiegare lo strano "salto generazionale" compiuto dal popolo Romano: dopo la *senectus* ricomincia il suo ciclo<sup>36</sup> con l'età "rigogliosa" di Traiano e nel

<sup>34</sup> Hamblenne (1985) 623–626.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. per esempio, Cic. *Cato* 71.13, dove alla maturazione dei frutti corrisponde la senilità dell'uomo: *et quasi poma ex arboribus, cruda si sunt, vix evelluntur, si matura et cocta, decidunt, sic vitam adulescentibus vis aufert, senibus maturitas*.

<sup>36</sup> La divisione in quattro fasi, infatti, scelta da Floro per le sue *aetates* affonda in un'antica tradizione, probabilmente di matrice pitagorica, che vede la corrispondenza tra le età dell'uomo e le stagioni della natura, secondo l'immagine offerta da Ovidio (*met.* 15.199–213): secondo il poeta, infatti, alla primavera corrisponde *tener et lactens puerique simillimus aevo*, all'estate un *valens iuvenis*, robusto e ardente, all'autunno la *maturitas* (ben diversa dalla gioventù!) così caratterizzata: *posito fervore iuventae / maturus mitisque, inter iuvenemque senemque / temperie medius, sparsus quoque tempora canis*; infine segue l'inverno, corrispondente alla nostra vecchiaia: *inde senilis hiems tremulo venit horrida passu, / aut spoliata suos, aut, quos habet, alba capillos*. Sulla divisione in quattro età e la visione ciclica dunque del tempo, Ruch (1972) 827–841.

rinvigorire delle forze sembra superare quella *revoluta infantia* che nella riflessione di Seneca Padre portava con sé traccia dell'involuzione del principato. Con tale passaggio e il sensibile cambio di segno di questa valutazione di Floro, Roma può dunque ripartire così da quella *iuventus et quasi robusta maturitas* culminante al tempo di Augusto, nell'ottica tutta ottimistica della *felicitas temporum*.

John W. Rich

## Appian, Cassius Dio and Seneca the Elder

**Abstract:** This paper examines the sources and methods of Appian and Cassius Dio and the likelihood that they used the *Histories* of Seneca the Elder as a source. It also considers the character and starting point of Seneca's *Histories*. Both Appian and Dio probably wrote up their histories from drafts which they compiled from their reading, but in other respects their aims and methods were very different. Cassius Dio's work was composed in the traditional mode of an annalistic Roman history from the foundation to his own time, while at the same time aspiring to high Greek literary standards. Dio read widely and seems to have drawn on multiple sources for most of his account. For the period which it covered the Elder Seneca's *Histories* may have been one of his sources. Appian's *Roman History* adopted a radically innovative structure, opening with a twelve-book account of the external wars of the Roman Republic, organized by region rather than linear chronology, and then passing to the violent internal discords initiated by the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus and culminating in the establishment of monarchy, followed by a concluding overview of the wars of the imperial period. Unlike Dio, Appian seems to have followed a single main source for much of his work, including Dionysius for events down to 265, Polybius for events from 200 to 146 BC, and perhaps Posidonius for the immediately following period. For his more ample narrative after Caesar's death he seems to have used a wider range of sources, which may possibly have included the Elder Seneca. Appian's structure had much in common with that of Florus' much shorter history. The earlier of these writers must have influenced the later, but their priority cannot be determined. The view that the Elder Seneca's *Histories* served as the model for the structural features shared by Appian and Florus should be rejected. The starting point of Seneca's *Histories* was probably the war between Caesar and Pompey. His work had the traditional character of a Roman history limited to the recent past, was probably organized by the consular year, and so had nothing in common with the innovative structures of Appian and Florus.

The present volume celebrates a remarkable discovery: the identification of *P.Herc.* 1067 as part of the Elder Seneca's *Histories*, albeit in a highly fragmentary state. Since a copy of Seneca's work was available at Herculaneum in the later first century AD, it could well have been accessible also to Appian and to Cassius Dio, when they wrote their Roman histories in respectively the mid second and early third centuries. Dio indeed tells us that he wrote much of his history not far

from Herculaneum, in his villa at Capua (76.2.1). In the first two sections of this paper I seek to assess the likelihood that Appian and Dio used the Elder Seneca's *Histories*, and, if so, the extent of their use. In the third section I consider the account of Appian's relation to the Elder Seneca's *Histories* propounded by Rossbach, Hahn and Canfora and outline what in my view can be established about the character of Seneca's work.

For both Appian and Dio I shall be proceeding by a somewhat roundabout route, via an overview of their sources and methods. Discussion of Appian's sources has dealt in particular with his account of the civil wars, and for Dio there has been a similar concentration on his narrative of the late Republic and early Empire. This focus is natural enough: for each writer, these are both the best preserved and the most historically significant parts of their works. Unfortunately, the sources they used there are mostly lost, and as a result attempts to identify them have often tended to be over-speculative. However, the enquiry can be put on a firmer footing by taking full account of what the writers themselves say about their methods of work and by considering their treatment of earlier periods, for which their narratives can be compared with what survives of Livy, Dionysius and Polybius.

## 1 Cassius Dio

As a stylist, Dio modeled himself on the classical Greek historians, particularly Thucydides, but in its structure his history conformed to the oldest of the Roman historical genres: his eighty books narrated the deeds of the Romans from the foundation of the city to his own time, and the material was arranged annalistically, by consular years.<sup>1</sup> Dio only refers to two sources by name, the autobiographies of Augustus and Hadrian.<sup>2</sup> However, he does make some illuminating statements about his methods of work, in particular that he 'spent ten years in collecting all the achievements of the Romans from the beginning to the death of

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<sup>1</sup> Millar (1964) remains the classic study of Cassius Dio and his history. Important recent contributions include Kemezis (2014) 90–149; Lange/Madsen (2016); Fromentin *et al.* (2016); Burden-Strevens/Lindholmer (2018); Osgood/Baron (2019); Madsen (2020). Several further collective volumes are forthcoming in Brill's *Historiography of Rome and its Empire* series. On Dio's use of annalistic organization see Swan (1987), (2004) 17–21; Rich (2016).

<sup>2</sup> D.C. 44.35.3, 66.17.1, 69.11.2.

(Septimius) Severus, and another twelve in writing my history'.<sup>3</sup> The chronological implications of this statement have been much discussed: in my view, the twenty-two years of research and writing are best dated to around 201 to 223.<sup>4</sup> No less important are what it tells us about how Dio worked, spending ten years gathering materials and only then starting to compose.

Dio must have accumulated notes and drafts during the long initial period of research. Other evidence attests ancient writers' use of such aids: thus the Younger Pliny tells us that his uncle 'never read a book without making excerpts', while Lucian recommends that a historian should first collect his materials, then weave them together as a draft (*hypomnema*), and only then work over his draft to give it artistic finish.<sup>5</sup>

Dio claimed in his preface that he had 'read pretty nearly everything which has been written about (the Romans) by anyone'.<sup>6</sup> This will have been a gross exaggeration, but he must still have read very widely during the initial ten years. This reading will not have been confined to earlier histories: Dio was to make substantial use, for example, of Cicero's *Philippics* in the huge debate which he composed for Cicero and Calenus. However, earlier annalistic histories must have provided his principal source of material.

It has sometimes been supposed that in the final stage in which he produced the finished composition Dio worked mainly from just one source at a time, with the full text of the source open in front of him. However, if he followed this method, much of his effort in the ten long years devoted to gathering material would have been wasted. No doubt he may sometimes have reverted to the original texts, but to my mind it is more likely that in the composition stage Dio worked chiefly from his accumulated notes and drafts. Such a method will have helped to shape the character of his work, and will have resulted in the deployment of a diverse range of source material. There will have been some points where Dio's narrative derived mainly from a single source, but more often the

3 D.C. 72.23.5: συνέλεξα δὲ πάντα τὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις μέχρι τῆς Σεουήρου μεταλλαγῆς πραχθέντα ἐν ἔτεσι δέκα, καὶ συνέγραψα ἐν ἄλλοις δώδεκα.

4 Rich (1990) 3–4; Swan (2004) 28–33. For a later dating see Barnes (1984), Letta (2019); for an earlier starting point see now Kemezis (2014) 282–293.

5 Plin. *epist.* 3.5.10; Lucian *Hist. Cons.* 48. On ancient writers' use of drafts see Avenarius (1956) 85–104; Skydsgaard (1968) 101–116; Dorandi (2000) 5–50; Pelling (2002) 19–25, 29, 40–43, 65–90.

6 D.C. fr. 1.2: <ἀνέγων μὲν> πάντα ὡς εἰπεῖν τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν τισι γεγραμμένα, συνέγραψα δὲ οὐ πάντα ἀλλ' ὅσα ἐξέκρινα.



notes from which Dio produced his finished composition will have been put together from several sources drawn from his wide reading.<sup>7</sup>

The extant part of Dio's history begins with Book 36, in 69 BC. Before that, we are dependent on excerpts in various Byzantine collections and the epitome of Zonaras. However, enough survives by these means to enable us to make an informed comparison with Livy and Dionysius. The results seem to me to support my conclusions about Dio's methods. As Schwartz long ago showed, there are a good many points of agreement with Livy, and more with Dionysius, but much of Dio's narrative diverges from them both. Urso has even suggested that Dio may have been consciously seeking to present an alternative version to Livy's. It is most unlikely that for early Roman history Dio depended on a single, unknown, main source. Much more probably, he drew on both Livy and Dionysius and also on several of their annalistic predecessors.<sup>8</sup>

Dio's account of the late Republic and early empire also fits well with this conception of his work as written up from notes drawn from wide reading. Such a method can help to explain both the strong interpretative shaping which Dio gave to his material, with its heavy stress on protagonists' motivations, and his sometimes notable errors, such as the misdating of Egnatius Rufus' career or the omission of the Conference of Luca. Attempts to identify a single source followed by Dio for extensive stretches have failed: thus Schwartz's doctrine that the later books of Livy served as Dio's primary source was refuted by Manuwald.<sup>9</sup>

When he reached the imperial period, Dio switched to a partly biographical mode: he still narrated emperors' reigns year by year, but these annalistic sections were framed by opening and closing sections assessing the emperor's character and mode of government, a structural device which may have owed something to Suetonius' example.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the annalistic sections are often now comparatively thin, but Swan (1987) shows that this was not for lack of evidence, but from Dio's choice. Even here, however, there is no need to suppose that Dio confined himself to just one of the earlier historians (for example, Aufidius Bassus) as his main source, rather than drawing on several of them.

If these conclusions are correct, it is not at all unlikely that Dio's wide reading included the Elder Seneca's *Histories*, and that some material which found its

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7 For this view of Dio's methods of work see further Rich (1989) 89–92, (1990) 5–11, (2015) 70–72. See also Millar (1964) 32–40; Gowing (1992) 43–44; Swan (1997), (2004) 17–23.

8 Schwartz (1899) 1692–1694; Libourel (1974); Urso (2016); (2018). On Dio's sources in his early books see also the further studies in Fromentin *et al.* (2016) 113–231.

9 Schwartz (1899) 1697–1714; Manuwald (1979) 168–254. Egnatius Rufus: C.D. 53.24.4–6, with Rich (1990) 159. I discuss Appian's and Dio's treatment of the late Republic at Rich (forthcoming).

10 On Dio's use of the biographical mode, or “biostructuring”, see Pelling (1997).

way into his finished history had been drawn by him from this source. Any attempt to identify such material must be the merest speculation. However, one tempting guess is that Dio may have turned to Seneca's *Histories* for some of his vivid insider gossip on court politics under Augustus. Such material cannot have been included by writers who published under Augustus or Tiberius, like Livy or Cremutius Cordus. Seneca, who did not intend to publish his *Histories* in his lifetime, may have felt under less constraint, and, as his other writings show, had intimate knowledge of the court.

Seneca's *Histories* may well have been Dio's source for the conspiracy of Cinna and Augustus' display of clemency in response at Livia's urging, an episode which Dio dates to AD 4 (C.D. 55.14–21). Our only other evidence for this event is the Younger Seneca's *De clementia* (1.9), whose indications imply that it took place during Augustus' stay in Gaul in 16–13 BC. It is plausible to suppose that the philosopher was indebted to his father's *Histories* for the tale.<sup>11</sup> Dio has commonly been held to have taken it (directly or indirectly) from the *De clementia*, but the Elder Seneca's *Histories* are a more likely source for him as well. No doubt the historian, like his son, dated the episode much earlier than Dio, and Dio's dating is probably another instance of confusion in his notes.<sup>12</sup>

## 2 Appian

The Roman history of Appian of Alexandria was very different in character from that of Cassius Dio. While Dio's work conformed to the traditional format, recounting the Romans' deeds at home and at war by the consular year from the foundation to his own time, Appian offered a radically novel alternative. He omitted domestic affairs except where they involved bloodshed, and adopted a structure in which chronological linearity was subordinated to region and theme. Prefatory statements show that the planned structure evolved as the work progressed.<sup>13</sup>

Appian's completed *Roman History* comprised two groups of twelve books. The first twelve dealt with the Romans' external wars and conquests, covering all the regions with which they came into ultimately victorious conflict up to the 50s BC. The fundamental organizing principle was that the Romans' dealings with each region were narrated in a single book from the time of the first encounter up

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<sup>11</sup> So Rossbach (1888) 172; Canfora (2015) 177–179.

<sup>12</sup> On Dio's version see especially Swan (2004) 147–155; Adler (2011).

<sup>13</sup> For the book structure of Appian's history see Brodersen (1993) 341–348, and on the structure's evolution and background see Bucher (2000), Osgood (2015) and Welch (2019).

to the completion of the conquest. Thus some books, for example those dealing with Gaul and Spain, cover very extended periods, and between the books the narrative jumps back and forth over time. Appian did, however, show flexibility in the application of this scheme: thus he did not attempt to treat later warfare in central and southern Italy together with the initial wars of conquest, but instead assigned a single book (the *Annibaïke*) to the Hannibalic war in Italy. The twelve books form three sub-groups of four books each. The first four covered the Romans' wars under the kings (*Basilike*), during the conquest of central and southern Italy (*Italike*, *Saunitike*) and against the Gauls from their sack of Rome down to Caesar's conquests (*Keltike*). Books 5–8 dealt with the Romans' wars against the Carthaginians and with their further conflicts with the western peoples first encountered during those wars (*Sikelike*, *Iberike*, *Annibaïke*, *Libyke*), while Books 9–12 covered their main wars in the East (*Makedonike*, *Hellenike*, *Syriake*, *Mithridateios*). Various regions which did not fit into the twelve-book scheme were rather clumsily included as supplements to four of the books (*Nesiotike*, *Nomadike*, *Illyrike*, *Ionike*). Five of the twelve books survive intact (*Iberike*, *Annibaïke*, *Libyke*, *Syriake*, *Mithridateios*), along with the short prefatory book and the supplementary *Illyrike*. Fragments survive from all of the rest except for the *Hellenike* and *Ionike*.<sup>14</sup>

The second group of twelve books opens with the five extant books of the *Emphyliã*, covering the internal disorders from the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 to the defeat and death of Sextus Pompeius in 35 BC. Since the Renaissance, the title *Emphyliã* has normally been translated as *Civil Wars*, but this is misleading since Appian included not just the civil wars fought between opposing Roman armies, but also other internal upheavals which led to bloodshed, and so in what follows I shall continue to use Appian's term *Emphyliã*, abbreviating it as *E*.

The point has particular importance for the structure of the first book of the *Emphyliã*. Appian explains at the outset that he has started with Tiberius Gracchus because he and his associates were the first to be killed in civil strife (*stasis*), and from that time such disorders got progressively worse until they took the form of open warfare (*E*. 1.2.4–6). From Tiberius Gracchus he passes to his brother Gaius and then to Saturninus, identifying the conflicts between them and their opponents as three successive episodes of *stasis* or 'internal action' (ἔργον ἐμφύλιον).<sup>15</sup> Appian then turns to the Social War, justifying its inclusion at this point

<sup>14</sup> On the *Parthike*, promised by Appian but apparently never composed (*Syr.* 51.260; *E.* 2.18.67, 5.65.276), and on the spurious Parthian book preserved in manuscripts of Appian's work see now Canfora (2015) 70–78; Mallan (2017).

<sup>15</sup> App. *E.* 1.27.121, 33.150.

on the grounds that it arose from the *stasis* in Rome and gave rise to worse *stasis* in which leaders resorted to armies (*E.* 1.34.150–1). The initiative was taken by Sulla in 88 when he led his army against Rome to resolve his conflict with Marius and Sulpicius. Appian comments: ‘Thus the *staseis* progressed from strife and rivalry to murders and from murders to full-scale wars, and this was the first army of Roman citizens to invade their country as though it were enemy land’.<sup>16</sup>

The *Emphyilia* were followed by the four books of the *Egyptian history*, which sadly are almost completely lost. These covered both the final civil war, at Actium and Alexandria, and the resulting conquest of Egypt. Appian evidently regarded these books as the culmination of the whole work, since they dealt simultaneously with the ending of the civil wars through the establishment of monarchy and the completion of the Roman empire by the conquest of his own homeland.<sup>17</sup>

By a late change of plan, Appian added three further books, dealing with the wars of the emperors, especially Trajan. These too are almost completely lost.

The earlier large-scale works covering all or most of Roman history followed the annalistic format, but the much shorter account in Latin by Florus, also composed during the mid second century AD, shows striking similarities to Appian’s scheme. Both author’s prefaces offer the same periodization of Roman history, according to which 500 years had elapsed from the foundation to the completion of the conquest of Italy; the following two hundred years had seen the extension of Roman power over most of the world and the establishment of monarchy; and nearly two hundred more years had passed by their own time.<sup>18</sup> The first part of Florus’ work is, like Appian’s, concerned almost exclusively with the external wars of the Republic (*epit.* 1.4–16, 18–47 = 1.10–21, 2.1–3.12).<sup>19</sup> Like Appian, Florus then turns to the ‘internal upheavals’ (*domesticos motus*) of the Late Republic, beginning with what he calls the *seditiones* of the Gracchi and Saturninus (*epit.*

<sup>16</sup> App. *E.* 1.60.269: Ὡδε μὲν αἱ στάσεις ἐξ ἔριδος καὶ φιλονικίας ἐπὶ φόνους καὶ ἐκ φόνων ἐς πολέμους ἐντελεῖς προέκοπτον, καὶ στρατὸς πολιτῶν ὄδε πρῶτος ἐς τὴν πατρίδα ὡς πολεμίαν ἐσέβαλεν.

<sup>17</sup> App. *Praef.* 14.60, *E.* 1.5.20–21, 1.6.25; Luce (1964); Canfora (2015) 125–136.

<sup>18</sup> App. *Praef.* 6–7.19–24, cf. 9.34, 11.44; Flor. *epit.* 1 *praef.* 5–8, cf. *epit.* 1.34, 47, 2.34 (= 2.19.2–3, 3.12.2–3, 4.12.64). Various emendations are required in Florus’ preface: see Hirschfeld (1899) 543–4; Jal (1967) 1. LXXX–LXXXII; Hose (1994) 58–9. I give references to both the two-book and four-book editions of Florus’ history: both book divisions have manuscript authority, but editors have subdivided chapters into sections only for the four-book version. For convenience, I use the two-book division in subsequent discussion of the structure of Florus’ work.

<sup>19</sup> Florus’ work opens with the kings and the establishment of the Republic (*epit.* 1.1–3 = 1.1–10), and includes a short account of the *seditiones* of the early Republic (*epit.* 1.17 = 1.22–26), using the term *seditio* *epit.* 1.22.2, 25.1, 26.5.

2.1–4 = 3.13–16),<sup>20</sup> and then continuing with the Social War (*epit.* 2.5–6 = 3.17–18) and the long series of civil wars, starting with the war between Marius and Sulla (*epit.* 2.9–18, 21 = 3.21–4.8, 4.11).<sup>21</sup> Again like Appian's, Florus' history concludes with a short account of imperial wars (*epit.* 2.22–34 = 4.12).

There are also some notable differences between the two works. Florus' treatment of imperial wars was limited to those of Augustus, whereas Appian's extended to Trajan. Unlike Appian's, Florus' narrative of the Republic's external wars makes only limited use of geographical arrangement, and mainly follows linear chronology.<sup>22</sup> A central (and much discussed) part is played in the structuring of Florus' work by the biological metaphor of the four ages of the Roman people (*infantia, adulescentia, iuuentus, senectus*), but there is no trace of this in Appian.<sup>23</sup>

The structural similarities between Florus' and Appian's histories are, nonetheless, too striking for coincidence, and are most easily explained by supposing that one of these writers influenced the other. Unfortunately the direction of influence cannot be firmly established: most scholars have held that Florus' history was composed earlier than Appian's, but the chronological indications are too slim to settle the point.<sup>24</sup> The alternative possibility of common derivation from a shared source is discussed in the next section.

The following passage in Appian's *Preface* (12.45–13.49) gives illuminating information on how he came to write his history on regional principles:

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**20** *Domesticos motus*: Flor. *epit.* 1.47 (= 3.12.14), making a sharp contrast with the 'external and just wars' (*ab externis iustisque bellis*), as at *epit.* 1.34 (= 2.19.5). Florus uses *seditio* of the actions of the Gracchi and Saturninus at *epit.* 1.47, 2.1 (= 3.12.9, 13.1). The term is also used in the chapter headings, but these were inserted by a late antique grammarian (Jal (1967) 1. XIV–VIII).

**21** Florus inserts the various slave wars between the Social War and the civil wars (*epit.* 2.7–8 = 3.19–20).

**22** On Florus' use of geographical arrangement see Hose (1994) 77–80.

**23** For Florus' "biological" scheme see *epit.* 1 *praef.* 4–8 and *epit.* 1.18, 34, 47 (= 2.1.1–2, 2.19.2–3, 3.12.1–3). Discussions include Häußler (1964); Jal (1967) 1.LXIX–CXI; Alonso-Núñez (1982); Hose (1994) 65–76; Bessone (1993b) 87–97, (1996) 31–41, (2008); ten Berge (2019).

**24** On Appian's date of composition see Brodersen (1993) 353–354; Bucher (2000) 415–416. Florus is held to have written under Hadrian by e.g. Garzetti (1964); Jal (1967) 1. CII–CXI; Hose (1994) 56–61. Other datings for Florus' history include: under Antoninus Pius, shortly before Appian (so Bessone (1993b) 91–97, (1996) 133 n. 3); under Marcus Aurelius, with Appian used as a structural model (so Hinard (2008) XIX–XXXVII). Florus cannot be redated to the Augustan period, as has sometimes been proposed: see Bessone (1996) 123–132; Berti, in this volume *supra* 119 n. 66.

καὶ τάδε πολλοὶ μὲν Ἑλλήνων, πολλοὶ δὲ Ῥωμαίων συνέγραψαν .... ἀλλ' ἐντυγχانونτά με καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν αὐτῶν ἐντελῆ καθ' ἕκαστον ἔθνος ἰδεῖν ἐθέλοντα ἀπέφερον ἢ γραφὴ πολλὰ- κίς ἀπὸ Καρχηδόνοσ ἐπὶ Ἰβηρας καὶ ἐξ Ἰβήρων ἐπὶ Σικελίαν ἢ Μακεδονίαν ἢ ἐπὶ πρεσβείας ἢ συμμαχίας ἐς ἄλλα ἔθνη γενομένας, εἴτ' αὐθις ἐς Καρχηδόνα ἀνήγεν ἢ Σικελίαν ὥσπερ ἀλώ- μενον καὶ πάλιν ἐκ τούτων ἀτελῶν ἔτι ὄντων μετέφερον, ἕως οὗ τὰ μέρη συνήγαγον ἐμαυτῷ .... καὶ τότε μοι κατὰ ἔθνος ἕκαστον ἐπράχθη, βουλομένῳ τὰ ἐς ἐκάστους ἔργα Ῥωμαίων καταμαθεῖν .... νομίσας δ' ἄν τινα καὶ ἄλλον οὕτως ἐθελῆσαι μαθεῖν τὰ Ῥωμαίων, συγγράφω κατὰ ἔθνος ἕκαστον.

This passage has often been misinterpreted through misunderstanding of the words ἐντυγχانونτά με: the correct rendering must be 'as I read', a common sense of the verb in post-classical Greek. Appian tells us that, as he read Roman history, he became frustrated. He wanted 'to get a complete picture of the Romans' valour in their dealings with each nation', but found that 'the account' was taking him from nation to nation and back like a wanderer, until I brought the parts together for myself ... for each nation'. It then occurred to him that others too would welcome such a version, and accordingly he set himself to 'composing the Romans' history nation by nation'.

Appian's suggestion that his enterprise was originally undertaken just for his own private use may be disingenuous, but there is no reason to doubt his claim that his procedure was first to assemble the materials on the Roman conquest nation by nation, and then to write them up as a history. Thus, as for Dio, Appian's reported method of composition involved two stages, but the nature of their activity in the first stage will have been radically different. Dio's task at that point was to bring together the materials for his chronological narrative from a wide range of sources, of which the most important would have been following the same arrangement by the consular year which he adopted for his own history. By contrast, Appian's primary task in this initial stage was to divide up the chronologically ordered material provided by his predecessors to fit his preferred ethnic and regional structure. To achieve this, he must have produced notes and drafts organized in accordance with his desired structure, and it would then have been natural for him, as for Dio, to work mainly from this material, rather than from the original sources, when he moved on to compose the finished history. As for Dio, composition from notes and drafts may help to explain features of Appian's history as we know it – both the strong interpretative shaping which he gave to his material and his frequent errors.<sup>25</sup>

The quoted passage begins by observing that 'many Greek and Roman writers have recounted' the Romans' conquest of their empire. However, when he goes

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<sup>25</sup> On Appian's methods of work see further Rich (2015), especially 69–72.

on to describe his experience as a frustrated reader, Appian seems instead to be speaking just of a single ‘account’ (ἡ γράφη). This conveys the impression that in his first stage of reordering his material Appian tended to work from a single main source. He cannot have meant, as Gelzer (1957) supposed, that he followed the same source throughout his work, but his language does carry the implication that he did so for extended periods of Roman history. It would not be surprising if he proceeded in this way. An author offering yet another annalistic Roman history might feel obliged to innovate in the way he selected and combined material from various earlier accounts. However, Appian’s chief innovation came in his reordering the material on ethno-regional lines, and he need have felt no scruple about drawing it mainly from a single well-regarded authority when one was available. Our other evidence indicates that this was in fact how Appian proceeded over much of his work.

**Tab. 7:** Historical periods and identifiable main sources in Appian’s extant *Roman History*

BC	Extant coverage in Appian	Main sources
To 265	<i>Basil.</i> , <i>Ital.</i> , <i>Samn.</i> (all frags.); <i>Gall.</i> fr. 1.1–4, 2–11	Dionysius
264–201	<i>Sic.</i> fr. 1–5; <i>Iber.</i> 4–38; <i>Hann.</i> (all); <i>Pun.</i> 3–66; <i>Mac.</i> fr. 1–4; <i>Ill.</i> 7–8	
200–146	<i>Hisp.</i> 39–63; <i>Lib.</i> 67–135; <i>Mac.</i> fr. 4–19; <i>Ill.</i> 9, 11; <i>Syr.</i> 1–47; <i>Mith.</i> 3–7	Polybius
146–50	<i>Gall.</i> fr. 1.5–13, 12–22; <i>Sic.</i> ( <i>Nesiot.</i> ) fr. 6–7; <i>Hisp.</i> 64–102; <i>Pun.</i> 136; <i>Num.</i> (all frags.); <i>Ill.</i> 4–5, 10–11, 30; <i>Syr.</i> 48–51; <i>Mith.</i> 10–120; <i>Emphyllia</i> 1.7 – 2.30	
From 50	<i>Hisp.</i> 102; <i>Lib.</i> 136; <i>Ill.</i> 13–30; <i>Mith.</i> 121; <i>Emphyllia</i> 2.31 – 5.145; frs. 13–19 (Egyptian and imperial books)	

The table above shows the coverage of five successive historical periods in what survives of Appian’s history. For two of these periods the bulk of Appian’s material derives, as has long been recognized, from a single source. Appian dealt with the conquest of Italy in his first three books and the first part of his fourth. All these books survive only in fragments, but enough is preserved of them and of Dionysius’ history to show that most of the material in these books comes from Dionysius. What survives of Appian’s coverage of the Romans’ wars in the years 200–146 BC is spread over six books: in all of these the bulk of the material comes from Polybius, as is shown by the fragments of Polybius and by portions of Livy and Diodorus for which Polybius was certainly the source. The point emerges particularly clearly for Appian’s account of the Romans’ war with Antiochus III,

which survives intact (*Syr.* 1–44) and for which almost all of Polybius' account is available to us from fragments or through Livy and Diodorus.

The natural conclusion from these facts is that Appian himself followed respectively Dionysius and Polybius directly as his main source for these periods. For most of the nineteenth century this was well understood: thus, for example, Niebuhr, Nissen and Hannak all asserted Appian's direct use of Dionysius and/or Polybius.<sup>26</sup> This consensus was challenged by Schwartz, in a discussion of Appian's sources which was to prove hugely influential. Schwartz argued that Appian's divergences from Dionysius and Polybius are so great that he cannot have been responsible for them himself and must have been using these writers through a later intermediary.<sup>27</sup> The majority of later scholars have accepted his case at least for the Polybian material. However, Schulten was an early dissenter, and Appian's direct use of Polybius in his account of the war with Antiochus has been upheld by Brodersen in his excellent edition of this part of the *Syriake* and by me in a recent paper.<sup>28</sup>

Since Schwartz, the question of Appian's sources has been mainly discussed in relation to individual books rather than his history overall. A notable exception is a much cited paper by Hahn, but its methodology is unfortunately flawed: Hahn assigns individual books to sources on the basis of indicators which are more likely to reflect Appian's own choices, namely the incidence of speeches and Olympiad dates.<sup>29</sup>

In my view, the hypothesis that Appian was using Dionysius and Polybius only through an intermediary should be abandoned. In the first place, no convincing suggestions have been made as to who the intermediary may have been. Secondly, there is no need whatever to postulate an intermediary. The divergences between Appian's version and Dionysius' and Polybius' originals may either be self-generated (whether through error or by deliberate choice) or result from the use of additional sources. In either case, there is no good reason to suppose that Appian himself could not have been responsible. Schwartz reached his view because he conceived of Appian as a mere compiler, with no mind of his own, but this conception has been exploded by recent research. Appian himself will have been perfectly capable of reading Dionysius and Polybius as his primary sources and using them with a good deal of freedom.

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<sup>26</sup> Niebuhr (1828/1870) 46; Nissen (1863) 113–117; Hannak (1869).

<sup>27</sup> Schwartz (1896) 217–222.

<sup>28</sup> Schulten (1905) 77–106; Brodersen (1991); Rich (2015). See also now McGing (2018) for Appian's direct use of Polybius on the Third Punic War.

<sup>29</sup> Hahn (1982).



As the analyses by Brodersen and in my recent paper have shown, we can observe in detail how Appian handled his Polybian original in his account of the war with Antiochus by comparing it with the surviving fragments of Polybius and with the narratives of Livy and Diodorus. For some episodes Appian reproduces Polybius relatively fully and accurately, but elsewhere he compresses heavily. This leads to a good deal of distortion, and so too does the reshaping that Appian carries out to produce a coherent monographic narrative of the war. There are a good many careless slips, especially over names, often perhaps the result of working from notes. Another source of distortion is Appian's own emphasis on certain themes which he uses to structure his narrative: the greatness of Antiochus' reputation and the unexpected ease of the Romans' victory; Antiochus' greed and the two sides' mutual suspicion; Antiochus' folly and the contrasting good sense of Hannibal and Scipio Africanus. Two passages, both relating to Scipio (*Syr.* 11–12, 40–41), are certainly introduced from another source, in my view best identified as Plutarch's lost life. Further intrusions from other sources are possible, but in my view it is more likely that Appian himself was responsible for all the other divergences from Polybius in this part of his work.<sup>30</sup>

So full a comparison between Appian and his main source is only possible for the Antiochus narrative, but, as I hope to show in detail elsewhere, enough survives for his other books with Polybian material and for those which drew on Dionysius to show that there too he used these writers directly and in much the same way as for his account of the war with Antiochus.<sup>31</sup>

Thus for two important historical periods Appian used an authoritative Greek writer, first Dionysius and later Polybius, as his main source, treating this source with considerable freedom, but only occasionally introducing material drawn from elsewhere. How did he proceed for the other periods for which there is little scope for comparing his account with its source?

For the years 264–201 BC, the period of the First and Second Punic Wars, Appian did not follow Polybius, but opted instead for a Roman source or sources. This may seem surprising in view of his later devotion to Polybius, but there were good precedents: Diodorus and Plutarch had done the same, and evidently Polybius was (wrongly) felt to have less authority for this period. Appian's main source for the Second Punic War has been much discussed, but we can only speculate.<sup>32</sup> Fabius Pictor, favoured by some, can certainly be excluded. The strongest candidate may be Coelius Antipater's monograph on the war, composed in the

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**30** For a different view see Goukowsky (2007) CXIII–CXXV; (2016) CII–CIV.

**31** See Rich (2015) 112–113.

**32** See further Leidl (1993) 446–459.

later second century BC: on several points, Appian's version agrees with that attributed to Coelius by Livy.

Appian wrote at length about events of the late second and early first century in several of his external books and in the first book of the *Emphyilia*. Here Appian's account cannot be compared with a predecessor, but much of it shared a common source with Plutarch. Polybius' history ended in 146 BC, and there is an obvious candidate for Appian to have turned to as his next main source, namely Polybius' continuator Posidonius. Much less of Posidonius' history survives, but in antiquity his authority was comparable to Polybius': both Livy and Diodorus appear to have turned from Polybius to Posidonius. That Appian did the same was held by Niebuhr and argued in detail by Busolt.<sup>33</sup> However, Schwartz rejected the claim,<sup>34</sup> and subsequently, although Posidonius has continued to get some support as a source for Appian's Spanish and Mithridatic narratives, he has been generally disregarded as a possible source for the *Emphyilia*. In my view, this needs reconsideration. The principal objection to identifying Posidonius as a main source for the first book of the *Emphyilia* has been alleged divergences on some topics, for example their judgement of C. Gracchus, between Appian and Diodorus, who has usually been supposed to be faithfully following Posidonius. The discrepancies may not be as serious as has been claimed, and several recent writers have credited Diodorus with greater independence than was previously held.<sup>35</sup> There are considerable attractions in identifying Posidonius as the source of the common material in Appian and Plutarch on the late second and early first century. For example, Posidonius seems to me the most plausible source for the excursus on the Roman public lands which precedes both Appian's and Plutarch's accounts of the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus.

Another candidate who has received notable support as a main source of the *Emphyilia* from the first book on is Asinius Pollio, first proposed by Meyer and argued at length by Gabba.<sup>36</sup> However, the doctrine that Appian was already using Pollio as a main source in the first book has now been generally and rightly abandoned. Horace's reference to Pollio as writing of 'civil conflict beginning from Metellus' consulship' (*motum ex Metello consule ciuicum*) shows that he began his history with the consulship of Metellus Celer in 60 BC and the formation

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<sup>33</sup> Niebuhr (1828/1870) 46; Busolt (1890).

<sup>34</sup> Schwartz (1896) 222.

<sup>35</sup> On Diodorus' use of Posidonius for events after 146 see now Wirth (2007); Goukowsky (2014) X–XX. In general on Diodorus' independence in handling his sources see Sacks (1990); Hau (2009); Rathmann (2016); Muntz (2017) especially 14–21; Hau *et al.* (2018). On the difficulty of reconstructing Posidonius' history see Clarke (1999) 130–139.

<sup>36</sup> Meyer (1894) 12; Gabba (1956) especially 83–88.

in that year of the political alliance whose collapse was to bring Pompey and Caesar to civil war.<sup>37</sup> The notion that this was preceded by an extended introduction starting from the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 has no plausibility.<sup>38</sup>

If Appian did use Posidonius' history as a main source, he would have had to look elsewhere when it finished in or soon after 86 BC, and it seems that after this he was obliged to depend on Roman writers. Despite recent objections, Pollio's history still seems to me the most likely source for the material common to Appian and Plutarch on the 50s and 40s BC in the second and later books of the *Emphyilia*.<sup>39</sup>

After the outbreak of the war between Pompey and Caesar, and still more after Caesar's death, Appian's narrative in the *Emphyilia* changes gear. He now writes in much greater detail than before and on a larger scale than he seems originally to have planned. Speeches, absent from the earlier part of the *Emphyilia*, now become very common, and there are more references to disagreement in his sources. It is likely that Appian's detailed work on this part of his history was only carried out at a fairly late stage, after he had finished work on the twelve books of external wars. Those books had dealt almost exclusively with the period down to the 50s BC, so that by now the chronology of events no longer required him to switch between books. The only exception is the supplementary book on the Illyrian Wars, which was probably a late addition prompted by Appian's encounter with Augustus' autobiography.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, in these later books of the *Emphyilia*, Appian was approaching the climax of the whole work, to be achieved in the lost Egyptian books.

It is thus likely that at this stage in the *Emphyilia* Appian, by now a seasoned historian, adopted a modified method in which he made more use of multiple sources. He explicitly acknowledges several sources here, and probably used others without explicit citation.<sup>41</sup> One of these may have been the *Histories* of Seneca the Elder.

The above discussion has not addressed another view propounded by a number of scholars, namely that both Appian and Florus used the Seneca the Elder's

<sup>37</sup> *Hor. carm.* 2.1.1–8. Against the view of Woodman (2003) 202–212 that the reference is to the consulship of Metellus Numidicus in 109 BC see Drummond (2013) 437–438.

<sup>38</sup> See further Cuff (1967) 185–188; Drummond (2013) 438.

<sup>39</sup> See now especially Pelling (2002) 3–18, (2011a) 44–47. Appian's dependence on Pollio is doubted by Drummond (2013) 439–440 and disputed by Westall (2013); (2015) 143–145, 156.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *App. Ill.* 14.42; *E.* 4.110.463, 5.45.191, 5.145.602.

<sup>41</sup> On Appian's references to sources in this part of his work see Magnino (1993) 537–545; Westall (2015) 130–146.

*Histories* as their main source for their accounts of the internal upheavals and ensuing civil wars from 133 BC on. It is to this doctrine that we must now turn.

### 3 Seneca the Elder, Florus and Appian

In November 1816, shortly after his arrival in Rome as Prussian ambassador to the papal court, Niebuhr discovered in a palimpsest manuscript in the Vatican Library (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Pal. Lat.* 24), along with fragments of various other classical authors, portions of two previously unknown works of the Younger Seneca, a treatise *Quomodo amicitia continenda sit* and the opening lines of a work *On the Life of his Father* (*De uita patris*).<sup>42</sup> In 1820, Niebuhr published an edition of the texts he had found.<sup>43</sup> Studemund published an improved edition of these Seneca fragments in 1888, and his text of the *De uita patris* fragment has been followed in subsequent discussions and relevant editions (*Appendix - T1*).<sup>44</sup>

The fragment of the *De uita patris* provides our only direct evidence that the Elder Seneca wrote *Histories*. The fragment's opening words show that the *Histories* had not yet been published, and it goes on to speak of the work as follows: *quisquis legisset eius historias ab initio bellorum ciuilium, unde primum ueritas retro abiit, paene usque ad mortis suae diem, magno aestimasset scire, quibus natus esset parentibus ille qui res Roman<as ....>* ('Whoever had read his *Histories* from the beginning of the civil wars, when truth first receded, almost up to the day of his death, would have thought it valuable to know from what parents came the man who [recorded] Roman affairs ....'). Other evidence indicates that the Elder Seneca died early in the reign of Gaius, c. AD 39.<sup>45</sup> The fragment's statement that the *Histories*' coverage extended 'almost up to the day of his death' thus implies that it continued to around the death of Tiberius, and Niebuhr in his edition suggested that Suetonius' citation of 'Seneca' for an account of Tiberius' death (*Tib.* 73.2; *Appendix - F1*) refers not, as previously supposed, to the Younger Seneca, but to his father's *Histories*. Niebuhr also argued that the Younger Seneca's statement that his father's *Histories* ran 'from the beginning of the civil wars' must

<sup>42</sup> On Niebuhr's discovery see Winkworth (1852) 32, 68; Walther (1993) 501; Murray (2010) 242. On the manuscript see Fohlen (1979).

<sup>43</sup> For the fragment of the *De uita patris* see Niebuhr (1820) 103–104.

<sup>44</sup> Studemund (1888) XXIII–IV, XXXI–II; Peter (1906) 98; Vottero (1998) fr. 97; *FRHist* 74 T1.

<sup>45</sup> Sussman (1978) 23–24.

mean that the work's starting point was the outbreak of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey in 49 BC.

Soon after Niebuhr's publication, Mai argued that Lactantius' citation (*inst.* 7.15.14; *Appendix* - F2) of 'Seneca' for an analysis of Roman history using the biological metaphor of successive ages (*infantia, pueritia, adulescentia, iuuentus, senectus*) should also be attributed not to the Younger Seneca, but to his father's *Histories*.<sup>46</sup> Some sixty years later, Rossbach used Lactantius' evidence to propound a conception of the scope and significance of the Elder Seneca's *Histories* which was radically different from Niebuhr's (Rossbach 1888, 161–173). The Younger Seneca's statement that his father began his history at the point 'when the retreat from truth first began', must, Rossbach argued, imply that he 'will have narrated all the civil wars of the Roman people which the Roman historians customarily report as starting from the death of Tiberius Gracchus'.<sup>47</sup> His work will accordingly have had the same scope as Florus' second book and Appian's *Emphyilia*. The Lactantius passage, Rossbach claimed, must show that Florus drew his conception of the ages of the Roman people from the Elder Seneca's *Histories*, and Florus probably used the work not just for this, but as his main source for his account of the civil wars in his second book, and perhaps also in his first book, since Seneca may have prefaced his full narrative of the Romans' civil wars with a summary account of their external wars. The Elder Seneca's work is also likely, Rossbach maintained, to have been drawn on extensively in the writings of his son and his grandson Lucan, and the striking verbal similarities between Lucan and Florus should be explained as borrowings not by Florus from Lucan, but by both writers from Seneca's *Histories*. Rossbach reasserted these claims in several subsequent publications,<sup>48</sup> and in his final contribution he added the further proposition that the Elder Seneca's *Histories* had served as structural model not only for Florus, but also for Appian.<sup>49</sup>

All Rossbach's contentions were soon challenged by Klotz, who argued that both Suetonius' and Lactantius' citations refer to lost works of the Younger Seneca; the discrepancies between the versions of the ages of the Roman people given by Florus and Lactantius show that Seneca was not Florus' source; and Florus' verbal similarities with Lucan were direct borrowings. Klotz also maintained that the Younger Seneca's language in the *De uita patris* fragment implies that he

<sup>46</sup> Mai (1828) 157.

<sup>47</sup> Rossbach (1888) 163: *Seneca ... omnia bella civilia populi Romani narraverit quae iam a morte Tiberii Gracchi initium cepisse historici Romani tradere solent.*

<sup>48</sup> Rossbach (1894) 2239; (1896) LIII–LVIII; (1903); (1909) 2761–2766.

<sup>49</sup> Rossbach (1909) 2762.

never brought his father's *Histories* to publication, and so was the only writer who had access to them.<sup>50</sup>

Klotz's claims too were soon questioned, and have remained in dispute. Although there have been notable doubters, the majority of subsequent writers have held that the Elder Seneca's *Histories* were published, that Suetonius' and Lactantius' citations refer to this work, and that it was the source for Florus' conception of the ages of the Roman people.<sup>51</sup> It was, however, a long time before any scholar took up Rossbach's further contentions that the *Histories* started with the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus and were used by Florus and Appian as the model for the structure of their works.

In 1964 Hahn adopted Rossbach's thesis in its main lines and presented it in revised form, with much greater emphasis on Appian.<sup>52</sup> Like Rossbach, Hahn argued that Seneca's *Histories* started from Tiberius Gracchus and were the common source for the shared structural features of Florus' second book and Appian's *Emphyilia*. In addition, he identified Seneca's work as Appian's main source for the narrative of the *Emphyilia*, following a suggestion made in passing by Piganiol.<sup>53</sup> Accepting the testimony of the majority of the manuscripts that Florus' *gentilicium* was Annaeus,<sup>54</sup> Hahn went on to claim that Florus belonged to a family circle with the two Senecas and Lucan, and that shared material deriving from the Elder Seneca's *Histories* could be identified in the works of the other three members of the group and in Appian.

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50 Klotz (1901). Klotz later made some modifications to his views: see Klotz (1909), (1913) 554–555; Griffin (1972) 10 n. 108.

51 Sceptics include Syme (1958a) 277; Griffin (1972) 10–11, 19, (1992) 33, 509; Levick in *FRHist* I 506–507, III 596. For listing of scholars' views on the identity of the Seneca cited in this passage of Lactantius see Lausberg (1989) 1957 n. 295; Vottero (1998) 78; Freund (2009) 425–428; add Woodman (2010b) 55–59 for the Younger Seneca.

52 Hahn (1964), with further argument for the Elder Seneca as the common source for Florus and Lactantius on the ages of Rome at Hahn (1965). Hahn did not take up Rossbach's suggestion that the Elder Seneca's *Histories* included an opening survey of Roman external wars, and held that Florus used Livy as his main narrative source directly, rather than through Seneca, as supposed by Rossbach.

53 Piganiol (1935); (1962) 153. For criticism of Piganiol's suggestion see Gabba (1956) 113–115.

54 On Florus' *gentilicium* see Jal (1967) CXII–III; Bessone (1993b) 105–106.

Hahn's thesis won early support from Zecchini,<sup>55</sup> but was also subjected to widespread criticism.<sup>56</sup> Hahn himself later propounded a quite different approach to the problems of Appian's sources, and reverted to the conventional view that Pollio was his main source for *Emphyilia* Books 2–5.<sup>57</sup> Recently, however, Hahn's original view has found fresh advocates. Westall, in a study of Appian's sources in the *Emphyilia* challenging his supposed dependence on Pollio, has claimed that the Elder Seneca's *Histories* were 'Appian's principal Latin source' and the source of the structural features common to Appian and Florus.<sup>58</sup> In a monograph on Appian and Augustus, Canfora has restated the views of Roszbach and Hahn (1964) at length, arguing that Appian should be seen as linked to the 'circle of the Annaei' comprising the two Senecas, Lucan and Florus; that the Elder Seneca's *Histories* served as both the structural model and the main source for both Florus' second book and Appian's *Emphyilia*; and that, while much of Florus' material derives from Livy and of Appian's from Pollio, their access to these writers came indirectly through the Elder Seneca.<sup>59</sup> Canfora also adds a further element, arguing that from *Emphyilia* Book 3, Appian used Augustus' autobiography as a second main source alongside Seneca's *Histories* and as a counterpoise.<sup>60</sup> Canfora's arguments have already won some support.<sup>61</sup>

The identification of *P.Herc.* 1067 as part of the Elder Seneca's *Histories* has put it beyond dispute that the work was brought to publication, presumably by his son. The latter's *De uita patris* may well have been composed as an introduction to the published *Histories*.<sup>62</sup>

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**55** Zecchini (1977). Zecchini offers as a further proof of common derivation the shared error of Appian and the younger Seneca on Bibulus' *praenomen*, but for refutation see Hose (1994) 162 n.12.

**56** E.g. Griffin (1972) 10 n. 115; Hose (1994) 162–165; Hinard (2008) CCXVII–VIII (cet étrange théorie); Levick in *FRHist* I 506–508.

**57** Hahn (1982), especially 275. See *supra* n. 29.

**58** Westall (2015) 158–60. In an earlier study Westall placed the emphasis instead on Livy, whom he identified as the source of the common material in Appian and Plutarch (Westall (2013), especially 112–113).

**59** Canfora (2015) 138–213. For an earlier statement see Canfora 2000. The 'circle of the Annaei', and indirect use of Livy and Pollio: Canfora (2015) especially 160, 210–213. Canfora's aspersions on the editors of *FRHist* are gratuitously offensive: Canfora (2015) 143–144, 159–160, 187–188, 300.

**60** Canfora (2015) 216–290.

**61** Carsana (2018), who, however, argues for Appian's making direct use of Pollio as well as of the Elder Seneca; Mazzoli and Renda, this volume. For a critique of Canfora (2015) see Smith (forthcoming).

**62** See Sussman (1978) 144 and in the present volume *supra* 149; Vottero (1998) 76–77.

Some of the other points in dispute do not seem to me capable of definitive resolution. The identity of the Seneca cited by Suetonius on the death of Tiberius or by Lactantius on the ages of Rome cannot be established with certainty. The father's history would provide a suitable context for each citation, but so could lost philosophical works by the son. Elsewhere in these authors' works references to Seneca relate to the son, but this is not a decisive objection to attributing these citations to the father, particularly for Lactantius, who may not have distinguished between them.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Florus' source for his conception of the ages of the Roman people cannot be definitively identified. The Seneca cited by Lactantius (whether the father or the son) could have been Florus' source, since the divergences between Florus' and Lactantius' versions could result from their own modifications of what they found in their source. However, the concept is unlikely to have originated with Lactantius' Seneca, and so Florus may have drawn it from another source.<sup>64</sup>

It is likely that the Younger Seneca drew on his father's *Histories* for some of his allusions to the recent past.<sup>65</sup> Whether, and, if so, to what extent Lucan, Florus or Appian drew on the Elder Seneca's *Histories* for this or other material cannot be determined. None of the evidence amassed by Rossbach, Hahn and Canfora provides proof of such debts. There is no need to postulate common derivation from Seneca to account for the similarities between Lucan and Florus: these may be direct borrowings from Lucan by Florus or shared debt to Livy, whom both writers used as their main source.<sup>66</sup> The Elder Seneca may well be Florus' source for his conception of the ages of the Roman people, but, if so, this would tell us nothing about Appian, since there is no trace of this biological metaphor in his work.

The best interpretation of the Younger Seneca's statement that his father's *Histories* ran 'from the beginning of the civil wars' (*ab initio bellorum ciuilium*) remains the one originally proposed by Niebuhr, that the work started with the civil war between Pompey and Caesar. This would have been a natural starting point for the Elder Seneca: beginning there made his history an account of the times through which he himself had lived. It has been objected that the Younger Seneca's use of the plural *bellorum ciuilium* implies that the work covered all the

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<sup>63</sup> Bocciolini Palagi (1978) 220–222.

<sup>64</sup> The concept may already have featured in Varro's *De uita populi Romani*: see further Häussler (1964); Bessone (2008) 49–87; Pittà (2015) 269–274.

<sup>65</sup> Castiglioni (1928) 456–7; Canfora (2015) 172–179.

<sup>66</sup> For Lucan's use of Livy as his main source see Pichon (1912) 51–104; Lintott (1971) 488–489 n. 6; Radicke (2004) 9–43.



Roman civil wars,<sup>67</sup> but this is not cogent. Caesar's conflict with Pompey inaugurated some twenty years of successive, wide-ranging civil wars, ended only by the final victory of Octavian/Augustus, which enabled him to make the proud boast that he had 'extinguished civil wars'.<sup>68</sup> The use of the plural form for the persistent civil warfare of the period is not uncommon both in the Younger Seneca's works and elsewhere, and the Elder Seneca himself employs it when he tells us that in his youth he was prevented from leaving his native Corduba by 'the fury of civil wars which was then ranging across the whole world'.<sup>69</sup>

The Younger Seneca goes on to speak of the *Histories* as starting 'from the point when truth first receded' (*unde primum ueritas retro abiit*). The remark must be his own, but probably reflects a view expressed in his father's work, perhaps in a conventional prefatory commitment to veracity. This too fits well with a Caesarian starting point. Tacitus at the start of his *Histories* observes that, after the Actium war and the monarchy to which it led, 'truth was damaged in various ways'.<sup>70</sup> If monarchy was the enemy of truth, Caesar's civil war, which led first to his monarchy and ultimately, after further civil wars, to its enduring establishment by Augustus, could appropriately be regarded as the point at which the regression from truth began.<sup>71</sup>

If this identification of his starting point is correct, the Elder Seneca's detailed narrative will have begun with the outbreak of the civil war in 49 BC, but this may have been preceded not only by a preface, which may have included the biological metaphor of the ages of Rome (if Lactantius' citation refers to this work), but also by an overview of earlier events to explain the origins of the conflict. Such a procedure would have been comparable to that of Sallust in his *Histories*: Sallust announced the scope of his work as 'the deeds of the Roman people at home and at war in and after the consulship of M. Lepidus and Q. Catulus [78 BC]' (1.1), but this main narrative was preceded both by a preface (1.1–18 Maurenbrecher = 1.1–16 Ramsey) and by an account of events from the outbreak of the Social War in 91 BC on (1.19–53 Maurenbrecher = 1.17–47 Ramsey). If Seneca's detailed narrative

<sup>67</sup> So Hahn (1964) 177; Canfora (2015) 140.

<sup>68</sup> *RG* 34.1: *[b]el[la ciuili]a exstinxeram*; cf. Vell. 2.89.3:  *finita uicesimo anno bella ciuilia*.

<sup>69</sup> *Sen. contr.* 1 pref. 11: *bellorum ciuilium furor, qui tunc orbem totum peruagabatur*. See Castiglioni (1928) 458–460; Griffin (1970) 9; Vottero (1998) 79–80.

<sup>70</sup> *Tac. hist.* 1.1.1: *ueritas pluribus modis infracta*. Cf. *Sen. benef.* 6.32.4; *Suet. Claud.* 41.2; *D.C.* 53.19.1–4.

<sup>71</sup> Sussman (1978) 142–146 interprets *ueritas* in this phrase as 'righteousness' and uses this to argue for a Gracchan starting point for the *Histories* (see also in the present volume *supra* 172–175), but this cannot be the term's meaning here: so rightly Lausberg (1989) 1938 n. 217; Levick in *FRHist* I 506 n. 18.

started in 49, a preliminary overview of this kind could well have begun with the formation of the alliance between Caesar, Pompey and Crassus in 60 BC, which, as we have seen, was also the starting point of Pollio's history, but seems unlikely to have treated events much earlier than 60 in any detail.

If, as maintained by Rossbach and his successors, the Younger Seneca's statement that his father's *Histories* ran 'from the beginning of the civil wars' should be taken as implying that it included the civil wars of the 80s BC, the work's formal starting point would have been the year 88 and Sulla's march on Rome in that year. The Romans, who have bequeathed the concept of 'civil war' to us, drew a sharp distinction between such wars, in which Roman armies were engaged, and other violent disturbances, such as the tribunician upheavals from Tiberius Gracchus on, and thus, as Appian clearly stated (n. 16), Sulla's march was the first civil war. The term *bellum civile* probably came into use in the 80s or 70s: by the ensuing decades, from which our first attestations date, it is firmly established as a designation for the wars between Sulla and the *Mariani*.<sup>72</sup>

The first outbreak of civil war in 88 would in fact have made an awkward starting point for a history, since it arose from and was intimately connected with the immediately preceding Social War. The Social War itself would have afforded a much more natural starting point, and had already served for this purpose for the histories of Sisenna and Lucceius.<sup>73</sup> 'From the beginning of the civil wars' would also have been an odd way of describing a history whose detailed narrative began in the 80s, but then continued over the ensuing three decades in which civil war played relatively little part.<sup>74</sup>

If the Elder Seneca did begin his detailed narrative in 88, it is likely that he will have prefaced it by an explanatory overview of some preceding events. Such an overview would probably have covered at least the Social War.<sup>75</sup> It may have extended to some earlier events as well, but it cannot be taken for granted that it would have included narratives of the tribunates of the Gracchi and Saturninus, as Rossbach and his successors assume. It is true that Florus and Appian narrated those episodes (termed *seditiones* by Florus, *staseis* by Appian) before going on to the Social War and the ensuing civil wars. In doing so they were presenting an

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<sup>72</sup> Cic. *Manil.* 28, *fam.* 5.12.2. On the origins of the concept of *bellum civile* see now Armitage (2017) 31–90; Lange/Vervaet 2019a; van der Blom 2019. On Sulla's march as the decisive innovation see Flower (2010).

<sup>73</sup> Sisenna: *FRHist* I 308, 312 (John Briscoe). Lucceius: Cic. *fam.* 5.12.2 (= *FRHist* 30 T1).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Levick in *FRHist* I 506, not refuted by Canfora (2015) 187–188.

<sup>75</sup> It is possible that Sisenna's treatment of the Social War had this character: Velleius describes his history as *opus belli civilis Sullanique* (Vell. 2.9.5 = *FRHist* 26 T13).

interpretation, which can already be traced in Sallust and Velleius, of Roman political disintegration as progressing from urban disorder to civil war.<sup>76</sup> However, as we saw in the previous section, Florus and Appian were offering accounts not just of the Romans' civil wars, but of all their internal upheavals in which blood had been shed, a point which has been obscured by the conventional mistranslation of Appian's book title *Emphyilia* as *Civil Wars*.

Thus what we are told of the Elder Seneca's starting point does not afford Rossbach and his followers the support which they claim: the most plausible interpretation of his son's description of the *Histories* as starting 'from the beginning of the civil wars' is that they began with the war between Caesar and Pompey, and, even if the Younger Seneca's reference is instead to the Sullan wars, it does not necessarily follow that his father's work began effectively with Tiberius Gracchus. A further and, in my view, fatal objection to the arguments of Rossbach, Hahn and Canfora is posed by what we are told of the scope and endpoint of the *Histories*.

The Younger Seneca tells us that his father's *Histories* dealt with *res Romanas* ('Roman affairs') and that its coverage continued 'almost up to the day of his death'. Other indications provide confirmation of its scope: if Suetonius' citation relates to the *Histories*, it extended up to Tiberius' death in AD 37, and *P.Herc.* 1067 has now been shown to contain part of its treatment of the reigns of Augustus and/or Tiberius.<sup>77</sup> Thus the work continued long after the victories over Antony and Cleopatra which brought the civil wars to an end, covering the whole of the long reign of Augustus and either all or almost all of the reign of Tiberius.

Canfora's comments on the scope of the *Histories* betray embarrassment.<sup>78</sup> The Elder Seneca, he assures us, 'volle assumere come oggetto della sua opera il tema cruciale e incandescente delle guerre civili romane'. His original plan may have been to stop at Actium. By continuing the work so far beyond that point, he turned it into 'una "storia generale" (modello *Historiae*)', but the theme of civil wars remained its 'filo conduttore'. The change of plan was perhaps prompted by the underlying tensions and instability Seneca perceived in the regimes of Augustus and Tiberius: he may have discerned 'un possibile riaccendersi del conflitto'. As a result, Seneca's work became 'una storia delle vicende politiche e militari *al tempo delle guerre civili*' (Canfora's italics).

<sup>76</sup> Sall. *hist.* 1.12 (*remoto metu Punico ... plurumae turbae, seditiones et ad postremum bella ciuilia orta sunt*); Vell. 2.3.3; cf. Jal (1963) 27–32.

<sup>77</sup> See Piano (2017a), and the contributions by Piano and Scappaticcio in this volume.

<sup>78</sup> Canfora (2015) 145, 169–170.

This fantasy is as redundant as it is implausible. The *Histories*' scope and the Younger Seneca's description of their subject matter as *res Roman<as>* carry a clear implication: the work was not a history of the civil wars, but a Roman history which took 'the beginning of the civil wars' as its starting point. The *Histories* evidently belonged to what by the Elder Seneca's time was one of the two main, long-established genres of Roman historical writing, namely histories of the deeds of the Roman people at home and at war which, instead of starting from the foundation of the city, covered just a limited recent period. This was the mode which had been pioneered by Sempronius Asellio and probably Fannius, had been continued by Sisenna, Sallust (in his *Histories*), Pollio, Cremutius Cordus and Aufidius Bassus, and was to reach its culmination with Tacitus.

The Elder Seneca's *Histories* were thus not an innovatively designed war monograph, but a Roman history of a traditional type, general in scope but restricted to a period of recent history. The Caesarian starting point showed no originality: Pollio had done much the same, and so too may Cremutius Cordus and Aufidius Bassus. In their structure too the *Histories* probably followed tradition. Sallust and Tacitus organized their works of this type by the consular year, and, little as we know about them, the same is likely to have been true of the rest. Thus Seneca too probably used annalistic organization for his *Histories*, although, like others, he will have applied it flexibly when handling the complexities of the Caesarian and triumviral civil wars.<sup>79</sup>

Traditional Roman historiography followed linear chronology, in which the material was organized by consular years and domestic and external sections normally alternated within each year narrative, and the Elder Seneca's *Histories* probably conformed to this model. The works of Florus and Appian, as we have seen, depart radically from this pattern in ways which have notable features in common. Both their works separate the treatment of external and domestic events and limit their coverage of domestic events to upheavals involving bloodshed: each writer first narrates the external wars of the Republic, then turns to the internal upheavals from Tiberius Gracchus on, and concludes with external wars in the imperial period. There is no good reason to suppose that the Elder Seneca's *Histories* served in any way as a model for these structural innovations. The only ground for this conjecture has been the, in all probability mistaken, belief that the work started with Tiberius Gracchus. Even if this were correct, its structure would still not have provided the model for Florus and Appian, unless, like Rossbach, we were to make the further assumption that Seneca first provided an overview of the Romans' external wars before going on to his account of their

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<sup>79</sup> On annalistic organization in Roman historiography see Rich (2011); (2018).

internal discords from the Gracchi on. Nor can Seneca have had any responsibility for the other structural feature shared by Florus and Appian, namely their periodization of the nine hundred years of Roman history, ending in the nearly two hundred years from the establishment of monarchy to their own time. The Elder Seneca may perhaps have been Florus' source for his other structuring element, the biological metaphor of the ages of Rome, but of this, as we have seen, there is no trace in Appian.

## 4 Conclusion

The conclusions for which this paper has argued may be summarized as follows.

The Elder Seneca's *Histories* began with the war between Caesar and Pompey, and conformed to the well established pattern of a history of the deeds of the Roman people at home and at war covering a limited period of recent history. It had much in common with the historical works of his near contemporaries Pollio, Cremutius Cordus and Aufidius Bassus: all these histories will have been on an ample, multi-book scale, and they probably had similar starting points and organized their material in the traditional fashion by the consular year. Although the Elder Seneca's *Histories* may possibly have been Florus' source for the biological metaphor of the ages of Rome, there is no good reason to suppose that Seneca's work served in any way as a model for the radical structural features shared by the works of Florus and Appian.

The close structural similarities between Florus and Appian are too close for coincidence, and must reflect a direct debt of one writer to the other rather than deriving from a common source. Unfortunately, there can be no certainty as to which wrote first.

Both Cassius Dio and Appian compiled notes and drafts from their reading, and in the final phase of composition worked mainly from these materials rather than from the originals, and this technique helps to explain the considerable freedom with which they handled their sources. In other respects, however, their methods differed widely, in accordance with their works' distinctive aims and structures.

Dio's work conformed to the oldest Roman historiographical pattern, the history of the deeds of the Roman people from the foundation of the city to the author's own time, and he aspired also to produce a history which could stand comparison with the Greek classics. He boasts of his wide reading, and for most of his work probably drew on multiple sources. For the period it covered – the Caesarian and triumviral civil wars and the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius – the Elder

Seneca's history may have served as one of his sources. In particular, Dio may have found it a helpful source of information on the politics of the imperial court.

The chief novelty of Appian's Roman history was his reorganization of his material on a predominantly ethno-regional structure. He was thus under no obligation to work consistently from multiple sources, and for much of his account of Rome's external wars he can be shown to have worked from a single main source – Dionysius down to 265 BC and Polybius for the period 200–146 BC. Posidonius may have served him in the same way for the later second and early first century BC, both in the external books and in the first book of the *Emphyilia*. Appian's account of the period from Caesar's death on in the *Emphyilia* is on a more ample scale and appears to have drawn on a wider range of sources. One of those sources could perhaps have been the *Histories* of the Elder Seneca, but, if Appian did make use of that work, it has left no identifiable trace.



## Appendix – *Testimonia* and *Fragmenta* from Seneca the Elder’s *Historiae*

The very often above mentioned *Testimonium* and *Fragmenta* of the historiographical work of Seneca the Elder are given in full below. They respectively consist, on one side, in a few lines from the so-called *de vita patris* linked to the name of the younger Seneca (*T1*) and, on the other side, in two passages from Suetonius’ life of Tiberius (*F1*) and from the later *Institutiones* of Lactantius (*F2*). Their texts follow *FRHist* II 982–985 n°74, where an English translation is found.

The corpus of *Fragmenta* is here augmented through the addition of the text transmitted by the Herculaneum roll on which this volumes is focussed, the *P.Herc.* 817 (*F3*). The text of the roll follows its *editio princeps*, dating 2017; a renewed edition will be published within the forthcoming *CLTP*.

**T1** ~ Sen. *vita patr.* fr 15 Haase (rev. Studemund 1888):

Incipit eiusdem Annaei Senecae de vita patris, feliciter scribente me Niciano die et loc(o) s(upra) s(criptis): ‘si quaecumque composuit pater meus et edi voluit, iam in manus populi emissem, ad claritatem nominis sui satis sibi ipse prospexerat. Nam nisi me decipit pietas, cuius honestus etiam error est, inter eos haberetur qui ingenio meruerunt ut puris et illustribus titulis nobiles essent. Quisquis legisset eius historias ab initio bellorum civilium, unde primum veritas retro abiit, paene usque ad mortis suae diem, magno aestimasset scire, quibus natus esset parentibus ille qui res Roman<as...>.’

**F1** (= Peter F<sub>2</sub>, Winterbottom F<sub>2</sub>) ~ Suet. *Tib.* 73.2:

Seneca eum scribit intellecta defectione exemptum anulum quasi alicui traditurum parumper tenuisse, dein rursus aptasse digito et compressa sinistra manu iacuisse diu immobilis; subito vocatis ministris ac nemine respondente consurrexisse nec procul a lectulo deficientibus viribus concidisse.

**F2** (= Peter F<sub>1</sub>, Winterbottom F<sub>1</sub>) ~ Lact. *inst.* 7.15.14:

Non inscite Seneca Romanae urbis tempora distribuit in aetates; primam enim dixit infantiam sub rege Romulo fuisse, a quo et genita et quasi educata sit Roma. Deinde pueritiam sub ceteris regibus, a quibus et aucta sit et disciplinis pluribus institutisque formata. At vero Tarquinio regnante cum iam quasi adulta esse coepisset, servitium non tulisse et reiecto superbae dominationis iugo maluisse legibus obtemperare quam regibus; cumque esset adulescentia eius fine Punici belli terminata, tum denique confirmatis viribus coepisse iuvenescere. Sublata enim Carthagine, quae tam diu aemula imperii fuit, manus suas in totum orbem terra marique porrexit, donec regibus cunctis et nationibus imperio subiugatis cum



iam bellorum materia deficeret, viribus suis male uteretur quibus se ipsa confecit. Et haec fuit prima eius senectus, cum bellis lacerata civilibus atque intestino malo pressa rursus ad regimen singularis imperii recidit quasi ad alteram infantia revoluta. Amissa enim libertate, quam Bruto duce et auctore defenderat, ita consenuit tamquam sustentare se ipsa non valeret, nisi adminiculo regentium niteretur.

**F3** ~ *P.Herc.* 1067 (ed. Piano 2017a)

Cr. 1 pz. I, sov. 1

```

      ---
1 [1]      ] . vit[
           ]am · r[
           ]at · eiş · [
           ]adp[
5 [5]      ]e · ş[
           ]e[ . . ] . . [
           ]o[
           ] . [
      ---

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Cr. 1 pz. I, sov. 2

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      ---
1 [1]      ]ç . . . [
           ]noř · de[
           ]u · an · a · [
      ---

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Cr. 1 pz. I, sov. 3

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      ---
1 [4]      ]..am. [
           ]miã[
           ]a[
      ---

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Cr. 1 pz. I, sov. 4

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      ---
1 [3]      ] . . . [
           ] . rétã[-] ři[
           ] . um
           ] . . [
5 [7]      ] .
           ]

```

]
   
] notári ·
   
]em
   
---

Cr. 1 pz. I, sov. 6

1 [3]                    ---
   
] , ru.[
   
]nqu[
   
] potiꝯus [
   
]cum · veꝯ ... [
   
5 [7]                    ]ñ[i]hil · n . [
   
] . . . . ult[
   
] . . . . ]erde . [
   
]çe · [
   
] que [-] eám[
   
---

Cr. 1 pz. II, sov. 1

1 [2]                    ---
   
] . e[
   
] , n [ . . ] . . [
   
]allo Cn [
   
]eda[ . . . . . ]ressuꝯ
   
5 [6]                    ]er[ . . . . . ]s · posset
   
]re . [ . . . . . ]bã[
   
] . o[ . . . . ]eat[
   
---

Cr. 1 pz. II, sov. 2

1 [4]                    ---
   
] . . contentuꝯ [
   
]simoꝯ
   
] . uꝯ[
   
] . [
   
5 [8]                    ] [
   
]que [-] mall[
   
]d[ . ]ã[
   
]ún
   
]
   
10 [13]                 ] . [
   
---

Cr. 6 pz. II, sov. 1

1 [3]            ---  
                   ]p[  
                   ]. . . . [  
                   ] . cum[ . . . ] . [  
                   ] Caés[a]re · [  
 5 [7]            ]ú, [-] bell[  
                   ]or[ . ]m[  
                   ]e[  
                   ---

Cr. 6 pz. II, sov. 1 + sov. 2 ?

1 [3]            ---  
                   ]p[  
                   ]. . . . [  
                   ] . cum[ . . . ] . [ . . . ] ll  
                   ] . Caés[a]re · [ . . ]or[  
 5 [7]            ] ú [-] bello · Gall[  
                   ] . . or[ . ]m[ ]o[  
                   ]e[ . . ]a[  
                   ] . ç[  
                   ] . . [  
 10 [12]         ] . . [  
                   ]a[  
                   ]ma[  
                   ]da . [  
                   ---

Cr. 2 pz. I, sov. 1 (= Fr. 1 N)

1 [3]            ] . [  
                   ]etávit[  
                   ] . o[ . . . ]n[  
                   ]fe[c]tūm  
 5 [7]            ] . em  
                   ] . . . [  
                   ---

Cr. 2 pz. I, sov. 2 (= Fr. 1 *N*)

1 [8]                    ---  
                           ]c, os ·  
                           A]ŭ[g]usto ·  
                           ]ŭ[ ..... ] . et  
 4                                ]gen[  
                           ---

Cr. 2 pz. I, sov. 3 (?) (= Fr. 1 *N*)

	col. I	---	col. II
1 [17]			] , çø[
	]s · malus		. [ ..... (.) ] frac[t-
	]rŭs · captam		. [ ..... (.) ] tēa . [
	]ē... [     ]		. [ ..... (.) ] rma[ ... ] .. [
5 [21]	]enęam		. [ ..... (.) ] nin[ ... ] . a[
	] ... [     ]		per.. [ ..... ] um[
		---	

Cr. 2 pz. I, sov. 4 (= Fr. 1 *N*)

1 [11]                    ---  
                           ]a  
                           ]um  
                           ]  
                           ]  
 5 [15]                    -st]ŭprata · muļię[re  
                           ---

Cr. 2 pz. I, sov. 5 (= Fr. 1 *N*)

	col. I	---	col. II
1 [1]	] , t[		
	]reg[                    ]		[ ... q]uot[
	]es		[ ... ]yi . [
	]raş . . · est		] . [
5 [5]			<u>i</u> n . [
			n[ ... ] . [
			qu[ . ] . [
			. aŋ[
			[
10 [10]			ęs[
		---	

Cr. 2 pz. I, sov. 6 (= Fr. 2 N)

	---
1 [4]	aŋ · eŕi[ c[o]mm[ alter[... ]rr[ rogab[
5 [8]	uŧ · Ha`t[eri- vāŕ[ [ [ [                   ] ŧena[t-
10 [14]	[                   ] yeŧ [·] ŧen . [ [                   ] qu[ [ [ [
15 [19]	[                   ] ūs · ŋ[ [                   ] . s · h[ [                   ] em . . [ [                   ] nŋ[
19 [23]	[                   ] aŋ[

Cr. 3 pz. I, sov. 1 (= fr. 3 N)

	---
1 [1]	] . . [ ] aŕe[ v]ult · [ . ( . ) ] . ŧaŧ[ ] ŧo . [
5 [5]	n[ olim · iŋ[ ___ domo · s . [ dixit [ s[
10 [10]	aŕi[ fā[ ---

Cr. 3 pz. I, sov. 2 (= fr. 3 N)

	---
1 [5]	] tr[ ] dāvit / q[u- ] arr[ ] c · vo[

5 [9] ]npo[  
 ]. . e[  
 ] hos[  
 ]meren . [  
 ], ium · ab[ ]  
 10 [15] ]ávit · ne[  
 ]şe · cu . [  
 ]ç · n . [  
 ]a · er[ ]nt

---

Cr. 3 pz. I, sov. 3 (= fr. 4 N)

1 [1] ]ul[  
 ]. . d[ . ( . ) ] . [  
 ] . . [  
 ]cisset [ ]  
 5 [5] ]t · et · o[  
 ]cis [·] e[ ]  
 ]mentis [ ]  
 ] Senâtu[ ]  
 ]t[ ]

---

Cr. 3 pz. I, sov. 4 (= fr. 4 N)

1 [2] ]hoç[  
 ]ru[ ]  
 ]i · Gall[ ]  
 ] habean[t ]  
 5 [6] ]. . viuş[ ]  
 ]sua · qu . . [ ]  
 ]doş · b[ ]  
 ]âcum[ ]  
 ] . . [ ]

---

Cr. 3 pz. I, sov. 5 (= fr. 4 N)

1 [4] ] . n . [ ]  
 ]  
 ] .  
 ]çiçe

5 [8]           ] . .  
                   ] .  
                   ] .  
                   ] . n̄t  
                   ---

1 ]au .[ N   8 ]at[ N

Cr. 3 pz. I, fr. 4 N fine: *soci et amici populi Romani?*

1 [20]           ---  
                   ] . .[  
                   ] n̄ovum [   
                   ] h̄oc · p[ . l. e[

Cr. 3 pz. I, sov. 6 (= fr. 5 N)

1 [1]           ---  
                   ] . [   
                   ]ud[   
                   ]écerit [   
                   ]ex · eo[   
 5 [5]           ]actem · [   
                   n]ihil · s[   
                   ]dent[   
                   ]n̄c . . [   
                   ] . c[ . . . . . ]ro . [   
                   ---

Cr. 3 pz. I, sov. 7 (= fr. 5 N)

1 [1]           ---  
                   ]et̄ : . [   
                   ] . s[   
                   ]et · c . [   
                   ] . u . u[   
 5 [5]           ]d̄ · nó[   
                   ]e · mo[   
                   ] . [   
                   ]           [   
                   ] . o[   
 10 [10]       ]a'ú' xi[   
                   ] . e · d[   
                   ---

Cr 3, pz. I, sov. 8 (= fr. 6–7 *N*, 11 *N*<sup>2</sup>)

	col. I	col. II
	---	
1 [1]	]eįs[ ]nón · ]a ʿ · quidem [·] ]aéni ·	[ [ · [
5 [5]	] · órum · h]oc · únũm · ]reliqu[u]m · ]reñt [·] ]. éritis :	sepa[ ]entı · [
10 [10]	]átis · ]al[t]ero ·	subiba[ potúr[ ş[i]mũ[ n]aşçe[ metu · · [
		]f · [
		] · · [
		[sa]rcire · qu[
		] · tum · lu[
15 [15]		]c · [
		[ · ]açtũr[
		[ro]gáre[
		[ · ]şá[
		] ·
20 [20]		] ·
		] ·
	---	

Cr. 4 pz. I, strato 1 (= fr. 8 *N*, 13 *N*<sup>2</sup>)

	---
1 [1]	[ ... ]neret [· [ ... ]mne[ · ] · [
	[ ... ] spatium · ñ[ ... ] · [
	incolumem · [
5 [5]	cum · hostes · e · · [
	· ]ũ · · · gerer[e · · · ]ãm · [
	ex · qu · [ · · · · ]tes[
	çi[ ... ]á[ · · ] imág[
	[ ... ]i[ ... ( · )]árum · çon · · [
10 [10]	[ · · · · ]alñ[
	] conşen[
	---



Cr. 4 pz. I, sov. 2 (= fr. 9 *N*, 14 *N*<sup>2</sup>)

- - -

1 [1]                   ]uř[  
                          ci]vica[  
                          ]inde · á[  
                          ]vis · . tu . [

5 [5]                   ]ç [·] pr[o]vid[en-  
                          ]. m · n[i]hi[  
                          ]e · v[i]r · pruđ[ens  
                          ],erit[  
                          ]civı . [

10 [10]               ]um ·  
                          ]uř[i]que ·  
                          ]uř  
                          - - -

Cr. 4 pz. I, sov. 3

- - -

1 [1]                   ] , ad . [

                          [ . . ]r . . . [

                          ęam . [ ]

                          ni . . [

5 [5]                   ]posse[  
                          ]fortu[-  
                          [  
                          [  
                          ]eru [

10 [10]               ]æço[  
                          ]ome[  
                          - - -

Cr 4 pz. I, sov. 4 (= fr. 10 *N*, 12 *N*<sup>2</sup>)

- - -

1 [1]                   a]dsın[t  
                          ]man[  
                          ]ds[  
                          ]ol[

5 [5]                   ]nim[  
                          ]uř [·] ı[  
                          ]. te[  
                          ]. t[  
                          ]hřa[

10 [10]               ]civ[

] · qu[  
] . . [ . . . ]  
---

Cr. 5 pz. I, sov. 1 (= fr. 11 *N*)

col. I

col. II

		---
1 [1]	] nostr[ ne · l]ongius · á · prop[osito ]dam · Auguste ]ut · repetam · et	[ . . . . ]sç[ [ . . . . ]u[ . . ] · c[ po]tuisset [
5 [5]	c]rèbrum · eórum ]árum [·] qui · ter ]nquar · sic · ut[ . [ . ]oga . [· i]gnárum ] amáraru[m	[a]d]optio[ [e]x]probray[ [ . . . . ]or . [
10 [10]	] . . in]es · solo[ ] . . . . . [	
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Cr. 5 pz. I, sov. 2

1	--- ]a[ in]t[ . [ . et · [ . · éd[
5	no[ nim[i- min[ inu[ ade[ ---

Cr. 5 pz. I sov. 3

1 [2]	--- ]e . . . [ . ]ter[ ]n]s[ ] . u[
5 [6]	]er[ ]no[ ]ga[

]le.[  
]ta[  
— — —

## Cr. 5 pz. I, sov. 4

1 [1] — — — ]atu[  
]it[ . . . ] bē[  
] . . . [ . . . ]  
] . e · tamq[  
5 [5] ]usiṭ · n[  
]ae. n[  
]m[  
]nē[  
]t[  
10 [10] ]lu[  
]da[  
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## Cr. 5 pz. I, sov. 5

1 [1] ] . s · . [ . . . ]  
]im[ . . . ] n[ . . . ] . a[ . . . ] tu . [ . . . ]  
] . . . [ . . . ] çet · dat[ . . . ] qu[ . . . ]  
]pl[ . . . ] ntem · n[ . . . ]  
5 [5] ]ura[ . . . ] . lō[ . . . ] fut[ . . . ] m[ . . . ]  
] . n · f[ . . . ] avam · si[ . . . ] . ll[ . . . ]  
]s · stu[ . . . ] us · [ . . . ] ram[ . . . ] ll[ . . . ]  
]tum · qu[ . . . ] mpe[ . . . ] ot[ . . . ]  
]e · su[ . . . ] um[ . . . ] li · o[ . . . ] rep[ . . . ]  
10 [10] ]dixi[ . . . ] . . . [ . . . ] prae[ . . . ]  
]u[ . . . ] ]cti[ . . . ]

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## Cr. 5 pz. II, sov. 1

1 [1] — — — h]abēat [·] çu[m]  
] . d[ . . . ] . a[ . . . ]  
]d[ . . . ] · alijum  
]ps[ . . . ] . c · m ·  
5 [5] ] . t · plēniş

]átur · cum  
                  ]destinat[  
                  ]. · Tiberius  
                  ]. a[. . . . .].  
10 [10]       ]pr[  
                  ---

Cr. 5 pz. II, sov. 2

1 [1]           ] quidem [  
                  ]árium · esse  
                  ]ulum · vellem  
                  ]e · qui[. . . e]st  
5 [5]           ]h[  
                  ]us · est ·  
                  ]çepere ·  
                  ] graves · sijnť  
                  ]ria  
10 [10]       ] ‘est [  
                  ---

Cr. 5 pz. II sov. 3

1 [1]           ]on . . [  
                  ]. a[  
                  ] · e . . . . · sub ; sijnť  
                  ]ce[. . . .]ruñť · .[  
5 [5]           ]enñi[  
                  n]arraba[t . . .]m · ř[  
                  ]nalis[ . . .]cu[  
                  ] . . . n[ . . .]st[  
                  ] . . t[ . . .] . . . .[  
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Cr. 9 pz. III, sov. 1

1 [2]           ]am[  
                  ]. s · et · dicere[  
                  ]. . a . . sse · m[ . . . . .]di  
                  ]. cl[. . . . .]it[  
5 [6]           ]tt . [ . ]řrent ·  
                  ]m[ . . .] . . [ . ]uř · saepius ·  
                  ]buř

10 [11] ] sol[                    ] ..  
          ]. tam[ . ] ...[  
          ] ..[  
          - - -

Cr. 9 pz. III *subscriptio*

1                    L [-] Annae[i · Senec]ae  
2                    Aḅ [-] inītiō [-] ḅ[ello]rum[ · civilium]  
                          [Historiae]

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Abbreviations are given according to the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* for Latin authors and according to *Diccionario Griego-Español* for the Greek ones. Only two exceptions are registered:

1. Florus' historiographical work is quoted following Malcovati 1972<sup>2</sup>.
2. Seneca's *Historiae* transmitted by *P.Herc.1067* are here quoted per "cr" (cornice) and "pz" (pezzo) given the absence of a division in books and/or paragraphs in the edition by Pivano in *CErc* 47 (2017), 163–250.
3. Only in Rich 'report Appianus' *Bellum Civile* is abbreviated *E. (Emphyilia)* by declared author's will.

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