Defining a Roman Identity in the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus: the dialogue between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’

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Word count: 79981
List of abbreviations


**AE** L’Année Épigraphique (1888-).

**CIL** *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (online).


All texts and translations are taken from the latest Loeb editions. Exceptions are listed below:

**Aristid.**


**Aur. Vict.**


**CTh.**


**Eunap.**

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Ammianus’ use of *peregrinus* and *advena* in the digressions on Rome (pp. 126-128).

The differences between Justin’s account of the Scythians and Ammianus’ account of the Huns (pp. 221-222).
Abstract

This thesis argues that Ammianus is interested in, and attempts to define, a Roman identity applicable to his own multifarious world. It argues that Ammianus and some of his peers discern a clear increase in the number of foreigners and outsiders in the empire. While some of his peers lament this perception and adopt a hard-line approach, Ammianus has a much more nuanced view. It is argued that the model of Roman identity which he devises not only accounts for foreigners, but actually, in some cases, makes them exemplars of a flexible Roman identity based chiefly on the notion of appropriate behaviour. In this sense, his identity scheme is ultimately integrative and inclusive. As part of his definition of identity, Ammianus utilises an ‘outsider’ perspective. This perspective is shown to dictate not only how he portrays his characters and their deeds, but even how he reflects on the substance of Romanness as a continual dialogue between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’, broadly conceived. It is finally argued that Ammianus’ purpose in defining such an identity is to ensure that the eternity of the empire, in which he firmly believes, is safeguarded by future ‘Romans’ who perhaps may never even see the City itself, but nevertheless remain committed to its protection.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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A note on Ammianus’ text

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I would like to place on record my thanks to the England cricket team for playing so poorly during my PhD period. Your mediocrity has made it much easier to focus on my work. Feel free to improve now, though. In the same vein, thanks are due to the cast and crew of Neighbours for your ridiculous story lines. I wasn’t a fan of the Toadie/Sonya arc at the time, but upon reflection I really enjoyed the diversion.

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Finally, to my Uncle Dave, who was around when I started but not as I finish, I dedicate the better parts of this thesis to you.
The author

In 2011 I completed a BA in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Bristol, with a final year dissertation on the nature of Frankish power under the Merovingians. After this I went on to a Masters at the same university, graduating in 2012 with a distinction. My thesis, under the direction of Prof. Neville Morley, dealt with the trope of decline in Ammianus. After a year of work, I returned to Classics, undertaking this PhD in 2014 at the University of Manchester.
Introduction

0.1 Ammianus Marcellinus and Roman identity

This thesis argues that Ammianus was interested in, and attempted to define, Roman identity through a means of a dialogue between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’.\(^1\) To explore this dialogue, Ammianus adopts an ‘outsider’ perspective (§ 0.2) which runs through much of the RG. Given this interest in identity, however, it is as well to start with the man’s own. Momigliano once remarked that Ammianus has “an almost indecent readiness to talk about himself”,\(^2\) and this tendency marks him out as unique.\(^3\) Despite this, the facts of his life have been much debated and in truth little about his life, career, and whereabouts during the second half of the 4\(^{th}\) century is secure.

Ammianus does offer some clues regarding his movements, however. He states at 14.9.1, in 354, that he is a part of the retinue of the general Ursicinus serving as a \textit{protector domesticus} in the Eastern town of Nisibis.\(^4\) Then, in 357, he calls himself a young man (‘adulescens’) in Ursicinus’ command group (16.10.21). This would suggest a birth date in the early to mid-330s.\(^5\) He accompanies Ursicinus to Gaul where they suppress the revolution of Silvanus (15.5) in 355, and in book 18 he can be found in Persia. 19.8.6-7 sees him escape the seizure of Amida by the Persians, and at 26.10.19 he witnesses the effects of a tsunami in Greece in 365-6.\(^6\) Ammianus’ last appearance has him in Antioch where he describes the

\(^{1}\) The distinction between these terms is explained below.
\(^{3}\) Marincola 1997: 200.
\(^{4}\) For a good overview of Ammianus’ travels see Matthews 1989: 14-16. For his military career path as a \textit{protector} see Crump 1975: 8-10 and Trombley 1999. Crump 1973: 102 suspects that after his service with Ursicinus Ammianus finished his career as an unattached officer. Some have argued that the historian had special skills. Austin 1979: 18, following Dilleman 1961: 143, reckons that Ammianus was a logistical officer, while den Hengst 1999 debates the possibility of him being an artillery officer. Given that he declares that his knowledge of siege weapons is “mediocre” (23.4.1: ‘\textit{mediocre ingenium}’) it is perhaps unlikely that he was an artilleryman. Matthews 1989: 301 rejects the hypothesis.
\(^{6}\) G. Kelly 2004: 143 sees the tsunami as a “representative symbol” of the work and a correction to Christian sources who conceived of the tsunami as divine punishment for Julian’s reign.
book burnings carried out by Valens (29.2.4: ‘omnes ea tempestate velut in Cimmeriis tenebris reptabamus’) in the early 370s.

Given that Ammianus does not mention the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria (22.16.12), which occurred in 391, he probably published his work before that date and died shortly after. Thus, it is likely that upon leaving the army sometime after Julian’s death in 363, Ammianus travelled the empire while researching his history before retiring to Rome, where he wrote, published, and died. Ammianus seems to have regarded Antioch as his home town, although other cities have also had their proponents. His social status has been widely agreed upon: his level of literary education, the fact that he favours horseback to walking, and his biting criticism of Julian’s attempt to force leading townsmen to sit as curiales (town councillors), has led most scholars to consider Ammianus if not a member of the curialis class himself, then at least closely aligned to it.

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7 Earlier scholars argued that Ammianus published the books in instalments (e.g. Laistner 1947: 143) and slightly later in the decade. Maenchen-Helfen 1955 argued that Ammianus must have published before 392 because Jerome seems to allude to Ammianus’ picture of the Huns (Adv. Iovinianum 2.7). He is followed by Chauvot 1998: 385. A date of c. 390 has been stated by Rike 1987: 137, Matthews 1989: 28-9, and Barnes 1998: 184 and despite some recent opposition it has been restated finally by Cameron 2012: 338.

8 Ammianus speaks warmly of Antioch (14.1.9; 14.8.8) and refers to the Antiochene Hypatius as ‘our’ (29.2.16: ‘noster’). It had been thought Lib. Ep. 1063 to ‘Marcellinus’ in Rome was addressed to Ammianus. The identification of that Marcellinus with the historian has been contested by Fornara 1992a: 339, who in turn suggests that Hypatius was of Thessalonica instead and argues similarly for Ammianus. This assertion is backed up by the argument of Noy 2000: 225 who, though he does not mention Ammianus, concludes that Graecus suggests a “Greek geographical origin”. Matthews 1994 restates the Antiochene connection as does Sabbah 2003: 50. Barnes 1998: 60ff., linking Ammianus to that Ammianus mentioned by Libanius (Ep. 233.4), posits a Phoenician town, perhaps Tyre or Sidon (p. 63), and is followed by Woods 2009: 364 who argues for Emesa. G. Kelly 2014: 68 leaves aside the question of Ammianus’ home city, concluding only that he was a “long-term resident” of Antioch.

9 Watts 2006: 4-6 on the prohibitive cost of education meaning that only wealthy families could afford to educate their sons in the schooling system beyond the basic ‘schools of letters’; thus, those who did receive this education were invariably of a higher status. Fornara 1992b: 421 has suggested that Ammianus’ education may have been stalled by his early entry in the army. For Ammianus’ dislike of marching see 19.8.6 and for his condemnation of Julian’s policy see 22.9.12.

10 Thompson 1947: 2. See A. H. M. Jones 1966: 245 for the struggles of the state to fill the town councils and Barnes 1998: 17 for the curial class being both oppressed and oppressive and p. 58 for the argument that Ammianus’ family may actually have risen above that status. Sabbah 2003: 50-1 argues that even though he may not have been of that class, he at least shared sympathies with it.
Given that the text outlines a relatively full biography of its author, it is little surprise that a further detail reveals his interest in identity in particular: Ammianus designates himself at the end of the history as a former soldier and a Greek (31.16.9: ‘miles quondam et Graecus’). As a self-described outsider to the city of Rome where he published the *Res Gestae* (hereafter RG) in Latin in the early 390s, Ammianus’ statement suggests a reason to ‘look’ at identity issues in his text. Dench, referring to Lucian, has argued that some Roman theorists on identity engaged in a “self-conscious positioning of the authorial voice off-centre, on the boundaries, moving between worlds” so as to better approach their topic.11 Andrade has also argued that Syrians in particular had to be particularly adept at navigating identity, caught as they were between Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern traditions.12 It may be possible to see in Ammianus’ statement just such a claim to be moving between worlds. On the one hand, he is a Greek amongst Romans, on the other a soldier amongst civilians.

This sensitivity to different identity communities manifests itself in the way Ammianus deals with identity. It will be shown how Ammianus cultivates an insider/outsider dynamic as regards not only the presentation of his own identity, but also those he creates for others. Above all, it will be shown how he maintains (and occasionally demolishes) boundaries between groups, especially between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’. As Barth emphasises (further § 0.4 below), it is often the boundaries erected between identities that maintain its meaning.13 Scholars on ancient identity have used Barth’s conclusions for some time and have shown that identities ‘on the ground’ can often work without, or across, conceptual boundaries.14 At the same time, however, textual identities are different.

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11 Dench 2005: 47. Dench also notes here that many of these writers were themselves of provincial origin, mentioning Apuleius and even Herodotus.
12 Andrade 2013: 11. Andrade’s arguments are interesting but perhaps confine to Syrians processes undergone by many peoples of the ancient world. See e.g. Woolf 2001: 177-80 on Gaul and LaBuff 2013 on Caria in Asia Minor.
They allow authors to draw barriers where perhaps there were none; or, indeed, to break down barriers where perhaps there were some.

Ammianus uses this insider/outsider dynamic to create a Roman community centred not on the Romans in Rome itself but on those at the periphery. These peripheral Romans are men like Ammianus himself: soldiers and ‘foreigners’ fighting for the empire on the borders and in the provinces, and those doing the most to safeguard its eternity. Ammianus expresses this agenda early in his first digression on Rome. Having outlined Rome’s early history, he writes how the Roman people (14.6.4-5):

...grown to youth and manhood, from every region which the vast globe includes, brought back laurels and triumphs. And now, declining into old age, and often owing victory to its name alone, it has come to a quieter period of life. [5] Thus the venerable city, after humbling the proud necks of savage nations, and making laws, the everlasting foundations and moorings of liberty, like a thrifty parent, wise and wealthy, has entrusted the management of his inheritance to the Caesars, as to his children.

This lifecycle metaphor has been variously analysed. den Hengst sees it crystallising Ammianus’ view that “Rome is a centre of stability in a restless world”; and Fuhrmann sees it as emphasising energetic renewal. Barnes deems this passage largely pessimistic, indicating that Rome will live on but weaken in its old age; and Isaac has recently expressed a similar view to Barnes, that it encapsulates “the certainty that the progress of time can

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15 Ammianus’ notion of a Roman military identity is discussed in ch. 1.
16 ‘...in iuvenem erectus et virum, ex omni plaga quam orbis ambit immensus, reportavit laureas et triumpfos; iamque vergens in senium, et nomine solo aliquotiens vincens, ad tranquilliora vitae discessit. [5] Ideo urbs venerabilis, post superbas efferatarum gentium cervices oppressas, latasque leges, fundamenta libertatis et retinacula sempiterna, velut frugi parenes et prudens et dives, Caesaribus tamquam liberis suis regenda patrimonii iura permisit’.
18 den Hengst 2010: 266.
Defining a Roman Identity

only bring deterioration, not improvement”. Many of these views focus on the periodising aspect of the passage as reflecting how Ammianus understands the division of historical time.

But the passage also indicates a transfer of action from the capital to the periphery, from the insiders to the outsiders. Rome itself, formerly vigorous, has reached retirement (‘ad tranquilliora vitae discessit’); it is an ancient city (‘urbs venerabilis’). The Caesars now bear the responsibility for maintaining the state. Given the emphasis Ammianus places on Rome overpowering savage tribes, and the pride with which he recalls how Rome subdued the earth after many hard wars (14.6.4: ‘post multiplices bellorum aerumnas…’), the martial dimension of the Caesars’ duty is most pressing.

There is the sense that the Roman patrimonium has already been established; it is now to be defended by the commanders and their soldiers. Indeed, the legalistic language (‘Caesaribus tamquam liberis suis regenda patrimonii iura permisit’) implies a familial connection between Rome and its defenders, themselves perhaps even adopted into the community. This is where Ammianus, the self-identified ‘former soldier’, is important because he is a paradigm of the contemporary Roman: an outsider to the now civilian city and yet its energetic defender and wholly Roman. These individuals are the ‘proper’ representatives of identity in the RG, and Ammianus’ identity model accepts that reality, thereby fashioning a new community of ‘Romans’ for the reality of the contemporary empire.

0.2 The ‘foreign’/ ‘outsider’ perspective

The fundamental definition of identity as a community is something to which we shall return, but the digression at 14.6 also affords an opportunity to discuss in more depth Ammianus’ ‘outsider’ perspective because it is a perspective which will occur often throughout the coming chapters. The digression begins with a direct appeal to “some foreigners who may be about to read this work” (14.6.2: ‘quosdam peregrinos, haec

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20 Isaac 2011: 238.
21 Hekster 2014: 381 notes the openness of Roman law in this respect: “there were hardly any distinctions between adopted children and those born in lawful marriage”.

17
lecturos forsitan’). This appeal is discussed fully in the second chapter. For now, it is enough to say that scholarship has tended to take this literally, as indicative of Ammianus’ own foreign status as a Greek in Rome,22 or else as signalling only that Ammianus wrote and published in Rome.23 Other work has taken the address as signalling the adoption of a satirical persona.24 While the address does signal that Ammianus is adopting a persona, it is not a satirical one. Instead, it allows him to integrate ‘outsiders’ at the expense of the metropolitans themselves.

Previous scholarly interpretations do not allow for the significance of the hypothetical foreigner (‘peregrinus’) addressee which expands Roman identity to accommodate different types of Roman. Mathisen has suggested that after the Roman citizenship was made universal by Caracalla in 212 the concept of citizenship evolved in order to “facilitate the integration of foreign, barbarian, populations into the western Roman world during the fifth and sixth centuries”.25 This is precisely what Mitthof means when he describes as “einer radikalen ideologischen Kehrtwende” the change from an ad hoc pattern of Romanisation prior to Caracalla’s citizenship edict in 212 to a situation where “die Voraussetzung für eine flächendeckende Identitätsbildung geschaffen wurde”.26

A similar argument is advanced here. Ammianus uses the peregrinus whom his audience would have recognised to be an ‘outsider’ of some description (whether legally or not) to advance an evolving concept of theoretical citizenship which could accommodate those whom he sees as contributing towards the Roman project. It is this group that could appreciate

26 Mitthof 2012: 62: “A radical ideological U-turn [whereby] the prerequisite for an all-encompassing identity was created”. Mitthof further argues that this vision of identity is not accurate for it ironed out all difference and produces a rather simplistic model. But this is the point of ideology after all, since, after the Althusserian fashion, it is necessarily illusory (Althusser 1971: 162-3). On the edict in general see Honoré 2004: 114-15 who attributes it to the cosmopolitan “Zeitgeist” of the Severan age and argues that it “gave many millions, perhaps a majority of the empire’s inhabitants […] a new consciousness of being Roman”; cf. Potter 2004: 139: Caracalla “was also interested in promoting a sense of Roman identity in the diverse population that he ruled”.
Ammianus’ identity work in the RG. Ammianus expresses a type of all-encompassing identity. To express this perspective, he has a pool of ‘outsider’ vocabulary. It is worth examining this briefly because it underpins the distinction between simply ‘foreign’, which is neutral or positive; and ‘barbarian’, which is always negative.

Ammianus himself typifies the kind of person for whom he writes: a ‘situational outsider’. In the first instance, ‘situational outsider’ acknowledges the legal definition that peregrini, at least before 212, tended also to be non-citizens. In the de Officiis (1.37), Cicero, with whom Ammianus was intimately familiar, famously meditates on the semantic difference between ‘enemy’ (‘hostis’) and ‘stranger’ (‘peregrinus’). Writing from a contemporary Roman perspective, Cicero says that what the ancestors call ‘enemy’ is now called a ‘stranger’, a term with a degree of euphemistic softness (‘...tam molli nomine appellare?’). But now, Cicero says, hostis has lost its mitigating ‘strangerness’ and become straightforwardly negative to mean an enemy under arms. Though not quite enemies, peregrini were certainly not citizens.

A similar distinction is noted in the earlier law codes. The Institutes of Gaius often distinguishes between the rights of Roman citizens, Latins, and foreigners. In the time of Hadrian, parts of the empire which had long experienced Roman rule, like Gallia Narbonensis and Spain, enjoyed colonial or municipal status while northern Gaul, Britain, and the Balkans were populated almost entirely by peregrini. Peregrinus meaning non-

27 ‘Foreigner’ and ‘outsider’ are used interchangeably throughout the thesis. For ease of reading, quotation marks are used with these terms in place of ‘situational’.
28 What follows owes a great deal to Lavan 2013: 32ff.
29 Cic. Off. 1.37: ‘Hostis enim apud maiores nostros is dicebatur, quem nunc peregrinum...Quamquam id nomen durius effect etiam vetustas; a peregrino enim recessit et proprie in eo, qui arma contra ferret, remansit’. Roby 2000: 468, n. for Cicero’s equating peregrinus to hostis. Lavan 2013: 33 mentions the passage but does not discuss it.
citizen, then, was a straightforward legal category, accounting for a large portion of the empire, at least in the early to high empire.\textsuperscript{32}

After Caracalla’s grant of universal citizenship in 212, \textit{peregrinus} seemingly lost its legal connotation of non-citizen.\textsuperscript{33} In the most recent contribution on the edict’s effect, Kulikowski has argued that it simply formalised the blurring of the line between citizen and non-citizen, a process which had been ongoing for at least a hundred years before Caracalla.\textsuperscript{34} Meanwhile Lavan thinks that the fact that \textit{peregrinus} appears only twice in the Justinianic Digest “reflects the minimal importance of the category following Caracalla’s general grant of citizenship”.\textsuperscript{35} Given this change in meaning by late antiquity, it is likely that Ammianus sees the label as referring not to non-citizens, but simply to a person not from the locality in which he found himself.\textsuperscript{36}

This is a meaning which had always existed. Cicero is denounced as a \textit{rex peregrinus} by Manlius Torquatus on account of his Arpinate birth, but as Cicero points out, this did not make him a non-citizen,\textsuperscript{37} for Arpinum had been granted full citizenship a hundred years prior.\textsuperscript{38} Torquatus must have known that Cicero was legally a citizen. Instead, Torquatus plays on Cicero’s provincialism, his ‘outsiderness’. This is indeed how Cicero interprets the jibe, for he outlines the careers of other new men who had come to Rome from the town like Cato the Elder and Marius. The citizenship is not at issue; rather \textit{peregrinus} is a term to describe someone

\textsuperscript{32} Lavan 2013: 26. Noy 2000: 1: \textit{peregrinus} “was primarily a legal term for someone who was free but not a Roman citizen”. Balsdon 1979: 86 notes that the Roman navy was mostly made up of \textit{socii} and \textit{peregrini}.

\textsuperscript{33} Balsdon 1979: 94 suggests that if Roman citizens were one group and \textit{peregrini} were the other, after 212 the distinction was more between the upper (‘honestiores’) and lower (‘humiliores’) class.

\textsuperscript{34} Kulikowski 2016: 100.

\textsuperscript{35} Lavan 2013: 32, n. 31.

\textsuperscript{36} E.g. \textit{AE} 2002.115 (p. 393): ‘decuriones collegae et populares et peregrini incolae’. The resident foreigners are people who did not have citizenship in the local community, irrespective of their Roman citizenship status (Lavan 2013: 33 for discussion and further examples).

\textsuperscript{37} Cic. \textit{Sull.} 23: ‘sed scire ex te pervelim quam ob rem qui ex municipiis veniant peregrini tibi esse videantur’.

\textsuperscript{38} Eckhardt 2012: 91: “Citizenship was granted in 188 [...] From a legal perspective, there was no basis for calling anyone from Arpinum a \textit{peregrinus} anymore”.
who is somehow ‘other’. In Cicero’s case, the difference is social pedigree (or geographical origin) rather than legal category.

That being said, an ‘outsider’ meaning for *peregrinus* is also found in late Roman legal thought: the Theodosian Code distinguishes between citizens of a province and outsiders who may themselves still be citizens.\(^{39}\) Under this reading, *peregrinus* may be synonymous to *externus* (outsider), a word Ammianus employs with similar frequency.\(^{40}\) On the other hand, both Mathisen and Garnsey have argued that *peregrini* came to refer primarily to *barbarians* – that is, people who had recently crossed into the empire and whose citizenship status is unrecoverable. Mathisen distinguishes between foreigners meaning “provincial natives, for they had been made citizens [and] foreign *peregrini* [sic] who had settled on Roman territory”.\(^{41}\)

Mathisen’s argument that *peregrinus* could refer to barbarians is a useful departure point for this study, since Ammianus never makes this equation: *barbari* are hostile external foreigners while *peregrini* are (potentially) Roman, internal ‘foreigners’ and outsiders of some description. *Peregrinus* appears some 14 times in the text.\(^{42}\) Many of its occurrences seem to hold the neutral meaning of an ‘outsider’, someone who is not from the place in which he finds himself.

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\(^{39}\) E.g. *CTh*. 1.34.1: ‘si qui iudicum vel cives eius provinciae, quam regit, vel certe peregrinos consiliarium sibi voluerit adsciscere…’; 6.37.1: ‘equites romani, quos secundi gradus in urbe omnium optinere volumus dignitatem, ex indigenis romanis et civibus eligantur, vel his peregrinis, quo corporatis non oportet adnecti’.

\(^{40}\) *Externum* generally carries the meaning of ‘foreign’ and is synonymous to *peregrinus* in most cases. E.g. 14.8.14 (the “native resources” of Cyprus meant that it could thrive without external assistance); 15.5.18 (*adoratio* was a “foreign and regal custom” introduced by Diocletian); 21.9.4 (the praetorian prefect Taurus avoided Julian “as if [he was] a foreign enemy”).

\(^{41}\) Mathisen 2006: 1020; cf. Garnsey 2004: 143-5 noting that there were different types of people who could be classed as *peregrini*, especially “...the newly arrived peregrines. This group was predominantly barbarian, from across the frontiers, and it was substantial”.

\(^{42}\) The references in book 14 and 28 belong to the Roman digressions and they are discussed in detail in ch. 2: 14.6.2; 14.6.14; 14.6.9; 15.12.1 (a group of *peregrini* could not withstand a native Gaul and his wife in a fight), 19.4.3 (the Trojan War caused by Paris, a *peregrinus*); 25.4.21 (Julian wrongly forces *peregrini* to serve on town councils when they should be exempt); 28.4.10; 28.4.17; 28.4.32; 30.1.12 (the friendly foreign king Pap is slaughtered by Romans); 30.4.17 (in their stupidity, contemporary lawyers think the name of a foreign writer to be a type of delicacy); 31.4.10 (evil Roman officers mistreat the foreign immigrants); 31.3.8 (reference to the foreign war which had overtaken the Balkans in the 370s).
Interestingly, in only one instance is *peregrinus* (possibly) negative. In this case, Ammianus, speaking from a Greek perspective, deems Paris, the instigator of the Trojan War, a foreigner (19.4.3). Unless Ammianus is following the Herodotean conception of the event as a broad clash of East and West, it is interesting that he, intimately familiar with both the *Aeneid* and Homer, falls on the Greek side of the legendary war. In any case, that Ammianus does not regard *peregrinus* as a negative term, akin perhaps to Mathisen’s “foreign *peregrini*”, is significant, since it implies that those whom Ammianus deems ‘foreigners’ exhibit a greater potential for assuming a Roman identity than the mass of external barbarians.

A second case illustrates the nuance contained in the term *peregrinus* and how it is distinguished from *barbarus* in Ammianus’ conceptual scheme. At 31.4.10 *peregrinus* refers to the Gothic immigrants received into Roman territory (31.4.10). In this instance, the foreigners are described by Ammianus as “harmless” (‘innoxios’). Ammianus laments the despicable treatment of the *peregrini* by the Roman officials assigned to oversee the migration of the barbarian groups into the empire. That these are *peregrini innoxii* rather than just *barbari* (31.4.11) suggests that Ammianus, though retaining the Goths’ barbarian status, also softens it such that they are considered potentially peaceful inhabitants of the empire. The mitigating ‘foreignness’ of the Goths is lost as soon as they turn against the empire. Thus, the peaceable *peregrini* of 31.4.10 become the *barbari* of 31.5.5 as they are goaded by the atrocious conduct of the official Lupicinus into attacking and wiping out a troop of Romans at Marcianople.

It is possible that Ammianus knowingly questions his hitherto rigid distinction of internal *peregrini*/external *barbari* to convey the conceptual awkwardness presented by the Goths in the final book. In one sense, the Goths are an external enemy to be defeated; in another sense they are erstwhile allies and even, with their king Ermenrich and his successors (31.3), quasi-Roman.\(^43\) The theory that *peregrini* were at the very least potentially legitimate members of imperial society is shown again at

\(^{43}\) Ermenrich and his Goths are discussed in ch. 4.
25.4.21 which states that Julian forced foreigners, who were exempt from serving as decurions, to serve on the councils anyway. In this context, the *peregrini* are simply people not from the city in which they found themselves. These uses imply that Ammianus envisages the ‘foreign’ community as exceptionally broad, possibly even encompassing citizens and non-citizens, people who live in the empire (Julian’s decurions), and those who do not (the Goths).  

To sum up so far: Ammianus uses *peregrinus* in a variety of contexts to describe individuals or things as somehow ‘other’ or ‘outside’ any given situation. For instance, in the Roman digressions discussed in ch. 2, *peregrinus* refers simply to an audience which did not live in the city itself, thus to be almost synonymous to ‘provincial’ (‘provincialis’) or ‘stranger’ (‘advena’). Furthermore, the Gothic case excepted, Ammianus does not use the term to refer to the external barbarians. *Peregrinus* for Ammianus is thus a way to establish a register of difference without resorting to a pejorative – it is an expression of his ‘outsider’ perspective.

One of the most important registers of difference in the RG is ethnicity, and this ties in once again to the label *peregrinus*. It has been argued by Lavan that *peregrinus* can also hold an ethnic meaning alongside its cultural or legal connotations. This overtly ethnic significance had, again, always existed. Pliny, for instance, groups the Egyptians with other foreigners (*Ep. 10.6.2: ‘inter Aegyptios ceterosque peregrinos’) in a letter to Trajan; and Suetonius calls the Gauls admitted to the senate by Caesar foreigners (*DJ. 80.2; ‘peregrinis in senatum allectis libellus propositus est’).

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44 On the legal applications of the term see Mathisen 2006: 1011-1040. See also M. Edwards: 2004, who equates the Roman identity solely with the citizenship. In the republic and early empire there existed a praetor whose duty was to judge cases between *peregrini* and *cives* but this responsibility is not attested after the 3rd century.

45 *Provincialis* occurs nine times in the text: e.g. 14.2.4; 17.3.5; 19.11.7.

46 14.6.12; 14.6.21; 19.2.14 (strangers and citizens crammed into the city of Amida to avoid the Persians); 19.9.6 (referring to the official Cragausius’ servant); 22.8.34 (the Tauri affix the skulls of strangers to their temples); 23.6.68 (the obscure trading relations between the distant Seres people and strangers); 28.4.9; 30.4.17 (it is easy for a stranger to trump the learning of contemporary lawyers).

47 For ethnicity as “one of the most powerful identifiers within the societies of the empire” see Shaw 2000: 381.

48 Lavan 2013: 33.
Ammianus’ usage often implies this ethnic dimension. For instance, in the ethnography on Gaul, the *peregrini* are non-Gauls (15.12.1); and at 30.1.12 the *peregrinus* is an Armenian king. Ammianus naturally never records how his characters themselves viewed their own ethnicity, but he does distinguish on the basis of descent. Most often this is achieved with an ethnonym. Ammianus calls himself a *Graecus* (31.16.9), a category which he often differentiates from a Roman perspective. For instance, in a brief scientific interlude on the calendar, he says that the *Romani* had fallen into difficulties with their calendar, and it was only with recourse to the *Graeci* that their error was fixed (26.1.12-13); and the next chapter shows how he uses *Francus* to talk about Silvanus and his fellows in the army.

Entailed in these ascriptions is the understanding that ethnicity is the preserve of a minority group however defined. As a *Graecus* writing in Rome, and as a *Francus* at court, Ammianus and Silvanus are expressing a minority identity (or in Silvanus’ case, having it expressed for him – he never deems *himself* a Frank). This is in line with modern scholarship on the issue: minority parties have “a heightened awareness of the social categories which determine their minority status”.49 Pohl has noted this in a recent paper.50 Ethnonyms in the RG are thus a means of creating a relational ‘foreignness’ whereby, depending on the circumstance, an individual or group is somehow ‘other’ to an often only implied larger group. Cicero uses a similar technique in several of his forensic speeches: *Galli, Phrygi*, and *Afri* are but a few of the ethnonyms he deploys to “mark the provincials as foreigners and support Cicero’s strategy [...] to disparage the evidence against his Roman clients”.51 Ammianus’ own purpose is different to Cicero’s, but he also uses ethnonyms to establish ‘foreignness’.

This thesis takes ethnonyms to be an indicator of ‘outsiderness’, of Ammianus’ argued literary scheme, rather than as representative of

49 Deschamps 1982: 91; cf. Mitchell and Greatrex 2009: xii for this view in a late antique work though citing a modern parallel.
50 Pohl 2015: 22, though arguing that ethnicity should be used guardedly in late antique studies.
51 Lavan 2013: 46. Cic. *Font.* 10.21 (Gauls); Flac. 17.40 (Phyrgians); *Scaur.* 2.17 (Africans).
genuine ethnic groups. The definition of ethnic groups has long been a topic for debate. In a famous yet difficult chapter, Barth argued that a “categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background”.\textsuperscript{52} Although origin is the defining criterion of ethnicity under this definition, alongside it co-exists what Barth terms the “cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies” which comprise features like dress and language.\textsuperscript{53} The belief that descent and origin underpins ethnicity is a common thread. Amory argued that ethnicity is the belief, whether true or not, in common descent.\textsuperscript{54} Meanwhile, according to S. Jones, an ethnic group is:

Any group of people who set themselves apart and/or are set apart by others with whom they interact or co-exist on the basis of their perceptions of cultural differentiation and/or common descent.\textsuperscript{55}

There is a degree of terminological vagueness in these definitions. If ethnicity as a term is broad enough to encompass cultural identity as well as biological descent, its explanatory utility must be questioned. In Ammianus’ case, there is no question that most if not all of the characters he marks ‘ethnically’ all share the same Roman culture; and yet, simply because he has used an ethnonym, it is enough to say that these individuals so marked are intended to be recognised as somehow different, as ‘outsiders’ to a given situation.

This brings us to the final aspect of Ammianus’ ‘outsider’ perspective. I term it also ‘situational’ or ‘styled’ because it allows for the possibility that Ammianus utilises a ‘foreign’ perspective to facilitate his exploration of Roman identity.\textsuperscript{56} In this sense, ‘foreignness’ is little more than a literary

\textsuperscript{52} Barth 1969: 13.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. p. 14. For an assessment of Barth’s great influence in the study of ethnicity see Banks 1996: 12ff.
\textsuperscript{54} Amory 1997: 14.
\textsuperscript{56} As with ‘outsider’ and ‘foreigner’, these terms are used interchangeably.
tool, at times flexible and transitory, at others almost permanent: to borrow Halsall’s comment on the ancient category of ‘barbarian’, it is a “floating category”.\(^{57}\) For example, as the first chapter will show, the Frankishness of Malarich is of crucial importance and a defining characteristic during the Silvanus episode at 15.5, but when he is mooted as a possible candidate for office under the emperor Jovian, his ethnicity is not mentioned at all (25.8.11). Ammianus wishes to emphasise the valuable contribution of ethnically marked individuals in the former instance (as part of his desire to relocate Romanness to styled ‘outsiders’), but it is not necessary in the latter case: he therefore manipulates ‘foreignness’ to suit the argument he wishes to make. This is a theme which continues in the Roman digressions (ch. 2) and the final book (ch. 4).

0.3 A new type of Roman

Scholars have long recognised that Ammianus, like any Roman historian, dislikes barbarians.\(^{58}\) As W. R. Jones put it some time ago:

\begin{quote}
Ammianus Marcellinus dedicated his *History* to arguing the defense of the Empire and *Romanitas* against the savage forces threatening it within and without.\(^{59}\)
\end{quote}

Heather has argued that for Ammianus the only good barbarian is a dead barbarian;\(^{60}\) and Chauvot has demonstrated that, though Ammianus employs a flexible scale of barbarity, the external barbarians are nearly always cast in a negative light.\(^{61}\) In his enormous book on the barbarian in antiquity, Dauge suggests that the barbarian in Ammianus oscillates between two poles of behaviour marked by *ferocia* at one end and its temporary subsidence at the other, and that the barbarians alone are marked by a “permanent instability” of behaviour.\(^{62}\) Ammianus has

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\(^{57}\) Halsall 2002: 93.
\(^{58}\) E.g. Camus 1967: 12-4; Dauge 1981: 341; Mackail 1920.
\(^{59}\) Jones 1971: 383.
\(^{60}\) Heather 1999: 234.
\(^{62}\) Dauge 1981: 342.
generally been seen as the best authority on the perceived barbarisation of 4th century society, and he is frequently cited in surveys on this subject. Ammianus’ interest in styled ‘outsiders’ (who are still Romans) should be distinguished from his thoughts regarding barbarians (who are external, non-Romans), though the depth of that interest is perhaps a result of the perceived changes in contemporary society as regards relations with the barbarian world. The reign of Constantine initiated a new phase in how the empire dealt with the western tribes. Constantine seems to have been the first emperor to permit the settlement on imperial territory of tribes without stipulating that they be dissolved first. Meanwhile, Mommsen reckoned that Constantine displayed “a strong preference for the Germanic element in the army, especially appointing Alamanni and Franks to senior officer posts”. One of these was the Frank Bonitus, whose son Silvanus receives a detailed treatment in the RG; and Ammianus notes Julian’s complaint that Constantine “was the first of all to promote barbarians to the consulship” (21.10.8: ‘eum aperte incusans, quod barbaros omnium primus ad usque fasces auxerat et trabeas consulares’). Certainly, Zosimus (late 5th century), following Eunapius, Ammianus’ contemporary, blames Constantine for introducing Christianity and causing the gradual barbarisation of the empire (2.7.1).

If Constantine towards the beginning of the century was the initiator of closer Roman-barbarian relations, then Theodosius (d. 395 and the emperor at the time of Ammianus’ publication) continued it. Blockley has seen the settling of barbarians on Roman soil as barbarian federates and the increased use of barbarian soldiers as Theodosius’ most significant

63 E.g. Liebeschuetz 1990: 8; Burns 1994: xvi; MacMullen 1988 passim.
64 For discussion of the changing diplomatic scenery see Wirth 1997. Goffart 1989: 14-15 argues that the later emperors moved away from the military solutions of the 3rd century to a more conciliatory position. Elton 1996: 60 notes that by the late 4th century Roman and barbarians were armed very similarly, thus eroding the traditional technological superiority of the empire. Ammianus even records (16.2.7) that the citizens of Troyes were unable to distinguish Caesar Julian and his forces from the Franks who had been ravaging the area.
65 Euseb. VC 4.6.2.
67 15.5.33: ‘licet patris quoque Boniti praetenderet fortiis, Franci quidem sed pro Constantini partibus in bello civili acriter contra Læcinianos saepe versati’.
legacy, something which Theodosius’ general Stilicho continued after the emperor’s death.\footnote{Blockley 1998b: 125; Chauvot 1998: 298ff. for discussion of Theodosius’ treaties with the barbarians and p. 308 for Chauvot’s division of contemporary reactions to Theodosius’ legacy into pro- and anti-barbarian camps, although he admits that is a simplistic divide.} At the end of the decade, Synesius of Cyrene offers in his \textit{de Regno} a biting critique of Goths in East Roman service.\footnote{Ziche 2011: 200 for Synesius’ belief that barbarian soldiers are inherently disloyal.} The precise reason for \textit{de Regno}’s composition has been debated, but it warns of what would come to pass if Rome refused to deal with its barbarian problem.\footnote{Older views had seen the text as caused by the revolt of the Goths Tribigild and Gainas (399-400) but Cameron and Long 1993: 110-12 demonstrate that it was written before that revolt and thus should be taken as a warning.}

Heather sees \textit{de Regno} as an attack on the Gothic chieftain Alaric who, having ravaged Greece and the Balkans, was permitted to live in that area with his own men and with the Roman post of \textit{magister militum}.\footnote{Chauvot 1998: 352-53.} More generally, Heather interprets the work as an attack on Roman policy.\footnote{Heather 1988: 160: “The \textit{De regno} had the express purpose of warning the Emperor about the dangers posed by Scythian soldiers”.} Cameron and Long agree.\footnote{Cameron and Long 1993: 119: “Synesius is attacking Eutropius for his barbarian policy”. Cf. Blockley 1998b: 428: the Theodosian policy of forming relations with barbarian chiefs was “condemned by Roman ‘nationalists’ as weak and dangerous”.} Synesius is not alone in his complaint regarding the role of barbarians in the army especially. Claudian in 399 alludes to Alaric’s promotion to \textit{magister militum} with his comment that the “ravager of Achaea and recent devastator of defenceless Epirus is now made lord of Illyria”.\footnote{Claud. \textit{In Eutr.} 2.216-18: ‘vastator Achivae gentis et Epurum nuper populous iultam praeсидet Illyrico’.} Vegetius, writing in the late 4th century, laments the contemporary Roman policy of paying non-Romans (‘alienos’) to fight for the empire rather than training citizens.\footnote{Veg. \textit{Mil.} 1.28: ‘vilius enim constat erudire armis suos quam alienos mercede conducere’.} Meanwhile Zosimus, though writing much later, complains that the emperor Theodosius permitted as many barbarians beyond the Danube as were willing to join his army.\footnote{Zos. 4.30.1: ἔφηκε τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰστρον βαρβάρων τῶν βουλομένων ὡς αὐτὸν ἵναι, τοὺς αὐτομόλους ἐντάττειν τοῖς στρατιωτικοῖς τάγμασιν ὑπισχούμενος.}
perception existed, whether justified or not, that there were more genuine foreigners than ever in the Roman empire.\textsuperscript{77}

The previous section introduced Ammianus’ ‘outsider’ or ‘foreign’ perspective. It remains to explain why he uses it. Ammianus perceives that what defines a Roman is contested and needs redefining considering the social and ethnic changes just outlined. He recognises that those doing the most to maintain the empire are not the Romans at the centre but those at the periphery who, though Roman in the political sense, are cast as somehow ‘foreign’ and outsiders. Roman reliance on styled outsiders is examined in ch. 1, but its clearest expression occurs at two points in the text. In the final Roman digression, Ammianus complains that the Romans of the capital (28.4.32):

\[\ldots\text{cry out that the foreigners, on whose aid they have always depended and stood upright, ought to be driven from the city}.\textsuperscript{78}\]

Then, right at the end of the work, Ammianus refers to the swift and decisive action of a Roman commander in response to the Roman defeat at Adrianople (31.16.8):

\textit{For on learning of the ill-fated events in Thrace, by secret letters to their leaders, who were all Romans (a rare case in these times) he gave orders that the Goths who had been admitted before and were scattered through the various cities and camps...}\textsuperscript{79}

The first of these is a positive, and the second a negative, use of foreign manpower. Evident in both cases, however, is the belief that Rome relies on that manpower to survive. In the first instance, Ammianus conceives of

\textsuperscript{77} Hallsall 2007: 159-61 has questioned the extent of trans-Rhenan penetration into the empire, stressing that if it did occur the incomers were quickly assimilated (or assimilated themselves). As I will suggest, it is in the aim of creating this kind of unity that Ammianus writes.

\textsuperscript{78} ‘\ldots\text{peregrinos vociferantur pelli debere, quorum subsidiis semper nisi sunt ac steterunt’}.

\textsuperscript{79} ‘Comperta enim fatorum sorte per Thracias, Gothos antea susceptos, dispersosque per varias civitates et castra, datis tectioribus litteris ad eorum rectores, Romanos omnes, quod his temporibus raro contingit\ldots‘. The translation is lightly adapted from the Loeb edition.
the relationship between Roman and ‘foreigner’ as having existed for time immemorial (‘semper’). In the second instance, Ammianus pinpoints an overreliance on that relationship specific to those times (‘his temporibus’) such that it is a rarity that Roman unit commanders are in fact Roman themselves. These observations acknowledge the presence of an increasing number of outsiders, styled or otherwise, within the empire. Although this had always been the case (28.4.32), by the 380s, the Romans, at least among the commanders in one particular area, are in the minority (31.16.8).

This thesis argues that Ammianus takes a pragmatic approach to this reality. Although still maintaining a clear distinction between Roman and barbarian, rather than simply lamenting the passing of the rustic Roman yeoman like a Synesius or a Vegetius, Ammianus uses the RG also to assimilate and integrate such new-type Romans. Ammianus did not write for barbarians, but he does devise a model of Roman identity to be universally followed by all Romans, many of whom may have been, like the usurper Magnentius (d. 353), part of a “new breed of capaces imperii”. According to Hunt, Magnentius was of “barbarian origin [...] whose family settled on Roman lands, and who rose to the high command after a career of service in the army”. ⁸⁰

The RG contains the stories of many of these men and their nuanced portrayal implies that Ammianus saw them not only as part of the Roman community, but even among the best examples of Romanness. ⁸¹ Again, it is worth restating that Ammianus’ conception of ‘foreignness’ or ‘outsiderness’ is a moving category. Thus, depending on circumstance, a ‘foreigner’ may be a genuine barbarian (Goths), a Roman marked with an ethnonym, or simply someone somehow ‘other’ to a particular situation (a soldier among civilians, for example, or a provincial in the city of Rome).

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⁸¹ The nuance in Ammianus’ discussion of barbarians generally, but those fighting for Rome especially, is emphasised by Chauvot 1998: 404-6 and offers a corrective to Camus 1967: 120 who argued for a manifestly negative appraisal of barbarians in the RG.
The dynamic between ‘foreign’ and ‘Roman’ underpins Ammianus’ investigation into, and definition of, identity.

0.4 Scholarship on Roman identity in the 4th century and earlier

In general, late antiquity is an appropriate field for an identity study because it was a period of profound social, ethnic, and religious change, and there were many communities clamouring to define themselves. The uniqueness of late antiquity should not be overstated, however. Rome had always been relatively accommodating towards different, potentially competing, identities which could only be expressed through discourse. Many of the myths about early Rome concern matters of social integration, the creation of one city from many parts, and the movement of people to the city from diverse places.

The famous story of the Sabine-Romans Numa and Appius Claudius exemplify the theoretical openness of Rome in accepting and assimilating foreign elements; and the emperor Claudius could tap into this tradition of assimilation when advocating the introduction into the senate of Gallo-Roman nobles. Although such myths are features of many societies, the Romans in particular made extensive use of migration and integration material, and one scholar has even argued that the idea of Romanness was inherently “anti-ethnic” for many Roman authors. Given that Rome was undeniably interested in ethnicity, however, it would be better to turn that formulation on its head and say that much Roman discourse has an ethnic dimension. Certainly, when compared with other ancient societies like China and Egypt, Rome was peculiarly fascinated by, and tolerant of, outsiders.

Scholars working on Roman identity have turned increasingly to cultural interpretations of community based on common feeling. Along with a more

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82 Liv. 1.18, 2.16.4-5; Dench 2005: 2-3.
83 Tac. Ann. 11.24 referring to Appius Claudius. Talbert 1996: 336: “it was only because of further initiative [by Claudius] that provincials became in any way a notable element in the membership of the Senate”.
84 D. Richter 2011: 132 referring to Roman identity in the high empire.
85 For a comparative analysis of China, Egypt, and Mesopotamia and their receptiveness to foreign identities see Poo 2005.
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cultural definition of identity, modern work has tended to focus not so much on a set definition of ‘Roman’ identity, but rather on much more specific identity communities which comprise the overarching belief in a common civilisation. Academics working on archaeology and imperialism (‘Romanisation’) have challenged the previously straightforward distinction between ‘Roman’ and ‘barbarian’ preferring instead to favour the idea of plural identities or even identities which seem to run counter to a totalising Roman identity.\(^{86}\)

James and others have explored definitions of military identity in the empire to argue for a specific and distinct form of military *Romanitas* which was able to accommodate soldiers from diverse nationalities.\(^{87}\) Sandwell and others have focused on how the various religious communities defined their identities,\(^{88}\) and still more work has focused on identity as defined through the perpetuation of an exclusive literary culture.\(^{89}\) The move away from an umbrella concept of ‘Roman’ to instantiations of it is perhaps a consequence of post-colonialism which recoils from blanket labels. But although this theoretical quirk results in a greater sensitivity to the nuance of some identity positions, it should not be forgotten that defining identity often necessitated the construction of seemingly clear polarities.

This is because, in a great many cases, identity discourse is an exercise in community creation, perhaps the most important insight classicists, but especially Romanists, have taken from theory in other disciplines. The works of A. D. Smith, Anderson, and Barth have become ubiquitous in classics and all of them dwell principally on discursive identity as the formulation of a community.\(^{90}\) The arguments of all three will underpin the

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\(^{86}\) E.g. Mattingly 2011 on “discrepant identities” in the Roman empire. For a critique of top-down Romanisation by a late antiquity specialist see Drijvers 2011: 27. For plural identities in the empire see Dench 1995, 2005, and 2010. Historians working on the Second Sophistic have employed the notion of code switching to describe the identities of Greeks in the empire; for this approach see Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 63-5; Gleason 2010: 126. This approach is analysed in ch. 1. For a recent account which rejects dichotomies in the Greek world see Skinner 2012: 44ff.

\(^{87}\) James 1999; Saddington 2009.

\(^{88}\) E.g. Sandwell 2007; Eckhardt 2012 (Jews); A. P. Johnson 2004 (Christians).

\(^{89}\) Watts 2006; Sánchez 2016; Mennen 2011; W. A. Johnson 2000.

\(^{90}\) Smith 1986; Anderson 1991; Barth 1969.
theoretical foundation of this study. On the face of it, their conclusions bear little relevance to our field. Barth and Smith are both concerned with ethnic communities in modern societies whereas Anderson, an historian of South-East Asia, in his book analyses the creation of nations from the 17th century onwards.

Geary has argued that Barth’s ideas on ethnicity and especially Smith’s criteria defining an ethnic group, namely: a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history and culture, an association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity, can only be applied to late antiquity with great difficulty.91 For Geary, these criteria cannot apply to all ethnic groups, especially not those of the post-Roman world. Such warnings are well founded. Anderson’s oft-cited notion of “imagined communities” is developed with specific reference to the growth of mass media, and the commercialisation of printed books and newspapers which, Anderson argues, helped create the modern nation.92 Any attempt to transpose this theory into a discussion of Roman identity must therefore take account of obvious dissimilarities between the society for which (and in which) the theory originated, and the target society. To put it tritely, there were no newspapers in Rome.

On the other hand, if theory is used with care, it can prove illuminating. Anderson’s focus on identity as the creation of imagined communities (expressed through text) is a useful way of understanding expressions of identity in the Roman empire.93 Anderson argues that the nation:

is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion [...] Communities are to be distinguished, not

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91 For these criteria see Smith 1986: 22-30; and Geary 2015: 12-14 for the critique, with Pohl 2014: 22 on the dangers of applying theories worked out in a specific context to the early Middle Ages.
93 Cf. Greatrex and Mitchell 2009: xii: “[E]thnicity is the outcome of a discourse” referring to ethnicity in late antiquity.
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by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.94

Nations and nationalism are arguably out of place in the ancient world, but Ammianus does play with the ideas of community raised by Anderson.95 Ammianus recognises that, since most of his fellow Romans will never see Rome (ch. 2) or the emperor (ch. 3) themselves, he must describe the sights for them and, quite literally, present the “image of their communion”. This communion is the idea of being Roman and of belonging to the empire. These two ideas are not equivalent, and Ammianus focuses especially on Romans who, because of their lamentable behaviour, are not actually Romans at all. At the same time, precisely because Romanness is a matter of appropriate behaviour (see below § 0.5), it is open to be claimed by Ammianus’ upright ‘outsiders’.

If the communal aspect of identity is accepted, then the issue of group cohesion becomes important. Turner has argued that “the mere perception of belonging to a social category is sufficient for group behaviour”.96 Put another way, there must first be the belief that a group exists before that group can act as one. The cohesive element of identity is encapsulated in Anderson’s insistence that nations are a “comradeship”,97 but both Barth and Smith also stress the importance of group cohesion for identity communities. For Barth, cohesion is maintained through continual processes of inclusion and exclusion; for Smith, cohesion is maintained by reinforcement of shared properties like a common homeland or a shared history.98 Arguably all manifestations of identity are inevitably concerned with expressing varying degrees of group belonging. As Cooper has argued, “[e]ven the heroic solitary was bound, in identity terms, to a community of like-minded souls”.99

95 For the possibility of viewing Rome as a nation see Ward-Perkins 2014: 126-7.
99 Cooper 2009: 194.
Ammianus’ task is to define a group identity for his readers, but he is not alone in his defining identity communities through text. Scholars have focused increasingly on the important role texts play in this regard, across a range of periods. Bynum has shown that identity is bound up with ideas of change – not only do writers formulate identities as a coping mechanism, the way that authors define identity in the face of change reveals much about the authorial programme and, in turn, the author’s culture.

Consequently, textual identities are especially prevalent at particular points in Roman history. Champion has applied a Barthian inspired reading of ethnicity to his analysis of Polybius’ Histories to illuminate that author’s complex evaluations of Greek and Romans. He argues that Polybius was writing when his contemporaries “were witnessing deep, and disturbing, socioeconomic transformations in Roman society that threatened to disrupt traditional political networks”. Meanwhile, according to Dench, Cicero in his work was coming to terms with the consequences of the Social War, which “stretched the traditional understanding of a civic community within the Greco-Roman world beyond recognition”. As will become clear, Ammianus and his contemporaries, in defining identities for their own times, were following a similar process in their attempts to make sense of a changed world.

Returning to late antiquity, scholarly focus has often been on the role of Christian texts in defining identities. Christian authors envisaged their...
communities and their rivals’ to be uniform and clearly bounded. Brown has argued that the 4th century was a “universe rustling with the presence of many divine beings”, and a writer like Prudentius aimed at creating a coherent Christian identity for use by his readers. Prudentius consistently portrays the Romans of history as barbarians because of their paganism and views Christianity as the marker of true Romans. He envisages his poems as providing a new “master narrative” for his co-religionists. According to Mastrangelo, Prudentius sees himself as a Christian Virgil and writes a “grand narrative’ or ‘meta-narrative’ of Roman Christian identity in all its cultural, ideological, and intellectual expression”. In Prudentius’ case, he signals his Virgilian purpose clearly at the beginning of the Psychomachia with a nearly verbatim quotation of Aeneid 6.56. Prudentius redeployes Virgilian imagery to create a new Christian historical narrative founded on the notion of personal salvation. Prudentius’ purpose is to define a Christian identity for use by his contemporaries.

Aside from Christianity, the role of texts in the formation of the Gothic, Lombard, and Frankish kingdoms have all recently been examined. Wood, for instance, has utilised Anderson’s arguments to shed light on Isidore of Seville’s textual ideological project in late antique Visigothic Spain. However, there has been little on how other texts in the late Roman world construct identity. At a risk of being platitudinous, there was an urgent interest in what may be termed the story of Rome in the mid-late 4th century. This is not a unique phenomenon - Dexippus and Florus in

106 For Christ as the “saviour of the Roman race” (‘salvator generis Romulei’) see c. Symm. praef. 80 and 1.449ff. for the argument that paganism should be left to the barbarian (‘sint haec barbaricis gentilia numina pagis’). For Prudentius’ equation of the ancient Romans to barbarians on account of their religion see Clark 2011: 33.
107 Mastrangelo 2008: 3.
110 Gillett 2009: 403-4 on Jordanes’ Getica and how texts can “reify group identity” (though Gillett thinks Jordanes tells us more about the Byzantine group identity than the Gothic); see Borri 2014 for texts in 7th century Lombard Italy; and Reimitz 2004: 87 and 2015 for the Franks.
the 2nd and 3rd centuries had also written books on universal Roman history. But the short historiographical efforts of Aurelius Victor (c. 350s-60s), Eutropius (c. 370), and Festus (c. 370) were somewhat different in purpose, aiming to provide the new imperial elite with a succinct introduction to the empire. It is to this period that the *Periochae* of Livy and the brief treatise *Origo Gentis Romanae* date, the latter dealing with the legends surrounding Romulus’ foundation of the city. These works attempt to define in a condensed form a common identity based on the idea of Rome, its history, and ethnicity. Ammianus’ desire to describe a Roman community and from that create Romans, therefore, is not unique; it is simply one attempt among many.

These texts perform a similar function to Prudentius’ narrative in that they are also concerned with defining an identity community. Unlike the Christian text, the religious element is relatively insignificant. Instead they emphasise the idea of a universal civic Romanness, like that described by Aristides 200 years earlier, which incorporated various ethnicities and cultures:

And neither does the sea nor a great expanse of intervening land keep one from being a citizen, nor here are Asia and Europe distinguished. But all lies open to all men. No one is a foreigner who deserves to hold office or to be trusted, but there has been established a common democracy of the world.

The idea Aristides expresses is stereotypical, but this does not mean that it is meaningless. It is rather an early expression of a kind of civic Romanness that does not eradicate foreignness but rather allows worthy foreigners (like Aristides himself) to assume a Roman identity alongside their native one. Slightly later in the speech, Aristides makes this coupling explicit: the

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112 On the purpose of the breviarists see Rees 2004: 4.
See too Ando 2000: 63 and Dench 2005: 95 for an explanation of how Aristides adapts and expands the polis model of classical Athens to apply it to Rome’s empire.
entire world is in partnership with Rome while still retaining its foreignness (Or. 26.85: ὑμεῖς δ’ ἀπασαν, εἰ οἶδω τ’ εἰπεῖν, σαγηνεύσαντες τὴν οἰκουμένην οὕτως σώζετε τοῖς κοινοῖς αὐτὴν πολίταις τε καὶ ξένοις). Aristides’ text shows that Ammianus works within a current that was born well before his own time.

Indeed, this interest in the Roman-foreign, insider-outsider dynamic continues after Ammianus’ death in the 390s. Rutilius Namatianus’ (416) encomium to Rome in the first book of de Reditu Suo testifies to the ancient victories of the city and its fortune-favoured longevity. As part of this praise, he commends Rome for “making one fatherland for diverse peoples” (1.63: ‘fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam’) and proving to be the “mistress of the world”. This poem dates to the period of turmoil following the fall of Stilicho in 408, including the struggles of the barbarian chieftains Alaric and Radagaisus and the sack of Rome by the former in 410. For Rutilius, the idea of Rome was a binding force and itself an act of identity creation at a time when the conceptual barriers between Roman and non-Roman were being breached. Aristides’ Oration to Rome similarly affirms a cosmopolitan identity as a binding force: Romans are quite literally netted like fish (σαγηνεύσαντες).

The notion of a common Romanness is expressed in an even broader form in the work of Themistius, the panegyrist of several 4th century emperors and an older contemporary of Ammianus. Themistius conceives of Romans and barbarians as similar because of their shared humanity. In his tenth Oration delivered after Valens had made peace with the Goths (370), Themistius praises the emperor for sparing the Goths rather than destroying them (Or. 10.132b):

> Whoever then of the kings here on earth has acted like a father, not only towards Romans but also towards Scythians,

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114 Cf. Edwards and Woolf 2003: 3. Cameron 2011: 217 argues that the Rome of his eulogy is not the brick and marble city but the idea of Roma as “symbol and personification of empire”.

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that man is the emulator of Zeus; that man truly loves mankind.\textsuperscript{115}

This extraordinary rhetoric imagines Roman and barbarian sharing familial relations. Elsewhere Themistius urges that the barbarians be protected as an integral part of the empire (\textit{Or.} 10. 131d: ὃς τῆς ἄρχης μορφὰν γεγενημένους). Themistius’ programme emphasising the common humanity of barbarians and Romans justifies the emperor Valens’ signing what was in fact an inglorious peace.\textsuperscript{116} Nevertheless, his inclusive attitude towards the barbarians is also reflective of his desire to see the empire governed by \textit{philanthropia}.\textsuperscript{117} Themistius’ ideology is a response to the Gothic problem in the later 4\textsuperscript{th} century and through it he sought “not the immediate annihilation but the eventual assimilation of the barbarian”.\textsuperscript{118} Themistius also defines an identity community, but he defines being Roman as the nexus of values conjured up by \textit{philanthropia}, including among them an openness and cautious kindness towards mankind (including barbarians).

These sources show that being Roman was a process of constant negotiation, often quite literally. The learned debate between Prudentius and Symmachus on the nature of Romanness is an example of how authors could tussle over identity.\textsuperscript{119} Revell has stated that: “[t]o be Roman was a discourse rather than an absolute. It was a discourse upon a shared idea of being Roman”.\textsuperscript{120} Quite what comprised Romanness was up to each

\textsuperscript{115} ὃστις ὕμνι καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς βασιλέων όὐ Ρωμαίοις μόνων ὡς πατήρ προσενήκεται, ἀλλ’ ἤδη καὶ Σκύθαις, οὕτως ἔστιν ὁ τοῦ Διὸς ζηλωτής καὶ οὕτος ὁ φιλάνθρωπος ἀτεχνώς. The translation is David Moncur’s (in Heather and Matthews 1991: 39).
\textsuperscript{116} Heather and Matthews 1991: 20-6.
\textsuperscript{117} Cf. \textit{Or.} 7.94c-d and Themistius’ praising of Valens for his (argued) bloodless suppression of Procopius’ revolt in 365-6 as arising from the emperor’s \textit{philanthropia}. The most extensive explanations of his \textit{philanthropia} ideal can be found in \textit{Oration} 1, 6 and 19.
\textsuperscript{118} Daly 1972: 366. Downey 1955: 203 sees \textit{philanthropia} as an alternative conceptual system to Christianity and a recognition that the empire could no longer automatically command a position of dominance over barbarians (p. 207).
\textsuperscript{119} Prudentius penned \textit{Contra Symmachum} as a response to Symmachus’ plea that the Altar of Victory be restored to the senate house in 384. As part of this plea, Symmachus (\textit{Rel.} 3.4) argued that only barbarians would be hostile to such a Roman artefact as the Altar of Victory. For this debate see Barnes 1976; M. Edwards 2004: 206ff. with Sogno 2011: 133.
\textsuperscript{120} Revell 2008: 2.
The recognition of identity as discourse emphasises its inherent ‘constructedness’ and accounts for the role of individuals in shaping an understanding of Romanness through an emphasis on particular values.

0.5 Ammianus and the definition of Roman identity

It was noted above that identity is primarily concerned with defining a community and thereby furthering group cohesion and integration. But it remains to define quite what identity means for Ammianus beyond noting simply that he sees it as a matter of group cohesion. A. D. Smith sees ethnic communities as defined by arguably cultural criteria - their “fund of myths, memories, values and symbols, often encoded, which express and explain the community’s perceptions of itself”.\(^{121}\) Similarly focusing on the community’s values and memories, Ammianus hopes to support, and perhaps revive, the idea of being Roman expressed through appropriate behaviour. The unprecedented extent to which he uses exempla from both cultures (Greece and Rome), and from all periods of civilisation, reflects his approach and has been documented by scholars.\(^{122}\) Exempla serve to reinforce a decidedly traditional version of Roman history based on a veneration of the ancestors. But Ammianus’ use of exempla from many sources may also stem from a desire to see the empire as a sufficiently broad and inclusive community based on a common notion of behaviour interpreted through civilisation.

This traditional idea is expressed in the text by several identity communities or strands which are primarily aimed at integrating ‘foreignness’ and creating Romans through an insider/outsider dynamic governed in turn by difference and similarity.\(^{123}\) The first chapter takes the

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121 Smith 1986: 42.
122 For Ammianus’ “encyclopedising approach to the past” see G. Kelly 2008: 220. For his juxtaposition of Roman and Greek exempla see Matthews 1989: 466. Rohrbacher 2002: 36 notes around a hundred exempla used by Ammianus to make a moral point which dwarfs that of Eunapius, his contemporary; Blockley 1994: 54 notes 110 places where exempla are introduced and over 200 separate instances of exempla. Vogt 1967: 149 judged the writer to have an overreliance on exempla which hindered his historical understanding.
123 Cf. Leppin 2012: 243, n. 12: “identity is a form of self-description of groups based on a distinction that is regarded as important: the main point is the difference, not the essence”. See too Wells 2001: 22: “identity is the ever-changing feeling and knowledge people have about their similarity to and difference from others”; and Conant 2012: 2:
community of the army. Ammianus has been called the last Roman historian to understand the army as an “insider”.\textsuperscript{124} As a self-confessed former soldier (31.16.8), Ammianus takes a keen interest in military matters. The first chapter argues that he creates a common military identity for the soldiers. Scholars have noted that the army had its own version of “military Romanitas” in the empire which worked to assimilate recruits mustered from a wide variety of ethnic and professional backgrounds.\textsuperscript{125}

\textit{Ammianus never uses Romanitas} but he does devise just such a version of military identity which rests on the premise of loyal and successful service to the state. Using the theory of ‘situational ethnicity’, the chapter shows how Ammianus allows ethnically marked soldiers to maintain their ethnicity alongside their professional Roman identity as soldiers. His flexible reading of ethnicity is part of his overall desire to integrate these people and also to further group cohesion around the banner of a shared military Romanness. Many writers in the late 4\textsuperscript{th} century believed outsiders to be inherently unstable and hence disloyal.\textsuperscript{126} But Ammianus argues to the contrary, as part of his wider assimilatory project in the RG.

The second chapter takes as its focus the Roman digressions of 14.6, 28.4, and 16.10 to argue that Ammianus uses these passages to create a notion of civic Romanness based on the idea that Rome is, to borrow Miles’ phrase, the “locus of a thoughtworld”.\textsuperscript{127} If the military identity defined in the previous chapter is by its nature relatively exclusive, the type of identity defined in this chapter is seen as incredibly broad so as to be appropriate for the majority of Ammianus’ ideal readers who would likely never see Rome. Scholars have long debated the purpose behind the two types of identities.

\textsuperscript{124} Burns 1994: xvi.
\textsuperscript{125} James 1999: 23.
\textsuperscript{126} Kagan 2011: 161 for the possibility that “competition among multiple identities” motivated treacherous actions.
\textsuperscript{127} Miles 2003: 138.
Roman digressions at 14.6 and 28.4, and 16.10 has not usually been considered with these. Generally, they have been regarded as an attempt by Ammianus to mix satire with history, characteristic of what Fontaine called “le mélange des genres”.\(^\text{128}\)

The address to the *peregrinus* at 14.6.2, and Ammianus’ focus on the poor treatment by the metropolitan Romans of strangers, has been taken to signify the adoption of a satirical persona for stylistic variation.\(^\text{129}\) This chapter, however, places the two digressions alongside that at 16.10 to argue that Ammianus engages in a process of identity definition across the three passages. The two ‘ethnographical’ digressions at 14.6 and 28.4 are an example of what Dench has termed “autoethnography”.\(^\text{130}\) Ammianus attempts to shift the focus of Romanness away from the metropolitan Romans and onto the upright stranger (‘honestus advena’) whose perspective the reader assumes. This stranger, like the addressed future reader *peregrinus* at 14.6.2, stands for all Romans who do not live in the City. The consistent focus in the digressions on the poor treatment of strangers and an undervaluing of their contribution to Rome’s longevity alludes to Ammianus’ integrative agenda and desire to re-found Roman identity on a more traditional footing which accepts and accommodates ‘foreign’ identities.

The third chapter takes as its focus Ammianus’ portrayals of the emperors. Scholarship has rightly focused on the importance of princely virtues for his emperors and has generally regarded Julian as setting the standard of imperial behaviour. But an element of imperial portrayals has so far missed a comprehensive analysis – the presentation and effect of imperial ceremony and propriety. Scholars have long recognised the increase of pageantry in late antiquity on the one hand and Ammianus’ description of it on the other. Generally, however, because Ammianus is regarded as a classical historian, it has been thought that he is largely disapproving of the increased visibility of ceremony. A recent contribution by Flower on

\(^\text{129}\) E.g. Rees 1999; den Hengst 2010: 286-7; Ross 2015.
\(^\text{130}\) Dench 2005: 62.
Constantius’ hieratic pose at 16.10 has argued that Ammianus is here belittling the emperor for his artificiality, for playing a role on a stage. But this judgement underestimates the extent to which the emperor is expected to perform a role.

The chapter analyses the emperors Constantius, Julian, and Valentinian to demonstrate that ceremony is a vital part of Ammianus’ conception of an emperor’s duty. Despite the work of Alföldi, MacCormack, and McCormick, there has been little which appreciates the role of imperial ceremony in Ammianus as a binding force. Using the research especially of Geertz and C. Kelly, which demonstrates how pageantry could contribute towards the construction of identity communities, the chapter argues that Ammianus conceives of ceremony and imperial pageantry as performing a cohesive function for his model of Roman identity.

Since Ammianus knows that members of the Roman community are geographically spread and ethnically diverse, he sees the ceremony surrounding the emperor as a focal point of identity which underlines the majesty of Roman power. It is important, therefore, for an emperor to ‘look imperial’ because he was the custodian of the Roman name (14.6.5) and the representative of Roman grandeur. MacMullen concluded long ago that Ammianus knows the psychological effect that ceremony possessed, and the pomp surrounding the emperor should be seen in this light. Ammianus has an undeniable interest in, and respect for, imperial pageantry because he sees it as furthering the creation and maintenance of a Roman community centred on the styled ‘outsiders’.

The final chapter takes as its focus the nomadic digressions, particularly the excursus on the Huns at 31.2. Most research on these digressions has attempted to trace either the sources Ammianus used or has attempted to disprove his veracity to access the ‘real’ Huns. Here the digressions are situated in Ammianus’ wider identity creation project. If Ammianus through the RG is attempting to define a Roman identity for ‘outsiders’,
then the Huns represent a type of ‘foreignness’ which could not be assimilated. Building on work which has applied the theory of ‘otherness’ to book 31, and arguing against a recent view which sees the book as monographical in nature and thematically divorced from the rest of the history, this chapter suggests that the final book in fact reaffirms both the integrative potential of Roman identity, and the need to police its boundaries against penetration by unsuitable groups.

That Ammianus had an identity agenda should not be surprising. Authors were in a privileged position as regards defining and perpetuating identity because they were theoretically able to reach a relatively large audience. This is not to say that any of them were writing for the masses: books were prestige items and texts took a great deal of time to copy and circulate. But because books were so prized, the people who read them were likely to have been of influence and wealth – a specialist audience. In spite of their cost, books of quality could expect to be read by diverse (elite) audiences. According to Norman, for instance, Libanius’ works flowed from Antioch to “all the Greek world”.

It is possible, perhaps even likely, that in writing in Latin and in Rome, Ammianus hoped that his book would also be read by powerful people. Some have argued that he may have recited the RG before the emperor Theodosius and his court in 389/90. There are contemporary parallels of such directed literature. Synesius seems to have written his de Regno for a specific audience, namely the so-called ‘opposition party’ of Aurelian in the Eastern court c. 397/8. Ammianus’ work was much lengthier than Synesius’ (or indeed the breviarists mentioned earlier), but given that books in the ancient world were often recited either in small groups or before an audience, it is likely that Ammianus saw the RG as serving a

133 Kulikowski 2012.
134 Corke-Webster 2013: 19ff. with reference to Eusebius of Caesarea.
136 Norman 1960: 123.
137 Frakes 2000: 53 imagines an intended audience of civil administrators and is followed by Rohrbacher 2007: 472 who broadens it to include the military branch around Theodosius.
contemporary purpose. Ammianus attempts to carve out Roman identities for his own readers at a time, in the words of MacMullen, of “unprecedented social flux”.139

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139 MacMullen 1964b: 49.
Chapter One

1.1.1 The army and ethnicity: furthering identity integration

This chapter argues that Ammianus envisages the Roman army as both a vehicle of integration and as an imagined community.\footnote{As explained above, the imagined community is the idea, devised by Benedict Anderson, that a community is conceived as a “deep, horizontal comradeship” (1991: 7).} The army fulfils a significant integrative function in the identity scheme of the RG by creating an ‘imagined community’ of soldiers which allows members to maintain their ethnicity alongside their professional designation as Roman soldiers. This is a significant pairing for my argument since it has recently been argued by Paradziński and others that Ammianus minimises ethnicity in favour of a professional military identity.\footnote{Paradziński 2015. Barlow 1996 argues similarly.} This view, however, does not do enough to account for the heavily ethnic flavour of some of the most important military action in the RG. As was argued in the introduction (§ 0.2), ethnicity is a means by which Ammianus establishes a sense of ‘foreignness’ or ‘outsiderness’. This definitional act allows him to define Roman identity through (and for) such people.

Further, this chapter argues that a hyphenated model of identity, which allows for both ‘types’ of identity (ethnicity/profession) to retain equal importance, is the best way to comprehend the martial brand of Romanness in Ammianus. As a former soldier himself (31.16.9: ‘miles quondam…’), he was perhaps in a better position than some of his civilian contemporaries to describe this. According to Ross, Ammianus positions himself as one of the last of the soldiers who had fought on Julian’s Persian expedition and as offering the final word on the reign of Julian, his hero.\footnote{Ross 2016: 24. Sabbah 2003 and now Ross have done much to flesh out the thriving trade in military memoirs (the authors of which served in Julian’s Persian expedition) in the second half of the 4th century. For most of these we know only their names.} Although this argument overestimates the importance of Julian to...
Ammianus’ project, it is correct to emphasise the ‘soldierliness’ of the RG.\footnote{E.g. Burns 1994: xvi: “the extant portions provide a soldier’s view of the Empire. Ammianus Marcellinus was the last Roman historian to understand the army as an insider”. See also Crump 1979 and Austin 1979 who both analyse the text from a military perspective; cf. Matthews 1989: 279: the RG’s “central subject is war”.}

It is necessary first to understand how Ammianus defines a Roman soldier, thus laying the foundation of an imagined community which accommodates, but is not defined by, ethnicity. Brandt and Seager have already done much to elucidate how Ammianus deploys terms for military men. However, it is traits not covered in the schemes of these scholars which are examined here: particularly how Ammianus conceives of a principle of reasoned behaviour (‘ratio’) which should guide Roman soldiers in contrast to barbarian mindlessness. This theoretical approach has scarcely been applied to the RG, since most work prefers to use Ammianus’ text as evidence for the barbarisation of the army, or else evidence of its efficacy.\footnote{Brodka 1998: 56-7 does note how \textit{virtus} is a crucial military virtue in the RG, yet offers little analysis. Most work, however, follows the methodology quoted in the text; e.g. Liebeschuetz 1990; Elton 1996; James 2011: 242ff; Charles 2007: 145ff.}

This section will demonstrate that Ammianus envisages the ideal Roman soldier as guided by a notion of appropriate behaviour comprising specific traits, namely moral worth expressed through \textit{fortitudo} (bravery) and \textit{fides} (loyalty).\footnote{This definition of Romanness is perhaps an earlier iteration of that found in the 5th century: Conant 2014: 161: “Foreign origins were no impediment: it was loyalty and service to the empire that made the Roman”.} These traits form what Ammianus terms the ‘way of the service’ (25.4.4: ‘mos militiae’) or the ‘military sphere’ (25.4.7: ‘res armata’) and they are expected of all Roman soldiers. This notion of reasoned behaviour, then, suggests the prototype of a \textit{thinking} soldier working for the furtherance of the empire, which is implicitly, and at times explicitly, contrasted to the artificial bravery of the barbarians’ furious madness.

Section 2 will show that this theory of a thinking soldier acquiring Romanness allows Ammianus to accommodate the many ‘foreign’ soldiers fighting for Rome, since the criterion for membership is not ethnicity, but
Defining a Roman Identity

reasoned behaviour.\textsuperscript{146} Section 3 will show that in defining Roman identity through behaviour, Ammianus is being entirely traditional. His hero Cicero, for instance, defines Romanness through customs (‘mores’) rather than race (‘ingenium’).\textsuperscript{147} Ammianus adapts this traditional picture of Roman identity for use in his own time. He allows a degree of flexibility as regards which sphere of identity, ethnicity or Romanness, may be accessed at any given time. This flexibility allows for the reality, in the RG, that many of the best soldiers possess an ethnonym. Under Ammianus’ scheme, ethnicity does not bar one from acquiring Romanness. But nor is it necessary for ethnically marked soldiers to jettison their ethnicity completely to become Roman. Instead, both identity categories co-exist and can be accessed depending on the situation. The model is integrative in that it allows for ethnic diversity yet still confers Romanness on Ammianus’ styled ‘outsiders’.

1.1.2 The making of a Roman soldier: defining the ‘imagined community’

The most important quality for the ideal soldier is \textit{fortitudo} because it is through this virtue that Romans annihilate their enemies.\textsuperscript{148} In a speech to his troops upon making peace with the Alamanni, the emperor Constantius, possibly echoing Jupiter’s claim in Virgil, declares that \textit{Romani} possess both \textit{fortitudo} when facing rebels and clemency (‘lenitas’) towards suppliants (14.10.14).\textsuperscript{149} The “innate bravery” (‘fortitudinem ingenitam’) of his soldiers is affirmed too at 21.13.12. Ammianus states in his narrator’s voice at 16.10.2 that barbarian nations are conquered chiefly through the bravery of Roman generals; and he groups bravery as one of the four chief virtues “defined by the philosophers” and possessed by the emperor Julian

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{146} For ‘foreign’ see Introduction.
\textsuperscript{147} Rep. 1.58, with Woolf 1998: 58; Dench 2005: 66, 139; Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 34; W. R. Jones 1971: 379. Ammianus deems Cicero the best of all (30.4.7: ‘excellentissimus omnium Cicero’) in his efforts as a lawyer. Ammianus’ reverence for Cicero is revealed by the former’s taking comfort in a Ciceronian saying (15.5.23) when he believed himself to be in mortal danger during the mission to assassinate the usurper Silvanus.
\textsuperscript{148} E.g. 16.10.2: ‘nec enim gentem ullam bella cientem per se superavit, aut victam \textit{fortitudo} suorum comperit ducum...’; 16.12.32: ‘\textit{Exsurgamus}—\textit{viri fortes}—\textit{propulemus} \textit{fortitudo} congrua illisa nostris partibus probras’.
\textsuperscript{149} Aen. 6.853: ‘...parcere subiectis et debellare superbos’.
\end{footnotesize}
Fortitudo is primarily a collective trait. Thus the Roman soldiers fight bravely against the Persians during the narrative of Constantius’ defence of the East, and Julian fires his entire army to emulate him in deeds of bravery. Occasionally, Ammianus will note an individual’s bravery: so the tribune Hariobaudes is a “man of conspicuous loyalty and bravery” (18.2.2: ‘fidei fortitudinisque notae’), and the comes Charietto is a “man of amazing bravery” (17.10.5: ‘viro fortitudinis mirae’), but in most cases bravery is a collective trait.

Bravery is also generally confined to those on the Roman side. Only on one occasion is fortitudo expanded to non-Romans: Ammianus says that Julian’s men campaigning in Persia feared the fortitudo of the Persian cavalry in open field (24.4.2). Barbarians do possess a form of bravery, but Ammianus generally deems this to be stubbornness (‘obstinatio’) rather than true valour. Thus, the Germani manage to destroy Roman forts through assaults born out of ‘barbarian pig-headedness’ (17.9.1: ‘obstinatio barbarica’), and the barbari hurl themselves against the gates of a town with great obstinacy after their victory at Adrianople (31.15.10). Seager has shown that obstinatio when applied to Romans tends to “refer

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150 This ‘classic’ list, famously expressed on Augustus’ clipeus virtutis, ultimately derives from Pl. Rep. 427e, and that Ammianus mentions Plato in the subsequent section (25.4.2: ‘illud adventens, quod apud Platonem legitur, Sophoclem tragoeidiarum scriptorem...’) would imply that he had that author on his mind. It is more likely, however, that Ammianus acquires the list from Cicero (Inv. rhet. 2.159), his most frequent moral authority, who cites the same qualities though in a different order.


152 Charietto is comes of the two Germanies at 27.1.2. Drijvers 2011: 28 deems the man a barbarian, but Ammianus himself does not. Indeed, the heroic death of Charietto, attempting to atone for the shame of his men’s flight (27.15), confirms his Romanness. Ammianus’ account may be contrasted with Zos. 3.7.1-5 who casts Charietto as a barbarian in spite of the assistance he affords Julian in Gaul.

153 Of the twenty times Ammianus uses fortitudo only five pertain to individuals (Julian, Charietto and Hariobaudes mentioned above and the emperor Valentinian at 30.7.10. The latter’s father Gratian is also said to be brave in the same section).
to the ‘bad’ side in civil war” which again implies its negative connotations.¹⁵⁴

Other words like *pertinacia* and *contumacia* are also used to refer to barbarian ‘bravery’ in battle. Thus 15.8.19 refers to the “obstinate siege of the barbarians” against Cologne, and Shapur displays stubbornness in his refusal to seek peace (20.7.8) after a bloody siege. Constantius’ men also manage to overcome the “invincible stubbornness” (17.13.11: ‘insuperabili contumacia’) of the Limigantes. *Pertinacia* is not always negative, but the difference is one of context. When used of Romans in battle it is manifestly positive: the Romans resist the saevitia of the barbarians stubbornly at the battle of Strasbour (16.12.36), and they stubbornly harry the retreating Persians in an engagement during Julian’s expedition (24.6.12). Barbarian *pertinacia*, on the other hand, is nearly always negative.¹⁵⁵ Ammianus maintains an Aristotelian distinction between ‘good’ bravery and ‘bad’ boldness.¹⁵⁶

The second key feature of the ideal Roman soldier is that he must possess loyalty or faith (‘fides’) to the state and the empire.¹⁵⁷ *Fides* is a flexible virtue in Ammianus and one of the most frequently cited qualities in the RG, occurring around 90 times in that form alone.¹⁵⁸ Sabbah attributes Ammianus’ interest in the quality to its ubiquity on contemporary

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¹⁵⁴ Seager 1986: n. 56 with his e.g.s of 21.12.4 (the defenders of Aquileia resist Julian) and 26.8.3 (Chalcedon resists the emperor Valens). In this context see 21.13.11 and the stubbornness (‘pertinaciter’) of the usurper Magnentius.

¹⁵⁵ As is *contumacia*: 17.13.5 for the Limigantes who behave *contumaciter* and “with their innate arrogance” (‘cum genuino fastu’) in their meeting with Constantius. *Obstinatio* tends to range from neutral to negative (e.g. 17.9.1 for Julian restoring forts reduced by the obstinate barbarians); but Ammianus seems to admire the stubborn barbarian who even as he dies manages to attack his enemy (16.12.48).

¹⁵⁶ Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1107b1-3. Ammianus references Aristotle several times e.g.: earthquakes (17.7.11); birthplace (27.4.8: ‘Stagira, ubi Aristotelem, ut Tullius ait, fundentem aureum flumen, accipimus natum’) though the latter reference implies that Ammianus may have accessed Aristotle via Cicero. Scholars generally downplay the extent of Ammianus’ philosophical knowledge (Laistner 1947: 149; Sabbah 2003: 73).

¹⁵⁷ Thus Hariobaudes (p. 49) is noted for both his *fides* and his *fortitudo*.

¹⁵⁸ The adjectival form *fidus* appears a further 40 times, and *fiducia* 59. Unusually Seager 1986 makes no mention of it. For comparison, the *Augustan History* mentions *fides* around half as many times (54).
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This is possible, but *fides* is also central to Cicero’s own definition of identity. Most frequently it entails a notion of trust or faith pertaining either to diplomacy (broadly conceived) or less formal individual relationships. Most importantly for the argument here is that loyalty is overwhelmingly a Roman quality. Julian’s *fides*, for example, is a fundamental aspect of his character in the RG. He assures Constantius in a letter that he has kept his *fides* according to his customs in spite of the acclamation of his troops in Gaul (20.8.5: ‘ego quidem propositi mei fidem non minus moribus...’); and he sends a subordinate to court assuring Constantius that Julian “would be a loyal deputy to his superior, so long as he should live” (16.7.3: ‘apparitoremque fidum auctori suo quoad vixerit fore’). Julian is perhaps the most perfect Roman in the RG so it is important that he should possess the quality in abundance.

Specifically, the virtue appears often in a military context and refers to the soldiers’ loyalty to the state. Julian addresses his soldiers as “brave and loyal defenders of my person and of the state” (20.5.3: ‘propugnatores mei reique publicae fortes et fidi’); and the usurper Procopius appeals to the “ancient loyalty of Roman armies and their oaths bound by firm religious rites” (26.7.16: ‘cana Romanorum exercituum fides et religionibus firmis iuramenta constricta’). *Fides* is a venerable quality (‘cana’) connected to

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159 Sabbah 2003: 74. E.g. *Fides milium* is attested on coins from Julian’s reign (RIC VIII, p. 228, no. 305).
161 E.g. 20.7.7 (a Christian priest receives a pledge from the Persians that he will be permitted to return to Roman territory); 31.3.1 (the Huns and Goths sign a treaty). This diplomatic use of *fides* is highly traditional. Keller 2010: 48 notes its application in the context of the Social War.
162 Garcia 2014: 92 notes that “*fidus* used in the RG denotes the quality of a civil or military subordinate who fulfils his duty and obeys his superior”. For the quality’s rare application to barbarians: 17.12.21 and the observation that the Quadi swear on their swords that they will remain ‘loyal’ to Rome, and 17.13.30 for a similar sentiment as it pertains to the Sarmatians.
163 Julian’s portrayal is discussed in ch. 3.
164 Pohl 2012: 20 sees *fides* and *devotio* as specifically late Roman terms for military and political loyalty respectively (while also noting their frequent appearance in Christian discourse).
Roman institutions: elsewhere Ammianus equates the white hair of the senators with the name of the Roman people as worthy of reverence.\textsuperscript{165} Meanwhile, Constantius lauds his men as “most faithful defenders of the Roman state” (17.13.26: ‘Romanae rei fidissimi defensores’). Ammianus thus has an image of the ideal Roman soldier whom he envisages as fighting for something, namely the emperor and the empire.

The language of collegiality, of ‘fellow soldiers’ (‘commilitones’), is commonly used to signify a unity of purpose in defence of the empire. Emperors and generals in historiography were almost expected to engage in this rhetoric, so its appearance in the RG should not be overemphasised. Still, it is in the speeches to soldiers that Ammianus’ ideology of the military service is most clear. Valentinian (27.6.12) connects the role of the general as both commander and fellow soldier with the protection of the state upon his elevation of Gratian to be joint emperor:

\begin{quote}
Behold, my dear Gratian, you now wear, as we have all hoped, the imperial robes, bestowed upon you under favourable auspices by my will and that of our fellow-soldiers [...] think nothing alien, which affects the interests of the Roman empire.\textsuperscript{166}
\end{quote}

As this quotation shows, Ammianus envisages the purpose of the army and the emperor to be the maintenance of the state. This responsibility united the members of the military and created order.\textsuperscript{167}

Against Roman order, Ammianus imagines the mass of barbarians representing disorder and destruction, and the possession of rationality, from which stem the required virtues, is the crucial difference between those who fight for Rome and those who fight against it. To reify the

\textsuperscript{165} 14.6.7: ‘et ubique patrum reverenda cum auctoritate canities, populique Romani nomen circumspectum et verecundum’.
\textsuperscript{166} “En,’ inquit, ‘habes, mi Gratiane, amictus, ut speravimus omnes, augustos, meo commilitonumque nostrorum arbitrio, delatos ominibus faustis [...] nihil alienum putare, quod ad Romani imperii pertinet statum’. The translation is lightly adapted from Rolfe.

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distinction between Roman and barbarian, he furthers the belief, well entrenched in classical thought, that external barbarians possessed a deranged intellect, exemplified by the bestial quality, *feritas*. During the great set piece battle at Strasbourg, Ammianus says that the barbarians have a ferocity which aroused the frenzy of battle (16.12.2: ‘barbara feritate certaminum rabiem undique concitante’), and Julian spurs his men on by ridiculing the excessive anger and madness of the enemy (16.12.31: ‘hi sunt barbari quos rabies et immodicus furor’).

These statements imply an almost bestial simplicity. To be sure, Romans too can also exhibit anger, madness, and excessive behaviour: the Valentiniani are frequent culprits. It cannot therefore be maintained that only barbarians are possessed of excessively passionate natures. The difference between Roman and barbarian excess is that Romans are never collectively said to act in this way: Ammianus is careful only to select individual Romans for judgement. On the other hand, external barbarians are regarded as a group and it is as a group that they are said to possess an unstable nature. Roman troops, irrespective of ethnicity, possess reason. The ordered rationality of the ideal Roman soldier as against the uncontrolled passion of the barbarians runs throughout the RG, and the notion of bravery and loyalty stems from this rationality. Interestingly, the one case where Ammianus appreciates barbarian bravery is where they explicitly possess a semblance of self-reflection: the Limigantes decide to fight to the death since they “thought it less shameful to be overcome by an enemy's strength than by the judgement of their own conscience” (17.13.11: ‘minus criminis aestimabant, alienis viribus potius quam conscientiae suae iudicio vinci’).

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168 W. Richter 1974: 355 sees *feritas* as indicative of the barbarian ‘other’ in ethnography. For the ‘other’ in the RG see ch. 4.
169 For Valentinian’s savagery see 29.3.2: ‘trux suopte ingenio Valentinianus’. His brother Valens is noted as possessing a harsh nature (29.2.12: ‘acerbitatem naturae’) which is not especially barbaric, but at 29.2.17 he behaves with “such a pitch of savagery” (‘ita saeviret infeste’) that he wishes his tortures could continue after his victims had died. Both brothers are the only Romans to possess *feritas*: 29.1.10 (Valens); 30.5.19 (Valentinian).
The battle of Strasbourg offers the most sustained portrait of the differences between Roman and barbarian soldiers (16.12.47):

For in a way the combatants were evenly matched; the Alamanni were stronger and taller, our soldiers disciplined by long practice; they were savage and uncontrollable, our men quiet and wary, these relying on their minds, while they presumed upon their huge size.\(^{170}\)

The Alamanni are a picture of typical barbarians – tall, strong, and of a savage and unrestrained nature. In contrast, the Romans rely on virtues derived from their rational minds (‘animis isti fidentes’): their extensive training and their caution.\(^{171}\) Ammianus enhances this view with a pairing of contrasting qualities pertaining to each side (‘illi feri et turbidi, hi quieti et cauti; animis isti fidentes, grandissimis illi corporibus freti’). Although Ammianus often blurs Roman and barbarian behaviour, in this case a distinction is maintained.

Caution, and the rationality it implies, is a trait of the ideal Roman soldier. Caution is also largely peculiar to Ammianus, as Seager has shown with reference to Tacitus and several 4\(^{th}\) century writers.\(^{172}\) Julian declares upon his accession as Augustus that he will be mild and moderate at home but cautious (‘cautus’) and considered (‘consideratus’) at war.\(^{173}\) As might be expected, Julian is himself frequently cautious and, tellingly, it is an explicit desire to avoid delay and move with speed that drives his decision to burn the transport ships in Persia with disastrous consequences (24.7.3).\(^{174}\) The

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\(^{170}\) ‘Pares enim quodam modo coiere cum paribus, Alamanni robusti et celsiores, milites usu nimio dociles; illi feri et turbidi, hi quieti et cauti; animis isti fidentes, grandissimis illi corporibus freti’. Translation lightly adapted.

\(^{171}\) Veg. *Mil.* 1.1 has a similar idea, putting Roman success down to their *disciplina*.

\(^{172}\) Seager 1986: 71ff., 83: “no other author in any field displays anything approaching the range or depth of his interest in caution and prudence, their spheres of operation, and their consequences for individuals, groups, and the state”.

\(^{173}\) 21.5.5: ‘domi moderatus visus sum et tranquillus, et in crebritate bellorum, contra conspiratas gentium copias, consideratus et cautus’.

\(^{174}\) As Seager points out (Ibid. p. 73) Julian is also frequently criticised for his lack of caution. Ammianus claims that Julian is a most careful emperor (24.7.2: ‘princeps sollertissimus’) which also indicates his desire to affirm Julian’s credentials for caution – the blame for Julian’s actions here are shifted onto Bellona rather than Julian himself (24.7.4). For Ammianus’ belief that divine machinery caused his hero’s downfall see
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emperor Valentinian is often said to be cautious, and although this has been interpreted as ironic by Seager, its context emphasises the specifically military application of this quality.\(^{175}\) Ammianus thus emphasises the orderliness of the Roman soldiers and suggests that their fighting skill derives from continuous drill and rational qualities.

Romans are expected to fight both bravely and \textit{thoughtfully} for the empire; in other words, they should emulate Ammianus himself as a ‘thinking soldier’ in opposition to the external barbarians whose bravery derives from instinct, like that of a cornered animal. The contrast between Roman and barbarian soldiers, specifically Roman rationality and barbarian madness, appears in another part of the Strasbourg narrative (16.12.36):\(^{176}\)

\begin{quote}
...and then the Germans, running forward with more haste than discretion, and wielding their weapons in their right hands, flew upon our cavalry squadrons; and as they gnashed their teeth hideously and raged beyond their usual manner, their flowing hair made a terrible sight, and a kind of madness shone from their eyes. Against them our soldiers resolutely protected their heads with the barriers of their shields, and with sword thrusts or by hurling darts threatened them with death and greatly terrified them.
\end{quote}

While the Alamanni are a picture of excess,\(^{177}\) the Romans possess a positive stubbornness (‘pertinax’). The contrast is further deepened by the observation that the barbarians’ \textit{furor} emanates from their eyes.\(^{178}\) The Alamanni’s eyes reveal the disorder within their souls, but so too do their

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Seager 1986: 74.
\item ‘...et properantes \textit{concito quam considerato} cursu Germani, telaque dextris explicantes, involavere nostrorum equitum turmas, \textit{frendentes immania, eorumque ultra solitum saevientium, comae fluentes horrebant}, et elucebat quidam ex oculis furo, quos contra pertinax miles, scutorum obicibus vertices tegens, eiectansque gladios, vel tela concrispans, mortem minitantia perterrebant’.
\item For a recent analysis of the barbarians at Strasbourg see Moreno 2014: 26, 30 who defines the contrast as Roman feeling and barbarian passion (‘el sentimiento romano y la pasión bárbara’); cf. Matthews 1989: 296.
\item The eyes and face are seen by Ammianus at 15.8.16 as a window into the soul (‘animorum interna’)
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actions which are rushed and ill-considered. The Romans, however, keep their heads covered with a wall of shields such that neither their eyes nor faces can be discerned. The Romans ensure that their emotions are contained, as represented in the text by the compact formation they adopt. Ammianus envisages the army posing an immoveable barrier against the enemy.

To be a Roman soldier means possessing rationality which subsequently leads to bravery and loyalty to the state. This is an entirely traditional picture. More broadly, both Cicero and Velleius Paterculus see fides as a general marker of civilisation and, for Cicero, Romanness in particular. For soldiers especially, according to McDonnell, fides was an important component of Roman manliness (‘virtus’) and it gained a moral-ethical dimension early in its conception. Ammianus argues that to be a Roman soldier is to possess values which in turn require rationality. But more than this, he suggests that soldiers are representing an idea of the empire, that they are engaged in maintaining the project of civilisation against the raging madness of the external tribes. In defining as Roman those soldiers who defend the empire, Ammianus lays the groundwork for accommodating those ‘outsiders’ in imperial service. As will be shown presently, his argument is that ‘foreigners’ are, firstly, doing good work on behalf of the state; and secondly that they could in point of fact be regarded as excellent Romans themselves.

1.2.1 Ethnicity in the army

For Ammianus, the importance of ethnicity in the army rests on the distinction between ‘barbarian’ and ‘foreign’; the former category is wholly bad; the latter category is potentially good. As the introduction showed,

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179 Cf. Otis 1964: 219 for Aeneas’ constant struggle with internal and external furor in the first half of the Aeneid and p. 242 for Aeneas’ almost feral instinct during the sack of Troy in Book 2: “[h]is whole character is dominated by furor”. Ammianus’ interest in the eyes, and the barbarians’ rashness, hints at a similar meaning.

180 Aristid. Or. 26.84 has a similar idea.

181 Velleius: e.g. the fides of certain Italian towns to Rome (1.4.2); and the hitherto strong but now wavering fides of the Rhodians (1.9.2). 2.67.2 notes the great fides of the wives of the proscribed in the time of Antony. For the overwhelming importance of fides to Velleius’ project see Schmitzer 2011: 186. On Cicero’s use of fides see above n. 157.

‘foreign’ means only an outsider to any given situation: it is a flexible perspective. In the case of the Franks and Gauls (§§ 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 below), both are styled ‘outside’ groups because they are marked with an ethnonym and arranged against a signalled ‘Roman’ establishment (the court for the Franks; the garrison in Amida for the Gauls). The position offered here is also at odds with several modern views of Ammianus’ description of the army which see him as sharply distinguishing between Romans and barbarians even in the service, and as advocating antagonism towards outsiders based on ethnicity.\textsuperscript{183}

These opinions are sometimes based on one or two flashpoint episodes, the most common of which is Ammianus’ commending the execution of Gothic soldiers in Asia Minor by the Roman commander Julius (31.16.8). For instance, Charles, though he concedes with reference to this scenario that Ammianus “does not necessarily condemn, here, the policy of allowing \textit{barbari} into the army”, and duly notes that foreign soldiers have their place for Ammianus, nevertheless reads it as an indirect criticism of Theodosius’ perceived openness towards outsiders.\textsuperscript{184} Yet the examples he cites as indicative of ethnic bias, the cautious and foresighted Sarmatian Victor (31.12.6: ‘Sarmata sed cunctator et cautus’) and the Gallic troops garrisoning the town of Amida during a Persian siege, are contestable. The Gauls occupy a different category to the Goths: the Goths are genuine barbarians,\textsuperscript{185} the Gauls and Victor are ethnically marked Romans, styled ‘foreigners’ and ‘outsiders’.

It is important to distinguish between external barbarians and those who fight for Rome, for there is such a distinction in the RG. The latter are, with one exception,\textsuperscript{186} never deemed barbarians by Ammianus. This is because

\textsuperscript{183} E.g. Camus 1967: 119, equating the \textit{Galli} with barbarians; cf. Dauge 1981: 339; Lee 2015: 107, n. 43 noting with reference to the Franks Bonitus and Silvanus that they were barbarians with Romanised names, following Liebeschuetz 1990: 8.
\textsuperscript{185} The Goths are fully discussed in ch. 4.
\textsuperscript{186} Chauvet 1998: 387 notes two exceptions: the \textit{voluntarii barbari militares} (20.4.4) and the \textit{Laeti barbari} (16.11.4). But as Chauvet makes clear, the latter case relates to an incursion by the Germans, so their designation as barbarians indicates their opposition to the empire. The first exception (20.4.4) is discussed below.
they are Romans instead, defined as such not because of their ethnicity, but in spite of it. For Charles, the fact that Victor is foresighted and careful “suggests that one should be very surprised to find these qualities in a barbarian”. In other words, Victor is a barbarian in spite of his good qualities. Charles reads the conjunction sed here as indicating surprise, as a concession, but it is better to read it as explicitly signposting the man’s (positive) military brand of Romanness. Caution and foresightedness, stemming from rationality, are traits representative of the military community. Ammianus is showing Victor’s Romanness rather than suggesting that he is a barbarian.

This view is strengthened by a survey of Victor’s appearance in the RG. Charles’ perfunctory note gives no indication of the relative frequency with which he appears or his faultless military credentials under three emperors. He appears first as a commander during Julian’s Persian expedition (24.1.2; 24.4.14), although he also held office under Constantius (25.5.2). He then serves as magister equitum under Valens, and follows him East (26.5.2), where he is sent as an ambassador to the Persians (30.2.4). The last we hear of him is in the battle of Adrianople during which he attempts to bring aid to Valens (31.13.9). The instance cited by Charles (31.12.6) is the only one which mentions his ethnicity.

It is better to see Victor as a Roman who is nevertheless ethnically marked. This is an important distinction which scholars like Charles have not appreciated, relying as they do on ethnicity as a chief criterion of barbarian status in Ammianus. Victor’s acquaintances reinforce his Roman rather than barbarian status. He is one of Julian’s generals, and often mentioned alongside similar officers: Nevitta, Dagalaifus (24.4.14), Arintheus, and Hormisdas (25.5.2), most of whom are also ethnically marked in some way. Nevitta and Dagalaifus are both associated with the “leaders of the Gauls” (25.5.2: ‘Nevitta et Dagalaifus proceresque Gallorum’) upon the death of Julian, and Hormisdas is the son of the Persian prince of the same name.

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188 Chauvot 1998: 400ff. captures the nuanced portrayal of ‘imperial barbarians’ in the RG and generally maintains the distinction offered here.
(26.8.12). Only Arintheus’ ethnicity is not mentioned explicitly, though he is associated with the Sarmatian Victor (25.5.2: ‘...Arintheus et Victor, et e palatio Constanti residui...’). The connection to Julian, given Ammianus’ love of that emperor, is a significant positive and also warns against seeing these men as barbarians. Of all the emperors, Julian is most often described by Ammianus as using and supporting ethnically marked soldiers. Indeed, it is his concern for these men that ultimately leads to his usurpation.189

Ammianus’ integrating identity agenda conflicts with those suggested for other late antique authors. Parnell, writing on barbarians in the Byzantine army, has argued that Procopius, when describing individuals with an ethnonym, portrays them as barbarian, not Romans.190 Thus, under Parnell’s reckoning, it is possible for Roman authors to appreciate barbarians’ contributions to the empire whilst not deeming them members of the Roman community, and Victor the Sarmatian would be one such example. Ammianus’ approach is quite different. He distinguishes between ‘foreign’ and ‘barbarian’,191 and he allows for foreigners to also become Roman.192 This approach is the best way to understand how Romanness works in Ammianus’ army.

There have been recent attempts to dissect Ammianus’ nuanced approach towards foreigners in the army specifically. Maria and Campos have noted that Ammianus presents plural and complex identities in the army and accept that many “Germans” in the RG seem to have reached “an important level of integration” through Ammianus’ creation of a common

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189 20.4. Constantius had ordered Julian in Gaul to give up some of his “auxiliary” forces (the Aeruli and Batavi, along with the Celts and the Petulantes). Julian goes along with his superior’s demands (20.4.4), but he asks Constantius not to take his fresh barbarian recruits, who had come over to Rome on the understanding that they would be serving in their own neighbourhood, away from their homes. These troops subsequently mutiny and force Julian to take the purple (20.4.14).
190 Parnell 2015: 816.
191 See introduction for the distinction between peregrinus and barbarus.
192 The example discussed by Parnell is that of Pharas the Herul, fighting for the Romans (Proc. Bell. 4.6.15), who claims in a letter to the Vandal Gelimer that “I too am a barbarian” (Εἰμι μὲν καὶ αὐτός βαρβαρός...). Procopius thus deems those who fight for Rome ‘barbarians’. As is argued in the text, Ammianus does not do this.
military identity. Although these conclusions are in themselves correct, these scholars argue that Ammianus presents a picture of a hybrid German-Roman identity alongside the professional designation of ‘soldier’; they envisage a high degree of cultural and ethnic mixing that “contradicts the existence of clear ethnic-cultural boundaries between members of the troops”. The argument presented here differs on the representation of identity, suggesting that it is more accurate to see it as hyphenated, rather than hybrid. This is because Ammianus in fact maintains discrete categories of identity rather than a model of indiscriminate and uncontrolled mixing. A hyphenated identity model holds that an individual has two separate, but complementary, identities between which he can shuttle as the situation demands and as such is distinct from the ‘hybrid’ notion which suggests an indiscriminate mixing of identities. The crucial difference concerns agency. The hybrid model implies a random cocktail of identities leading to the creation of a fresh identity. The hyphenated idea, on the other hand, suggests that an individual can keep the constituent parts of his identity distinct, akin to that of situational ethnicity envisaged by the social anthropologist Eriksen, which suggests that “a man may behave as a tribal in some situations and as a wageworker in others”. If he wishes to move between these parts the actor must make a rational choice.

193 Maria and Campos 2012: 36: “Ello constituye una clara evidencia del importante nivel de integración de esos sectores al ejército y de la construcción de una identidad militar común o híbrida”.
194 Ibid., pp. 41-2: “contradice la existencia de fronteras étnico-culturales nítidas entre los integrantes de las tropas”.
195 This brand of hybridity was suggested by Bhabha and his school and argues for a fusion or a mixing of two or more identities which breaks down the conceptual barriers separating aspects of one’s identity to create a third, new, ‘space’. On this see Bhabha 2004: 2-3; Rutherford 1990: 10; Bynum 2005: 30-1. In classics, the notion of hybrid identity has been advanced in fields ranging from Herodotus (McWilliams 2013) to Romanisation (Hingley 2005: 30). For a critique of the hybrid theory see Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 27 and Pitts and Versluys 2015: 6.
196 Eriksen 2010: 280. For the considered application of this theory to late antiquity see Halsall 2006: 283: “Early medieval ethnicity was situational and multi-layered [which individuals] can play, abandon or reorder in importance as circumstances dictate”. These views have a grounding in social psychology, thus Turner 1982: 20: “Different situations tend to ‘switch on’ different conceptions of self so that social stimuli are construed and social behaviour controlled in the appropriately adaptive manner”.

As the previous section showed, rationality forms an important role in Ammianus’ conception of Roman soldiers. This may in part be because Ammianus recognises that contemporary soldiers need to juggle their ethnic and professional identities. The notion of hyphenated identity explains how Ammianus reconciles ethnicity and military identity and it may reflect the presentation of his own identity in the sphragis (31.16.9: ‘miles quondam et Graecus’).197

This sphragis is therefore a key for reading identity in the army especially. There have been many contributions analysing its significance.198 But Sánchez has argued recently that it is a “tool for identity construction on multiple levels”.199 Although Sánchez does not link Ammianus’ statement with the army, but regards it as indicative of Ammianus’ cultural identity and awareness of social status, Stertz some time ago raised the possibility that it might have relevance for conceptualising the army.200 Stertz used the sphragis as a gateway to assessing the presence of Greeks in the later Roman army and concluded that, since they were rare, it was an apology by Ammianus for his soldier’s learning.

Although Stertz is right to read the sphragis as a springboard to evaluating both ethnicity and the profession of soldiers in the RG, by limiting his inquiry just to Greek ethnicity he does not go far enough. Miles quondam et Graecus is a key for reading hyphenated identities (profession/ethnicity) in the army as a whole, and applies to soldiers of any ethnicity. In other words, Sánchez’s suggestion is accepted here in principle but reorientated,

197 In focusing on how Ammianus presents his own identity and by offering it as an interpretive tool, I appropriate thinking from postmodern narrative theory (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 12-14).
199 Sánchez 2016: 37.
and Stertz’s argument that it signals an interest in Greek ethnicity in the army is broadened to include ethnicity in general.

1.2.2 Silvanus and the Franks in the West (15.5)

The case of Silvanus and the Franks at the court of Constantius demonstrates how Ammianus not only notes hyphenated identity, but also emphasises ethnicity. Ammianus himself often speaks “as a Greek”, thereby allowing the ethnic sphere of his identity to predominate in any given situation.\(^{201}\) The Franks are treated in the same way – their Frankishness is cast as a critical component of their identity such that it dictates the actions they take. By highlighting ethnicity, Ammianus adopts a clearly signposted ‘foreign’ perspective which allows him not only to demonstrate that Romanness can be open to various peoples, but also that they can be its best exemplars. Silvanus and his fellows are “incorporated outsiders” and the best representations of Ammianus’ brand of martial identity in stark contrast to the corrupt centre of Constantius and his court.\(^{202}\)

The notion of ethnicity being used to drive one’s actions is known as the ‘instrumentalist’ position. This holds that ethnic ties, whether perceived or real, can be used by interest groups to achieve common goals like political advancement or economic prosperity.\(^{203}\) For the following example, instrumentalism is apt. Malarich and Silvanus are both Roman commanders. Silvanus is based in Cologne and Malarich is an officer at Constantius’ court (then in Milan). To anticipate the argument, both are Franks and soldiers, but at times one or other of these identities predominates. What is more, Ammianus’ sympathetic treatment of the Franks advances his agenda stressing the contribution of ‘outsiders’ to

\(^{201}\) E.g. 17.7.11: ‘quas Graece σύργγας appellamus’. For Ammianus’ self-conscious Greekness see G. Kelly 2014: 69ff.

\(^{202}\) Dench 1995: 68, who examines the notion of incorporated outsiders as emblematic of Roman quality.

Rome. By focusing on their behaviour alongside their ethnicity, he places them too within the imagined community of the army.

Some scholars have argued that Ammianus *minimises* the ethnicity of Silvanus and his Frankish brethren. Barlow argues that their Frankishness is unimportant and that Ammianus’ goal is to define a military *virtus* against the corrupt civilians at court. Wickham also cites Ammianus’ Silvanus as evidence that upon joining the army, barbarians “deracinated themselves”. A recent contribution on Silvanus by Paradziński similarly downplays the role of ethnicity, underlining instead the soldierly aspect of the episode. But this is to underestimate Ammianus’ insistence on the importance of ethnicity in this episode – it exists alongside the professional identity of the soldiers and should not be ignored. Indeed, it may even be expected that Ammianus should emphasise ethnicity. An inscription made at the height of the Roman empire declares the owner to be a “Frank, a Roman citizen, and a soldier in arms”. This seems to be a sure case of a foreigner retaining his native ethnic identity while fighting in the Roman army. The tombstone cannot be dated, but it does show that the hyphenated way of thinking which Ammianus utilises had been around for some time, especially in the army.

When the reader first meets Silvanus, he is a Roman commander sent to Gaul to enforce peace. Significantly, there is no mention of Silvanus’ Frankish ancestry within the body of the text until the plot is revealed. This may be because Ammianus is hierarchising his hyphenated model and wants Silvanus to be seen primarily as a dutiful Roman commander rather than a Frank. In any case, Ammianus’ description of Silvanus places him within the imagined military community of the soldiers which rests on the

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205 Wickham 2010: 47.
206 Paradziński 2015: 86: “It could be argued that what really constituted [the Franks’ identity], was not as much its ethnicity as similar experience of military service [...] we should not perceive the affair as a struggle between two ethnic groups but two different groups of Roman officials”.
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virtues of its members (see above § 1.1.2), and his efficiency in Gaul is commented upon by Ammianus (15.5.2):

Since through long neglect Gaul was enduring bitter massacres, pillage, and the ravages of fire, as the savages plundered at will and no one helped, Silvanus, an infantry commander thought capable of redressing these outrages, came there at the emperor's order.209

This passage exhibits the chief military virtues of bravery and loyalty noted earlier. Gaul had faced numerous attacks of the barbari. The language used is striking: the barbarians engineered “bitter massacres” and they plundered freely ("licenter"). Although licenter probably holds no moral meaning, likely indicating the unhindered nature of enemy attacks, licence is a typical barbarian trait, and barbaris licenter grassantibus recalls ancient topoi regarding the irregularity and moral excess of barbarian society. For instance, while recounting an incident between Constantius and the Sarmatian Limagantes, Ammianus complains that many of them “believed mad licence to be freedom” (17.13.23: ‘licentem amentiam libertatem existimarent’);210 and during a digression on the Thracian tribes, Ammianus writes that “long continued license has increased their savagery” (22.8.33: ‘intendente saevitiam licentia diuturna’). License is indicative of barbarism and Ammianus is appalled that Gaul had not received aid for so long.

Silvanus is thus cast as something of a saviour, very similar to Julian himself who is rapturously received by the Gallic provincials later in book 15.211

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209 ‘Cum diuturna incuria Galliae caedes acerbas rapinasque et incendia, barbaris licenter grassantibus, nullo iuvante perferrent, Silvanus pedestris militiae rector, ut efficax ad haec corrigenda, principis iussu perrexit’.

210 The use of the noun amentia is noteworthy since this is one of just three occurrences of it, two of which occur at 17.13. Ammianus may be linking amentia and licentia to underline that he regarded licence to be utterly opposed to rational thought (‘mens’, a word he uses often).

211 15.8.21: “And in his coming they placed the redress of their common disasters, thinking that some helpful spirit had shone upon their desperate condition” (‘communiumque remedium aerumnarum in eius locabat adventu, salutarem quendam genium affulsisse con clamatis negotis arbitrata’). There is a clear link between Julian and Silvanus, his predecessor in Gaul, elsewhere. While on his way to Gaul (15.8.19), Julian hears that Cologne (the site of Silvanus’ insurrection) had been sacked by the barbarians; and at 16.2.4, preparing an expedition against the Alamanni, “the Caesar with the greater
Silvanus’ own credentials for solving the crisis are excellent (‘efficax’), and his vigour in safeguarding the province (15.5.4: ‘itaque duce Gallias ex re publica discursante’) causes the barbarians to lose their own zeal (‘barbaros [...] iam sibi diffidentes et trepidantes’). When Ammianus describes how the plotters at court begin to engineer Silvanus’ downfall, he laments that while the latter was defending Gaul from barbarian attack, Dynamius and his collaborators were attempting to frame an innocent (15.5.5: ‘insons’) man. While Silvanus rushes back and forth (‘...discursante’) in Rome’s service, Dynamius too is even more restless (‘inquietius’). The similarity of behaviours belies a difference in objectives, thereby underlining Silvanus’ status as a skilled and loyal Roman soldier against the corrupt ‘proper’ Romans at court.\textsuperscript{212}

As the plot gains ground and Silvanus’ situation worsens, his Frankish ancestry is hinted at. The narrative develops in this way to emphasise the double aspect of identity as profession/ethnicity and to demonstrate how ‘foreigners’ are valuable members of this imagined military community. Silvanus’ ethnicity seemingly becomes a spur to action for Malarich and the Franks at court (15.5.11):

Malarichus, on unexpectedly receiving this [a forged letter ‘incriminating’ Silvanus and Malarich], being even then troubled and sad, and grievously lamenting his own lot and that of his fellow-countryman Silvanus, called together the Franks, who at that time were numerous and influential in the palace, and now spoke more boldly, raising an outcry over the

\textsuperscript{212} Julian is a useful parallel in this instance, for while dutifully defending Gaul from barbarian attack (like Silvanus) he feels it necessary to send his subordinate Eutherius to court to counter Marcellus’ slanders against him (16.7.3).
disclosure of the plot and the unveiling of the deceit by which their lives were avowedly aimed at.\textsuperscript{213}

In this section Malarich views the situation in terms of opposites. He, Silvanus, and the Franks in the palace occupy one side of the divide, while the plotters (identified by Ammianus with the establishment) hold the other. Paradziński suggests that ethnicity is not important and that Ammianus casts “similar experience of military service” and not ethnicity as the chief explanation for why Malarich and his colleagues act.\textsuperscript{214} This either/or model need not be adopted. Rather, both ethnicity and profession are relevant factors in this episode. Silvanus and the men at court are of the same people (‘populus’) and, upon hearing that Silvanus and Malarich had been framed, the \textit{Franci} at court rally around them. Ammianus casts the Franks as successful and loyal Romans because he wants to demonstrate that ethically marked people are valuable contributors to the imperial effort. It is the Franks who are upholding Roman ideals: both Silvanus and Malarich are trustworthy officers who are themselves framed by the supposedly genuine Romans at court.\textsuperscript{215}

The ethnicity argument is developed throughout the episode. Malarich protests that Silvanus is innocent and deserves a chance to defend himself. In response he summons his colleagues at court and offers to go himself to bring Silvanus to the emperor. As a guarantor of his return he offers up his relatives (‘suis’) and a certain Mallobaudes (15.5.6):

\begin{quote}
But Malarichus, commander of the Gentiles, was at once struck with the unfairness of the procedure, and summoning his colleagues, vigorously protested, exclaiming that \textbf{men devoted to the empire} ought not to be made victims of cliques and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{213} “Haec Malarichus subito nactus etiam tunc squalens et maestus suamque et popularis Silvani vicem graviter ingemiscens adhibitis Francis, quorum ea tempestate in palatio multitudo florebat, erectius iam loquebatur: tumultuabaturque patefactis insidiis retectaque iam fallacia, per quam ex confesso salus eorum adpetebatur’.

\textsuperscript{214} Paradziński 2015: 86.

\textsuperscript{215} The divorce between the internal (good) and external (bad) Franks is underlined with the appearance of the tribune Laniogaisus (15.5.16) who warns Silvanus that the Frankish tribes would kill or capture him if he fled to them.
wiles. And he asked that he himself—leaving as hostages his relatives and having Mallobaudes, tribune of the armaturae, as surety for his return—might be commissioned to go quickly and fetch Silvanus.216

Silvanus’ Frankishness is not stated explicitly yet and it could be that Malarich is acting on Silvanus’ behalf simply because he wishes to protect a fellow soldier. Ammianus elsewhere calls Mallobaudes a king of the Franks (31.10.6: ‘rex Francorum’), however, and that he offers up his relatives as hostages implies, though does not confirm, Silvanus’ ethnicity as common ground for Malarich. Alongside the Frankish element is the clear statement of their worth: they are “devoted to the empire” (‘dicatos imperio’).217 It may also be significant that Ammianus has Malarich say this for he is a commander of the gentiles, a foreign unit in Roman service.218

Malarich’s efforts on behalf of Silvanus are not attested in any other source, as Paradziński has noted. It is therefore likely that Ammianus stresses Malarich’s role in attempting to resolve the plot alongside his clearly signposted ethnic origin to further his argument that ‘foreigners’ make excellent Romans. Rohrbacher, citing this case, has suggested that Ammianus has a respect for “barbarians” in imperial service, but more than

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216 ‘Confestimque iniquitate rei percitus Malarichus, gentilium rector, collegis adhibitis strepebat immaniter, circumveniri homines dicatos imperio per factiones et dolos minime debere proclamans, petebatque ut ipse relictis obsidum loco necessitudinis suis, Mallobaude armaturarum tribuno spondente quod remeabit, velocius iuberetur ire ducturus Silvanum’.

217 Cf. 17.13.30 and Constantius’ justification for electing a certain Zisais to lordship over a Sarmatian tribe because he would be “devoted and loyal to us in the future” (‘dicatum nobis futurum et fidum’). The only difference between Zisais and Malarich is political allegiance: one is devoted to the empire (‘imperium’) and an (internal) Roman; the other is devoted to the Romans (‘nobis’) and an (external) client king.

218 For the gentiles, established either by Diocletian or Constantine, A. H. M. Jones 1966: 218 thinks that they “seem by [Ammianus’] day to have consisted almost exclusively of barbarians, mostly Franks and Alamans”; Woods 1997: 274 however argues that the corps was recruited from all over the empire and so “did not suffer from any particular national or regional loyalties”. Regardless of their ethnic composition, they are likely to have been seen as ‘foreign’ by Ammianus’ readers since gentiles and laeti were external groups permitted to settle on imperial land in exchange for recruits. For these groups see Brennan 1998: 200; Ziche 2011: 203; Stickler 2011: 500. The Notitia Dignitatum lists a full fifteen commanders of Sarmatian gentiles settled only in Italy (Christie 2011: 56). As Moralee 2008: 66-7 shows, there were contemporary laws which attempted to legislate against intermarriage between provinciales and gentiles (CTh. 3.14.1: ‘de nubitiis gentilium’).
this is at stake. Malarich and Silvanus are ‘foreign’, not barbarian, and they are lauded, not just respected. This is the point of the episode: to demonstrate the worth and dedication of ethnically marked Romans like Silvanus and Malarich, both of whom are stated explicitly to be both effective and loyal Romans and Franks, and thus worthwhile members of the imagined martial community.

There are two identities in play here: an ethnic Frankishness and a professional military Romanness. This is signalled early in the section (15.5.7):

For he [Malarich] declared that he knew beyond question that, if any outsider should be sent, Silvanus, being by nature apprehensive, even when there was nothing alarming, would be likely to upset the peace.

Externus (outsider) is the key word. It may simply refer to a man outside of the situation and so not relevant to a Frankish ethnicity in the passage. But it is much more likely that, given the context and the general meaning of this word, by externus Malarich (Ammianus) means a non-Frank. This reveals how Ammianus plays with ideas of foreignness to create identity categories. Malarich asserts that if an externus is sent to retrieve Silvanus, then it may cause him to panic and embark upon a real insurrection. If externus does have an ethnic meaning, then the quotation shows how two distinct categories of identity, those of ‘Frank’ and a Roman military identity, have now become expressed in the text.

It is worth recognising that Silvanus himself has had no say in this process. Indeed, he is not even aware that there is a plot afoot; rather he is a passive recipient of an identity which the Franks at court have assigned him. It is ironic that Silvanus’ Frankish identity has been affirmed and

220 Ross 2016: 82ff. primarily sees the Frankish affair as a critique of Constantius and as ‘creat[ing] the situation in which Julian can become the saviour of Gaul’.
221 ‘Testabatur enim id se procul dubio scire, quod si quae mittetur exterius, suopte ingenio Silvanus etiam nulla re perterrente timidior, composita forte turbabit’.
222 For externus, see above n. 40.
recognised without his knowledge. However, although Silvanus has no agency, Malarich does. It is Malarich who acts because of the plight of his fellow Frank. Consequently, although Silvanus and Malarich are first mentioned only as Roman soldiers, by the end of the passage they have ‘switched’ to their Frankish identities.

As mentioned above, the hyphenated model of identity allows individuals to possess many identity perspectives from which they may view a situation. This conception of identity means that the either/or models posited by scholarship on this episode can be jettisoned and the weight placed by Ammianus on both ethnicity and profession appreciated. In the above case, Silvanus begins as a wholly Roman soldier involved in pushing back the barbarians (‘barbari’) from Gaul; there is no mention of his Frankishness until it is raised as common ground for Malarich and his fellows at Constantius’ court. At this point Malarich acts strenuously on Silvanus’ behalf and ethnicity becomes important.

Moreover, Ammianus does not condemn the Franks for acting as an ethnic group; indeed, he is careful to praise their good work. Once Silvanus does rebel, Ammianus treats him as a typical usurper to be annihilated, with no mention of his ethnicity. But upon his death Ammianus comments once more on his Frankish origin by referring to his father Bonitus, a Frank (‘quidem Francus’) who had performed “brave deeds” (‘fortia facta’), itself a possible signalling of that man’s Roman identity, for Constantine in the wars against Licinius (15.5.33). It may be that Ammianus uses quidem in a concessive sense, but it is likely, given the praise he has bestowed on the Franks throughout this chapter (15.5), and his focus on Silvanus’ loyal service and eventual framing, that quidem has an amplificatory meaning.

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223 Malkin 2011: 19 sees the early Greek colonists possessing many “circles” of identity with no recognisable hierarchy. A similar process appears in Ammianus.

224 Ammianus hates usurpers. Even Procopius, a relative of Julian (26.6.1) and enemy to Valens, is cast straightforwardly as a rebel to be crushed (for a different view see Austin 1972a: 187 who thinks that Procopius is “treated with comparative leniency” and may be contrasted to the “pallid and vacillating Valens” [p. 194]). O’Brien 2013: 226 has noted that usurpers (like the lesser emperors Valens and Jovian) do not get any formal direct speech in the text. Julian is an exception since Ammianus avoids his possible usurper status (G. Kelly 2005: 415). Kolb 2001: 212 notes how Ammianus preserves the ambiguity of Julian’s actions though does not completely “whitewash” (übertünchen) the usurpation.
underlining Silvanus’ connection to Bonitus, himself another loyal Frank. Ammianus highlights ethnicity because he wishes to demonstrate the worth of ‘outsiders’ and to signal them as fully integrated members of the Roman community.

At the same time, these individuals are Roman soldiers. Silvanus is both brave and loyal and his usurpation is born of necessity (15.5.16: ‘nihil tutum ex praesentibus ratus, in consilia agitabatur extrema’). His ethnic and professional identities are ‘accessed’ according to the situation. It is important to note that, in the case of the Franks, their ‘Roman’ identity is not ethnic. Ammianus does use ‘Roman’ in an ethnic sense, but, with one exception, it refers to the inhabitants of Rome (see ch. 2). ‘Roman’ is never used in the Frankish episode, but it is implied in their designations as soldiers and their possessing the qualities of soldiers. This hyphenated combination of profession and ethnicity is also that which Ammianus imagines for himself as a “former soldier and a Greek” (31.16.9: ‘miles quondam et Graecus’) in his sphragis and it permits the retention of a native identity alongside a Roman one, thereby creating Romans out of ‘foreigners’ via a flexible process of definition. The next subsection develops this point with reference to another prominent ethnic group in the RG: the Gauls.

1.2.3 The Gauls in the East (19.6)

The Gauls are a second example of soldiers whose ethnic background and commitment to Rome are equally stressed by Ammianus. Unlike the Silvanus episode, there is a much greater focus on the assimilation of these men into the Roman identity. In reality, the Franks and Gauls could be distinguished in Roman thought as an external and internal group.

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225 Cf. Eriksen 2010: 286: “Any person thus has many complementary social identities, and the context decides which of them is activated at any time. The model of segmentary identities serves as a reminder that identity is not fixed, is not ‘innate’, but is fashioned in the encounter between an individual and a social situation”.

226 The exception (31.16.8) is discussed below. Rather than Romanus Ammianus favours collective pronouns like nos and noster (e.g. 14.2.6: ‘nostri pedites’; 16.9.3: ‘pars nostra’ etc.) or, as the text explains, unqualified collective nouns like milites (e.g. 14.2.5; 14.11.13 etc.).

227 Whitmarsh and König 2007: 10 argue that one of Rome’s most distinctive features is its “insistence on the co-existence of overarching identities with local ones”.
respectively. In extant literature, the Franks are first mentioned in the late 3rd century as a tribe living on the lower Rhine.\footnote{228} Already under Constantine, Franks were appearing in Roman service so that by Ammianus’ time they were fully part of the Roman landscape: Silvanus himself, when considering his options prior to usurpation, did not feel that he could return to Frankish lands for fear that their peoples would hand him over to Constantius.\footnote{229} Even the Franks, who only sixty years prior had been a mysterious barbarian tribe, were now Roman soldiers.

If the Franks were relatively recent entrants into the empire, the Gauls had been provincials since the late republic and were “thoroughly romanized by the end of the second century A.D.”.\footnote{230} Thus, historically speaking, they are not equivalent to the Franks in their ‘foreignness’. At the same time, however, Ammianus deploys ethnonyms when he wishes to signal ‘foreignness’ of some type. This is certainly the case with the Gauls (‘Galli’) who often appear even more barbarous than those who belong to genuine, traditionally external, groups like Franks and Sarmatians. Ammianus renders Gaul and the Gauls ‘foreign’ when they were nothing of the sort. As with the Franks, Ammianus seeks to emphasise the ‘outsiderness’ of the Gauls as part of his argument for both the value of ‘foreign’ contribution, and the need to integrate such men into the Roman identity.

It will become clear that the barbaric Gauls are made into valuable members of the imagined military community following their effective service during the siege of Amida (19.6), where their initial ‘foreignness’ gives way to a final integration. Rees has argued that the Gallic orator Pacatus used a similar technique before Theodosius in 389, rendering his homeland at first as bleak and distant, before then casting it as a bastion of

\footnote{228} Pan. Lat. 11.5.4 with Christie 2011: 18. Julian also fights Franks during his Caesarship in Gaul (16.3.2).
\footnote{229} 15.5.15-16. Elton 1996: 40 suggests that there was no such thing as “barbarian nationalism” and it may be that the Franks across the Rhine did not feel any ethnic ties to Silvanus who seems to have been a second-generation Frank. Kulikowski 2015: 137 argues that it took “no more than three generations” for provincials to become fully Romanised.
\footnote{230} Goudineau 2000: 466.
Romanness.\textsuperscript{231} According to Rees, Pacatus “moves discreetly from a pose of Alterity to one of inclusion” to excuse Gaul’s complicity in the usurpation of Magnus Maximus in the first instance, and produce a picture of a “unified Gallic loyalty to Theodosius” in the second.\textsuperscript{232}

Like Pacatus, Ammianus also “moves discreetly from a pose of Alterity to one of inclusion”, but his subjects are the Galli themselves. Gaul is, however, part of the process. Chauvot has also noted that the Gallic passages cast that place as a thoroughly barbaric place worthy of Roman curiosity.\textsuperscript{233} This view implies that Ammianus is simply engaging in antiquarianism. Instead, the Gallic passages shape how the reader receives the Galli elsewhere in the RG – in the siege of Amida, for instance (discussed below). Ammianus makes Gaul a ‘foreign’ land which in turn distances its inhabitants from the reader. Ammianus then integrates these people into the Roman identity upon their laudable behaviour.

Gaul is rendered a ‘foreign’ land in Ammianus’ lengthy digression on that country and its denizens. At 15.10.1 Ammianus describes the Alps and casts Gaul itself as an ancient place, impossibly hard to penetrate:

This country of Gaul, because of its lofty chains of mountains always covered with formidable snows, was formerly all but unknown to the inhabitants of the rest of the globe, except where it borders on the coast; and bulwarks enclose it on every side, surrounding it naturally, as if by the art of man.\textsuperscript{234}

The sources of this digression have been discussed by several scholars, in particular the way in which Ammianus imbues his account with an air of

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{231} Rees 2014: 46-8, citing \textit{Pan. Lat.} 2(12) 2.1 and the starting point for Pacatus’ journey to Rome “from the furthest recess of Gaul, where the shore of the Ocean receives the setting sun”. Rees contrasts this description with the \textit{laudes Hispaniae} (Theodosius’ homeland) at 4.2-5 which casts Spain as the “supreme \textit{locus of Romanitas}”.

\textsuperscript{232} Rees 2014: 43, 52.

\textsuperscript{233} Chauvot 1998: 389-90.

\textsuperscript{234} ‘Hanc Galliarum plagam ob suggestus montium arduos, et horrore nivali semper obductos, orbis residui incolis antehac paene ignotam, nisi qua litoribus est vicina, munimina claudunt undique natura velut arte circumdata’.
\end{footnotes}
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antique learning to enhance its scientific credibility. The strangeness of Ammianus’ account compares to Caesar’s, not only in its outline of the tribes at 15.11.1 (cf. BG 1.1), but also in its tenor. For Caesar, Gaul and Germany truly were terra incognita, and as Krebs has shown, Caesar exaggerates their strangeness to cast himself as an intrepid explorer. According to Krebs, the geography of Germany in Gallic War is “arranged in an image of boundless and undifferentiated space in order to convey a specific message”, namely that Germany is effectively unconquerable.

Ammianus’ Gaul also conveys the message that the country is a ‘foreign’ place (despite it not being so). It is this kind of styled foreignness that comes into play when dealing with the Gauls themselves, since it allows Ammianus to cast such people as the core of Romanness after the fashion of the ‘upright outsider’ archetype.

Unlike the unproductive wildness of Caesar’s Germany, Gaul’s alien nature is cast as representative of a primitive simplicity and honour, which again suggests that Ammianus enhances the Gauls for an identity purpose. A local ruler at the time of its annexation by Augustus, king Cottius, is praised for his just rule (15.10.7: ‘quod iusto moderamine rexerat suos’) and the industry with which he carved paths through his part of the Alps (15.10.2); the bizarre story of the Gallic innkeeper and his wife who can best any band of peregrini in a fight; and the Gallic soldiers who are favourably contrasted to those of Italy in that they regard military service as a duty rather than a burden (15.12.3), all suggest Ammianus’ appreciation for the rustic virtues of the Gauls. Ammianus never makes the contrast explicitly, but since he has already made the comparison between the motivations of the Gauls and Italians for enlisting, it is hard not to think of the Romans of the city whose worthlessness so mars the fair aspect of Rome in the previous book (14.6).

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237 Krebs 2006: 124 arguing that Caesar wanted to justify to his readers in Rome why he did not attempt to subdue Germany too.
The Gaul of the RG is most definitely not that of several centuries of Roman occupation. It more resembles the *Germania* of Tacitus, and this text is a useful comparandum because it raises the possibility of using ethnography as a tool to explore identity. Woof has argued that this is one of the main reasons why the ethnographical trend was so popular in antiquity: the “ethnographic mode” slows narrative time, “summon[s] up exotic vistas [and emphasises] communal – as opposed to individual – identities”. The bellicose innkeeper’s wife (15.12.1) recalls the description of the German women who rally their flagging husbands in battle (*Germ.* 8); and Tacitus’ assertion that they much prefer war to peace as a means of winning glory (*Germ.* 14) recalls Ammianus’ appreciation of the Gauls who need no encouragement to enlist (15.12.3). Both accounts have something of the ‘noble savage’ about them, though Ammianus is not as complimentary of the Gauls as Tacitus is of the Germans.

While Tacitus is dealing with a genuinely foreign country, however, Ammianus writes about Gaul, long a Roman province, as if it were the same. Isaac has queried why this might be and protests that there “is no objective reason for such anachronisms” in Ammianus’ description of Gaul, for he surely had access to up-to-date information on the area. The explanation must be that Ammianus does so intentionally. It may be simply that Ammianus wishes to appear learned, as if he has charted Gaul himself, as has already been suggested by others. But this does not explain why the Gallic soldiers, whenever they are mentioned, also seem to be ‘foreign’,

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238 Vergin 2013 also sees the ethnographical digressions informing Ammianus’ identity agenda but for her they emphasise the traditional polarities of Roman/barbarian. Ammianus has long been regarded as an adherent of either Tacitus or Sallust (or both). E.g. Tacitus: Büdinger 1895: 3; Wilshire 1973 (stressing Ammianus’ independence from Tacitus); Conte 1994: 648; Cameron and Cameron 1964: 326. Sallust: Marincola 1997: 255 (calls Sallust his “premier Latin model”); Matthews 1989: 32. Combination: Syme 1968: 216; Rohrbacher 2002: 36.

239 For barbarians as a “literary mirror” see Kaldellis 2013: 10.


241 Barnes 1998 and Woolf 2011: 32 attribute this particular anecdote to Ammianus’ personal experience although it is not clear how either scholar decides between what Ammianus experienced and what he read.

even exaggeratedly so. It is because Ammianus plays with identity categories to emphasise the extent of ‘foreign’ contribution to Rome. Lampinen comes close to this reading when he says that Ammianus is praising Gallic martial valour because it was important that the empire have strong defenders.²⁴³ But it is not just that the Gauls are good fighters; it is that they are recognisably foreign and good fighters. This is part of Ammianus’ identity argument regarding the (valuable) place of situational outsiders in the imperial project.

Gaul is thus made out to be an alien country in the RG despite its long membership in the Roman empire. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Gallic soldiers are similarly alien. Ammianus blurs the Galli with possible external barbarian recruits.²⁴⁴ The Gauls appear often as soldiers in the RG, but the clearest example of their studied ‘foreignness’ is their contingent’s actions during the Persian siege of Amida, “one of the finest narratives in ancient literature”.²⁴⁵ Towards the end of book 18 Ammianus describes the town of Amida and its garrison. The garrison has been swollen by the arrival of six legions from Gaul which had been mustered by Magnentius and Decentius during their uprising. These recruits are “turbulent and untrustworthy” (18.9.3: ‘fallaces et turbidos’). It is unclear whether they were provincial Gauls or external recruits. Julian, for instance, writes that:

The most enthusiastic of [Magnentius’] followers were, in virtue of their ties of kinship, the Franks and Saxons, the most warlike of the tribes who live beyond the Rhine and on the shores of the western sea.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Lampinen 2011: 228.
²⁴⁴ Kulikowski 2015: 146 has recently questioned the distinction between internal and external groups and suggests that even those men from across the borders should be considered “in the same terms as those within the limes” because their career paths follow a similar trajectory as those regional groups within the empire like the Pannonians or the Gauls.
²⁴⁵ Thompson 1947: 9; cf. Marincola 1997: 203: “There is, in fact, no participatory narrative in any other ancient historian comparable to this one”.
This may simply be Julian engaging in the standard practice of labelling enemies as barbarians. Still, the possibility that these troops were external recruits cannot be discounted. In any case, most scholars seize on their typically barbarian traits. Camus believed them to be barbarian troops and that their description as turbulent shows Ammianus’ suspicion of barbarian penetration into the army; and Dauge notes that, though they are of use to the Romans, their barbarian qualities singled them out. Most recently, Szidat has observed the Gauls to be acting out tropes of Gallic disloyalty.

These scholars are right to note the stress Ammianus lays on the Gauls’ irrationality and consequently their barbaric behaviour; but there is no need to see them as somehow representative of barbarian penetration into the army. Whether or not these troops are genuine external barbarians, Ammianus labels them Galli, linking them to Gaul which, in the literary world of the RG, is a ‘foreign’ land. The Gauls’ efforts demonstrate Ammianus’ integrative identity model in action. As is shown presently, they are initially rendered ‘foreign’ before finally being recast as the epitome of Roman military virtue and members of the imagined community – the outsiders become insiders.

In the first instance, the characterisation of the troops as “turbulent and untrustworthy” is a sign that Ammianus is playing with a specifically military identity. The first section noted that the key traits of a Roman soldier were loyalty and a rational bravery (as opposed to mindless barbarian stubbornness). This first description of the Gallic legions effectively undermines their military credentials in that they possess the exact opposite of what is required. The non-Romanness of these quasi-barbarians is set in high relief by the stream of identifying categories in this section (18.9). Firstly, the garrison to which they were added as reinforcements already had a “force of natives of no mean size” (18.9.3: who followed him because of racial affinity. The question of Magnentius’ ethnicity is discussed by Drinkwater 2000, concluding that the supposed barbarian origin of Magnentius is an invention and that he is likely to have been a provincial Gaul.

248 Szidat 2015: 133.
‘indigenarum turma non contemnenda’); at the same time, the Gauls had managed to outstrip a “horde of Persians” (‘Persarum multitudinem’); next, Ammianus details several of the other legions already in Amida and commends them for their bravery against the enemy in a prior engagement despite the fact that they were new recruits like the Gauls (‘tirones novellos’); and in the final section (18.9.4), the last turma mentioned are the comites sagittarii, comprised of “freeborn barbarians who are conspicuous above the rest for their prowess in arms and their bodily strength” (‘ingenui barvari, armorum viriumque firmitudine inter alios eminentes’).

The Galli initially appear to be poor Roman soldiers when set against their fellows. At this stage in the narrative, then, they are scarcely part of the army-wide imagined community (indeed they are implicitly outside it), and their ‘foreignness’ is implied through their possession of typically barbaric traits. At the same time, the one group in Amida who are labelled ‘barbarian’ (the ‘ingenui barvari’) seem rather to be the most effective of the collected forces. In addition, the Gauls are not yet explicitly defined as Galli, only Magnentian and Decian (18.9.3: ‘Magentiaci et Decentiaci’).249

Ammianus is playing an identity game by blurring the boundaries between Roman and barbarian. He is making these troops as ‘foreign’ as possible so that the fact of their eventual integration and redemption into beacons of a martial Romanness will be even more powerful.

The barbarisation of the Gallic troops continues during the Persian siege narrative. The Amida episode is lengthy, but the chief focus here is the exploits of the Magnentian troops whom Ammianus portrays at some length and with highly emotive language. The following, drawn from 19.6.3-4, describes events after the Persians parade captured Romans before the walls:

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249 Decius was Magnentius’ brother and appointed Caesar by him upon the commencement of the former’s reign. It may be that their designation as such signalled their Gallic ethnicity, since Ammianus’ readers would likely have known the origins of Magnentius’ usurpation.
The Gallic soldiers, seeing these throngs of wretches, with an understandable, but untimely, impulse demanded that the opportunity be given them of encountering the enemy, threatening death to the tribunes who forbade them, and to the higher officers, if they in their turn prevented them. And just as ravening beasts in cages, roused to greater fierceness by the odour of carrion, in hope of getting out dash against the revolving bars, so did they hew with swords at the gates.\textsuperscript{250}

The Gauls within the walls of Amida appear as barbarian as any of the warbands defeated by Julian and Constantius in the preceding books, though that they do at least possess a glimmer of rationality betrays that Ammianus presents a Roman military identity. Ammianus’ description of these troops as \textit{Galli milites} is significant because it would seem to differentiate, if not entirely exclude, them from the rest of the garrison of which Ammianus himself is a part.

The narrative isolates the Gauls. These soldiers are so overcome by bloodlust that they threaten their own officers with death and slaughter. Ammianus’ description of the scene within the town as the officers decide what to do conveys the sense that the garrison fear the Magnentian troops just as much as the Persians (19.6.5: ‘inopes nos consilii, et quid opponi deberet saevientibus ambigentes’). There is a trace of ‘Roman’ rationality in these men in that they are spurred to anger by the sight of the wretched inhabitants of other captured towns, but it is overridden by irrational emotion.

Throughout the Amida narrative, Ammianus writes of the Roman garrison as ‘our men’. Thus, at 19.1.1, Shapur rejoices at the wretched imprisonment “of our men” (‘nostrorum’); similarly, the Persians were bent upon “our destruction” (‘nostrum exitium’). When the attack finally comes,
“our men resisted with courage and determination” (19.2.6: ‘et contra acri intentataque occasione nostrorum’). But Ammianus’ language implies that the Gauls are an outside group: they are not *Romani* or *nostri*; they are *Galli*. Ammianus uses the first-person possessive pronoun to refer to all Romans (including the Gauls), but it is notable that he also uses the first-person plural to describe the terrified Roman officers arranged *against* the savage Gauls (19.6.5: ‘inopes nos consili...saevientibus...tandem eligimus...’).

251 Ammianus accommodates the Gauls with one hand yet alienates them with the other. These troops appear more barbarian than Roman: they possess “Gallic greatness of heart” (19.6.4: ‘magnimiatate Gallica’) which dictates that they be allowed to march against the enemy. Chauvot reads this detail positively, and it could tie in to the martial valour of the Gauls noted by Ammianus in the digression (15.1).252 On the other hand, this Gallic nature had already led them to sally out with decidedly mixed results,253 and it is likely another alienating strategy: such unrestrained recklessness, often resulting in unsustainable casualties, is indicative of a barbarian nature throughout the RG.254

There is little identifiably ‘Roman’ in these Gauls when they first appear in the narrative. They are soldiers (‘milites’), but they are not truly Roman and fall outside the military community. Even if they are external recruits and not provincials, they are very different to the Franks who, though of tribal origin, possess decidedly Roman characteristics and do good work on behalf of the state. The Gauls are cast as utterly ‘foreign’ and a hindrance to the Roman cause. This is because Ammianus wishes to show that even

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251 For Ammianus’ use of the first-person plural see G. Kelly 2008: 42-3.
253 19.6.4: “they had made frequent sallies and attempted to interfere with the builders of mounds, had killed some, and had suffered the like themselves” (‘licet antea saepe egressi, structoresque aggerum confossis quibusdam impedire conati, paria pertulerunt’). Cf. 19.5.3 in which Ammianus says they possessed bravery (‘fortis’) but great recklessness. 254 27.10.13: ‘Et hinc arte belli doctior miles, inde licet feroces sed incauti barbari dexteris coire collatis’, noting the contrast between Roman skill and barbarian impetuosity; 29.5.38 and the African tribes who charge on Roman lives “without regard for their lives” (‘sine sui respectu’).
complete ‘outsiders’ can be made Roman; indeed, can represent the best of a martial Romanness.

There is a clear transformation of the Gallic troops from barbarian to Roman. They become part of the Roman military identity through their actions against the Persians. As with the Franks, they exhibit their identity after a hyphenated fashion, retaining their ethnicity alongside their professional designation; and the switching between the two constituent parts is a rational process. This integrative process allows Ammianus to accommodate ethnicity in his identity model without supressing that part of identity.

Ammianus signposts the transformation of the Galli earlier, with his comment at 19.5.3. Their tribunes reject their pleas to attack. The Gauls react poorly, “gnashing their teeth like beasts” (‘frendebant ut bestiae’). But Ammianus foreshadows the future feats of this unit (19.5.3: ‘verum secutis diebus efficacia eorum eminuit ut docebimus’). There is a distinct awareness that this foreign troop will fight bravely for the Roman cause, and Ammianus uses the same adjective (‘efficax’) for them as for Silvanus the Frank (15.5.2). By appropriate behaviour these ‘foreigners’ assume a professional Roman identity to co-exist with their ethnic one.

The crucial point is that the Gauls’ ethnicity and their behaviour, which Charles, for instance, has seen simply as representative of “the fickle nature of barbarian units”, changes dramatically as Ammianus completes the process of integration. Charles is correct that the Gallic troops start out as barbaric, but he misses the nuance in Ammianus’ method. The historian engages in a flexible process of identity construction after a hyphenated fashion to integrate these soldiers.

This phenomenon can be illustrated by a closer look at the text from 19.6.7-13. At the start of this little section, these men are still “impatient of delays” (‘Galli morarum impatientes’), so desperate are they to engage the

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256 So too Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 10, citing the Gauls in Amida: “Ammianus hated all barbarians, even those who distinguished themselves in the service of Rome”.

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Persians. Under cover of a propitiously moonless night, and after a quick prayer to the heavens, the *Galli* rush stealthily on the sleeping enemy. Armed with their axes and swords they butcher a great many before the alarm is raised. At 19.6.8, upon realising that the element of surprise is lost, the Gauls halt their advance because “it no longer seemed prudent” (*nec enim cautum deinde videbatur*). The sudden assumption of caution is significant. As was noted earlier (p. 54), *cautus* is an overwhelmingly Roman trait in the RG. This is an indication that Ammianus is reformulating these Gauls as explicitly Roman soldiers, as part of the imagined military community, and it was precisely their *incaution* which had caused them to suffer heavy losses in earlier skirmishes (19.6.3-4). As the Gauls show themselves to possess Roman traits they begin the process of becoming Roman.

The Persians are now the ones who exhibit the raging, barbaric behaviour which had earlier been associated with the Gallic troops. It is the Persians who are “raging and coming to battle from every side” (19.6.8: ‘cum iam undique frendentium catervae Persarum in proelia venirent accensae’). The Gauls are no longer the ones grinding their teeth (19.5.3: ‘frendebant ut bestiae’); instead they halt their charge because it no longer seemed the prudent thing to do. There is a thought process at work which contrasts sharply with the first mention of the Gauls earlier in the passage where they are driven by a bloodlust which causes them to threaten their own officers with death (19.6.3). The highly reasoned behaviour of these men is now one of their defining characteristics. They have evolved into thinking warriors driven by reasoned, or rather, contained, aggression.

This transformation is further suggested by the well-ordered nature of their retreat to the safety of the walls. They withdraw “as if to music, not one of them turning his back” (19.6.9: ‘nullo terga vertente, evadere

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257 de Jonge 1982 in his commentary on this passage (19.6.7) considers whether the detail that the Gauls wielded axes (*secures*) is another signifier of their strangeness. In the end, he decides that axes may have been a specialised tool for these particular troops.

258 Once, the Persians are noted as possessing it (23.6.78); and at 29.5.51 Ammianus sarcastically praises the African prince Igmazen for his caution in deciding to flee from a battle with the Romans.
festinabant, et velut repedantes sub modulis’). Given that Ammianus elsewhere laments how contemporary soldiers favour softer songs rather than war-chants (22.4.6: ‘cum miles cantilenas meditaretur, pro iubilo molliores’), and given that at 22.4.6 he also mentions that a Spartan was once punished for being caught seeking shelter while on campaign, the Gauls appear as an example of martial excellence, as quasi-Spartiates. These do not appear to be the same quasi-barbarians whom Ammianus had introduced as “turbulent and untrustworthy” (18.9.3: ‘fallaces et turbidos’).

This is not to say that Ammianus’ Gauls entirely abandon the Gallic part of their character; rather that the Gallic and Roman features of their identity co-exist, whereas before these troops had begun the raid, they were barbarian-like, as unpredictable as wild beasts. Ammianus suggests the co-existence (rather than the complete replacement) of ethnic and Roman identity through his terminology again. At 19.6.4 the milites return to being Galli. The Gauls resist the Persians with all the strength of their being (‘contra Galli corporum robore…’). This phrase may well be an internal echo of 19.6.4 where Ammianus mentions their “Gallic greatness of heart” (‘pro Gallica magnamitate’), but whereas in this early section the natural bravado of the Gauls is a weakness and even a threat to Roman safety, now their natural strength has found a productive outlet in the destruction of Persians.

Furthermore, in directing their aggression against Persians rather than their fellow soldiers, the Gauls reinforce their Roman identity. This newfound collegiality is suggested in subsequent sections. At 19.6.10 the Gallic soldiers reach the walls of Amida following their ordered retreat a few moments before. The order is given, and the defenders hasten to open the gates to “our men” (‘et resultantibus e civitate lituis multis portae panduntur recepturae nostros’). Earlier in the narrative, the Gauls are contrasted to nostri (Ammianus and the rest of the garrison), but now they too are part of the group.

259 For the Spartan connection with music see e.g. Plut. Lyc. 21; Cic. Tusc. 2.37.
This reception into full membership of the imagined military community is symbolised by their passing through the city gates which mark a concrete boundary between Roman and barbarian. Ammianus has a clear conception of boundaries separating Roman and barbarian not only in terms of behavioural differences, but also in the understanding that the orbis Romanus was separated from barbaricum by the Roman frontier (‘limes’). Valentinian, for instance, is disliked by the author, but his consistent virtue while alive was his dedication in protecting the frontiers as became a dutiful prince (28.2.1: ‘officio principis’). Ammianus’ sensitivity to the integrity of boundaries causes him to underline the Gauls’ own movement across the divide between Romanness and barbarity.

Identity is a constructive process of accommodation and recognition. Recognition, that is, by the group which an individual has just joined. Parnell has suggested that “to become a Roman that individual would have to consciously choose to join the Roman political community and be accepted into it by other Romans”.

How the Gauls are accommodated into the Roman community has already been shown in the discussion above, but they are also recognised and accepted. The end of their section illustrates how Ammianus envisages this transformational process in action. At 19.6.11-13 Ammianus describes the aftermath of the raid. He compares the Gauls’ attack to the famous Greek night raid (ll. 10.435) and says that, had luck been on their side, they would have exceeded their

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260 For the role of walls as identity “boundary maintenance” see Matthews 1989: 392; Neil 2012: 51ff. and Jaeger 1997: 10, with reference to how Livy ‘builds’ Roman identity through the maintenance of similar boundaries.
261 31.4.9: ‘per id tempus nostri limitis reseratis obicibus…’. For the late antique conception of the limes as an ideological boundary between Roman and barbarian see Kulikowski 2015: 147; for Ammianus’ thoughts on it see Drijvers 2011 who notes his flexibility in seeing the border at times as a boundary overseen by fortifications and at others as a more nebulous zone of interaction. In reality, the border is likely to have been just such a zone of interaction. On the ancient frontier as a zone see Isaac 1988; Barlow 1996: 228; Amory 1997: 26; Drinkwater 2007: 38; Klein 2015: 28. This perspective is in line with theoretical work on the frontier, as e.g. in Donnan and Wilson 2010 and, especially, Sahlins 1991.
262 Ward-Perkins 2005: 77: “for a change of identity to be successful, this requires, not only mental and cultural adjustments on the part of the person making the shift, but also the acceptance of that person into the group they wish to join.”
263 Parnell 2015: 814, building on Wooff 1998: 59: “To become a Roman one had to be […] received […] into the political and religious community of the populus Romanus”.

83
Homeric precedent. Ammianus, a proud Greek, is fond of introducing Homeric parallels into his narrative to add epic flavour.\textsuperscript{264} That Ammianus sees fit to include the \textit{Galli} in a Homeric reflection is interesting in itself and provides further evidence of their transformation into brave Roman soldiers. In any case, the Gauls receive their recognition at 19.6.12:

In honour of their officers, as leaders in these \textbf{brave deeds},
after the destruction of the city the emperor ordered statues in full armour to be made and set up in a frequented spot at Edessa, and they are preserved intact to the present time.\textsuperscript{265}

The Gauls succeed in winning acceptance into the Roman community. Their statues testify to their bravery, but they also provide the Gauls with recognition and consequently acceptance into the Roman military community. The \textit{Galli} are no longer examples of barbaric instability; they are examples of Roman courage to be emulated. By receiving the acknowledgement of the emperor himself, and then having statues erected in their honour, they receive a permanent recognition of their Roman identity. Ammianus says that the monuments can still be seen to this day, again reifying their Romanness.

The last mention of the Gauls (19.6.13) details the carnage they inflicted during the night as it is surveyed by the Persians the following morning. The assembled kings are indignant that the \textit{Romani} had succeeded not only in forcing their way through the picket line but also in slaughtering so many high value targets, the optimates and satraps.\textsuperscript{266} Ammianus therefore signals the end of the transformation. The soldiers started out as \textit{bestiae};

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{264} A point noted by Wallace-Hadrill in the Penguin translation of Ammianus by Walter Hamilton (p. 454), with G. Kelly 2008: 59. The Amida narrative has several Homeric allusions. At 19.4.1 a plague breaks out in Amida which seems to echo the plague that struck the Greeks before the walls of Troy at \textit{Iliad} 1.9 ff. and 43 ff. (see also 19.4.3). 19.1.9-11 tells how the struggle over the corpse of Grumbates, one of Shapur's vassals, and the resultant funeral games resembled the struggle over Patroclus' body.

\textsuperscript{265} ‘Horum campidocitoribus ut \textbf{fortium factorum} antesignanis post civitatis excidium armatas statuas apud Edessam in regione celebri locari iussessor imperator, quae ad praesens servatur intactae’.

\textsuperscript{266} ‘Retectis sequenti luce funeribus cum inter caesorum cadavera optimates invenirentur et satrapae clamosi dissoni fortunam aliam alibi cum lacrimis indicabant, luctus ubique et indignatio regum audiebatur arbitrantium per stationes muris obiectas inrupisse Romanos’.
\end{quote}
they became *nostri*; now they are *Romani*, responsible for delivering a grievous blow to the enemy leadership cadre.\textsuperscript{267}

This section has shown how Ammianus envisages the construction of identity within the army. Although the cases of the Franks and Gauls are presented differently, both demonstrate that Ammianus is not only aware of ethnicity but also allows for it to contribute in significant ways to the portrayal of Roman soldiers. In the strict sense of geographical location and ethnic origin, the Gauls and the Franks are not equivalent; whether or not Ammianus’ *Galli* are provincials or external recruits, they are labelled as the former but described more in the fashion of the latter.

The crucial point is that both groups, Franks and Gauls, are dedicated to the empire and perform good work on behalf of the state. As part of this, their ethnicity is not minimised or ignored; it is rather emphasised and even celebrated. This is because Ammianus sees the Roman military identity as one which incorporates ‘foreign’ contributions. This act of incorporation is expressed through a hyphenated identity model which allows the co-existence of a native ethnicity alongside a professional soldierly identity.

1.3 Explaining the imagined community as an integrative tool

The question remains why Ammianus uses this hyphenated model. For instance, knowing that Silvanus would eventually rebel, he could have cast him as a raging barbarian to be crushed. Alternatively, if he wanted to make Constantius’ regime seem as degenerate as possible, as many scholars have suggested, Malarich and his fellows could have been ignored (as they are in all other sources) and Silvanus’ military credentials

\textsuperscript{267} A similar, though abbreviated, process occurs to the Gauls and “northern Germans” (*arcotis Germanis*) at 25.6.13-14 during the Roman retreat from Persia under Jovian. These 500 men are initially ordered to swim the Tigris as barbarian cannon fodder but their action upon reaching the opposite bank is “bold and efficient” (*audacia...efficax*) and they kill many Persians, inspiring the Roman onlookers. King Shapur is perturbed at the “brave deeds of our men” (25.7.1: ‘*fortia facta nostrorum*’) and he singles out the 500 swimmers as particularly worrisome (25.7.3). This is a companion episode to Amida and illustrates again the transformational process from barbarian to Roman.
emphasised at the expense of his ethnicity – his name seems ‘Roman’ enough such that his Frankishness could not be inferred.268

Foreignness is important to Ammianus’ scheme. In this third part, Ammianus’ assimilatory identity model is nuanced further. His aim is to foster an ultimately integrative identity community by granting soldiers, many of whom are somehow marked as ‘foreign’, a share in the imperial project. This is measurably different to some of his peers. As part of this process he relocates the locus of Roman identity away from the corrupt centre (the court, Rome) to the virtuous periphery (‘foreigners’, soldiers).269

In the first instance, Ammianus recognises that more outsiders have been required to enlist in the army. At several points he laments that those who traditionally enlisted (Romans and provincials) are no longer doing so: the Italians cut off their thumbs to avoid military service (15.12.3); Roman commanders (31.16.8: ‘rectores Romani’) are rarely seen in military service “these days”; and the provincials (19.11.7: ‘provinciales’) would rather give money in lieu of service.270 This last example comes with an explicit warning concerning barbarian recruitment. Some have taken these sentiments, especially the last mentioned, as indicating Ammianus’ dislike of barbarian engagement in general.271

268 For Silvanus as a Roman name: Liebeschuetz 1990: 8 and Mommsen 1996: 464 who reckons Silvanus a “Frank with [a] Roman name”. Silvanus was a popular woodland deity in the Roman provinces. See also Lee 2015: 107, n. 43 who also judges ‘Bonitus’, Silvanus’ father and also deemed a Francus by Ammianus, similarly Roman.

269 This is a process examined further in the following chapter with reference to the digressions on Rome.

270 15.12.3 referring to the Gauls: ‘Nec eorum aliquando quisquam (ut in Italia) munus Martium pertimescens, pollicem sibi praecidit’; 19.11.7: ‘aurum quippe gratae provinciales pro corporibus dabunt, quae sese rem Romanam aliquotiens aggravavit’; 31.16.8: ‘rectores, Romanos omnes (quod his temporibus raro contingit)’. Cf. Hdn. 2.11.2-5 on the demilitarised Italians even in his day. The problems of the later 4th century army is well known. The seventh book of the Theodosian Code is devoted to recruitment and its issues. The traditional picture of rampant barbarian recruitment is offered by Mackail 1920; Vogt 1967: 156-8; Liebeschuetz 1990; and MacMullen 1990: 52, although Elton 1996 downplays the extent of barbarisation in the army. Saddington 2009: 86 suggests that local provincial enlistment gave way to ethnic (tribal) recruitment at this time; and Wirth 1997 offers a detailed picture of the prevalence and role of tribal military colonies.

This is true up to a point. Heather has rightly noted that Ammianus’ attitude to barbarians is relatively uncomplicated in that he tends to advocate slaughter rather than accommodation.\(^{272}\) Thus at 31.16.8 Ammianus praises the quick thinking of the Roman commander Julius for deciding to massacre the Goths in his service as a precaution after the battle of Adrianople. He also praises the destruction of a band of Saxons with whom Rome had recently concluded peace (28.5.7). At the same time, however, Ammianus’ attitude towards barbarians eludes generalisation.\(^{273}\) Some scholars, most noticeably Chauvot, have suggested that Ammianus adopts a more nuanced view, and even that he supports the integration of barbarian officers into the Roman hierarchy.\(^{274}\) Chauvot is right to say that integration is the key point. It is not necessarily barbarian recruitment in itself Ammianus fears but *uncontrolled* and hasty recruitment. This is the crux of his complaint at 19.11.7 (Constantius and the Limigantes) and, especially, throughout book 31, whose overarching theme is precisely the sheer number of Gothic immigrants present in the Roman world.\(^{275}\)

Ammianus makes clear that unintegrated recruits are to be feared because they have not yet been assimilated to the Roman identity. It is significant that the one definite case of ‘ethnic’ treachery in the RG concerns an Alamannic king who had been recruited hastily and directly from his tribe. This king is later found to be a double agent and suffers immolation (29.4.7). Wolfram has written that the 4th century Roman army was “polyethnic and open to all kinds of warriors”, taking to extremes the ethnic diversity of the Roman legion of the earlier empire.\(^{276}\) It cannot be denied that most of the soldiers individually named as performing well are potentially of barbarian stock, and if names were to be taken as evidence


\(^{273}\) In this he is like the panegyrist Themistius who seems at times to favour barbarian integration and at others to favour a harder line, cf. Daly 1972: 355.

\(^{274}\) Chauvot 1998: 400-404, modifying the view of Demandt 1965: 34 who suggested that Ammianus was pro-German.

\(^{275}\) For the overwhelming number of Goths see e.g.: 31.4.5 and 31.7.2.

\(^{276}\) Wolfram 2012: 102.
of ethnicity, the picture becomes even clearer.\textsuperscript{277} It is for integrative purposes that Ammianus devises his hyphenated model of professional Roman identity alongside ethnicity, as a means of fostering unity among soldiers of all ethnicities; and in casting ‘foreigners’ as devoted and effective soldiers, Ammianus is granting them a stake in the empire.

This agenda appears elsewhere. During a speech to his soldiers, Ammianus puts into Valentinian’s mouth a justification for appointing a colleague to share the purple. This speech does not relate to external recruits, but it demonstrates Ammianus’ interest in trust and the danger of accepting untested people into friendship (26.2.9):

\begin{quote}
For as the philosophers teach us, not only in royal power, where the greatest and most numerous dangers are found, but also in the relations of private and everyday life, a stranger ought to be admitted to friendship by a prudent man only after he has first tested him; not tested after he has been admitted to friendship.\textsuperscript{278}
\end{quote}

Given that Valentinian explicitly links the private with the public sphere, this may be taken as a general reflection on imperial affairs. Statecraft is most certainly on Ammianus’ mind in this speech, as it is in most of the imperial orations Ammianus includes.\textsuperscript{279} In the previous section (26.2.8), Valentinian underscores the importance of \textit{concordia} through which even the weakest states grow strong. Ammianus is desirous of \textit{concordia} within the state because it was an act of concord between Bravery and Fortune,

\textsuperscript{277} E.g. Machameus and Maurus’ heroic conduct against the Persians (25.1.2); and that of Bainobaudes and the Cornuti (16.11.9); the “extraordinary bravery” of Charietto (17.10.5). Interestingly, although Ammianus never mentions his patron Ursicinus’ ethnicity, there is an Alamannic king with that name (16.12.1) would raise the possibility of the former’s foreign heritage. For the large number of “germanische Namen” in the RG see Hoffmann 1978: 307ff. For names denoting identity in general see Alston 1999: 179-80.

\textsuperscript{278} ‘Ut enim sapientes definiunt, non modo in imperio, ubi pericula maxima sunt et creberrima, verum etiam in privatis cotidianisque rationibus, alienum ad amicitiam, cum iudicaverit quisquam prudens, adiungere sibi debeat, non cum adiunxerit, iudicare’.

\textsuperscript{279} On the place of speeches in historiography generally see Mehl 2014: 21-2 with Champion 2004: 193 arguing that speeches reflect a “political choice” of the author. For the speeches in Ammianus see especially O’Brien 2013.
two forces ordinarily at odds, which initiated Rome’s imperial ambitions.280 This desire extends to the army by implication: if strangers are admitted wholesale into the empire and its institutions, or if they are promoted to military posts too quickly, they cannot be integrated easily into the Roman identity. But if they are successfully integrated, such people can make a valuable contribution to the Roman effort. The Gauls in Amida, whether or not they are truly external recruits, demonstrate this process in action.

Ammianus does accept the dangers of unintegrated foreignness, but in offering his hyphenated identity model, he hopes to create cohesion within the army and emphasise the contribution of ‘foreigners’ to the Roman project. Ammianus regards ‘foreigners’ very much as partners and consequently he affords them a valuable place within the Roman military community. Analysis of the possible source of Ammianus’ hyphenated model, Cicero, demonstrates the point. This author faced similar problems to Ammianus and was also interested in integrating ‘foreignness’ and creating unity. Blockley has shown that Ammianus is deeply familiar with many of Cicero’s works, even deeming him to be an exponent of “Ciceronian historiography”.281 In reply to a question posed by Atticus regarding whether Cato should be considered as from Rome or Tusculum, Cicero writes (de Leg. 2.5):

Surely I think that he and all natives of Italian towns have two fatherlands, one by nature and the other by citizenship. Cato, for example, though born in Tusculum, received citizenship in Rome, and so, as he was a Tuscan by birth and a Roman by citizenship, had one fatherland which was the place of his birth, and another by law.282

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281 Blockley 1998a: 313.
282 ‘Ego mehercule et illi et omnibus municipibus duas esse censeo patrias, unam naturae, alteram civitatis, ut ille Cato, cum esset Tusculi natus, in populi Romani civitatem susceps est; ita, cum ortu Tusculanus esset, civitate Romanus, habuit alteram loci patriam, alteram iuris’.
In this formulation Cicero allows for individuals to possess two loci of identity, a natural homeland and one adopted by law. This model could be described as ethnic-institutional in that place of origin represents ethnicity and legal status represents institution.

This is very similar to the hyphenated model proposed by Ammianus with respect to Roman soldiers. The Franks and the Gauls are both soldiers and ‘foreigners’ at different times and it depends on the situation as to which of their identities they access. For Cicero, both identities are an inherent part of all Romans and it is a question then of hierarchising them: the institutional Roman identity “must stand first in our affection” (‘sed necesse est caritate eam praestare’) over its ethnic counterpart, and it is for that identity that Romans should give their lives if necessary. It is likely that Cicero, in his insistence that the state requires individuals to give their lives, is speaking in general terms and not referring specifically to military service. Ando, for instance, reads the passage as a broad comment on the nature of the relationship between native and Roman identity.

Cicero’s model, however, has obvious implications for members of the army, and Saddington and others have applied it successfully to a military context. This is because, as Ammianus himself recognises at several points, it is in the army that Romans encountered genuine foreigners to a greater degree, often as colleagues. Not coincidentally, Cicero wrote de Legibus (begun in 52) at a time when traditional outsiders to the Roman identity were beginning to assert themselves politically after the enfranchisement of the Italians after the Social War; meanwhile expressions of ethnic (non-Roman) identity remained strong in the 1st century.

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283 Dench 2005: 96.
285 Saddington 2009: 83 cites Cicero explicitly. James 1999: 16 notes that military identities were added to recruits’ existing identities in a juxtaposed fashion; Brennan 1998: 191 that Roman identity itself “promoted the existence of fluid and even multiple identities”.
286 Allies south of the Po were awarded Roman citizenship; those north of the Po were awarded Latin rights, which was subsequently upgraded by Caesar to full citizenship. For background see Balsdon 1979: 84ff. and Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 81ff. On the contest over Roman identity after the Social War see J. H. C. Williams 2001: 16; Dench 2005: 138, 2013: 126-7.
century BC. Under the banner of *tota Italia* (‘the whole of Italy’), Cicero could speak easily of a much broader Italian identity than previously envisaged.

The specific circumstances of this slogan should not be forgotten. Gruen and Dench have both stressed Cicero’s nuanced and inconsistent view of both foreigners and Roman identity more generally. For instance, Cicero claims that the “entirety of Italy” (‘cuncta Italia’) appeared to back his candidacy for the consulship. Although Mouritsen has conceded that “Cicero put unusual effort into courting the Italian constituency”, Cicero’s Italian rhetoric may not reflect a genuine desire to open up Romanness to outsiders. At the same time, however, the “symbolic implications of such claims” (that he could rely on non-Romans), would not have been missed by contemporaries. In Cicero, the outsiders to be integrated are Italians. In Ammianus, the outsiders are Franks and Gauls. Whether or not Ammianus’ readers truly believed them to be exemplars of Romanness, that he paints them as such is important and at the very least signals the identity games he plays.

There is, however, a difference in the way Ammianus and Cicero conceive of their hyphenated models. Cicero recognises the potential to possess dual allegiances: both fatherlands are important in his conception, and the very discussion of fatherlands is an attempt to overcome potential discord and promote integration. In this aspect he is identical to Ammianus. But whereas Cicero explicitly ranks the institutional *patria* over the native *patria*, Ammianus does not. Ammianus never condemns any of his soldiers for acting as an ethnic group.

In those other cases where ethnically marked troops are mentioned as possibly betraying Roman secrets to their brethren across the border, Ammianus is reluctant to accept that ethnic allegiance is to blame. The

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287 For the still significant place of Italian languages even in the late republic see Langslow 2012.
288 Gruen 2013b; Dench 2013.
289 Cic. *Pis.* 3; Sest. 125.
290 Mouritsen 2001: 121.
Lentiensis tribesman serving in Gratian’s bodyguard, having returned home on leave, does not betray Rome because he is an undercover agent, but because he is a loose talker (31.10.3: ‘in loquendo effusior’); and the several Alammanic officers who are said by some to have passed secrets to their brethren are given the benefit of the doubt by Ammianus (14.10.7-8). The only guaranteed case of treachery, as noted above (p. 86), is that of an Alamannic chief whom Valentinian promotes to a high position in the army (29.4.7).292

The question remains why Ammianus would not insist that his soldiers disregard their ethnicity and become fully ‘Roman’ – as was noted above (§ 1.2.1), some have attempted to claim that Ammianus suppresses ethnicity in the army to achieve just this effect. But, as already stated, this is to ignore the consistent focus on ethnicity in the major case studies (and even in some minor ones). This is because Ammianus intentionally emphasises the ‘foreignness’ of the army’s soldiers. This is couched as, if not an entirely positive development, then at least one born of pragmatism: since provincials and others are not enlisting, it has been necessary to turn to alternative sources of manpower. Ammianus recognises that the contemporary Roman army has transformed into a decidedly multi-ethnic body. Rather than insisting that these people abandon their native identities, Ammianus allows for them to be retained. This act allows ‘foreigners’ a greater stake in the empire whilst simultaneously allowing them to retain their ethnicity, an identity category which Ammianus himself regarded as integral to his own self-definition (31.16.9).293

292 Barnes 1998: 87ff. argues that Ammianus attacks Christianity indirectly through insinuation and rumour, noting for instance the bishop who was rumoured to have betrayed the town of Bezabde to Shapur (20.7.9). It may be that Ammianus uses insinuation to similar effect as regards ethnically marked troops; but if so, it is unclear why Ammianus feels it necessary to resort to such an oblique tactic, especially given the shrill complaints of Synesius and others regarding the worth of foreign soldiery.

293 In modern times, the case of the Gurkhas in the British army is an interesting parallel. These soldiers retain a distinct sense of their own ethnic identity whilst simultaneously taking pride in their status as British soldiers. For the image of the Gurkhas in British service, and especially the notion of their distinctive ethnicity which the British did much to foster, see Caplan 1991: 580ff. Recent work on the Roman army in the late republic has
1.4 Conclusion

Ammianus recognises that ‘foreigners’ (outsiders of some sort) are playing an ever-increasing role in the empire, especially in the army. Rome had always utilised such people, and it is perhaps to earlier rhetoric that Ammianus looks for his own hyphenated identity model. Ammianus maintains a distinction between ‘barbarians’ and ‘foreigners’, and he even styles himself a member of the latter group. He maintains ‘foreignness’ to emphasise their contribution to the Roman project. Since he recognises that many of those now fighting for Rome are outsiders, he intends his identity model to be useful in the contemporary cosmopolitan empire. The next chapter will argue that Ammianus develops his integrative identity agenda by placing Rome as the locus of his identity thoughtworld and thus conceptually accessible to Romans of all ethnicities.

also argued that ethnic identity remained far more pronounced than originally thought. On this Pfeilschifter 2010; Rosenstein 2012.
Chapter Two

2.1.1 The Romans, Rome, and their place in the Roman identity

Given that most of the RG is concerned with events outside Rome, Ammianus’ decision to devote three digressions (14.6; 16.10; 28.4: hereafter the ‘Digressions’ to distinguish the three from Ammianus’ many other digressions) to the City merits discussion. This chapter argues that Ammianus focuses on Rome because of his desire to create a Roman identity which could account for, and integrate, ‘foreignness’. Each Digression contributes to the historian’s integrative aim. The two Digressions at 14.6 and 28.4, couched in ethnographic language, focus on the customs of the people of Rome and are of a moral nature. The second portion of this chapter argues that the moral Digressions define Roman identity as a cultural rather than ethnic status. This identity is based on appropriate behaviour, in line with the conclusions of the previous chapter. The third Digression (16.10), discussed in the first part of the chapter, focuses on the structures of Rome itself to ‘site’ a universal civic Roman identity independent of the inhabitants of the Eternal City.

In the RG, the Romans of Rome (hereafter the ‘metropolitan Romans’), think themselves to be the arbiters of Romanness, a category which, in their view, is closed off to those who do not live in the city itself. Ammianus, however, turns the tables on the capital’s inhabitants, making them the barbarians, while conferring what he argues is true Romanness on the peregrini (14.6.2) and the honestus advena (14.6.12). These personae represent those who, in Ammianus’ scheme, do the most to further the empire: the signalled ‘foreigners’ in the army, are an example, but really his category includes all who would likely never see Rome, but nevertheless contribute to the Roman project.²⁹⁴ Ammianus’ technique is ultimately integrative.

²⁹⁴ For my qualification of ‘foreigner’ see introduction.
A similar process is evident with the ‘imagined community’ (ch. 1) of the soldiers dictated not by ethnicity but by behaviour. It is the Franks in the army, signalled ‘outsiders’ but really the most dutiful Romans, who are arranged against the scheming ‘proper’ Romans at court. Perhaps in expressing this opinion Ammianus is simply making explicit what many at the time considered a natural position. This is especially the case if Ammianus did indeed recite his work before Theodosius and his entourage in 389/90,295 as that emperor was known for advancing the cause of true outsiders – just the kind of contemporary Roman to appreciate Ammianus’ identity work in the Digressions since they had become Romans through culture rather than ethnicity.

2.1.2 The city of Rome as the monumental heart of the Roman community (16.10)

This section argues that 16.10 situates Rome as the monumental heart of the Roman community, a locus of identity, and an integrative force. Nothing has been done on the integrative power of Rome in this Digression. Grig comes fairly close to this reading in her suggestion that Rome here is “intrinsically ideological” and that it “encapsulates the rest of the world”, but the view is not developed explicitly.296 Many theories regarding Ammianus’ view of Rome have been offered. For G. Kelly, it contributes towards a polemical silence against Constantinople and forms part of an anti-Constantinople trend in some late 4th century literature.297 Meanwhile Rohrbacher, labelling Ammianus’ interest in Rome “anachronistic”, argues that Rome’s importance in the RG is explained by Ammianus’ allegiance to Latin historiography, an interest born out of his respect for the past rather than any desire to comment on the status of the City in the present.298

295 See above, n. 137.
298 Rohrbacher 2002: 25.
Other material on 16.10 has tended to focus on the way in which Ammianus uses the grandeur of the City to belittle Constantius. Humphries argues that in its first portion Ammianus “meditate[s] on the very nature of an emperor’s duties” through the lens of Constantius’ ineptitude.\(^{299}\) Barnes sees in 16.10 a condemnation of the “empty ceremony” of Constantius.\(^{300}\) A similar theme is developed by Ross - he argues that by juxtaposing 16.10 to Julian’s victory at Strasbourg (16.12), Ammianus undermines Constantius’ “empty triumph”.\(^{301}\) Other approaches have emphasised the role of buildings (Rome itself) in symbolising the “primacy of Rome”, rather than commenting on how it presents people (Constantius).\(^{302}\) This chapter charts a course between these two approaches to arrive at a deeper understanding of how 16.10 contributes to Ammianus’ identity argument. Both the emperor and structures of the city work together in different ways to further identity integration by making ‘outsiders’ Roman.

Constantius’ \textit{adventus} affords Ammianus the occasion to establish Rome as the foundation of Roman identity or, to use Miles’ phrase, the locus of a thoughtworld.\(^{303}\) Roman thought was especially receptive to the idea that a person could possess several ‘types’ of homeland, for example of law and birth, and Ammianus in 16.10 similarly positions the city of Rome as a homeland for all.\(^{304}\) Ammianus advances a broader civic identity model through a detailed presentation of Rome’s monumental buildings. Zuiderhoek has argued recently that states relied on monuments to “maintain cohesion”, and this is exactly what Ammianus fosters in this portion of the RG.\(^{305}\) Ammianus builds a \textit{communis patria} which relies not on ethnic ties (the view of the metropolitan Romans themselves), but on

\(^{299}\) Humphries 2015: 167.  
\(^{300}\) Barnes 1998: 179. The argument for ceremony’s utility to Ammianus’ identity model is discussed in the next chapter.  
\(^{301}\) Ross 2016: 12.  
\(^{302}\) Grig 2012: 32.  
\(^{303}\) Miles 2003: 138. Fornara 1992a: 330 has noted how Ammianus’ imagination is centred on the idea of “immortal Rome” which he uses as a focus for his “patriotic sentiments”.  
\(^{304}\) For the distinctions between types of homeland in Roman legal thought see Moatti 2014 who concludes (p. 151) that there was “a Roman discourse of mobility and multiple affiliations”; cf. Mathisen 2006: 1018 on the “multiple legal identities” citizens could possess even after 212.  
\(^{305}\) Zuiderhoek 2017: 97.
Defining a Roman Identity

the belief that a common civic identity could exist between Romans of different ethnicities. In positioning Rome in this fashion, Ammianus reaffirms the idea of the empire, which had arguably seen increased regionalisation in the later 4th century, as a coherent identity community with a fixed symbolic centre.

A. D. Smith has argued that all identities need a “symbolic geographical centre” to which all adherents of that identity may in theory return. The monuments of Rome described in 16.10 are this centre. Buildings are the “cultural symbols of romanitas”: identity given form. This had long been the view of the ancients. Vitruvius, for example, writes in his preface that it was necessary for Rome’s buildings to accord with its history and grandeur (1 praef. 3). Vitruvius’ arguments tied in with an Augustan ideology which prioritised the definition of a distinctive kind of Romanness against Hellenism. According to Wallace-Hadrill, Vitruvius committed to an exposition of identity expressed through this simple explanatory dichotomy: he wished “to keep a Greek/Roman opposition constantly present in the reader’s mind”. Ammianus does not utilise this same polarity, but he is concerned with deploying Roman architecture as a means of identity definition, as an ideological statement. For him, Rome’s monuments reflect, on the one hand, a glorious past to which all Romans could look; on the other, the gargantuan lodestone of their identity.

The first portion of the Digression, the adventus itself, is discussed in the next chapter. The focus of its second part is the city itself, as Ammianus magnifies Rome so that it may be ‘seen’ from the provinces. That size is at issue is shown by the emperor’s entry into the city. There is a cumulation

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306 On this phenomenon in the empire see Ando 2000: 19-20.
307 For the increased regionalisation of the empire at this time see Kulikowski 2015, esp. p. 145: “[t]he development of regional aristocracies with regional interests that played themselves out at the court of the emperors is a distinctly late imperial phenomenon: the gradual rise in the number of Baeticans and Narbonensians under Nero and the Flavians did not produce regional factions in the same way that we can identify Pannonian, Frankish, Gallic, Cappadocian, or Tarraconensian groupings in the fourth century”.
309 Häussler 1999: 1, 4.
of height vocabulary. Ammianus describes how Constantius *stooped* when passing through *lofty gates*, although he was very *short* (16.10.10: ‘nam et corpus perhumile curvabat portas ingrediens celsas’). This description undermines Constantius by contrasting his insignificant presence to that of the Eternal City, as Klodt has argued. Indeed, the change in Constantius’ demeanour as soon as he enters Rome is the most striking feature of 16.10. He is a picture of imperial confidence, even arrogance, as he moves towards the City. In Constantius’ case, his whole posture is affected (16.10.11: ‘affectabat’); with Rome, its gargantuan presence is very real, being quite literally set in stone.

At 16.10.13-15 the emperor Constantius enters Rome:

So then Constantius entered Rome, the home of empire and of every virtue, and when he had come to the Rostra, the most renowned forum of ancient triumph, he stood amazed; and on every side on which his eyes rested he was dazzled by the array of marvellous sights […] the sanctuaries of Tarpeian Jove so far surpassing as things divine excel those of earth; the baths the size of provinces; the huge bulk of the amphitheatre, strengthened by its framework of Tiburtine stone, to whose top human eyesight barely ascends; the Pantheon like a rounded city-district, vaulted over in lofty beauty; and the exalted heights which rise with platforms to which one may mount, and bear the likenesses of former emperors; the Temple of the City, the Forum of Peace, the Theatre of Pompey, the Odeum, the Stadium, and amongst these the other adornments of the Eternal City. [15] But when he came to the Forum of Trajan, a construction unique under the heavens, as we believe, and admirable even in the unanimous opinion of the gods, he stood fast in amazement, turning his attention to the gigantic

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311 Klodt 2001: 89-90.
complex about him, beggaring description and never again to be imitated by mortal men.\textsuperscript{312}

The monumentality expressed in this passage is clear, especially the consistent focus on the height of the City’s buildings. Brodka and Seager have shown how Ammianus utilises ‘height’ vocabulary when talking about the imperial office – it is often described as the “pillar” (‘columen’) or “peak” (‘vertex’) of power.\textsuperscript{313} Here he deploys a similar technique as the City’s height is solemnly described. As with the picture of imperial power as a ‘summit’, the City is also a peak, but of the world: certain buildings dominate the scene with their celestial quality. The cumulation of height vocabulary is remarkable, exemplified by the baths which are as large as provinces (‘lavacra in modum provinciarum exstructa’). If Ammianus is being ironical with respect to Constantius, the size of Rome is far more straightforward: it dwarfs the onlooker and this description of its grandeur impresses even the emperor.

But more than this, Constantius is a conduit through whose eyes the reader beholds the seat of empire. Scholars have read the RG as a work meant for the metropolitan Romans.\textsuperscript{314} But this Digression is more than Ammianus simply displaying his learning to a cultured Roman audience. He writes the walkabout from a tourist’s perspective, implying that the scene is for the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{312} ‘Proinde Romam ingressus imperii virtutumque omnium larem, cum venisset ad rostra, perspectissimam priscarum potentiae forum, obstipuit, perque omne latus quo se oculi contulissent, miraculorum densitate praestriectus […]’ [14] Iovis Tarpei delubra, quantum terrenis divina praecellent; lavacra in modum provinciarum exstructa; amphitheatris molem solidatam lapidis Tiburtini compague, ad cuius summitatem aegre visio humana conscendit; Pantheum velut regionem teretem speciosa celsitudine fornicatam; elatosque vertices qui scansili suggestu consurgunt, priorum principum imitamenta portantes, et Urbis templum forumque Pacis, et Pompei theatrum et Odeum et Stadium, aliaque inter haec decora urbis aeternae. [15] Verum cum ad Traiani forum venisset, singularem sub omni caelo structuram, ut opinamur, etiam numinum assensione mirabilem, haerebat attonitus, per giganteos contextus circumferentiam, nec relatu effabiles, nec rursus mortalibus appetendos’. The translation is lightly adapted from the Loeb.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{313} Brodka 1998: 76, citing 20.5.3 and Julian who is \textit{elevated} to the imperial power (‘ad potestatum omnium columnum sustulistis’); and 26.2.7 (‘adscito in honorum verticem eo’). Seager 1986: 105: “[t]he imperial power is itself an extreme, a peak”.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{314} E.g. Cameron and Cameron 1964: 325: Ammianus was “showing off his knowledge of Greek before the Latin-speaking audiences of Rome”; G. Kelly 2003: 588: “Nobody doubts that Ammianus Marcellinus wrote in Rome and for Rome” though noting that “in [Ammianus’] ideology the boundary between the city and the empire is blurred”. In his book of 2008 (pp. 181-2) Kelly imagines a far more diverse audience for the RG including foreigners and the politically involved.
benefit of ‘outsiders’ (such as himself), and an exploration of identity after
the fashion of Virgil (Aen. 8; Ecl. 1.20ff.).\footnote{For a discussion of this topos, and a comparison of Ammianus’ tour of Rome to that in other texts, see Schmitzer 1999.} In Eclogues, Tityrus informs Meliboeus, another outsider who is unknowing of the City, of Rome and its
marvellous size (1.25-6: ‘verum haec tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes,
quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi’). Ammianus writes from a
similar perspective. His implied ‘outsider’ represents those who live
outside Rome and who need to be told about the City, though the
metropolitans, as his first audience, could also appreciate an edifying
description of the capital.

Rome bursts with monumental architecture and the short clauses effect a
stream of “eye-catching tableaux”.\footnote{Roberts 1988: 183 referring to Constantius’ procession at the beginning of 16.10 but equally applicable here. For the shape of the narrative once Constantius enters the city see Kelly 2003: 598.} First Constantius sees the ancient
Rostra, the symbol of Roman triumph, and from which he addresses the
people and the senate (16.10.13); then the sanctuaries of Jupiter which
outdo all other buildings as far as divine things do human (16.10.14); and
then baths the size of provinces, bigger still; next the Colosseum which is so
massive that human eyesight can barely discern the top; meanwhile the
Pantheon is as large as a city district. These descriptions establish Rome as
a gargantuan city which towers over the emperor as it does mankind.
Ammianus contends that the sanctuaries of Jupiter seem almost divine
amongst the other buildings, but it is hard to resist identifying that
contention with the City itself because it surely seems to be divine in
aspect. Rome appears more like a work of art to be viewed than a living
city.

In the preceding sections Ammianus carefully describes Constantius’
procession (16.10.4-12). But when the emperor enters the City
(‘proinde...ingressus’), he shifts his focus to its buildings and underlines the
alienating, indeed crushing, effect of the City upon the emperor.
Undoubtedly, this a technique by which Ammianus augments Rome’s size.
But it also demonstrates how Ammianus uses the scene to demonstrate the integrative power of Rome at Constantius’ expense. Firstly, the emperor: Blockley has noted that Constantius is reduced to the role of spectator as he experiences the City. The consequences of its grand size render him a stranger in his own capital. Constantius perceives each monument as more impressive than the one before it (16.10.14) and complains that rumour had not done the grandeur of Rome justice (for he had not been there himself). When the emperor reaches the huge Forum of Trajan and its equestrian statue, he even falls into a depression, conscious of his own inadequacy (16.10.15):

Therefore abandoning all hope of attempting anything like it, he said that he would and could copy Trajan’s steed alone, which stands in the centre of the plaza, carrying the emperor himself.

This is the symbolic power of Rome at its highest point: it has increased over the course of the Digression to mirror Constantius’ growing surprise until finally reaching a crescendo with Trajan’s Forum. The City is so marvellous and its history so rich that even the current emperor cannot hope to match its most famous monument. Importantly, Constantius is not considered as sharing in the glory of Rome. Indeed, the emperor is disassociated from the City. Ammianus often chastises Constantius for his arrogance: at 15.1.3 the emperor is criticised for styling himself ‘My Eternity’ and “lord of the whole world” (‘orbis totius se dominum appellaret’) in his letters; but when confronted with the true eternal body and mistress of the world (14.6.6: ‘terrarum…domina’), he is reduced to a helpless spectator.

From this point on, the reader and the emperor are polarised as the former’s Roman identity is confirmed and the latter’s is undermined. This is achieved through Ammianus’ presentation of Rome’s buildings and their

318 ‘Omni itaque spe huius modi quicquam conandi depulsa, Traiani equum solum, locatum in atrii medio, qui ipsum principem vehit, imitari se velle dicebat et posse’.
reception by his characters. Constantius starts out confidently, as is shown by his stooping under arches (16.10.10). His procession towards Rome presents a majestic picture and the people crowded on the hills and shores thunder their approval of the Augustus.\textsuperscript{319} Having just entered the City, he behaves appropriately towards the senators and observes the proper protocol during the Roman games (16.10.13-14). But as Constantius begins to survey the imperial centre he becomes a tourist in his own capital (16.10.14):

Then, as he surveyed the sections of the city and its suburbs, lying within the summits of the seven hills, along their slopes, or on level ground, he thought that whatever first met his gaze towered above all the rest.\textsuperscript{320}

Scholars have recognised how Ammianus in 16.10 casts Rome as literally too great to describe.\textsuperscript{321} But in this instance, he allows Constantius through a telescoping effect to survey the entirety of Rome as if from afar.\textsuperscript{322} Again, the effect is created through a stream of ‘size’ vocabulary. The sentence begins with reference to everything enclosed within the peaks of the seven hills; next there is a description of the inclines and the planes which also indicate Rome’s size; and finally, the emperor’s belief that each sight surpasses the one previous. But the imperial gaze cannot fully comprehend the sight – Constantius becomes a wonderstruck visitor as soon as he enters. The dramatic transformation of the emperor, from majestic entrant to insecure visitor, is one of the Digression’s most striking features.

This is the heart of the passage and indicates Ammianus’ identity agenda which aims to integrate ‘outsiders’ (Romans who do not live in the City) at the expense of the emperor who, rather than enjoying Rome’s

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\textsuperscript{319} 16.10.9: ‘Augustus itaque faustis vocibus appellatus, non montium litorumque intonante fragore cohorruit’.
\textsuperscript{320} ‘Deinde intra septem montium culmina, per acclivitates planitiamque posita urbis membra collustrans et suburbana, quicquid viderat primum, id eminere inter alia cuncta sperabat’.
\textsuperscript{321} Grig 2012: 33; Kelly 2003: 599.
\textsuperscript{322} A similar technique allows Ammianus the soldier to survey the entirety of the Persian army at 18.6.21-23, with G. Kelly 2008: 84-7.
\end{flushright}
magnificence, is cowed by it. First: the vast size of Rome renders the capital ‘visible’ to the empire’s many inhabitants. Indeed, the narrative places Rome as the largest city in the RG. Ammianus describes innumerable settlements in his digressions. Antioch has street lighting which turns night into day (14.1.9); Egypt has many beautiful cities, of which the most impressive is Alexandria, with its respected educational institutions (22.16.6-7, 17) and the Serapeum which rivals the Capitolium in Rome (22.16.12); and among the wealthy and populous cities of Gaul (15.11.7: ‘civitatibus amplis et copiosis’), is Trier, the esteemed seat of the emperors (15.11.9: ‘domicilium principum clarum’). But none of these cities rivals Rome in sheer size.

Second, Ammianus establishes the City as a suitably majestic site and thus worthy of affection. Scholars have noted how Ammianus mentions only pagan buildings. There is no suggestion of a Christian presence. Since Rome’s size allows it to be ‘seen’ from the provinces, outsiders receive a tangible grounding for their own Roman identity, and a common cultural memory is created, irrespective of religion. Edwards has argued that the City “was a storehouse of Roman memories, an archive which ordered them and made them accessible”.

The huge buildings are themselves memories of a past time, an archive which reveals ancestral practice. Ammianus’ is a Golden Age Rome typified by Trajan’s Forum which “never again could be imitated by mortal men” (‘nec rursus mortalibus appetendos’). Ammianus’ aim is to present Rome as he himself imagined it to be, “to convey in physical, architectural terms the theme of the city as mistress of the world”. To achieve this, he takes his readers on a sightseeing tour of Rome through the eyes of Constantius.

In contrast to the marginalising and demoralising effect of Rome on Constantius, Ammianus’ reader, the hypothetical foreigner (14.6.2), is welcomed to view and to ‘live’ in the City by appreciating and celebrating

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323 On cultural memory see Spencer 2011: 43.
its architecture. The welcoming nature of Rome is introduced at the gates (16.10.13):

    So then Constantius entered Rome, the hearth of empire and of all the virtues.\textsuperscript{326}

The importance of the hearth, the \textit{lar}, is such that elsewhere in the history the nomads are distinguished from the rest of humanity by their lack of one,\textsuperscript{327} and this again positions Rome both as a sacred centre and as a possession for all, not just its inhabitants. In Rome itself, Zuiderhoek has noted that the communal hearths were the “sacred heart of the community”.\textsuperscript{328} Ammianus stresses the religious significance of the \textit{lar} by twinning it not only with the boundary of Rome but also with an invocation of Roman \textit{virtus}. On the global scale invoked here, the whole City is the hearth, the sacred heart of the Roman community.

The site of Rome is intrinsically connected to Roman identity. Ammianus sees it as his duty to restate the foundation of Roman identity and to cast Rome as a place for all Romans regardless of ethnicity. His statement (through Constantius) that Rome was the “asylum of the whole world” (16.10.15: ‘asylum totius mundi’) alludes to Rome’s foundation story which famously brought many ethnicities together to form a united people living in the capital.\textsuperscript{329} Livy, whose work enjoyed a relatively wide circulation in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, is an example of this belief.\textsuperscript{330} His picture of early Rome is that of a city founded by a mix of natives and foreigners in search of a permanent home, and this theme was current in the mid-4\textsuperscript{th} century as the anonymous \textit{Liber de Origine Gentis Romanae} reveals.

\textsuperscript{326} ‘Proinde Romam ingressus imperii virtutumque omnium larem’.
\textsuperscript{327} 14.4.3 (Saracens); 31.2.10 (Huns), with Fuhrmann 1968: 550ff.
\textsuperscript{328} Zuiderhoek 2017: 68.
\textsuperscript{329} Grig 2012: 32. The following discussion owes much to Edwards 1996.
The connection between identity, the City, its site, and buildings in Roman historiography is well-known and indicates how the site could create Romans. In Livy, for example, when the Romans consider abandoning Rome after the Gallic sack, Camillus warns them that if they evacuated, the Volsci or the Aequi would occupy the area and become Romans themselves.\textsuperscript{331} For Livy’s Camillus, “Romanness here is presented not as a nebulous, abstract quality but as concretely related to a particular place and imperilled by absence from that place”.\textsuperscript{332}

Edwards links Camillus’ plea with contemporary fears over the possibility that both Caesar and Antony planned to move the state capital to Troy or Egypt.\textsuperscript{333} In response, Octavian devoted himself to demonstrating Rome’s importance by beautifying the City, renovating its sacred landscape and erecting his mausoleum on the banks of the Tiber.\textsuperscript{334} This mausoleum was fronted with Augustus’ \textit{Res Gestae} which listed many of his construction projects, as well as panels depicting Romulus, Remus, Roma, and the arrival into Latium of Aeneas.\textsuperscript{335} For both Livy and the first emperor, Rome was immoveable and pre-eminent.

The visions of the city in both Livy and Augustus imply that knowing Rome makes a Roman. Livy’s Camillus says this when he warns his fellows that while Rome \textit{is} the Tiber and the seven hills, it is also the buildings of the City, its shrines and temples. Augustus’ evocation of Rome’s beginnings, of Aeneas and the twins, on his mausoleum confirms the connection between architecture and being Roman. The belief that proper Romans need to know the City is of vital importance in 16.10. In general, when considering Ammianus’ purpose in the Digression, it is hard not to think of Cicero’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{331} Liv. 5.53.7, with C. Edwards 1996: 47.
\item \textsuperscript{332} C. Edwards 1996: 47.
\item \textsuperscript{333} Nic. Dam. \textit{Caes.} 20; Suet. \textit{Caes.} 79.3; Cass. Dio 50.4.1 with Edwards 1996: 47-8.
\item \textsuperscript{334} Liv. 4.20.7 calls Augustus a founder (‘conditor’) of Rome because of his extensive building programme. Zanker 1988: 65: “[d]uring the 30s Octavian was the most important patron of new buildings in Rome”.
\item \textsuperscript{335} The \textit{Res Gestae} was inscribed on durable bronze sheets which would have underlined the permanence of both Rome and the Augustan legacy (Suet. Aug. 100 for the ‘Augustan epoch’). For the \textit{Res Gestae} see Ando 2000: 143. For Augustus’ mausoleum see Davies 2000: 17; Zanker 1988: 72ff.
\end{itemize}
judgement on the works of Varro. Cicero said of Varro’s now lost masterpiece on Roman history and religion (Cic. Acad. 1.9):

...for we were wandering and straying about like visitors in our own city, and your books led us, so to speak, right home, and enabled us at last to realize who and where we were.336

According to Edwards, Cicero warns his contemporaries that it is not enough just to live in the City amongst its buildings; rather “to know Rome, to possess Rome as one’s true home, one must know what Rome means”.337 If Romans wanted to find out about what being Roman was, Cicero suggests, they had to read Varro’s books. The Varronian example is prescient for Ammianus and illuminates the latter’s purpose with its emphasis on a perceived foreignness and how to combat it through a detailed understanding of Rome and its people.

It also relates to how Ammianus conceives of Constantius. Constantius comes to Rome as its master, but he does not understand its significance - he is uncomprehending, akin to the wanderer in Cicero’s appraisal of Varro. Ammianus’ knowledge of Varro’s work is unproven, but given that Augustine uses Varro as the basis for his argument in book 5 of City of God, it would not be unlikely. In any case, Ammianus almost definitely read Cicero’s Academica and with it the judgement quoted above.338 Cicero further implies that it is possible, through a recognition of “who and where we are” (‘qui et ubi essemus…’), to recognise (‘agnoscere’) Romanness. This is Ammianus’ intention in the RG.

Cicero continues (Acad. 1.9):

You have revealed the age of our native city, the chronology of its history [...] you have likewise shed a flood of light upon our

336 ‘...nam nos in nostra urbe peregrinantis errantisque tamquam hospites tui libri quasi domum reduxerunt, ut possemus aliquando qui et ubi essemus agnoscere’.
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poets and generally on Latin literature and the Latin language. 339

Such a description might easily apply to Ammianus as well. The deliberate manner in which he sets himself against the contemporary trend towards short form literature (breviaries and epitomes) betrays his strong desire to be recognised as a substantial author, similar to Livy or Tacitus, the latter of whom he echoes with his claim to have begun from the principate of Nerva (31.16.9). 340 Ammianus’ condemnation of the metropolitan Roman nobles for reading only the frivolous satires of Juvenal or the racy biographies of Marius Maximus, and for “hating learning like poison” (28.4.14: ‘detestantes ut venena doctrinas’) also indicates the significance he imagines for the RG.

Cicero wonders whether it be likely that Greeks would read Varro since they might confine themselves to their “own” literature (1.10: ‘sua’) instead. Given Ammianus’ expertise in both languages, and his own statement that skill in both languages at this time was rare, it is easy to imagine him reading Varro (or Cicero on Varro) and being inspired to fulfil a similar purpose to Varro. 341 Ammianus wanted to tell Romans about the city at 16.10 and thus solidify a universal of type of identity rooted in the site of Rome.

Ammianus implies that Romans may be made through an understanding of the City itself. The uncomprehending nature of the metropolitan Romans, and how this degrades their identity is discussed in the second section – though they live in the capital, they do not understand it. The implication is, then, that anyone who can understand Rome may be integrated into its

339 ‘tu aetatem patriae, tu discriptiones temporum...aperuisti... plurimumque idem poetis nostris omninoque Latinis et litteris luminis et verbis attulisti’.

340 For his engagement with short form literature see Ross 2016: 1.

341 Ammianus writes in Latin but his text contains the largest amount of Greek in a Latin historical work. For Ammianus’ judgement that true bilingual skill was noteworthy see his comment on Musonianus who was “famed for his command of both languages” (15.13.1: ‘facundia sermonis utriusque clarus’). This statement redounds to Ammianus’ credit since he possessed a similar skill, as Sánchez 2016: 40 suggests. Drijvers 1996: 536-7 argues that the two languages to which Ammianus refers are Greek and Aramaic (the Syrian vernacular).
identity. This is revealed at 16.10.16-17 and its context suggests the role of Rome in integrating ‘foreignness’ and making Romans. The Persian prince Hormisdas, a companion of Constantius, is (among other things) asked what he thinks of Rome. He, replying “with native wit” (‘astu gentili’), says only that he takes comfort by his learning that even in Rome men are mortal.

This conversation has been much studied by scholars, with particular focus on the Persian’s suggestion that Constantius build a stable around Trajan’s equestrian statue since he cannot hope to match Trajan’s monument himself. Edbrooke argued some time ago that it was reflective of Ammianus’ “western attitude” and comprised a veiled criticism of Constantius’ tendency to employ an excessive number of Eastern advisers rather than members from the old aristocracy.342 Blockley thought it an exhortation on the part of Hormisdas to invade Persia;343 while Kelly argued for it to be a “covert reference to Constantinople”.344 Cameron, on the other hand, detected no underlying agenda at all.345

I argue that it demonstrates how Ammianus sees identity functioning: to be Roman meant both appreciating the ‘foreign’ contribution to Rome, but also assimilating it. It is important that there is a signposted, yet fully integrated, ‘foreigner’ in the heart of Rome testifying to, and recognising, after the fashion of Cicero (‘qui et ubi essemus agnoscere’), its glory. In the first instance, Ammianus has a Persian affirming the magnificence of Rome because it reinforces its fame: even outside the empire it is known and admired, especially by Persia, a rival empire.346 But it is significant too that it takes a ‘foreigner’ to appreciate what Rome is. Once Ammianus has affirmed the City as the hearth for all Romans, it fits his integrative agenda that Hormisdas should judge Rome’s greatness. This was a Persian prince

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342 Edbrooke 1975: 413.
346 The letters between Constantius and Shapur at 17.5 indicate that the terms of this relationship were more equal than that which existed between Rome and the western tribes.
“whose departure from Persia I showed earlier” (16.10.16: ‘cuius e Perside discessum supra monstravimus’), and who had served Julian well during his Persian expedition.

Ammianus emphasises Hormisdas’ Persian origins but simultaneously acknowledges his Roman identity. It is noteworthy that he is termed *gentilis*, for it will be remembered that in the previous book Malarich the Frank is *gentilium rector* (15.5.6), and so the two men are linked conceptually as possessing a hyphenated identity, both ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’. The later sections of 16.10 make a Roman out of the Persian prince. The juxtaposition of Hormisdas, Rome, and the emperor reveals the integrative argument that knowing Rome can make Romans. Ammianus focuses on Hormisdas’ comprehension, not Constantius’; he alone truly understands the symbolic power of the City. There is in this scene the belief that understanding the significance of Rome confers that identity on the individual.

The most recent contribution on the episode by Mecella notes how it demonstrates the extent to which Hormisdas, a member of the Persian royal family, has become fully integrated into the Roman system – this same prince (and his son) would become a trusted general under Julian, even leading a column during the latter’s expedition against Persia. Mecella shows how, here and elsewhere, Ammianus emphasises Hormisdas’ willingness to fight for Rome against the country of his birth. This is not her main point, for she is more interested in charting the career of Hormisdas as a whole, but she is right to realise quite how much Ammianus emphasises both the ‘foreignness’ of this prince and his Romanness. These dual perspectives are both in play. As an ‘outsider’, the prince recognises the majestic lodestone of Roman identity; yet as a

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347 The narrative of Hormisdas’ journey from Persia to Rome was in a lost book.
348 Edbrooke 1975: 414 reads *astu gentilis* as plainly pejorative since he notes several applications of *gentilis* to Rome’s barbarian enemies.
349 24.1.2 where he is mentioned alongside the other Julianic generals Nevitta, Arintheus, Victor, and Dagalaifus. For the son, also named Hormisdas, and whom Ammianus praises as “gentle” in his management style see 26.8.12.
Roman himself, it is to just this centre, this hearth (16.10.13), that he
directs his sight.

Ammianus’ interest in presenting and explaining the ‘stuff’ of Rome
betrays a wider integrative agenda, hinted at by Hormisdas’ role in the
text. Edwards has argued similarly with reference to Cicero:

To be at home in Rome was not to be born there (how many
Romans could make that boast?). It was rather to be master of
Roman knowledge. Without such knowledge, Romans might be
thought to imperil their own identity, while, by implication,
Roman knowledge could confer romanitas on the foreigner.351

Ammianus writes of Rome to confer knowledge, and thus identity, on the
‘outsider’. Ammianus undoubtedly wrote in Rome and his initial audience
would have been its inhabitants, but 16.10 implies that he envisaged a far
wider audience.352 Frakes’ prosopographical analysis of the RG has
revealed that Ammianus most often names officials in the civil and military
branches of the imperial service; that is to say, people who did not live in
the capital.353 Such people will have accompanied Theodosius to Rome in
389/90 when Ammianus is likely to have delivered his work.

Many may never even have seen Rome, given the Eastern focus of their
careers. For instance, Richomer starts out in Gaul (31.7.4), and so
conceivably may have ventured to Rome prior to Theodosius’ visit, but he
is transferred East by Gratian and held a number of posts there.354 So too a
certain Ellebichus, about whom much is known thanks to the works of

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352 Though Gabba 1981: 50-2 notes how ancient authors’ actual readership could differ
substantially from their ideal readership.
broadens Ammianus’ ideal audience to embrace the military coterie around Theodosius.
Rosen 1982: 37 imagines an audience of young professionals whose education would have
deepened their appreciation of the RG and also opened up to them the chance of a
bureaucratic career.
354 PLRE I: 765-66 deems Richomer a Frank, though his ethnicity is never mentioned by
Ammianus, who focuses instead on his military accomplishments (31.7.5: elected senior
general by his colleagues) and bravery (31.12.15: ‘Richomeres se sponte obtulit propria,
tgre que promiserat libens, pulcrum hoc quoque facinus, et vire convenire existimans forti’).
This is likely because Ammianus did not deem the Frankish portion of his identity to be
relevant to the narrative.
Libanius. Such men were, in Ammianus’ scheme, both Roman and ‘foreign’. These people, of various ethnicities, stood for the kind of empire Ammianus envisaged. It was these people who needed to be told of Rome, the “home of all virtue”. It may be that Ammianus intends this phrase to be a meaningless platitude aimed at flattering his native Roman audience, but if this so, it sits uncomfortably with the passages of sustained criticism of their mores at 14.6 and 28.4.

More likely, Ammianus intended Rome to fulfil for his ideal readers the same role as the bedrock of their identity that it played for himself. The City’s great size demonstrates Rome’s universality and therefore its relevance to every Roman irrespective of location. This is not to say that Rome’s world dominance needed such a demonstration: the imperial message had long been familiar and continued to be broadcast in state pronouncements of the 4th century. But there is in this section a deliberate attempt to expand Rome beyond its geographical confines. This is a tactic that Ammianus uses in the companion Digressions at 14.6 and 28.4 which pointedly attack the parochialism of the metropolitan Romans. In this instance, the sheer size of the City coupled with the monuments selected for mention, render Rome the hearth of the empire: a kind of “secular Mecca”.

Edwards and Woolf deem Rome a Mecca because it was a place where many visitors passed through just once in their lives, but it is a revealing parallel in another sense. Muslims pray in the direction of Mecca (specifically the Ka’ba) in what is known as the ‘sacred direction’ so that they may have a “focal point [...] a physical pointer to the presence of

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356 Cf. Edwards and Woolf 2003: 4: “The physical fabric of the city gives plausibility – authority even – to Rome’s claim to rule the world. The greatness of the city at the same time serves to render comprehensible the extent of its vast empire”.
357 Perhaps the best statement of Rome’s civilising mission is uttered by Virgil’s Anchises (Aen. 6.987ff.). For 4th century instantiations of this ideology see Heather 1999; Cizek 1989.
358 E.g. 14.6.22: ‘vile esse quicquid extra urbis pomerium nascitur aestimant’. This argument is justified fully below (§ 2).
359 Edwards and Woolf 2003: 11. The parallel should not be stretched – after all, several of the monuments Ammianus selects for mention are explicitly religious.
In the same way, Ammianus hopes to make the City the ‘outsiders’ locus of belonging, and it has been suggested that he envisaged the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline as the symbolic centre of the capital. Whether or not Ammianus had a specific place within Rome in mind, he is concerned with identity.

Ammianus envisages Rome fulfilling the role of symbolical geographical centre to which all Romans could theoretically return, and Constantius is a conduit through whom readers could experience the city. Rome is at the centre of a universal civic identity, which itself is much broader than the prescribed martial community explored in the previous chapter. Elsner has argued that “pilgrimage is a journey into one’s identity in its topographic, cultural and spiritual resonances”. In 16.10, the emperor symbolises the Roman pilgrim, the ‘outsider’ journeying to the centre, but where he is rendered a stranger, the reader (the actual ‘outsider’) is welcomed. Although Rome cannot be physically seen from the provinces, it looms large in the imagination of Romans everywhere as the intended centre of their thoughtworld.

This thoughtworld rests on the capital’s ancient structures and the long history which they represent and for which Ammianus is rekindling respect in the RG. There is reference to the provinces in the description of the city’s baths which were “built to the size of provinces” (16.10.14: ‘modum provinciarum exstructa’) to go with the description of Constantius as appearing to the metropolitans “as he was seen in his provinces” (16.10.9: ‘qualis in provinciis suis visebatur’). These remarks indicate Ammianus’ ‘outsider’ perspective and may imply that he had all Romans in mind when

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360 King 1999: 47. *Qu’ran* 2.144: ‘We will surely turn you towards a direction that will please and satisfy you. Now the time has come, so turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. And you, O believers, turn your faces towards it, wherever you are’.

361 Edwards 1996: 86-7, citing 22.16.12 on the temple “with which revered Rome elevates herself to eternity, the whole world beholds nothing more magnificent” (‘quo se venerabilis Roma in aeternum attollit, nihil orbis terrarum ambitiosius cernat’). Although Edwards does not mention the Ka’ba the parallel is obvious given Ammianus’ contention that the whole world ‘looks upon’ Jupiter’s temple as Muslims everywhere look upon their own holy place. Latham 2016: 222 also cites Ammianus as holding the temple to be the “seat of empire and the glittering center of Roman public religion”.

constructing this scene. This self-conscious provincial perspective should come as no surprise, for the provinces are the most frequent theatre of operations for the events he describes. This focus contrasts sharply with the Rome-centric approach of his models Sallust and Tacitus (as might be expected).363

The City’s centrality to Ammianus’ mental landscape is revealed in his consternation that his favourite emperor Julian is buried in Tarsus rather than Rome: his tomb ought to have been washed by the Tiber not the Cydnus (25.10.5). It is an indication of his argument that Julian, who was born in Constantinople, whose Latin was only passable,364 and who had never even seen Rome, should nevertheless lie in that place. Julian represents the kinds of Romans Ammianus likely envisaged making use of his identity work in these passages – people who perhaps would never see Rome themselves but who could read about it and situate it as the locus of their identity.

Julian is also the kind of Roman envisaged by the author in that he is virtuous, dedicated to the state, yet, in spite this, so clearly ‘foreign’, as indicated by his ethnonyms. The picture of Julian in the RG is overwhelmingly Greek, and he is marked as such in the text. His Greek ethnicity also causes problems with some of his troops who demean him as an “Asiatic” and a “Greekling”, a “deceiver, and a fool with a show of wisdom” (17.9.3: ‘Asianum appellans Graeculum et fallacem, et specie sapientiae stolidum’). Ammianus has no time for these criticisms and they arise in times of tension, but Julian, like Ammianus, is both Greek and Roman, a member of the Roman community, yet completely ‘foreign’ to the City.

363 Julian, for instance, is regarded by Ammianus as especially dutiful to the provinces, and he considers resigning his post as Caesar if he is forced to acquiesce in the ruin of Gaul (20.4.8). Constantius, on the other hand, is chastised for allowing his cronies to feast on, and exploit, the provinces (16.8.12). All of the emperors are in their necrologies judged on their attitude towards their regions: Constantius had no regard for them (21.16.17) while Valens, paradoxically because he is painted in the RG as a poor emperor, was especially considerate (31.14.2: ‘provinciarum aequissimus tutor’); Jovian’s abandonment to Persia of the eastern provinces is the central feature of that emperor’s narrative (25.9.1-4).

364 16.5.7: ‘aderat Latine quoque disserendi sufficiens sermo’.
2.2.1 The moral Digressions (14.6; 28.4) and the place of ‘foreigners’ in the Roman identity

If 16.10 sites Roman identity in the capital’s structures, the other two Digressions define that identity as a behavioural and cultural status. Scholars have overwhelmingly seen 14.6 and 28.4 as satirical in tone, intended as a cultured diversion to be appreciated by a learned metropolitan Roman audience. The most recent contribution on them by Ross goes even further in reading them as humorous interludes. Ross argues that Ammianus adopts a “light-hearted satirical persona” and sees them as “anything but censorious attacks upon the Romans”. Whether or not Ammianus is being satirical, this is an overstatement. To be sure, satire cannot be conclusively ruled out. For one thing, there are thematic similarities between Juvenal’s poems especially and Ammianus’ Digressions; for another, there is evidence in the late 4th century for what Fontaine has termed “le mélange de genres”. Claudian, for instance, seems to evoke Juvenal during his tract denouncing the prominent eunuch Eutropius.

However, questions remain regarding seeing these Digressions as satirical. It must be noted that Ammianus explicitly denounces the satirist he is supposed to have aped at 28.4.14, alongside the (now lost) biographer Marius Maximus. He also crucially denounces the type of literature these men produced, which should caution against the assumption that Ammianus would wish to write similar material. Ross surmounts this

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366 Ross 2015: 356, 358. den Boeft 1992: 13 sees them as satires caused by a possible failure to come to terms with literary Roman society; Rohrbacher 2002: 28-9 notes their satirical and innovative nature and also suggesting that the digressions may have been inspired by personal slights suffered by Ammianus; see too 2007: 470; den Hengst 2010: 287 sees Ammianus emulating Lucian in the digressions; Rees 1999 sees emulation of Juvenal; G. Kelly 2008: 132 regards the digressions as “wittily” told.
368 In Eutr. 2.133-37 echoing Umbricius’ complaint at Sat. 3.60-1 that Rome is becoming Greek. For this and further parallels see Long 1996.
369 “Some of them hate learning as they do poison and read with attentive care only Juvenal and Marius Maximus, in their boundless idleness handling no other books than these” (‘Quidam detestantes ut venena doctrinas, Iuvenalem et Marium Maximum curatiore studio legunt, nulla volumina praeter haec in profundo otio contractantes’).
difficulty by arguing that Ammianus is playing a joke in revealing the true – that is, humorous – intention of the Digressions at the last moment. But if this is the case, it is all but unique in the RG, for, as Syme noted long ago, Ammianus cultivates an austere authorial persona. Given that Ammianus chastises his characters freely and often harshly throughout the history, it is likely that he intends the Digressions to be similarly orientated.

The moral Digressions should therefore be seen as entirely serious. This need not preclude their basis in satire, if it is defined as how a presentation of “mundane scenarios and stock criticisms lead to tough and serious questions. [Satire] makes us commit, and, once we have, catches us out”. Thus Sogno sees the Digressions as both serious and satirical. According to Hooley, the satires of Ennius and Lucilius “constitute other stories about being Roman and what that might mean, played out on a more human scale”. In his own Digressions on Rome at 14.6 and 28.4, Ammianus is dealing exactly with “being Roman”.

2.2.2 Rome as ethnographical subject

On the other hand, a recent book by Vergin has argued that the Digressions have more in common with ethnography rather than satire. Vergin’s arguments were coolly received because she perhaps overstates the connections between the Roman Digressions and the Hun digression at 31.2, but the suggestion that Ammianus is, in 14.6 and 28.4, writing ethnography deserves consideration, especially if that genre can be

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370 Ross 2015: 363, n. 34: the criticism of Juvenal and Maximus is a “humorous revelation (at the last moment) of the true intent of the passages, and retrospectively force[s] a comical reinterpretation of the earlier passage”.

371 Syme 1968: 217. Barnes 1998: 63 terms Ammianus “a disappointed and embittered man” by the time he wrote which may also militate against a humorous reading. Halsall 2002 argues for instances of black humour in the RG.

372 Cf. Curran 2000: 232 who calls the digressions a “scathing attack on the life and manners of the fourth-century city”.


376 Vergin 2013. I have not been able to consult this book directly.
defined as “any act of representation indicative of an interest in the habits and customs of foreign peoples”.\textsuperscript{377}

The Romans of Rome are obviously not a foreign people. But just as Ammianus casts the Galli as a signposted ‘foreign’ group (see ch. 1), it will be shown that the metropolitan Romans receive a similar treatment. Following Vergin, the Digressions should be seen as ethnographical, akin to many in the RG.\textsuperscript{378} Such a reading transforms the metropolitan Romans into the foreigners they so despise. In other words, the author uses a process of ‘othering’ against the metropolitan Romans to ease identity definition for his readers.\textsuperscript{379} Having rendered the metropolitans ‘foreigners’, Ammianus makes Rome the possession of all rather than that of a few parochial insiders.

This is part of Ammianus’ wider integrative scheme highlighted in the previous section: if the city’s buildings are the site of a civic pan-Romanness in 16.10, its inhabitants are the target of Ammianus’ de-Romanising technique in 14.6 and 28.4. Once the metropolitan Romans’ ethnicity, the basis of their identity, is undermined, Ammianus transfers Romanness to the so-called ‘incorporated outsiders’ whom he addresses so prominently at 14.6.2, some of whom were discussed in the previous chapter.\textsuperscript{380} Den Boeft suggested some time ago that Ammianus’ bitterness in these passages may have been stimulated by his inability to come to terms with “Roman social grammar”.\textsuperscript{381} This is not to say that Ammianus was hostile to the nobility; there are many instances where he praises characters for their ancestry.\textsuperscript{382} However, the rules in these Digressions are different, as he aims to show how the nobilitas and plebs were not the Romans they thought themselves to be.

\textsuperscript{377} Almagor and Skinner 2015: 10.
\textsuperscript{378} Vergin 2013: ch. 7.
\textsuperscript{379} Ammianus’ use of ‘othering’ is examined in detail in ch. 4 with reference to the Huns.
\textsuperscript{380} For the notion of the incorporated outsider see Dench 1995: 68.
\textsuperscript{381} den Boeft 1992: 13.
\textsuperscript{382} E.g. 28.1.30 and the noble Aginatius, “a man of noble descent from his early ancestors” (‘iam inde a priscis maioribus nobilem’), who was wrongfully driven to death by the criminal acts of Valentinian’s official, Maximinus. Theodorus, “born of a clan famous in olden times in Gaul” (29.1.8: ‘namque antiquitus claro genere in Galliis natus’), is also caught up in trials chaired by Valens in Antioch.
This is where Ross’ argument for the humorous satirical interpretation of the passages runs into difficulty. He suggests that because Ammianus is “fully sympathetic” to the aristocrats during Valentinian’s treason trials at 28.1 then he cannot also be attacking them in the Digressions, referencing that at 28.4 specifically:

The dramatic change in attitude to the inhabitants of Rome within such a brief narrative space at the beginning of Book 28 (only two short chapters separate the description of the trials from the satiric digression) shows that one or other authorial pose is less sincere, and generic cueing points to that of the Satirist.³⁸³

For Ross, Ammianus’ about-face as regards the metropolitan Romans can be explained only through a lack of sincerity in one or other position. Since Ammianus adopts a satirical persona, the argument goes, the Roman Digressions need not represent the “true feelings of the author” who is actually happy with the metropolitan Romans.³⁸⁴ This argument, however, paradoxically underestimates the rigidity of Ammianus’ moral criteria: bad behaviour is always condemned, irrespective of how the historian treats his characters elsewhere. While Valentinian’s officials are extreme and barbaric in their treatment of the metropolitan Romans in the instance cited by Ross (28.1); the metropolitan Romans are similarly so in their treatment of the honestus advena specifically, and in their behaviour generally.

The honestus advena persona (14.6.12) signals the adoption of an explicitly external perspective. Not only does this serve an integrative purpose (discussed in the previous section), it also allows the possibility of viewing the metropolitan Romans as ethnographic subjects. Dench has shown how it was characteristically Roman for the “ethnographer’s lens [to be] turned onto themselves”.³⁸⁵ Ammianus uses this autoethnographic approach in

³⁸³ Ross 2015: 367.
³⁸⁴ Ibid.
³⁸⁵ Dench 2005: 62.
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the moral Digressions. Unlike Pausanias, say, who is very much an insider of the community he describes, Ammianus casts himself as an outsider looking in. This act prepares the ground for a transferral of Romanness away from the parochial ethnic Romans to the outsiders (discussed below § 2.2.3).

Ammianus’ dismissal of the parochial metropolitan Romans undermines the specifically ethnic (and exclusive) identity to which they cling. That it is their ethnic identity Ammianus attacks is signalled towards the beginning of the first Digression when he condemns the “uncouth flightiness of a few who do not reflect upon where they were born” (14.6.7: ‘levitate paucorum incondita, ubi nati sunt non reputantium’). Then, in the same section, he quotes a saying of Simonides that one who is going to live happy and in accord with perfect reason ought above all else to have a glorious fatherland (‘ut enim Simonides lyricus docet, beate perfecta ratione victuro, ante alia patriam esse convenit gloriosam’).

The emphasis on place of birth and patria is unmistakeable and it is not coincidental that Ammianus, a proud Graecus, has a Greek poet affirming it. The importance of origins in the expression of Greek identity especially had been established already in the 6th and 5th centuries BC, reaching its zenith in the works of the tragedians and Herodotus. Imperial writers like Pausanias also demonstrated the clear link between Greekness and a

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386 Pausanias implies the oddness of his enterprise at 9.36.5 with his observation that “the Greeks appear apt to regard with greater wonder foreign sights than sights at home” (Ἕλληνες δὲ ἄρα εἰσὶ δεινοὶ τὰ υπερόρα ἐν θαύματι τίθεονται μειτζων ἢ τὰ οἰκεῖα). As for his own insiderness, Pausanias refuses to detail some rituals because they are forbidden to the uninitiated (1.37.9).

387 G. Kelly 2003: 588, n. 1 takes peregrinus here as indicating only that Ammianus wrote in Rome and attaches to it little significance.

388 E.g. Hdt. 8.144.2 and the insistence that the “Hellenic race [was] of one blood and speech” (‘αὐτὸς δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὼν ὀνόματος τε καὶ ὀμόγλωσσον’). This utterance has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. J. M. Hall 1997: 45-6 sees Herodotus here emphasising Greek heterogeneity and as using a contrast with the Persian barbarian to ease the shock of inter-Greek difference; Kim 2009: 9 also sees it as focusing more on the barbarians than the Greeks; McWilliams 2013: 749 argues that Herodotus is actually questioning the Athenian argument that Greeks are naturally a single people. Nippel 2001: 281 reads it as a straightforward call for Greek unity, as does Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 51.
sense of place. Ammianus, by starting the first Digression with Roman origins, therefore signals an exploration of ethnic identity.

The theme is continued in the other moral Digression (28.4), which begins by denouncing the senators who glory in their famous names “and many other equally fine-sounding indications of eminent ancestry” (28.4.7: ‘aliisque ita decens sonantibus originum insignibus multis’); then, as he finishes with the senate (28.4.27: ‘hactenus de senatu’), he attacks the plebs who are “conspicuous, as if they had cultured names” (28.4.28: ‘nitent ut nominibus cultis’). Ammianus questions the ancestry of all metropolitan Romans, whatever their social class. This gives the passages an ethnographic flavour, and they resemble the beginning of several other ethnographic digressions in the history. The beginning of the digression on the Saracens deals with their putative origins in Assyria (14.4.3), and that on the Huns with their alleged home next to the Ocean, beyond the Black Sea (31.2.1).

With the Huns in book 31, for example, Ammianus provides a window into their lives and by describing their horrific customs he invites his readers to experience extreme discomfort: the Huns, he says, cut the cheeks of their young and eat their meat half-raw. In the same way, Ammianus asks his readers to assess the Romans as they would a barbarian people in any of his other ethnographic digressions. Some of these people posture as if they were bulls when they are greeted (28.4.10: ‘ex his quidam […] in modum taurorum’); others closely and swiftly question men for news of horses or chariots (28.4.11: ‘et cum ita graves sint et cultores virtutum, ut putant, si venturos undelbet equos aut aurigas quendam didicerint nuntiasse, ita velociter imminent eidem et percutiantur’). These Romans think themselves serious (‘gravis’) and cultivators of the virtues, but instead are

389 Elsner 1995: 129-32 sees Pausanias as a pagan pilgrim charting the centre of his own identity, and Whitmarsh 2010: 2 argues that he stresses a localised Greek identity as a reaction to the increased globalisation of the 2nd century Roman empire.
390 14.6.1-6 comprises introductory material in which Ammianus meditates on the life cycle of the Roman empire, from republic to monarchy. 14.6.7 initiates the behavioural digression proper, starting with the origin of the Roman senators.
391 31.2.2-3: ‘ubi quoniam ab ipsis nascendi primitiis infantum ferro sulcantur altius genae […] et semicruda cuiusvis pecoris carne vescantur’.
guilty of indulging in trivialities. The stream of third person verbs (‘putant’, ‘didicerint’, ‘imminent’, ‘percunctatur’) and the deictic pronouns *his* and *eidem* further distance Ammianus and his readers from the metropolitan Romans, a practice which contrasts with the many occasions he deploys the personal pronoun to signal inclusiveness.\(^{392}\)

Still more people laud some trifling rank they had acquired such that “you might think” (28.4.23: ‘existimes’) them Marcellus returning after the capture of Syracuse (‘ut post captas Syracusas existimes reverti Marcellum’). Ross has suggested that the second-person form *existimes* is one “typical of diatribe and uncommon of Ammianus elsewhere” in support of his argument that Ammianus is writing satire.\(^{393}\) This point deserves consideration, but for a reason other than that posited by Ross because it arguably indicates ethnography more than it does satire. *Existimes* occurs six times in the extant text. Of these, two occur at 28.4 and can be ignored for now since they are the instances up for debate. Of the remaining four, then, two occur in undeniably ethnographical passages: one in the Hun digression and one in the lengthy Persian digression.\(^{394}\) In the latter two instances, Ammianus implicitly addresses a hypothetical Roman who looks in on the foreign societies being described, a situation which also fits with the two *existimes* at 28.4.

Even more interestingly, the Persian and Hun examples occur in a context of a description of body shape and posture – both peoples walk strangely. The Persians have an “unsteady gait” (‘vagoque incessu’); the Huns are

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\(^{392}\) For instance, Ammianus begins the third digression with a reference to “our times” (28.4.5: ‘nostra’) and yet in the digression itself consistently refers to the metropolitans as ‘they’ or ‘them’ (cf. 28.4.14: ‘quidam detestantes ut venena doctrinas […] quam ob causam non iudicioli est nostri’).

\(^{393}\) Ross 2015: 359.

\(^{394}\) Aside from the example quoted in the text: 28.4.21: bonds formed at the gambling tables in Rome are so strong “that you might think them the brothers Quintilius” (‘ut Quintillos esse existimes fratres’); 23.6.80: the Persians “stroll about with such a loose and unsteady gait, that one might think them effeminate, yet they are very keen warriors” (‘vagoque incessu se iactitantes, ut effeminatos existime’; 31.2.2: The Huns are so deformed “that you might think them two-legged beasts” (‘ut bipedes existimes bestias’). The two other occurrences are at 30.4.15 (part of a diatribe against lawyers) and 20.8.11 (Julian’s letter to Constantius informing him of his proclamation in Gaul).
simply “two-legged animals” (‘bipedes bestias’) and it is revealed later that a life on horseback has rendered them virtually unable to walk. In the Roman Digression, too, the immediate context of *existimes* is concerned with gait: the gamblers “walk with a set expression of dignity and sorrow” (28.4.21: ‘incedere gravitate composita maestior’) and the Marcellan nobles “walk with puffed up neck” (28.4.23: ‘cervice tumida gradiens’). Like these barbarous peoples, the way the metropolitan Romans move is scrutinised. Further ethnographic parallels can be adduced.

Newbold has shown how Ammianus uses “garments as ethnographic markers”, citing the Huns and Persians. \(^{395}\) The Huns wear clothes of mouse skin (31.2.5) and the Persians’ clothes shimmer with many colours (23.6.84). The metropolitan Romans, too, however, “shine in silken clothing” (28.4.8: ‘fulgentes sericis indumentis’). \(^{396}\) Ammianus turns an ethnographer’s lens on the metropolitans.

Returning to *existimes*, Lushkov has written that:

> As a feature of Latin historiographical style, the “imaginary” second-person subjunctive was common to geographical descriptions and as such helped to create the vivid experience (*enargeia*) of the reader in the text. \(^{397}\)

The three Digressions are geographical and ethnographical descriptions in this vein. 16.10 is nothing less than a geography of Rome, aimed at siting a civic pan-Romanness, and 14.6 and 28.4 are the ethnographical contributions to the triad, focusing on the customs of these ‘foreigners’, to reveal the behavioural basis of Romanness. The parallels with genuine ethnographies (the Hun and Persian) in the RG are highly suggestive, and though I should be cautious to take the form *existimes* as indicative of anything, let alone satire as per Ross, its use does reveal thematic similarities which must be appreciated. Ammianus renders the metropolitans as he would a barbarian people.

\(^{395}\) Newbold 2005: 10.

\(^{396}\) Cf. 28.4.19: ‘vestes luce nitentes ambiguæ’.

\(^{397}\) Lushkov 2015: 67, n. 16.
One of the key themes for Ammianus, not coincidentally, given his own interest in the ‘outsider’s’ lot, is the metropolitan Romans’ terrible treatment of guests and outsiders. The way he describes this mirrors his portrait of a barbarian tribe in another ethnographical digression: that on Thrace and its peoples. The Tauric tribes “sacrifice strangers to Diana” (22.8.34: ‘et immolantes advenas Dianae’). These Tauric barbarians dwell on an island off Thrace which so terrifies sailors that they dare not spend the night there for fear of being sacrificed while asleep.

Ammianus makes the comparison explicitly: when the Romans consider driving out peregrini from Rome, they exclaim “in imitation of the Tauric tribe” (28.4.32: ‘ad imitationem Tauricae gentis’). The metropolitan Romans appear as the antithesis of civilisation. Comparing the Roman commons to such people is meaningful, and it is interesting that neither Ross’ nor Kelly’s arguments for satire mention this comparison at all. Merrills has noted that the way a society treats strangers is often a key distinguishing feature of peripheral (barbarian) peoples against the author’s (civilised) centre. In this case, it is the centre mistreating the visitor from the periphery (‘peregrinus’) in such a way that the metropolitan Romans do not seem Roman at all.

Ammianus reveals the non-Romanness of the metropolitans by sundering the connection between the nobles and their ancestors – he notes at 14.6.10 that these people are unaware (‘ignorantes’) of the example of their own ancestors (‘maiores suos’) who could thrive on tiny estates.

Again, Ammianus brings to the fore the treatment of outsiders. These very ancestors used to treat free-born foreigners with humanitas, but recently, Ammianus says, peregrini had been driven out of the city during a

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food shortage (14.6.19). The theme is picked up again towards the end of the Digression, where Ammianus laments that the metropolitans “regard as worthless anything born outside the pomerium except the childless and unwedded” (14.6.22: ‘vile esse quicquid extra urbis pomerium nascitur aestimant praeter orbos et caelibes’). This is part of a standard attack on the vice of legacy-hunting, but it reveals the mercenary truth beneath their ‘principles’. It also underlines quite how parochial the metropolitan Romans had become, for it follows closely the observation regarding the humanity of the ancient Romans towards *advenae*.\(^{402}\)

By jealously guarding who is accepted into the City and by clinging to their narrowly defined ethnic identity, the metropolitan Romans have in fact lost the qualities that made them Roman in the first place: namely their openness to foreigners, their connection to their ancestors (‘maiores’), of whom they are ignorant, and their *humanitas*. The elite Roman connection with the *mos maiorum* has been well studied, as has its role in forming the ethnic identity of noble Roman families.\(^{403}\) Braund deemed the *mos maiorum* the “essence” of *Romanitas*, while Habinek has demonstrated the extent to which the republican Roman aristocracy was able to control how ancient custom was remembered.\(^{404}\) Given this connection, by undermining it, Ammianus also undermines the very identity of the metropolitans.

This decline in *humanitas*, a trait specifically equated with the ancient Romans at 14.6.21, is significant for it reveals once again Ammianus’ universalising perspective.\(^{405}\) It is a quality which occurs a number of times in the RG, but generally it is invoked whenever a character lacks or is


\(^{405}\) Seager 1986: 20: “Ammianus castigates those who are so arrogant as to think [‘humanitas’] unRoman”.

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feigning it.⁴⁰⁶ Most pertinently here, it is often linked by Ammianus to Roman dealings with foreigners, or foreign dealings with Romans.⁴⁰⁷ Thus Ammianus considers it a heinous crime that the barbarian king Gabinius is tricked by a show of this quality (‘humanitate simulata’); the emperor Valens treats the Armenian king Pap with humanitas; two Gothic chiefs ask to be received ‘humanely’ by the Romans; and, in the tumult before the Adrianople disaster, the barbarians believe that their leaders have been killed by the Romans “with a show of humanitas” (‘humanitatis specie’).⁴⁰⁸ Ammianus gives the quality a specific meaning of hospitality, which may derive from the distinction Gellius, one of his major sources, makes between humanitas meaning philanthropia and it meaning paideia.⁴⁰⁹ Ammianus conceives of it in the former sense, of “signifying a kind of friendly spirit and good-feeling towards all men without distinction”.⁴¹⁰ In the Roman Digressions, both of which mention humanitas, the nobles’ lamentable treatment of foreigners is the issue.

By equating humanitas with philanthropia, Ammianus undermines the ethnic identity of the Romans in two ways. Firstly, given that this narrower meaning describes Roman dealings with foreigners both in the Digressions and in the history as a whole, it positions the corrupt metropolitan Romans almost as an ethnic counterpoint to the hypothetical “upright outsider”

⁴⁰⁶ Humanitas occurs 17 times in total. Gallus (14.1.8) and Valentinian (30.8.4) lack humanitas explicitly. Feigned humanitas of the Persians: 18.10.4; 25.8.1; and Romans: 29.6.5; 29.6.2.

⁴⁰⁷ The Persian king Shapur displays the quality twice at 18.10.4 and 25.8.1 but in both cases it is feigned. Brandt 1999 thinks the quality is to do with the emperor’s concern for his subjects. This is one of its meanings but chiefly it deals with diplomatic relations and their failure.

⁴⁰⁸ 29.6.5 (Gabinius); 27.12.10 (Pap – this may be ironical since Valens later engineers the death of this king. If it is not ironical, it is a surprising quality to assign to Valens, an emperor Ammianus truly disliked); 31.4.12 (Gothic chiefs); 31.5.7 (Romans believed to have killed the chiefs with a show of humanitas). These examples are discussed in ch. 4.

⁴⁰⁹ Gell. 13.17.1. The best accounts of Roman humanitas are Clarke 1956: 135ff. and Veyne 1993. Modern scholars tend to equate humanitas with Roman culture; e.g. Hingley 2005: 64: “Humanitas, in the Roman view, was created through the adoption of civilization and it was a matter of degree and not an absolute”. See too Conte 1994: 178 referring to the quality in the works of Cicero as “that consciousness of culture that is the fruit of civilization, the capacity to distinguish and to appreciate what is beautiful and fitting”; and Mennen 2011: 8-9.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.: ‘significat dexteritatem quandam benivolentiamque erga omnis homines promiscam’.
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(‘ingenua advena’) whose perspective the reader assumes. Secondly, by linking humanitas with the Romans’ own ancestors in this manner, and remarking consistently throughout the Digression that the men of today do not possess the qualities inherent in this trait, Ammianus implies that they have abandoned the mos maiorum. By rupturing the connection between the contemporary and the ancient Romans, Ammianus removes the basis of the former group’s ethnicity and renders them non-Roman.

The metropolitan Romans, while affecting to be the only civilised group, perversely by their behaviour show that they are the real barbarians. If Almagor and Skinner’s definition of ethnography holds true, that it is the study of customs of a foreign people, then these Digressions certainly appear ethnographical. If this is accepted then Ammianus could be using the metropolitan Romans to reveal ‘proper’ Roman behaviour via a mirroring effect, a technique utilised by authors from Herodotus to Tacitus. The Tacitean parallel is especially relevant since that author in his own ethnography uses the Germans to shame contemporary readers. The difference is that Tacitus wrote for the very Romans he criticises. Ammianus, on the other hand, envisages a broader audience of ‘outsiders’ (in this case, simply those that did not live in the capital).

2.2.3 Transferring Romanness from the ‘Romans’ to the ‘foreigners’

Returning to the ‘foreign’ perspective, Ammianus uses these passages not only to demonstrate what is not Roman, but also to shift the focus of Romanness away from the exclusive ethnicity of the metropolitan Romans towards a broader moral or civic quality attainable by all Romans. This universalist reading, achieved by a marginalisation of the City’s inhabitants, places a great deal of weight on the address to the peregrini at 14.6.2 which runs as follows:

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412 Above, n. 377.
414 E.g. Tac. Germ. 19.3: ‘nemo enim illic vitia ridet, nec corrumpere et corrupi saeculum vocatur’.
Now I think that some foreigners who will perhaps read this work (if I shall be so fortunate) may wonder why it is that when the narrative turns to the description of what goes on at Rome, I tell of nothing save dissensions, taverns, and other similar vulgarities. Accordingly, I shall briefly touch upon the reasons, intending nowhere to depart intentionally from the truth.\textsuperscript{415}

This is a key to Ammianus’ outsider perspective in this and its companion Digressions and is a view at odds with much current work. Fontaine, for instance, sees it as representative of Ammianus’ personal experience at the hands of the Roman elite.\textsuperscript{416} Other views see it as reflecting his adoption of a “‘cranky outsider’” persona from satire (pp. 112-13).\textsuperscript{417}

Instead the persona represents a vision of identity obtainable by situational outsiders in the text. The ‘outsider’ perspective occurs often in the Roman Digressions, as the table below shows:

\begin{tabular}{|l|p{0.7\textwidth}|}
\hline
14.6.12 & at nunc si ad aliquem bene nummatum tumentemque ideo, \textit{honestus advena} salutatum introieris primitus \\
 & But now-a-days, if as a \textit{respectable stranger}, you enter for the first time to pay your respects to some man...
\\
14.6.14 & cum autem commodis intervallata temporibus, convivia longa et noxia coeperint apparari, vel distributio sollemnia sportularum, anxia deliberatione tractatur, an exceptis his quibus vicissitudo debetur, \textit{peregrinum} invitari convenient... \\
 & And when, after a sufficient interval of time, the preparation of those tedious and unwholesome banquets begins, or the distribution of the customary doles, it is debated with
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{415} ‘Et quoniam mirari posse quosdam peregrinos existimo, haec lecturos forsitan (si contigerit), quam ob rem cum oratio ad ea monstranda deflexerit quae Romae geruntur, nihil praeter seditiones narrator et tabernas et vilitates harum similis alias, summamim causas perstringam, nusquam a veritate sponte propria digressurus’.


\textsuperscript{417} Rohrbacher 2007: 471.
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| 14.6.21-22 | anxious deliberation whether it will be suitable to invite a stranger... |
| 113.6.21-22 | illud autem non dubitatur, quod cum esset aliquando virtutum omnium domicilium Roma, *ingenuos advenas* plerique nobilium, ut Homerici bacarum suavitate Lotophagi, humanitatis multiformibus officiis retentabant. Nunc vero inanes flatus quorundam, vile esse *quicquid extra urbis pomerium nascitur* aestimant praeter orbos et caelibes |

Furthermore, there is no doubt that when once upon a time Rome was the abode of all the virtues, many of the nobles detained here *foreigners of free birth* by various kindly attentions, as the Lotus-eaters of Homer did by the sweetness of their fruits. But now the vain arrogance of some men regards *everything born outside the boundary of our city* as worthless, except the childless and unwedded.

| 28.4.10 | et abundare omni cultu humanitatis *peregrinum* putantes, cuius forte etiam gratia sunt obligati, interrogatum, quibus thermis utatur aut aquis, aut ad quam successerit domum. |

and they believe that *a stranger* is given an abundance of all the duties of courtesy, even though the great men may perhaps be under obligation to him, if he is asked what hot baths or waters he uses, or at what house he has been put up.

| 28.4.17 | civilitatis autem hoc apud eos est nunc summum, quod expedit *peregrino* fratrem interficere cuiuslibet, quam cum rogatus sit ad convivium excusare |

But the height of refinement with these men at present is, that it is better for *a stranger* to kill any man's brother than to decline his invitation to dinner.
28.4.32 qui si defuerit strepitus, ad imitationem Tauricae gentis, peregrinos vociferantur pelli debere, quorum subsidiis semper nisi sunt ac steterunt, et taetris vocibus et absurdis

And if this noisy form of demonstration is lacking, they cry in imitation of the Tauric race that all strangers—on whose aid they have always depended and stood upright—ought to be driven from the city. All this in foul and absurd terms.

The previous chapter showed that the sphragis at 31.16.9 (‘miles quondam et Graecus’) is a key for reading hyphenated identity in the army, where miles stands for a martial Romanness and Graecus for a juxtaposed ethnicity. Ammianus’ honestus advena of the Roman Digressions performs a similar task because it underscores both the importance of appropriate behaviour for Ammianus’ notion of Roman identity (‘honestus’), and that identity’s aptitude for integrating ‘foreigners’ (‘advena’). At the same time, by using a generic term for ‘outsider’ or ‘newcomer’, Ammianus implies that Romanness need not be the preserve of a select few who live in the city of Rome but rather a common possession of all. It is part of his project to have a ‘respectable outsider’ journeying to the heart of the Roman community, witnessing the corruption there, and assuming the mantle of Romanness himself from the decadent metropolitans. This is a similar process to that undergone by Hormisdas during Constantius’ tour of Rome, though in that instance it is the emperor himself, not the metropolitans, who is marginalised (above § 2.1.2).

The continual references to the ‘foreigner’ in the Roman digressions expand identity beyond the narrow possession of the metropolitans. Rohrbacher, for instance, sees the ‘outsider’ perspective as little more than a stylistic tool, but the focus on how foreign people are treated is significant for it implies that the Romans’ duty is to welcome those people on whom it explicitly relies (28.4.32). For Ammianus, this means supplying
these people with a Roman identity broad enough to accommodate ‘outsiders’ from Hormisdas the Persian to Malarich the Frank (ch. 1).

This expanded identity relies not on ethnicity, to which the metropolitans desperately cling, but behaviour. Under this definition it is the metropolitans who appear less than Roman and the honestus advena who takes their place.\textsuperscript{418} The adjective honestus is important because it supports reading identity as behavioural rather than ethnical. In most cases it refers to worthy or honourable conduct performed by individuals from emperors to eunuchs, and it is often paired with either a synonym or an antonym for effect.

The clearest case of this occurs in the first Digression, when Ammianus claims that “the consciousness of honourable and virtuous conduct” renders men immortal (14.6.8: ‘...ex conscientia honeste recteque factorum’). The same coupling of honestus and rectus occurs again at 16.7.5 where the conduct of the eunuch Eutherius is praised, though generally Ammianus varies his vocabulary. Petronius Probus is criticised for unquestioningly defending his clients “without regard to honour and virtue” (27.11.4: ‘sine respectu boni honestique’). Conversely, the emperor Valentinian often fails to distinguish right from wrong (30.8.8: ‘sine honesti pravique differentia’).\textsuperscript{419}

Behaviour is key here, and Ammianus dwells on the difference between the contemporary and ancient inhabitants of the city. The ancient Romans, he says, differed little from common soldiers in their bearing and dress, winning their empire only through valour (‘virtus’) rather than expensive clothes and large estates (14.6.10). This interest in appearance runs through both behavioural digressions for there is a sense that the metropolitan Romans have slipped into superficiality and abandoned their characteristic gravitas for levitas. They rival each other for material

\textsuperscript{418} The Loeb translation by Rolfe renders honestus advena ‘stranger of good position’. The Penguin translation of Walter Hamilton translates it ‘respectable stranger from the provinces’. Although I normally follow Rolfe, I have preferred a version of Hamilton’s because, as explained in the text, it captures better the behavioural dimension Ammianus usually imputes to honestus.

\textsuperscript{419} Ammianus uses the noun form honestas only rarely (e.g. 17.5.12; 21.13.10; 30.4.1).
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benefits and signs of needless luxury: statues (14.6.8); cloaks and tunics (14.6.9); and banquets (28.4.13).

In this world, frivolities are taken seriously and serious business is disregarded. Ammianus captures this inversion neatly: “In short, in place of the philosopher the singer is called in, and in place of the orator the teacher of stagecraft” (14.6.18: ‘denique pro philosopho cantor, et in locum oratoris doctor artium ludicrarum accitur’). As he traverses this upside-down city, the ‘upright outsider’ is the only one who behaves as he should. It is the *advena* who dutifully calls on his social superiors each morning; he who would have been treated with great respect by the ancient Romans (14.6.21). He is the one who looks in disgust upon the inhabitants of the city and he who exhibits true Roman behaviour.

This undermining of the metropolitan Romans’ identity allows the *peregrini* and *advenae* to claim the Roman identity for themselves. Ammianus never says this explicitly – he does not venture as far as his contemporary Aurelius Victor who, comparing native and ‘foreign’ emperors, notes that *externi* provided for Rome some of their best leaders. In starting his short list with the Italian Nerva, Victor invites contrast with the diabolical Domitian, a native-born Roman, and loathsome to the whole of mankind (11.10: ‘Domitianus longe tetrior in omne hominum genus’).

Geographically speaking, very little separates the birth places of Domitian and Nerva; but for Victor it is enough that the latter is not strictly a Roman, for he was “born in the town of Narnia” (12.1: ‘oppido Narniensi genitus’).

Ammianus’ comparison is implicit, tied up in both his anti-ethnic rhetoric and his studied focus on universalism even in the ‘behavioural’ Digressions. Thus, at the beginning of 14.6 he hails the “security of the times as having spread through all regions and parts of the world” (14.6.6: ‘securitas temporis, per omnes tamen quot orae sunt partesque terrarum’).

Meanwhile, at the start of the final Digression, he juxtaposes once more

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Rome and its provinces with his apology that he had been driven from affairs of Rome “by the great mass of external events” (28.4.1: ‘adigente cumulo foris gestorum’) which required his attention. Ammianus’ distinction between matters at Rome and matters abroad (‘...foris gestorum’) shows again how he consciously plays with an insider/outsider dynamic.

Such a technique affords non-ethnic Romans and other ‘outsiders’ a stake in the empire and a chance to become Roman. The army was discussed in the previous chapter, but there is a phrase in the final Roman Digression (28.4.32) which pertains to the specifically military aid that ‘foreigners’ offer the empire. The Roman mob:

...cry out that the foreigners, on whose aid they have always depended and stood firm, ought to be driven from the city.421

Traditionally, scholars have explained this address as explicable through the apparent experiences of Ammianus himself, who is believed to have been one of those foreigners ejected from Rome during a food shortage at 14.6.19.422 Noy suggests that Ammianus, in lamenting the treatment of outsiders, has a “vested interest, as he would have been counted among the foreigners himself”.423

This phrase signals Ammianus’ interest in ‘foreigners’ serving in the army and explains why he, as it were, maintains ‘foreignness’ when dealing with the military. This allows him to locate the essence of Roman identity on the empire’s periphery with the ‘upright outsiders’. Returning to 28.4.32, the noun _subsidiun_ must have a military significance in the sense of providing reinforcement. Ammianus does not use the word excessively, but in all but three instances it appears in a military context. In several cases _subsidiis_ in this form refers to military aid as explicitly propping up the existing force (cf. ‘steterunt’ at 28.4.32). Thus at 15.8.13 Constantius in a direct speech to

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421 ‘...peregrinos vociferantur pelli debere, quorum subsidiis semper nisi sunt ac steterunt’.
422 Though Sivan 1997: 116-121 suggests that Ammianus was expelled from Rome for perpetrating political blunders rather than simply because he was a foreigner or a literary professor.
423 Noy 2000: 35.
the soldiers urges them to “strengthen by reinforcement” (‘subsidiis fulciens’) their fellows; at 24.6.8 the elite Persian cavalry, in a close parallel of the above quotation (28.4.32), are supported by their colleagues in the infantry (‘quorum in subsidiis’); finally, at 24.6.11, Julian brings up support for his own men (‘fulcire subsidiis’) during a battle in Persia. Given this, it is probable that at 28.4.32 Ammianus alludes to the work of peregrini in the army.

2.3 Conclusion

It cannot be denied that the behaviour of the capital’s inhabitants, the genuine ethnic Romans under Ammianus’ scheme, is among the worst in the RG and utterly un-Roman. But the inhabitants of the city (14.6; 28.4) work with the City itself (16.10) to further Ammianus’ argument of integration. The city of Rome becomes a universalising tool – it is the ancestral homeland for all imperial subjects and a place to which they can all theoretically return, as to a hearth (16.10.13). This journey was one made by Ammianus himself and in many respects he himself typifies the new type of Roman he visualises: moral, urbane, dutiful, and possessed of a hatred of barbarians. Crucially, this ideal Roman is not defined by his ethnicity (though ethnicity can be a part of his own hyphenated identity, independent of Romanness) but by his behaviour. The argument of the Roman Digressions is the clear demonstration of un-Roman behaviour by the unworthy metropolitans.

In the Roman Digressions, the metropolitans are the true foreigners. They are the ones who share traits with Tauric head-hunters and it is their customs which Romans everywhere should find abhorrent. Ammianus depicts the metropolitans almost as a local tribe. They fawn over common prostitutes as if they were Easterners with their Zenobias,  

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424 Cf. Purcell 1992: 422: “A commonplace of classical literature has it that a city is people not buildings; but of no city has that ever been less true than of Rome”.

425 The ‘localisation’ of Rome, and whether it can be depicted as a ‘local culture’ has been explored by Goldhill 2010: 46-68. Goldhill cites Dionysius of Halicarnassus as several times referring to Rome as a local culture as against Greek culture. 1.38.4: “the city of the Romans performs [religious rites] both according to the Greek way and according to the local way”. See also 2.7.4, Rome’s “local dialect” and 5.75.2, its “local custom”.
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Artemisias, or Cleopatras (28.4.9). Ammianus disassociates the metropolitans from the Roman identity by likening them to oriental queens and enemies of Rome (and Greece). This process allows non-ethnic Romans a share in the identity for which the locals do not care. By the end of the Digressions at 14.6 and 28.4 the reader’s sympathies are not with the inhabitants of the City but with the hypothetical peregrinus or advena.

This narrative technique is very similar to that in the Digression on the City (16.10). There, Ammianus turns the tables on Constantius by alienating him from the locus of Roman identity whilst simultaneously making his readers feel, quite literally with words like lar and asylum, at home. In the behavioural digressions, the peregrinus is the real Roman - for Ammianus, these are the people on whom the empire has always relied. The inhabitants themselves, on the other hand, are simply a matter of ethnographical curiosity, akin to other barbarians in the RG.
Chapter Three

3.1.1 The Emperor and Roman identity

This chapter argues that Ammianus sees the ceremonial aspects surrounding the emperor as unifying the members of his Roman identity community around the office itself. Similar to the previous chapter, the ‘outsiders’ are interpreted broadly as a pan-Roman audience ‘observing’ the emperor through Ammianus’ text. Imperial ceremony integrates onlookers and conquers the distance which separates contemporary Romans. This distance is both geographical (the Romans are no longer in Rome but all over the empire) and mental (those Ammianus allows a share in Roman identity are traditionally viewed, or are styled, as ‘outsiders’ of some sort). This perspective develops the argument that Ammianus uses Roman identity as a means of integration and to promote unity around an idea of Romanness. Chapters 1 and 2 argued that the army and city of Rome were both vehicles of identity integration; the emperorship, expressed through its majestic representation, fulfils a similar role.

Much scholarship has argued that Ammianus favoured a civilis-type emperor who spurned ostentation. The distinction between the two styles of being emperor, majestic and citizen-like, is put succinctly by den Boeft and his colleagues, who hold that Ammianus “obviously preferred [a] type of administration [whereby] the emperor was a paragon of civilitas, like Julian tried to be, but that does not necessarily imply his begrudging Constantius a different style”. Neri and de Bonfils reach similar conclusions regarding the importance of civilitas to Ammianus’ imperial scheme. For these authors, especially the former, Julian’s possession of

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426 This is not to imply that Romans had not been dispersed throughout the empire in earlier times, only that Ammianus tries to bind centre and periphery much closer together than many earlier writers by envisaging Romanness as a highly inclusive category.

427 I borrow the notion of conquering distance from Brown 2003: 56 who refers it to the organisational reforms of the tetrarchy.


429 Neri 1984; de Bonfils 1986. Cf. Barnes 1992: 3, referring to Julian’s assumption of a private individual as a consular colleague (23.1.1) as meant to “enhance Ammianus’
*civilitas* is *the* defining characteristic of his portrayal in spite of Ammianus’ criticism which is not seen as terminal.

Underpinning the belief in the primacy of the citizen-king is the contrast between Julian, Ammianus’ hero, and Constantius, one of the RG’s chief villains. Although seemingly an easy contrast to make, there is a problem in comparing the two rulers in this way, especially since it is often when Julian acts as a citizen that Ammianus criticises him most harshly. Contrary to the view of much modern work, this chapter argues that Ammianus’ criticisms of Julian occur because the author favours a more ceremonial imperial figure. This is because he sees the usefulness of imperial ceremony in binding together the Roman community through its ostentatious visibility. This is a conclusion entirely in keeping with work on ceremony in late antiquity. Scholars of the RG have regarded Ammianus as something of an exception in this regard. He is not. Imperial ceremonial is of the greatest importance to Ammianus’ emperors since it performs a significant identity function.

3.1.2 The purpose of ceremony

Scholars working on Roman ceremonial generally have recognised its potential to unite around a central idea those who behold it. The heavy use of pageantry and ceremony in the empire was famously charted by Alföldi. He took the view that even the ‘good’ emperors created distance between themselves and their subjects through a careful use of imperial ceremony. More recently, Rees, in his work on the tetrarchy, has also shown how power and theatre combined to create self-perpetuating ideologies, while MacCormack and McCormick have demonstrated the unifying function of ceremonial. MacCormack, in particular, argued that ceremony, and the *adventus* especially, “formulated [the community’s] presentation of Julian as a hero possessing the *civilitas* which was one of the traditional virtues of a pagan Roman emperor”.

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430 Alföldi 1970.
431 Rees 2004: 56.
corporate identity, in both good times and ill”.\(^{433}\) This is an explicit link between ceremonial and identity which has so far been unappreciated in Ammianus, though MacCormack herself does discuss the RG in parts.

Scholars working on late antiquity have also examined the role played by pomp and circumstance in creating unity and integrating onlookers into a community. C. Kelly has argued that “rococo representations of power should be taken seriously. An empire is held together not only by military force and efficient administration, it also requires an effective ideology to proclaim the rightness and authority of its government”.\(^{434}\) Kelly also notes that in the 4\(^{th}\) century attempts were made at “more tightly unifying the empire and of exerting a greater degree of central control over its human and economic resources”.\(^{435}\) Underpinning such an interpretation is the understanding that ritual and ceremony, though it undeniably creates distance between ruler and ruled, also serves as a conduit of communication between the two parties. Wienand represents this position thus:

Pomp and circumstance are essential to monarchic rule, and a crown is far more than a hat, even still more than just a symbol of political power: a crown is a medium in the communicative processes between the ruler and the ruled – a medium (among others) through which sovereignty itself is carved out in the first place.\(^{436}\)

Wienand’s edited volume, which grapples with the presentation of power in the 4\(^{th}\) century, does much to demonstrate how pageantry functioned and what its purpose was, and moves beyond some earlier work which was largely content with simply pointing out that imperial presentation had evolved into something more ‘overt’ by the later empire.\(^{437}\) Building on this trend, the most recent contribution on the topic by Matheis has suggested

\(^{435}\) C. Kelly 2004: 110.
\(^{436}\) Wienand 2015: 3.
\(^{437}\) E.g. Charlesworth 1947; Kolb 2001; McEvoy 2010.
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with reference to Constantinople that there was “ein ausgefeiltes
Zeremoniell, welches die Kommunikation und Interaktion zwischen Kaiser
und hauptstädtischer Bevölkerung strukturierte”.438

This kind of approach, which focuses especially on the communicative and
integrative role played by ceremonial, is not new, and scholars working in a
diverse range of fields have recognised its potential. Perhaps the most
influential of these are V. Turner and Geertz, whose efforts have done
much to reveal the importance of pageantry to the maintenance of certain
societies. For Turner, it was only possible to understand a practice if its
“ritual idiom” was first deciphered.439 Communities functioned through a
vast network of rituals which simultaneously served to include and exclude
participants and onlookers.

Geertz’s work, meanwhile, adopted the view that ritual and what he
deemed the “trappings of power” served to “order the social world by
confronting it with magnificence reaching down from above”.440 Geertz’s
study on 19th century Bali suggested that “royal rituals [...] enacted, in the
form of pageant, the main themes of Balinese political thought: the center
is exemplary, status is the ground of power, statecraft is a thespian art”.441
This belief that grandiose imagery could mark out the centre as centre and
also that governing required a ‘performance’ of some kind are useful
insights for making sense of the later Roman empire, a society which relied
so much on ritualised behaviour.

Despite these developments, there has been little attempt to analyse
Ammianus’ conception of the emperors from this perspective, and scholars
have preferred to assess his imperial picture as indicative of the civilis
princeps ideal mentioned above. To be sure, there has been a recognition
that Ammianus makes use of imagery and ceremony. O’Brien has argued
recently that Ammianus engages with ceremonial imagery current in

438 Matheis 2016: 368: “an elaborate ceremonial which structured the communication and
interaction between the emperor and the inhabitants of the capital”.
440 Geertz 1985: 23.
441 Geertz 1980: 120.
architecture of the 4th century; and Matthews has shown that Ammianus is highly sensitive to the theatricality of late Roman ceremonial. Again, these views are not new. MacMullen’s celebrated paper on Ammianus and the 4th century proved that late Roman society was underpinned by a heavy consumption of ceremonial and other images at all levels: “a passion for pure display took hold throughout the empire”. MacMullen himself thought that this increased interest in elaborate appearance indicated a decline in traditional Roman values. However, there is no suggestion in the RG that Ammianus sees such decoration as un-Roman. Indeed, he regards pomp and ceremony as integral to the imperial office since it elevates the emperor and renders him a focal point for the Roman gaze and an integrative force of Roman identity. The act of observing the emperor and witnessing the personification of the empire’s majesty creates and reinforces the identity community by presenting both the fact of Roman power (expressed through the grandiosity of the image) and the idea it represents. This idea is the project of Romanness shared by those who work to maintain the empire: the soldiers, civilians, and other ‘outsiders’ on the front lines of Roman identity.

3.2.1 An emperor’s majesty and a Roman audience

This section examines Ammianus’ portrayal of imperial majesty and argues that Ammianus sees the imperial office as a stage show to be observed by the members of his identity community. The office could be experienced by onlookers as a means of anchoring their identity around a ceremonial figurehead who in turn represented the Roman ‘group’. The emperor must play a role: as Geertz has said, “statecraft is a thespian art”. Once

\begin{enumerate}
\item O’Brien 2013: 225-26.
\item Matthews 1989: 246ff.
\item MacMullen 1964a: 441. Around the same time Bonfante 1964: 402, influenced by Auerbach’s analysis of the graphic account of the arrest of Peter Valvomeres (15.7), notes how Ammianus cultivated “a kind of visual sense [...] a vivid impression of seeing the thing described”. Auerbach’s book, which contained a chapter on Ammianus, was republished in 2003.
\item Ibid., p. 446.
\item For identity defined through group membership see Cooper 2009: 194 and my introduction.
\item Above, p. 137.
\end{enumerate}
the notion of an audience is established, Ammianus’ integrative purpose is more closely analysed.

Constantius is a suitable starting point for this analysis because he is explicitly praised by Ammianus for the care with which he maintains his image. This praise, along with a comment on his shunning popularity, occurs during the virtue section of Constantius’ obituary (21.16.1: ‘imperatoriae auctoritatis cothurnum ubique custodiens, popularitatem elato animo contemnebat et magno’). It is the first of Constantius’ merits which Ammianus chooses for discussion. The primacy of this virtue and its meaning deserve consideration.

In the best sustained analysis of the phrase, Jenkins has argued that, though Ammianus seems to praise Constantius' maintenance of the imperial dignity, it is a criticism of that emperor and an indication of his arrogance, in line with other uses of cothurnus in the RG. On the other hand, Teitler is surely correct to emphasise Ammianus’ pledge to “observe a true distinction between Constantius’ good qualities and his defects” (21.16.1: ‘bonorum igitur vitiorumque eius differentia vere servata’). If Ammianus is indeed being ironical here, he is undermining his own claims to accuracy, something unlikely. 21.16.1 should be read in a context of praise rather than censure.

It is also important that auctoritatis cothurnum is a specifically ‘imperial’ quality (‘imperatoriae...’), for this also hints at a positive meaning. Jenkins' analysis fails to appreciate the difference between the office of the emperor and the rest of the administration, military and civil, about whom the other instances of cothurnus concern. For instance, Ammianus ridicules the general Lupicinus since, though of warlike spirit and a skilled soldier (21.1.2: ‘bellicosum sane et castrensis rei peritum’), he raised his eyebrows like horns and “ranted in the tragic buskin as the saying goes”

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450 Jenkins 1987: 62 further suggests that the lack of theatrical imagery in the Julianic books is because his reign was "morally superior" to the others. But it may also be because of all the emperors it is Julian who most frequently fails at the theatrical game of imperial presentation. This point is developed further at § 3.2.
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(‘et de tragico, quod aiunt, cothurno strepentes’). Using the same expression Ammianus comments similarly on the praetorian prefect Petronius Probus. The implication is that such highly wrought behaviour is unseemly and unnecessary for seasoned generals and administrators. The same, however, cannot be said of the emperors. Although Ammianus does have an expectation that officials maintain a customary pomp (14.7.10: ‘ad praetorium cum pompa sollemni perrexit’), the nexus of duties contained in cothurnus are strictly imperial.

The explicit link between performance and nothing less than the authority pertaining to the emperor (‘imperatoriae auctoritatis’) reveals Ammianus’ true understanding of that office’s nature: its power is inextricably bound up with its staging and it is implicitly something different to other offices which do not require such high ceremony. Cothurnus implies the dramatic staging of a play and underlines that Ammianus sees being emperor as a performance. For this reason, I have translated it metaphorically as ‘theatre’, though still retaining the connotations of dignity. The word occurs four times in the extant text, and twice it refers to the office. The other two instances (Lupicinus and Probus mentioned above) confirm the dramatic context since they occur in conjunction with the adjective tragicus to add flavour to the narrative.

The connection Ammianus makes between stage acting and the imperial office is important because it contains not only a performative aspect, but also the notion of an audience observing the emperor as he plays his role.

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451 27.11.2: ‘et licet potuit (quoad vixit) ingentia, largiendo et intervallando potestates assiduas, erat tamen interdum timidus ad audaces, contra timidos celsior, ut videretur cum sibi fideret, de cothurno strepere tragico, et ubi paveret, omni humilior socco’.

452 For the theatrical application of the word in Ammianus see Jenkins 1987. Quint. Inst. 10.1.68 and Plin. Nat. 35.111 both link cothurnus with gravitas. The English translations of Rolfe and Hamilton render cothurnus ‘dignity’ which does not quite capture the performative aspect of the quality for Ammianus. It is interesting to note that another use of cothurnus by Horace (Ars P. 80) sees it not only as a performance, noting Archilochos, but also links it with silencing the crowd and the carrying out of serious business (81-2: ‘et popularis vincentem strepitus et natum rebus agendis’). Constantius’ own maintenance of cothurnus sees him spurning the favour of the crowd and dealing wisely with both civil and military affairs (‘…administrationum […] militarium’).

453 The last instance of cothurnus not mentioned in the text occurs at 28.6.29 as part of a theatrical metaphor for the disasters wrought by Valentinian’s officials in Africa.
This is a crucial first stage in establishing the identity purpose of imperial ceremonial in that, by ‘consuming’ the emperor’s majesty, Romans reaffirm their own identity and unite around the institution of a highly visible emperorship. This visibility is what Ammianus introduces here and it complements the sheer visibility of Rome (ch. 2).454

The use of a strong, highly traditional, Roman virtue like *auctoritas* confirms the genuineness of the picture. It is a word Ammianus uses frequently, some forty times in total. Often, it refers to the power bestowed by an office on its holder, and in this mundane sense it refers regularly to the emperor.455 Julian is the emperor most often described as possessing the virtue, though Valentinian also possesses it at several points.456 Beyond this, the traditional undertone of the quality is present when Ammianus describes the ‘authority’ of ancient wisdom or institutions. It is associated several times with Cicero and Pythagoras, and once each with Homer and the Roman senate.457 These examples show simply that Ammianus takes *auctoritas* seriously and regards it as an ancient virtue. Consequently, the linking of the virtue with *cothurnus* is not ironic or covert criticism. Ammianus saw the dramatic, even high-flown, element (‘cothurnus’) of the imperial office as an integral component of its presentation: the office was meant to be performed.

Alongside *auctoritas*, and pertaining even more closely to the imperial power, is the quality of majesty (’maiestas’). In many cases *maiestas* forms part of a phrase relating to treason but there are also times where

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455 E.g. 20.4.6 (Julian is pressed on one side by the barbarians and on the other by the “authority of the emperor’s orders”); 23.5.22 (Julian declares that emperors think that whatever they decide is right thanks to the authority of their position).
456 Julian: 17.1.2 (he is a general of brilliant authority); 24.3.8 (the soldiers laud Julian’s authority to the skies); 25.3.22 (even on his deathbed Julian retained his authority and chided those who were weeping for him); 25.4.1 (Julian cultivated the four main virtues and some of the lesser ones, one of which was authority); 25.4.12 (Julian’s authority was very well established). Valentinian: 26.2.11 (his unexpected assumption of authority); 30.7.7 (referring to his deeds performed when he held imperial authority).
457 Cicero: 16.1.5; 22.15.24; Pythagoras: 15.9.8; 22.16.21; Homer: 27.4.3; senate: 14.6.6.
Ammianus uses the word to describe the imperial office. It is generally in the safeguarding of his *maiestas* that Constantius (and Valentinian) commits his crimes. Thus at 16.8.1 many offences are committed under the banner of protecting the majesty of Constantius’ position, and Valentinian combines the *maiestas* of his station with serious licence (29.3.1: ‘maiestati fortunae miscenti licentiam gravem’). Generally, however, the majesty of the emperor is an indispensable part of his image and it is significant that Procopius appeals to the ‘majesty’ of the Constantines during his rebellion as a means of buttressing his legitimacy (26.7.16). This appeal has a powerful effect on the soldiers and Valens shrewdly displays his own connection to Constantine, the aged general Arbitio, to quell them (26.9.4-5).

At the same time, Ammianus refers to the “emblem of kingly majesty” (17.11.4: ‘regiae maiestatis insigni’) with reference to a story concerning Pompey the Great. This example explicitly links majesty not only with rulership, but also with the ceremonial accoutrement of the position, its visibility, which, it is argued below, necessarily had to be seen and understood by audience members if they were to use it as a focal point for identity. It is also significant that Julian is never said to possess an emperor’s *maiestas*. He is “distinguished by an internal majesty” (25.4.1: ‘coalita maiestate conspicuus’) which could be a substitute, but, while Ammianus is clear that this makes him a great man in a philosophical sense, it is unclear how far it correlates to his upholding of an emperor’s majesty. This is a distinction worth emphasising in Julian’s case, for while he may have believed in the ideal of the philosopher-king, Ammianus did not.

More than its conspicuous visibility and connection to old Roman values, *maiestas* is representative of the Roman community, a common cause which had to be defended, and this is the reason for a majestic emperor: Ammianus sees him as an abstract expression of the Roman community. In

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458 For the development of *maiestas minuta* as a catch-all treason charge see *OCD* s.v. *maiestas*.
a direct speech to his men, Julian invokes majesty as a source of inspiration for his soldiers before they join battle with the Alamanni: he urges them “to wash away the old-time stains and restore its fitting beauty to the majesty of Rome” (‘elutis pristinis maculis, Romanae maiestati reddere proprium decus’).

Majesty is also connected with the Roman cause by Julian, who subsequently urges his men to fight for it (16.12.32: ‘nostris partibus...’). Indeed, Julian states that it was for the Roman mission that he decided to assume the Caesarship in the first place (16.12.32: ‘...quae contemplans Caesaris nomen cunctando suscepi’). By a careful juxtaposition, Ammianus links the “fitting beauty of Roman majesty” (‘Romanae maiestati...proprium decus’) with the Roman cause (‘nostris partibus’) and the office of Caesar (‘Caesaris nomen’). For Julian, the trio were inseparable in their contribution to the Roman community.

Majesty is, then, a significant quality for Ammianus. It covers a spectrum of meanings and depending on context can serve broadly as a rallying cry for Roman troops or narrowly in connection with the authority of the emperor. It also contains a visual dimension in association with the paraphernalia of imperial power. These connotations are developed in the following sections with reference to imperial ceremominal. Ceremonial is an inspiration for Romans and something in which they can anchor their identity after the fashion of Julian’s troops; it is the preserve of the proper emperor; and, crucially, it is something which had to be seen and ‘consumed’ by an audience who are bound together by the shared experience. Again, this is a process akin to that in the second part of 16.10 where Romans experience the locus of their identity through a conspicuously estranged Constantius.
3.2.2 Constantius’ *adventus* and the maintenance of identity

The *adventus* of Constantius to Rome in the first part of 16.10 demonstrates the utility of ceremony as an integrative tool. Much has been written about this chapter and most scholars see it as an ironic undermining of Constantius’ aptitude for the imperial office. Barnes interprets 16.10 as an uncomplicated condemnation of the “empty ceremony” of Constantius. Klodt sees it as a comment on his great arrogance, while Flower regards it as articulating a “gulf between appearance and reality: these are fabricated troops for a fabricated triumph”.

Most recently, Ross has argued that 16.10 formed part of Ammianus’ anti-Constantius rhetoric and promotion of Julian in that it highlighted the “empty triumph” of the former. These views all denounce Constantius as artificial: to borrow Vout’s judgement on this scene, “[a]ll is show, without substance”. Rees, moreover, suggests that “the author’s control of the irony is such as to undermine any sense of elevation of the emperor and his office”. These scholars are right to note that Ammianus criticises both the occasion of the procession and Constantius’ arrogance generally, but it is important to distinguish between the incumbent and the office itself. Rees conflates Constantius and the office he holds. This is a mistake. Constantius is a poor emperor but it is the *emperorship* that is at stake in 16.10. The presentation of the office in the first part of the digression works in concert with the image of Rome in the second part (ch. 2) to create a focal point for identity.

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459 For analysis of the emperor in Rome itself in the second part of 16.10 see previous chapter.
460 Blockley 1975: 50
463 Flower 2015: 832.
464 Ross 2016: 12.
465 Vout 2012: 223.
466 Rees 2013: 115.
467 Masterson 2014: 143-7 comes close to the position offered here.
468 For a similar point in connection to the imperial cult see Harris 2016: 176: “Emperor-worship allowed the *princeps* to be coupled with Rome itself as an object of public respect, so that together they formed a focus for possible unity”.

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This is a position consistent with studies on ceremonial events generally. Hekster has acknowledged a communal psychology with his suggestion that imperial ceremonies “were an important opportunity for emperors to establish themselves and their soldiers in the minds of their people” (my emphasis in this and following quotation). Similarly Humphries observes that imperial appearances “provided a ceremonial common ground that could be commemorated by all Romans, regardless of religious affiliation”. Here it will be demonstrated that this is also true of all Romans regardless of ethnic background or geographical location. Ammianus positions Romans as looking in on the emperor performing his role – in this sense, everyone is an ‘outsider’.

16.10 is a lengthy passage. For ease of analysis it is subdivided. First, the universality of the procession, since through this perspective Ammianus demonstrates that the identity of the community is at issue. He establishes two gazes: that of the crowd and that of the emperor. These interact throughout the rest of the passage and signal the creation of a Roman community, emperor and citizen, senator and common people (16.10.5-6):

As Constantius approached the city, he let his eye dwell without expression on the senators paying their humble duty and the venerable images of the patrician families. It did not occur to him as it had to Cineas, the celebrated envoy of Pyrrhus, that he was beholding an assembly of kings; his thought was rather that here was a place of sanctuary for the whole world, and when he turned towards the populace...

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469 MacCormack 1981: 48: *Adventus* was “a ceremony of persuasion, integration and consent, in which spontaneous action could be clothed in a familiar ceremonial”. For an early modern parallel see Dwyer 2015: 52 on Napoleon’s coronation ceremony and “how it was designed to promote social integration and political consensus, a synthesis that demonstrated the will to bring the Revolution to an end”.

470 Hekster 2007: 347.

471 Humphries 2007: 34.

472 For the important constituent parts of the emperor and the crowd in *adventus* scenes see Kneafsey 2015: 158.

473 *Cumque urbi propinquaret, senatus officia, reverendasque patriciae stirpis effigies, ore sereno contemplans, non ut Cineas ille Pyrri legatus, in unum coactam multitudinem*
Just as in a theatrical performance or any other mass entertainment, different classes are present in this scene. At first the emperor witnesses the senators, and then he turns to the common people. It is pertinent that Ammianus invokes Pyrrhus to make his point, for this famous general appears as a positive exemplum elsewhere and hints at the universal aspect of the passage. When Valens treacherously assassinates the Armenian king Pap at a banquet, Ammianus invokes as a case of “old-time justice” (30.1.22: ‘priscam illam iustitiam’) the cordial relations which existed between Fabricius and the Epirote. In that instance Ammianus uses Pyrrhus to meditate on Roman-foreign relations and a Roman failure to uphold a standard of behaviour, thereby implying the importance both of a kind of ‘internationalism’ (inherent in Ammianus’ outward-looking identity scheme) and the behavioural basis of proper Roman identity.

The universal aspect of Pyrrhus as an exemplum is further affirmed by Eutropius, who believes Pyrrhus to be the first truly external enemy with which the Romans had to contend. The same author has Pyrrhus claiming that if he had Romans at his disposal he would conquer the whole world (‘totius orbis’). In 16.10.5, totius orbis becomes mundi totius but the sense is retained of a peculiarly outward-looking scene, in some sense bigger than both the emperor and those watching the procession in person. The historian signals that Constantius’ adventus is to be a communal event applicable to Romans the world over. This sense is only amplified if Ammianus really did recite his work before Theodosius’ court, peopled as it was by Romans of various ethnicities. The whole scene has

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regum sed asylum mundi totius adesse existimabat [...] Unde cum se vertisset ad plebem...‘. The English is taken from the Penguin translation of Hamilton.

474 Cic. Off. 1.40 makes a similar point.

475 For the qualified use of ‘internationalism’ in this period see Matthews 2000: 31 who refers it to the relationship between barbarian ethnicity and Roman law.

476 Eutr. 2.11: ‘is mox ad Italiam venit, tumque primum Romani cum transmarino hoste dimicaverunt.’

477 ‘quos cum adverso vulnere et truci vultu etiam mortuos iacere vidisset, tulisse ad caelum manus dicitur cum hac voce: se totius orbis dominum esse potuisse, si tales sibi milites contigissent’.

478 Theodosius staged an adventus into Rome in June 389 which Ammianus may have witnessed and used as a model for 16.10. For the adventus of 389 see Curran 1998: 107.
a universalising flavour which hints at Ammianus’ larger integrative agenda.

Ammianus reiterates the communal nature of Constantius’ reception. The following recounts Constantius’ entrance into Rome (16.10.4, 6):

...escorted by formidable troops, he was conducted, so to speak, in battle array and everyone’s eyes were riveted upon him with fixed gaze [...] he was amazed to see in what crowds men of every type had flocked from all quarters to Rome.479

The previous section argued that Ammianus conceives of the emperor as an actor in a role. This passage shows this process in action. Not only are everyone’s eyes on Constantius (‘omnia oculis...’) but the audience is riveted with fixed gaze (‘...contuitu pertinaci intentis’). The latter detail symbolises an enraptured audience, utterly spellbound by the image before them. This shows that Constantius has, to quote van Nuffelen, given a “successful performance” before the assembled members of the community who, in viewing the resplendent emperor, celebrate being Roman.480

The scale is enlarged slightly later in the passage with a careful triad of universalising features. First, Constantius himself marvels at the great mass of people before him (‘stupebat...celebritate’); then mankind itself is invoked (‘hominum genus’); and finally Rome is imagined as almost flooded (‘confluxerit Romam’) with people. The entire Roman community observes the emperor performing his role, thus showing the universal application of imperial ceremony.

The communality of the adventus and the notion of an audience ‘consuming’ the sight of a suitably majestic emperor is enhanced throughout the passage, but a recent contribution on this scene by Flower

480 van Nuffelen 2012: 185 referring to late antique ceremonies in general.
misses its significance. Flower, in line with the work outlined above, interprets much of it as a thinly veiled attack on the rulership style of Constantius. Although not all the passage is critical of Constantius, says Flower:

None the less, this passage describing Constantius’ *aduentus* consistently undermines his imperial status, emphasizing the emptiness of his rule [...] The rest of the passage then continues this theme by presenting Constantius as a man who did not know how to be an emperor, being desperate to look the part, but not actually able to become a real ruler.481

This view needs modification. Rather than hiding criticism of Constantius, the passage aims to create a Roman community through the witnessing of an emperor who, for all his faults, dutifully upholds the theatre of his imperial authority (21.16.1). Flower sees a cleavage in Constantius between being a “real ruler” and his desire to “look the part”, where the implication is that behaving justly is the mark of a true emperor and the cosmetic aspect is empty frippery. This stance is right in that being a good emperor is indeed about behaving with moderation – Ammianus says so explicitly.482

But Flower is wrong to dismiss so readily the importance of looking the part. Constantius is terrible at much of an emperor’s duty; he is excellent at maintaining an appropriate image. A further detail illustrates the point, and how Romans, in appreciating the sight of a majestic emperor, solidify their identity. Constantius himself remains completely still (‘immobilis’) during the procession and he affects to crouch as his carriage passes under arches. Once more, Flower interprets this detail negatively, emphasising

481 Flower 2015: 828, 829.
482 29.2.18: ‘nihil aliud esse imperium, ut sapientes definiunt, nisi curam salutis alienae, bonique esse moderatoris, restringere potestatem, resistere cupiditati omnium rerum et implacabilibus iracundiis’.
Ammianus’ comment that it was an affectation (16.10.11: ‘quae licet affectabat’). 483

Ammianus acknowledges the conceit and sees through the ruse himself, but it does not detract from the image of power which Constantius marshals. 484 Most pertinently, Ammianus allows Constantius’ affectation to receive a rapturous reception. The effect of the image on its ‘consumers’ within the text is an indication of its purpose as an affirmation of Roman and imperial majesty, and the power of ceremony to unite an audience and reinforce identity (16.10.9):

Accordingly, being saluted as Augustus with favouring shouts, while hills and shores thundered out the roar, he never stirred, but showed himself as calm and imperturbable as he was commonly seen in his provinces. 485

Vout argues that Constantius’ “displays of power are unconvincing”. 486 Yet this is not actually the case for the characters in the text. The people raucously express their approval of Constantius so appreciative are they of the emperor and his procession. It is significant how Ammianus does not seek to minimise the crowd’s zealous reaction given his earlier statement that the emperor had brought an unwelcome and unashamedly martial procession to Romans “neither expecting nor desiring to see this or anything like it” (16.10.2: ‘haec vel simile quicquam videre nec speranti umquam nec optanti’). 487 It may be because Ammianus accepts the “power of pomp and glitter” 488 but still cannot allow Constantius a passage where

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483 Flower 2015: 833: “Ammianus thus presented [Constantius] as trying to act out the role of an emperor, a unique figure amongst humanity, by performing in this manner, but failing to understand that people easily saw through his charade”. See too Klodt 2001: 89-90.


485 “Augustus itaque faustis vocibus appellatus, non montium litorumque intonante fragore cohorrruit, talem se tamque immobilem, qualis in provinciis suis visebatur, ostendens’.

486 Vout 2012: 223.

487 See Heim 1990: 170 for the importance Ammianus places on a prospective emperor receiving an enthusiastic reception.

488 MacMullen 1964a: 438.
he is free from blemish. He therefore criticises the circumstances of the procession, but leaves its description and impact untouched, even positive.

Ammianus emphasises the universal application of the ceremony: Constantius’ rigid posture mirrors how he is viewed “in the provinces” (‘qualis in proviniis suis videbatur’). This kind of language is a continuation of that found in earlier passages and once more places the whole Roman community, most of whom do not live in the capital, as observers of the ceremony and as styled ‘outsiders’. This is not a procession for Rome but for the empire and the world – the emperor becomes a universal figure and an expression of identity. As part of this process, Ammianus elevates the emperor so that he might be more easily seen.

Fontaine judges the whole thing a charade: “l’immobilité rituelle à laquelle cet empereur se croit forcé...au point d’avoir l’air ridicule d’une sorte de statue vivante”. Flower argues similarly, that in describing the emperor as a “figure of a man” (16.10.10: ‘tamquam pigmentum hominis’) Ammianus undermines and criticises him:

Rather than being an uncontroversial commonplace in Late Antiquity, the assimilation of a living emperor with an image was potentially loaded with criticism.

In support of his thesis, Flower appends several texts, one of which, by Libanius, contrasts Julian with Constantius, a man who was “witless and little better than a painted image or a figure of clay”.

The context is quite different, however. In Ammianus, Constantius’ statue-like posture contributes to the picture of majestic ceremony to be observed by all Romans. It is also part of Ammianus’ process of elevating the office and its paraphernalia (16.10.6-8):

489 In general, Millar 1977: 39: the “emperor functioned as a sort of moving capital of the empire in himself”.
490 Cf. Zuiderhoek 2017: 97: “Collective practices [...] contributed in important ways to establishing and maintaining a sense of collective identity”.
491 Fontaine 1982: 539.
492 Flower 2015: 825.
493 Lib. Or. 17.8: οὐδὲ γὰρ νοῦ μετέχειν οὐδὲ πολὺ βελτίων τῶν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ἢν ἢ τῶν πηλίων.
And as if he were planning to overawe the Euphrates with a show of arms, or the Rhine, while the standards preceded him on each side, he himself sat alone upon a golden car in the resplendent blaze of shimmering precious stones, whose mingled glitter seemed to form a sort of shifting light. [7] And behind the manifold others that preceded him he was surrounded by dragons, woven out of purple thread and bound to the golden and jewelled tops of spears, with wide mouths open to the breeze and hence hissing as if roused by anger, and leaving their tails winding in the wind. [8] And there marched on either side twin lines of infantrymen with shields and crests gleaming with glittering rays, clad in shining mail; and scattered among them were the full-armoured cavalry (whom they call clibanarii), all masked, furnished with protecting breastplates and girt with iron belts, so that you might have supposed them statues polished by the hand of Praxiteles, not men. Thin circles of iron plates, fitted to the curves of their bodies, completely covered their limbs; so that whichever way they had to move their members, their garment fitted, so skilfully were the joinings made.494

The historian disapproves of the setting of the procession – it was unseemly that Constantius should march into Rome at the head of an army.495 At the same time, however, the juxtaposition of the emperor and

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494 ‘Et tamquam Euphraten armorum specie territurus aut Rhenum, altrinsecus praeuentibus signis, insidebat aureo solus ipse carpento, fulgenti claritudine lapidum variorum, quo micante lux quaedam misceri videbatur alterna. [7] Eumque post antegressos multiplices alios, purpureis subtegminibus texti, circumcedere dracones, hastarum aureis gemmatisque summitatibus illigati, hiato vasto perflabiles, et ideo velut ira perciti sibilantes, caudarumque volumina relinquentes in ventum. [8] Et incedebat hinc inde ordo geminus armatorum, clipeatus atque cristatus, corusco lumine radius, nitidis lorice indutos, sparsique cataphracti equites (quos clibanarios dictitant) personati thoracum muniti tegminibus, et limbis ferreis cincti, ut Praxitels manu polita crederes simulacra, non viros; quos laminarum circuli tenues, apti corporis flexibus ambiebant, per omnia membra diducti, ut quocumque artus necessitas commodisset, vestitus congrueret, iunctura cohaerenter aptata’.

495 It was customary for generals to lay aside their military paraphernalia upon reaching Rome. In the struggles after the murder of Pertinax in 193, Septimius Severus, having marched with his army from Pannonia to Rome, ostentatiously exchanged his military gear.
his soldiers is also a picture of Roman majesty, and Roberts, in his nuanced piece on the procession, has described the scene as a “barrage of semantically related words [and] insistent visual stimuli”. 496

This majestic, even beautiful, image continues as Ammianus describes the close-fitting armour of the soldiers such that “you might have supposed them statues polished by the hand of Praxiteles, not men” (16.10.8: ‘ut Praxitelas manu polita crederes simulacra, non viros’). This description is not negative; rather it implies that the procession has an abstract significance as a picture of Romanness. In the context of the passage, Constantius’ own comparison to a statue (16.10.10) is similarly positive. 497 Kolb has argued in reference to imperial portraiture in the tetrarchy that “[d]essen Gestaltung prägte folglich wesentlich das Bild, welches sich die Untertanen von ihren Herrschern machten”. 498 The conclusion is applicable here. A distinction should be made between the unworthy emperor who participates in the procession, and the abstract picture of Roman power which exists independently of him. It is this picture which Ammianus emphasises, since it is consumed by an audience, thus integrating the community around a shared experience of Romanness.

The statue-like nature of the Roman soldiers and the emperor implies an audience looking in on the procession and appreciating it as a demonstration of Romanness. Ammianus writes of statues or statue-like beings in a similarly awe-inspired way: there are Persians who moved “in such close order that the gleam of moving bodies covered with closely fitting plates of iron dazzled the eyes of those who looked upon them” (24.6.8: ‘ita confertas, ut lamminis cohaerenter aptati corporum flexus,

497 Cf. Fowler 2007: 7: “To be – or to try to be – a Roman meant in a sense to become like a statue: a monument of gravitas, constantia, and auctoritas”. Fowler juxtaposes Constantius (16.10.9-11) with the statue-like posture of Papirius and his colleagues prior to the Gallic sack of Rome (Liv. 5.41.8-9).
498 Kolb 2001: 47: “Its design thus essentially shaped the image which subjects made of their rulers”.

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splendore praestingerent occursantes obtutus’). Elsewhere, Ammianus mentions with reverence the statues in Alexandria’s Serapeum which seem almost to breathe they are so lifelike (22.16.12: ‘et spirantibus signorum figmentis’), and oddly enough he invokes once more the notion that the whole world looks upon the Serapeum and its constructions (‘nihil orbis terrarum ambitiosius cernat’), mirroring the universalising rhetoric in 16.10. The first half of the chapter, with its focus on the serried ranks of the army and the detailed description of their appearance, demonstrates the full power of Rome not only in terms of its men and resources, but also in terms of the power of its imagery.

The transfigured Constantius becomes the majestic figurehead of the Roman community, a concept rather than an individual; as Drake has suggested, he “embodied Rome” and the adventus was a celebration of the “universal state he carried in his person”. Elsner has shown that one of the crucial differences between art of the principate and that of late antiquity is that the latter becomes a “virtuosic typological system whereby everything in the world could be explained as an allegory or symbol of the Other World”. Although Elsner refers to Christian art specifically, a similar principle is on show here. Ammianus turns Constantius into a piece of art where he represents the otherwise intangible sense of being Roman. This is not to downplay the criticism in the passage: there is certainly unease regarding the circumstances of the procession and Constantius’ arrogance (16.10.12: ‘supercilium’), but the careful portrayal of the ceremony itself suggests that Ammianus has in mind a broader audience than the metropolitans who witness the procession: he wants Romans to ‘see’ the emperorship through his book too, as if Constantius is not in Rome but with them.

By witnessing and appreciating the picture of majesty Ammianus presents, Romans reaffirm their identity in the grandeur of the imperial power, a

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499 See too Aristid. Or. 26.84 for the notion of serried ranks of men with tightly fitted armour massed against external threats. Ammianus envisages a similar idea.
500 Drake 2014: 221.
focal point for all irrespective of location. This interpretation can be supported and developed with an analysis of the source text for 16.10 and the root of Ammianus’ model of ceremonial kingship. Straub and Charlesworth recognised long ago that Ammianus adapts a passage from Xenophon’s *Cyropaideia* concerning Cyrus’ cultivation of an imperial image for consumption by provincials.

For Straub and Charlesworth, this source text confirms only the orientalising of Roman custom,⁵⁰² and Xenophon’s significance for Ammianus has scarcely been discussed since (8.1.40, 42):

> We think, furthermore, that we have observed in Cyrus that he held the opinion that a ruler ought to excel his subjects not only in point of being actually better than they, but that he ought also to cast a sort of spell upon them [...] [42] He trained his associates also not to spit or to wipe the nose in public, and not to turn round to look at anything, as being men who wondered at nothing. All this he thought contributed, in some measure, to their appearing to their subjects men who could not lightly be despised.⁵⁰³

Both scholars believe that Ammianus derives from this passage his comment that Constantius refrained from turning his head, wiping his face, or spitting during the procession (16.10.10).⁵⁰⁴ There has been very little work done on the possible relationship between Ammianus and Xenophon

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⁵⁰² Straub 1939: 184, with Charlesworth 1947.
⁵⁰³ Καταμαθεῖν δὲ τοῦ Κύρου δοκοῦμεν ὡς οὐ τοῦτω μόνῳ ἐνόμιζε χρῆναι τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν ἀρχαίων διαφέρειν, τῷ βελτίωνας αὐτῶν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ καταγωγεῖν ὡς τοῦ χρῆναι αὐτοὺς [...] [42] ἐμελέτησε δὲ καὶ ὡς μὴ πτύοντες μηδὲ ἀπομυττόμενοι φανεροὶ εἶεν, μηδὲ μεταστραφόμενοι ἐπὶ θέαν μηδὲν, ὡς οὐδὲν θαυμάζοντες, πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἔμελον τι εἰς τὸ δυσκαταφρονητοτέρους φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀρχαίοις.
⁵⁰⁴ For a more recent statement of Ammianus’ allegiance to Xenophon in this section see Matthews 1989: 233.
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beyond noting that they were both soldiers and historians, or that they coincidentally share certain ethnographic details.

More than this, however, Cyrus’ awareness of appearance’s power to “bewitch” onlookers is relevant to 16.10. In Xenophon, Cyrus must show that he is supreme to enchant his subjects and so further integration. Rulers must not wonder at anything (8.1.42: ὡς οὐδὲν θαυμάζοντες) but themselves be a figure of wonderment; and they must wear extravagant dress so as to hide any defect and augment their stature (8.1.40: αὕτη γὰρ αὐτῷ συγκρύπτειν ἐδόκει εἰ τίς τι ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐνδεές ἔχοι, καὶ καλλίστους καὶ μεγίστους ἐπιδεικνύναι τοὺς φορούντας). These measures enabled Cyrus to control the entirety of the empire (8.1.45: τῇ μὲν δὴ ὀλή Περσῶν ἄρχῃ οὕτω τὴν ἀσφάλειαν κατεσκεύαζεν) and to make him and his deputies men who could not lightly be despised by those they ruled (8.1.42: πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ὥστε φέρειν τι εἰς τὸ δυσκαταφρονητότερος φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἄρχομένοις).

As was noted earlier, Ammianus borrows these ideas for his own account of Constantius who, with his grand appearance, and despite all his faults, succeeds in ‘bewitching’ the metropolitan Romans to such an extent that they cheer his arrival – Ammianus notes early in the passage that Constantius’ trip to the city was both too long and actually unwelcome. Rees has argued that Constantius here “does not inspire ekphrastic wonder”, contrasting him to Julian (22.2.4) whose own entry into Constantinople is received with great wonder (‘cum admiratione magna’) by the people. But this is not the case, for Constantius too is well received in spite of Ammianus’ scepticism (16.10.9: ‘Augustus itaque faustis vocibus appellatus, non montium litorumque intonante fragore cohorruit’).

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505 E.g. Marincola 1997: 142-3 on Ammianus’ sphragis which “recalls the tradition of soldier-historian going back to Xenophon”.
506 Teitler 1999: 217 notes that the detail of Persians urinating while standing (23.6.79) may have derived from Xen. Cyrop. 1.2.16, though he also appends several other parallels.
507 16.10.2: ‘sed ut pompam nimis extentam, rigentiaque auro vexilla, et pulcritudinem stipatorum ostenderet agenti tranquillius populo, haec vel simile quicquam videre nec speranti umquam nec optanti.’
508 Rees 2013: 115.
In the *Cyropaideia*, Xenophon appreciates the charismatic power of Cyrus as a binding and bewitching force. It is no coincidence that Ammianus too has cause to (grudgingly) respect the charismatic power of the Persian king in the *RG*, whom he calls the Shapur, king of the Persians and a venerable man (27.12.1: ‘rex vero Persidis, longaevus ille Sapor’), and this character further illuminates Ammianus’ identity agenda as regards the Roman emperor. Unlike Xenophon’s Cyrus, Shapur is a conniving and utterly dishonourable monarch, but Ammianus does recognise significant similarities between the two states, not least in their imperial ceremony.

Ammianus’ fascination with imperial image and its effect on an audience is reflected in his description of the majesty of the Persian king on the one hand and the studied universality of his office on the other. The description of Shapur before the walls of Amida exemplifies this (19.1.2-3):

And when the first gleam of dawn appeared, everything so far as the eye could reach shone with glittering arms, and mail-clad cavalry filled the hills and fields. [3] The king himself, mounted upon a charger and overtopping the others, rode before the whole army, wearing in place of a diadem a golden image of a ram’s head set with precious stones, distinguished too by a great retinue of men of the highest rank and of various nations.\(^5\)

The parallels between this passage and Constantius at 16.10 are obvious enough, though Ammianus changes the details. Constantius rides alone in a golden carriage amid the resplendent blaze of shimmering precious stones (‘insidebat aureo solus ipse carpento, fulgenti claritudine lapidum variorum’) and surrounded by gleaming troops “beaming with a

\(^5\) E.g. 17.5.1 (his unbridled greed); 18.10.4 (while waging war against the Romans, he makes a “pretence of mildness” so that people might come over to him of their own volition); 20.6.1 (he is a “savage king”).

\(^5\) ‘Cumque primum aurora fulgeret, universa quae videri poterant armis stellantibus coruscant, ac ferreus equitatus campos opplevit et colles. [3] Insidens autem equo, ante alios celsior, ipse praeibat agminibus cunctis, aureum capitis arietini figuramentum, interstinctum lapillis, pro diemate gestans, multiplici vertice dignatum, et gentium diversarum comitatu sublimis’.
shimmering light” (16.10.6: ‘corusco lumine radians’). The picture renders him quasi-human (16.10.10: ‘tamquam figmentum hominis’). In Shapur’s passage, echoing Constantius’, “everything so far as the eye could see shimmered with glittering arms” (‘universa quae videri poterant armis stellantibus coruscabant’). However, Shapur is mounted on a horse rather than in a carriage and it is the headdress he wears rather than his vehicle which is golden and bejewelled; and while Constantius himself is *figmentum hominis*, Shapur’s headdress is *arietini figmentum*.

Shapur’s role as a universal figurehead is only hinted at for now: he is accompanied by a conspicuously diverse retinue (‘multiplici vertice dignitatum, et gentium diversarum comitatu sublimis’). However, slightly later in the Amida narrative, the universality of Shapur and Constanius is juxtaposed directly (19.2.11):

...while the hills re-echoed from the shouts rising from both sides, as our men praised the power of Constantius Caesar as lord of the world and the universe, and the Persians called Shapur “saansaan” and “pirosen,” which being interpreted are “king of kings” and “victor in wars”.

In this passage, Ammianus again deploys the picture of the hills echoing the acclamations of rulers (cf. 16.10.9) to demonstrate their acceptance as majestic figureheads: both Romans and Persians see their monarch as universal rulers and as a focal point of affection. Shapur explicitly marshals innumerable peoples (19.2.4: ‘populos tam indimensos’) and is the lord of so many kings and nations (19.1.6: ‘tot regum et gentium dominum’), people who exalt in their leader’s magnificence and celebrate a shared Persian identity, even if they are not Persian themselves.

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511 ‘...resultabant altrinsecus exortis clamoribus colles, nostris virtutes Constanti Caesaris extollentibus, ut domini rerum et mundi, Persis Saporis saansaan appellantibus et pirosen, quod rex regibus imperans, et bellorum victor interpretatur’.

512 Canepa 2015: 163 argues that the “collective chanting” of this scene “manifested a certain experiential knowledge”.
This paradoxical labelling of Shapur’s army is emphasised – Ammianus, himself a member of the garrison in Amida, describes the tribes arranged before the walls (19.2.3):

The Persians beset the whole circuit of the walls. The part which faced the east fell to the lot of the Chionitae [...] the Gelani were assigned to the southern side, the Albani guarded the quarter to the north, and to the western gate were opposed the Segestani, the bravest warriors of all.\(^{513}\)

These men are all Persians (‘Persae’) but also too members of various tribal groups. Ammianus uses a similar technique to describe (some) Roman forces in Amida (ch. 1) which are both Roman and ethnically marked. Ammianus carefully maintains an element of ‘foreignness’ in both armies to demonstrate the integrative effect of imperial ceremony. It is significant that in this context, before a diverse audience, Ammianus has no qualms accepting Constantius’ acclamation as master of all things and the world (19.2.11: ‘ut domini rerum et mundi’), but in a private context, Ammianus is harshly critical of Constantius’ propensity to style himself master of the world in his letters (15.1.3: ‘confestim a iustitia declinavit [...] orbis totius se dominum appellaret’). When the emperor is on display or invoked by his followers, he should be pre-eminent such as to be a focal point for the Roman community and an integrating force.

Ammianus transposes into the RG the functional power of Persian ceremony in Xenophon, applying it in both Roman and Persian situations. Imperial ceremony maintains the theatre of Roman power which almost ‘bewitches’ onlookers and reifies their Romanness. As the all-knowing narrator, Ammianus is immune to the effect he describes; but not so his characters who witness Constantius in his majesty and, as a community, celebrate being Roman. The Persian parallel suggests further that such pageantry is the mark of civilisation. Geertz has said of royal progresses

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\(^{513}\) ‘Persae omnes murorum ambitus obsidebant. Pars, quae orientem spectabat, Chionitis evenit [...] Gelani meridiano lateri sunt destinati, tractum servabant septentrionis Albani, occidentali portae oppositi sunt Segestani, acerrimi omnium bellatores’.  

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that they “locate the society’s center and affirm its connection with transcendent things by stamping a territory with ritual signs of dominance”.

514 In 16.10 Ammianus casts the emperor in the abstract, surrounded quite literally by the hills and shores (‘montium litorumque’), as the centre of belonging.

3.3.1 The civilis princeps model as outdated for the contemporary empire

The Cyropaideia holds another significance for the RG in terms of the type of monarchical system it represents. In his analysis of Xenophon and Ammianus, Charlesworth notes that the civilis princeps style of earlier times had given way in the later empire to a new type: “the tremendous concentration of power in the hands of the emperor necessitated a different treatment of a ruler whose realm included so many peoples, with diverse traditions”. 515 It would be useful to return to the debate concerning the relevance of the civilis princeps model to the RG. Ammianus in fact envisages an emperor exactly opposite that of the citizen king. He imagines a monarch after the fashion of Xenophon’s Cyrus, aloof and majestic. This is because, as Charlesworth intimated, he recognises that the civilis princeps model belongs in the past and is unsuitable for the ethnically diverse and geographically spread contemporary empire: it is not sufficiently majestic and therefore cannot serve as a highly visible locus of identity.

First, the relevance of the citizen-king ideal to Ammianus must be questioned. In purely linguistic terms, the historian does not favour it. The word civilis occurs often in the RG, just under forty times, but it generally possesses a neutral meaning as part of a phrase for civil war (e.g. 18.5.7; 21.6.6) or as a technical term referring to the civil administration (21.16.3; 21.16.3; 18.5.7; 21.6.6).

514 Geertz 1985: 16.
515 Charlesworth 1947: 38; cf. Whitby 2004: 186 for the argument that the later empire could no longer sustain “the Augustan ideal of a civilian principate”. For an up-to-date account of the evolution of imperial imagery see R. Smith 2007: 159-61, esp. p. 161 for the later Roman court as “a theatre in which a particular ideology of royal power was visibly enacted and made manifest to an elite within the court and beyond it”; and Weisweiler 2015: 21ff.
its secondary function does hold the ‘virtuous’ meaning of ‘citizen-like’. Julian is the only emperor who is *civilis*; it is used of him twice in this virtuous sense: 18.1.4 notes his citizen-like conduct in court (‘civilia’), and 22.5.3 has his courteous engagement with a group of bickering Christians, although Seager has interpreted this instance negatively.516

Of the occurrences which bear relation to governing, the quality is used only of two officials: Ursicinus is a “cautious and civil governor” (28.1.43-44: ‘minister...cautus et civilis’) and Lauricius is a “a man of civil prudence” (19.13.2: ‘homo civilis prudentiae’). As for the abstract noun, Ammianus uses *civilitas* only twice in the extant text. In the first case (25.4.7) it refers to Julian and does hold the traditional meaning of behaving as a citizen, for it is one of several virtues cultivated by that emperor. Julian was “incredibly skilled in matters of war and of the toga and cultivated only so much *civilitas* as protected him from contempt” (‘armatae rei scientissimus et togatae, civilitati admodum studens, tantum sibi arrogans quantum a contemptu’).

In this context, *civilitas* may be translated ‘citizenly’, and although *togatus* is likely just a general term for matters of government, its rarity in the text suggests that Ammianus intentionally juxtaposes it with *civilitas* to evoke a republican ambience and the citizenly conduct of that era.517 In the second instance, Ammianus equates *civilitas* with the Greek πολιτικῆς of Plato to mean ‘the art of government’.518 Thus, although it may be admitted that on the two occasions *civilitas* is used it refers to government and governing, the relative paucity of the value and its corresponding adjectival form should caution against hunting for the ideal of the *civilis princeps* in the RG.

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517 Like *civilitas*, *togatus* occurs just twice and in both cases is contrasted with the military. The other occurrence also appears in a Julianic context as part of his *adventus* to Vienne: “surrounded by troupes of soldiers and citizens” (22.2.4: ‘stipatusque armatorum et togatorum agminibus’).
518 Pl. *Grg.* 463b, cited as part of Ammianus’ discussion of lawyers and the rhetoric they use.
Although Ammianus does subscribe to some of the elements, especially self-restraint and justice, the defining feature of the *civilis princeps* is that he behaves as a citizen, and this is where Ammianus is most sceptical.\(^{519}\) In his panegyric to Trajan, Pliny praises the emperor for being "one of us" (*Pan. 2.4-5: ‘unum ex nobis’), a citizen and a senator (2.7), and at 59.6 he reminds Trajan that a *princeps* should seem as much like a private citizen (‘privatus’) as possible. It has been noted by Braund that Trajan’s citizenly conduct, his *humanitas* and *civilitas*, is the “mainstay” of the panegyric:\(^{520}\) he conducts his private life like that of a citizen (83.4) and brings the outlook of a citizen to the office of emperor (44.1-2).

Pliny’s model is revived not only in the 4\(^{th}\) century panegyrics but also by Eutropius, who frequently commends his emperors for their *civilitas*. This author is a useful contrast to Ammianus. In Eutropius, where *civilitas* and its derivatives are meant as a virtue (as against their use as ‘civil war’ and the ‘civil arts’) it appears some 18 times. Augustus behaved *civilissime* (7.8) as did Claudius (7.13); Nerva is *civilissimus* (8.1) and Trajan has *civilitas* (8.2), as do Quintillus, Probus, Diocletian, Constantius Chlorus, Vetranio, and Jovian.\(^{521}\) It is also a distinctly imperial virtue. In the first six books (which deal with republican history) *civilis* refers only to civil war, and *civilitas* does not occur at all. From book seven, and starting with Augustus himself, emperors exhibit the quality in relative abundance.\(^{522}\) According to Cornell, *civilitas* for Eutropius means the “moderate use of supreme power and was characteristic of the best emperors” and was highly important to that author’s scheme.\(^{523}\) Ratti concurs, suggesting that “[l]a notion de *civilitas* est capitale pour la compréhension” of Eutropius and that it symbolises “une attitude d’ouverture à l’égard des citoyens, et d’hostilité à

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\(^{520}\) Braund 1998: 62.

\(^{521}\) 9.12; 9.17; 9.28; 10.1; 10.10; 10.18.

\(^{522}\) From the start of Augustus’ reign in book 7 to the end of the work with the death of Jovian in book 10 is 32 Teubner pages. ‘Virtue’ applications of *civilis* and *civilitas* thus occur, on average, every other page. Given that most reigns are treated in a paragraph or less, and hence Eutropius confines himself to the highlights of each emperor, it can be concluded that the virtue was of particular importance to his conception of a good emperor.

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la force brutale et souvent aveugle du tyran”. Eutropius’ usage reveals an infatuation with civilitas.

Ammianus deals with similar themes to Eutropius, especially with respect to the senseless power of the tyrant. Despite the similarity of their material, however, Ammianus barely uses civilitas. This is because he distinguishes between the behaviour of an emperor and that of a private citizen, and this distinction is at the root of his vision of ceremonial kingship furthering identity integration. Ammianus’ real attitude to the utility of ceremony, in particular its potential to unite members of the Roman identity community around the figure of the emperor, is revealed by a comparison to Julian’s own pseudo-adventus at 15.8.21. This is the point at which he leaves behind his status as a private citizen and becomes Caesar in Gaul:

But when he reached Vienne and entered the city, all ages and ranks flocked together to receive him with honour, as a man both longed for and efficient; and when they saw him from afar, the whole populace with the immediate neighbourhood, saluted him as a commander gracious and fortunate, and marched ahead of him with a chorus of praise, the more eagerly beholding royal pomp in a legitimate prince.

The people of Vienne “eagerly behold royal pomp in a legitimate prince” (‘avidius pompam regiam in principe legitimo cernens’) and celebrate

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524 Ratti 1996: 197, 199.
525 It may just be coincidental, but Ammianus’ favourite author Cicero (Rep. 1.67) also chastises those who, though holding office, try to act like private citizens (‘qui in magistratu privatorum similes esse velint’). According to Cicero, this practice succeeds only in eradicating hierarchy and promoting anarchy.
526 Cf. 22.2.4 and Julian’s arrival at Constantinople where “all ages and sexes poured forth” (‘effundebatur aetas omnis et sexus’) and there was “unanimous applause from the people” (‘et popularium consonis plausibus’). Further, as Julian progressed, “all eyes were turned upon him, not only with a fixed gaze, but also with great admiration” (‘omnium oculis in eum non modo contuitu destinato, sed cum admiratione magna defixis’). As with 16.10 there is a studied focus on the universality of the scene, the emperor as a focal point, and his enthusiastic reception by the crowd.
527 ‘Cumque Viennam venisset, ingredientem optatum quidem et imperarebilem honorifice suscepera omnis aetas concurrebat et dignitas, proculque visum plebs universa, cum vicinitate finitima, imperatorem clementem appellans et faustum, praevia consonis laudibus celebrabat, avidius pompam regiam in principe legitimo cernens’.
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Julian’s coming. This demonstrates the usefulness and importance of imperial ceremony - it indicates that, for legitimate emperors like Julian and Constantius, it is the people’s expectation for them to be majestic. Although this example relates to the positive reception of the populace, it is also the opinion of Ammianus himself. In this instance, Julian has proceeded immediately from his elevation as Caesar. His acclamation is supported by the emperor, the army, and the gods themselves (15.8.9).

As with Constantius (16.10), there is a universal aspect to Julian’s procession. Romans of all age and rank come together in affirmation of their Romanness, mirroring the adventus (16.10) in which Constantius views both the senate and the common people; and while Julian is hailed as a commander of fortune (‘imperatorem...appellans et faustum’), so too is Constantius (16.10.9: ‘Augustus itaque faustis vocibus appellatus’). Both emperors are completely different - for instance Julian is clemens while Constantius is not - but they each represent the imperial office in their respective progressions. The institution, expressed through its ostentatious visibility, is the focal point of a communal identity.

What is more, there is, as in 16.10, a focus on imperial appearance: Julian wears the emperor’s garb (‘amictu principali’) and is invested in the ancestral purple (15.8.11: ‘avita purpura’). Following this, he is carried alongside his imperial colleague in the royal carriage to the palace (15.8.17) and from there to Vienne. It is ironic that this is the most regal Julian will appear in the text, and perhaps explains why he fails to win the popularity he craved. Here, as a majestic emperor, he is beloved; but when he discards the ceremonial trappings (‘pompa’) of an emperor, his public image is lampooned by the Antiochenes and by Ammianus (§ 3.3.2 below). As with 16.10, there is an emphasis on seeing and being seen. Indeed, in what is surely the exception that proves the rule, it is left to an old woman
who in fact has no sight at all to celebrate Julian as a future restorer of the temples.\textsuperscript{528}

At 15.5.18 Ammianus observes that Diocletian was the first Augustus to “introduce the foreign and royal form of adoration” (‘Diocletianus enim Augustus omnium primus externo et regio more instituit adorari’), where before emperors (‘principes’) had been greeted as if they were a higher official (‘iudex’). This statement has been variously interpreted. Avery, agreeing with Alföldi, argued some time ago that Ammianus’ account here is “tinged with rhetorical invective” against Diocletian’s innovation.\textsuperscript{529} In the case of adoratio, despite noting the historian’s “moral indignation” at Diocletian’s innovation, Barnes argues that for Ammianus “the reign of Diocletian belonged to Rome’s glorious and ancient past”.\textsuperscript{530} Barnes’ observation that Diocletian is very much an ancient emperor implies a periodisation of time. For Barnes, whose Ammianus is strongly anti-Christian, this is because of Christianity and Constantine’s role in the propagation of that religion.\textsuperscript{531} Ammianus’ anti-Christian perspective, according to Barnes, causes him to make Diocletian the last of the old emperors.

It is also possible that Ammianus periodises Diocletian’s reign on governmental style rather than religion, thereby making that emperor not the last of the old emperors but the first of the new ones. If Ammianus does relocate Romanness from the centre to the periphery as a means of integrating ‘outsiders’, this statement situates Diocletian’s reign as the beginning of that period since it is the time at which the old governing style

\textsuperscript{528} 15.8.22: ‘tunc anu quaedam orba luminibus, cum percontando quinam esset ingressus, lulianum Caesarem comperisset, exclamavit hunc deorum templa reparaturum’.

\textsuperscript{529} Avery 1940: 70.

\textsuperscript{530} Barnes 1998: 179.

\textsuperscript{531} Ibid. p. 183: “The last six books of Ammianus construct a subtle and complex argument to prove that the weakness of the Roman Empire after 378 was caused by the corruption that began with Constantine, flourished under Constantius, and reached a peak under Valentinian and Valens”.

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was presumed inadequate for the contemporary empire.\textsuperscript{532} It is significant that Ammianus supplies this information from his reading (‘legerimus’) because it implies that the time of the principate had receded into history. It may also indicate Ammianus’ perspective that he calls Diocletian \textit{Augustus} while Eutropius, for whom \textit{civilitas} was of cardinal importance, terms him \textit{princeps} (9.26).\textsuperscript{533}

Both Avery and Alföldi interpret 15.5.18 as a criticism. It may be so: \textit{externo et regio}, possibly alluding to Persian custom, certainly implies a negative development. And yet, the context of the passage describes a decidedly positive occurrence. Ammianus’ patron Ursicinus is accepted into the consistory by the emperor, regains imperial favour and, in being allowed to kiss the purple, is treated “much more graciously than before” (‘multi quam antea placidius’). Even Ursicinus’ summoning to kiss the purple by the \textit{magister officiorum} is the way that is more honourable (‘mos est honorator’). Thus, the statement that Diocletian had introduced a different form of obeisance, which could have been left to stand alone as an unambiguously negative development, is mitigated somewhat by its positive context.

Ammianus’ ambiguity as regards \textit{adoratio} may be a case of his inconsistent views on kingship, as noted by several scholars, rather than as a deliberate signposting of a changed time. For Masterson, there is an “obvious tension in Ammianus’ thought” in that he wants his emperors to be both glamorous and transcendent “while at the same time (and with contradiction) wanting the transcendent filled with civility”.\textsuperscript{534} Similarly, Matthews recognises that Ammianus “wants the best of both worlds” when it comes to defending the majesty of the emperor with treason trials:

\textsuperscript{532} Chambers 1966: 32ff. is still useful on Diocletian’s reforms which he deems “decisive, heroic, and ruthless”. More recent work (e.g. Rees 2004; Benoist 2007: 264) prefers to place Diocletian within a longer evolution in Roman governmental style.

\textsuperscript{533} While Ammianus does use \textit{princeps} very often as another word for ‘emperor’ (e.g. Gallus 15.3.2; Constantius 21.7.4; Julian 24.8.1), \textit{princeps} is, by my count, always used to describe emperors before the 4\textsuperscript{th} century either specifically (e.g. Aurelius 14.4.1; Octavian 14.8.11, 15.10.2; Commodus 22.9.6) or generally (e.g. of the \textit{veteres principes} mentioned at 16.10 the latest is Galerius, the contemporary of Diocletian).

\textsuperscript{534} Masterson 2014: 141.
they were seemingly necessary but manifestly lamentable at the same time.\textsuperscript{535}

But it is more likely that Ammianus periodises Diocletian’s reign to serve a wider identity purpose: namely that the \textit{civilis princeps} ideal is insufficient for the contemporary empire in which Roman identity is the preserve of ‘outsiders’ who require a highly visible emperor. These people would likely never see the emperor in person so would rely on a vision of Romanness in which to site their identity. The fact that Ammianus consigns the practice of \textit{adoratio} to history renders criticism of it if not pointless then at least somewhat ambiguous.

3.3.2 Beyond the \textit{civilis princeps}

It is necessary now to develop further how Ammianus presents the emperor and the ceremonial qualities of the position through an analysis of its opposite. The citizen-like model of imperial rule, as Ammianus makes clear with reference to Julian in this section, actually diminishes the emperor in the eyes of his subjects (inverting the purpose of majestic kingship according to Xen. \textit{Cyrop.} 8.1.42), thus undermining his role in maintaining Roman identity.

Before returning to the text, it is possible to see in another 4\textsuperscript{th} century work the same sensitivity to imperial presentation, albeit in this case its conclusions run counter to Ammianus. In the \textit{Augustan History}’s biography of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century emperor Severus Alexander, Severus is criticised by both his wife and mother for carrying out his duties with excessive civility (\textit{Alex. Sev.} 20.3: ‘nimiam civilitatem’). Addressing the emperor, the two women claim that “you have made your rule too gentle and the power of the empire less respected” (‘molliorem tibi potestatem et contemptibiliorem imperii fecisti’). Although Severus replies that he had made the empire more secure and longer lasting (‘securiorem atque diuturniorem’), and the picture of the emperor in the SHA is unambiguously positive, the complaint, whether or not it was uttered, shows how an excessively

\textsuperscript{535} Matthews 1989: 203.
humble emperor could diminish nothing less than the “power of the empire” (‘potestas imperii’).

Severus defends his actions as contributing to the security and longevity of the realm. This is a concern which interests Ammianus too. This thesis argues that Ammianus defines a type of Roman identity applicable to the multi-ethnic world of his own day in the hope that the eternity of Rome, in which he fanatically trusts, may be realised. It is in this sense that his view aligns with Severus’ in the SHA since both desire Roman security. As part of this wider scheme, however, and where he differs from the anonymous author of the SHA, is the belief in a majestic emperor whose ceremonial qualities could be viewed and ‘consumed’ by a Roman audience looking in from without. Severus sees his civilitas contributing to the longevity of the empire; but for Ammianus, only a majestic emperor, on whose behalf Severus’ mother and wife speak, could preserve the potestas imperii.

A useful introductory example to the kind of emperor Ammianus sees is 21.1.4, which explains how Julian, upon accepting the acclamation by his troops in Gaul, upgrades his headgear:

...and he wore a magnificent diadem, set with gleaming gems, whereas at the beginning of his principate he had assumed and worn a cheap crown, like that of the director of a gymnasium attired in purple.536

This passage demonstrates Julian’s transition from not-quite emperor to majestic Augustus simply by putting on a suitable crown. It parallels the tortured scene of Julian’s first acclamation in which he was unable to find a suitable diadem (20.4.18). Rejecting as cheap both the purple token from his wife’s head adornment and a horse’s purple decoration, he finally settles for the neck chain of a standard bearer.537 Julian’s diadem is ambitiosus and contrasted with the “cheap crown” (‘vili corona’) he had worn previously.

536 ‘...et ambitioso diademate utebatur, lapidum fulgere distincto, cum inter exordia principatus, assumpta vili corona circumdatus erat xystarchae similis purpurato’.
537 For the “union profonde entre le prince et la pourpre” see Valensi 1957: 73.
Ambitiosus is an ambiguous word in the RG, though in this case it implies a legitimate grandiosity. It most often pertains to constructions of some kind in both a positive and negative sense. Marcus Aurelius, the archetypal good emperor in the RG as he was in the wider tradition, built the “magnificent” Nymphaeum (15.7.3); Augustus his “beautiful” temple in Rome (17.4.12); and Symmachus his “splendid” bridge (27.3.3). It is also used negatively to describe the showy or pretentious houses of the wealthy. The flexibility of the word is revealed when Ammianus declares the temple of Capitoline Jupiter to be the most “magnificent” temple the world could witness, and yet complains that the Romans of olden times did not crave the “extravagant” banquets of the contemporary generation. Whatever else may be said about ambitiosus, it reflects wealth and magnificence, along with their positive and negative concomitants.

While ambitiosus does hold some ambiguity, there is none surrounding vilis, the word Ammianus uses to describe the headdress Julian puts aside. Although it can be used in a positive sense to praise the meagre diet favoured by Julian (21.9.2; 25.4.4), and in a (fairly) neutral sense to refer to a private soldier (16.5.3; 17.9.7), in most cases Ammianus uses ‘cheap’ or ‘humble’ pejoratively. When Julian walks on foot in a consular procession it is considered affected and cheap (22.7.1: ‘ut affectatum et vile carpebant); the diet of the barbarous Scythian tribes is incredibly poor (23.6.61: ‘assueti victu vili et paupertino’); and the lowly Diogenes accuses the young well-meaning noble Hierocles of practising magic (29.1.44). The first of these examples, Julian’s conduct as emperor, is the most telling for he is the only emperor accused of cheapening the imperial dignity.

In the other example where vilis pertains to an emperor, Valens decides against meeting the Alamannic king Macrianus on his own land because to do so would be “indecorous and cheap” (27.5.9: ‘indecorumque erat et vile’); and when Valentinian suffers his apoplectic fit, his courtiers quickly

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538 E.g. 14.7.6; 22.4.5; 23.6.46.
539 22.16.12: ‘Capitolium, quo se venerabilis Roma in aeternum attollit, nihil orbis terrarum ambitiosius cernat’. 31.5.14: ‘quod nondum solutionis vitae mollitie sobria vetustas infecta nec ambitiosi mensis...’.
assist him to his rooms lest he be seen to fall in sight of the common people (30.6.3). Thus, the one emperor who is explicitly, and positively, said to present a majestic image (30.9.6: ‘maiestatis regiae decus implebat’) in Valentinian consciously avoids excessive humility,\textsuperscript{540} while the other emperor who consistently struggles with his image (Julian) is guilty of behaving in a cheap manner. In deploying both \textit{ambitosus} and \textit{vilis} in connection with Julian in the quotation above, Ammianus is engaging with his own internal rhetoric of emperorship whereby legitimate monarchs look grandiose and improper ones look cheap.

Returning to 20.4.18 and Julian’s struggles to find a suitable crown, Icks, the most recent commentator on this episode, has wondered why Ammianus would choose to include “such a detailed account of this embarrassing episode” especially since Julian himself, in his own account of the scene, reveals the bare detail that a soldier put a collar on his head (\textit{Ep. ad Ath.} 284d).\textsuperscript{541} The answer must be that Ammianus regards the imperial accoutrement as a key distinction between a usurper and a genuine emperor. Although the historian never deems Julian an outright usurper, there is a degree of unease regarding the origins of his rule. This unease evaporates as soon as Julian acquires a crown – Ammianus’ celebration of this transition reveals the high value he places on imperial majesty (encapsulated in the regalia and the emperor’s image more generally), and also recalls Wienand’s suggestion that “a crown is far more than a hat”.\textsuperscript{542} Julian’s assumption of a suitably impressive crown signals his own recognition, however quickly he reverts to a humbler style,\textsuperscript{543} of his role as a ceremonial centrepiece of the Roman identity and an integrating figure.

\textsuperscript{540} Teitler 2007: 53ff. also reads Valentinian’s majesty positively. Teitler himself wrote in response to Paschoud 1992 who argued that Valentinian’s handsomeness should be read negatively, as a picture of northern barbarity.

\textsuperscript{541} Icks 2016: 316.

\textsuperscript{542} Above, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{543} For Ammianus’ dislike of Julian’s humility see C. Kelly 2013: 225.
This majestic aspect should be given its due weight. Scholars have often noted how Julian is compared unfavourably with Constantius. But Julian alone is a useful case study in this regard because he appears as both majestic emperor and *civilis princeps*. The few vices outlined in Julian’s necrology are primarily concerned either with his lack of decorum or his failure to appreciate and follow due ceremony. These failings contrast with the relative success of Constantius in ‘acting imperial’ (16.10). Julian, however, is “of an excessively flighty disposition” (‘levioris ingenii’), extremely talkative (‘linguae fusoris’) and is desirous of popularity such that he often converses with unworthy men.

One of these men is the philosopher Maximus whom Julian receives during a meeting with the Constantinopolitan senate (22.7.3). Ammianus says that:

…Julian started up in an undignified manner, so far forgetting himself that he ran at full speed to a distance from the vestibule, and after having kissed the philosopher and received him with reverence, brought him back with him. This untimely ostentation made him appear to be an excessive seeker for empty fame.

The link between *decorum* and the emperor’s office is clear. It is precisely because he wishes to maintain *decorum* that Valentinian decides against meeting the Gothic chief Athanaric on his own lands (27.5.9). Julian, on the other hand, acts indecorously, “forgetting who he was”, and his untimely show made him seem a seeker of empty fame (‘inanis gloria’). Julian has a propensity to blur the boundary between ‘private citizen’ and ‘emperor’ and it is a key difference between Ammianus and the ideal of the *civilis*. 

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544 For Constantius being unfavourably compared to Julian see G. Kelly 2005 who focuses on how both emperors are compared in differing ways to Marcus Aurelius; O’Brien 2013 for how Ammianus uses direct speech to undermine Constantius and promote Julian; and, in general, Ross 2016.

545 25.4.18: ‘vulgi plausibus laetus, laudum etiam ex minimis rebus intemperans appetitor, popularitatis cupiditate, cum indignis loqui saepe affectans’.

546 ‘…exsiluit indecore: et qui esset obitus, effuso cursu a vestibulo longe progressus, exosculatum susceptumque reverenter, secum induxit per ostentationem intempestivam, nimius captator inanis gloriae visus’.
princeps. It was noted earlier that for Pliny, Trajan’s ability to behave as a citizen while emperor was one of his best qualities. In Julian’s case, however, this is exactly the problem: he has forgotten that he is an emperor, and his attempt to behave as a citizen is merely an “ostentation” (‘ostentatio’), the kind of display that is not imperial.

It has already been mentioned how scholars have argued that it was Constantius rather than Julian who had the incorrect idea of imperial power. Thus Flower notes the “emptiness of [Constantius’] rule”, reckoning that the “display of imperial power [seems] theatrical, with the suggestion that Constantius might be playing a role, even when he appears to be succeeding in behaving like an emperor”. 547 Baynes commented long ago on Constantius’ “false conception” of the emperor. 548 But Ammianus’ own words in this instance imply the opposite to be the case: it is Julian who acts inappropriately (‘indecore…qui esset oblitus’). 549 Ammianus envisages a model of majestic kingship to replace the outmoded civilis-type advocated by Julian himself and imputed to Ammianus by scholars. This is because a ceremonial monarch is easier to ‘see’ and comprehend, thus serving as a powerful focal point for identity orientation. Julian’s failure in this regard is a consistent theme.

Sabbah has argued that Ammianus centres the action between two poles, Rome and Antioch; he sees them as the “main structuring element of the account”. 550 Given the two cities’ importance to the narrative, it is noteworthy that Julian’s indecorous actions and overly humble, inappropriate, behaviour take him to Antioch as well as Constantinople, as if to demonstrate that Julian’s impropriety tends to manifest itself at the

547 Flower 2015: 828, 830.
548 Baynes 1935: 87.
549 Following Matthews 1989: 236 who refers to Eunapius VS 445 noting how Maximus grew insolent owing to the favour he enjoyed and began to wear elaborate clothing unworthy of a philosopher. Matthews notes how this reflected ironically on Julian’s attempts at philosophical behaviour which was, “in late Roman conditions, simply incompatible” with being an emperor. In spite of this recognition Matthews does not think it impacts Julian’s portrait significantly. I argue that this is actually a fundamental criticism of Julian and also betrays the importance for Ammianus of imperial ceremony.
550 Sabbah 2003: 54.
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times in which it is least welcome: in the metropoleis and thus the best stages for a communal expression of identity.

Julian’s fractious relationship with the Antiochene is charted at 22.14 in a passage of sustained criticism. Ammianus dismisses his grain reform as a measure designed to satisfy his love of popularity (‘amor popularitatis’), surely an unfavourable back-reference to Constantius’ spurning of popular opinion (21.16.1), the first of his virtues complementing his maintenance of imperial theatricality. As with the earlier passage on Rome, whose senate rebukes Julian for moving against his superior Constantius (21.10.7: ‘auctori tuo reverentiam rogamus’), Julian’s antagonist is the Antiochene senate which demonstrates “openly” (‘aperte’) why his price edict is misguided. This detail implies that Ammianus, probably an Antiochene himself, agrees with his fellows. Julian’s lack of decorum exacerbates the situation and causes him to write the Misopogon, which “enumerated in a hostile spirit the faults of the city, including more than were justified” (‘probra civitatis infensa mente dinumerans, addensque veritati complura’).

The similarity between this and the earlier episode in Rome is striking (21.10.7ff.). In Rome, Julian had written to the senate a “sharp oration full of invective (‘orationem acrem et invectivam’) concerning Constantius’ misdeeds. Here, he composes another invective (‘composuit invectivum’) concerning the misdeeds of Antioch. Julian’s ire is caused by the independence of the two senates, but his engaging in petty squabbles with the councillors of two important cities, coupled with his undignified reception of the philosopher Maximus in Constantinople, undermines somewhat the gravitas of the office. Ammianus says with reference to Valentinian that emperors must be men of serious purpose (26.2.2: ‘vir serius rector pronuntiatur imperii’). Julian, however, fails consistently on this score, and especially in the above cases.

The Antioch passage, and the internal references it contains, demonstrates that Julian’s ‘un-imperial’ image is at issue. When Ammianus describes the
Antiochene response to Julian’s complaint, the emperor is derided as an ugly, even monstrous, figure (22.14.3):

For he was ridiculed as a Cercops, as a dwarf, spreading his narrow shoulders and displaying a billy-goat’s beard, taking mighty strides as if he were the brother of Otus and Ephialtes, whose height Homer describes as enormous.551

The grotesque nature of this portrait is obvious. Julian’s ugliness is such that he can be both a dwarf and a loping giant.552 This contrasts with the description of the statue-like Contantius and the accompanying procession as containing men who looked as if they had been moulded by Praxiteles himself (16.10.8). Constantius’ presentation of the office is, quite literally, picture perfect. Here, however, the Antiochens’ dismissal of Julian as a Cercops and a billy-goat with narrow shoulders further undermines his imperial presence. It also echoes the claims made at court when Julian was still a Caesar in Gaul that he was a “goat, not a man” (17.11.1: ‘capella, non homo’) (he is also deemed a “monkey in purple” ['purpuratam simiam']).

On the one hand, Ammianus taps into the tradition in antiquity that dubious rulers tend to be ugly; but on the other, he also looks forward to the handsomeness of Valentinian which “filled out a beautiful sight of imperial majesty” (30.9.6: ‘maiestatis regiae decus implebat’).

Furthermore, Ammianus tells how Julian was labelled a slaughterer rather than truly religious – this was fitting criticism (‘et culpabatur hinc opportune’) because it was for “the sake of appearances” (‘ostentationis gratia’) that he took up the sacred emblems in place of the priests. Julian is therefore unseemly on two counts: not only is he ugly and indecorous, but he is also guilty of performing certain religious rites purely for the sake of being seen to do so. As with the earlier example, Julian is guilty of

551 ‘Ridebatur enim ut Cercops, homo brevis humeros extentans angustos et barbam prae se ferens hircinam, grandiaque incedens tamquam Oti frater et Ephialtes, quorum proceritatem Homerus in immensum extollit’.
552 Charles and Anagnostou-Laoutides 2013: 213ff. for physiognomy revealing character in many ancient writers. Ammianus’ Julian is a contradiction, both ugly (here) and beautiful (25.4.22); though see Head 1980: 227: “Although Julian was Ammianus’ great hero, he does not emerge from the historian’s pages any handsomer than Constantius”.

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ostentatio, the wrong kind of imperial display. Although Ammianus puts these words into the mouths of the Antiochenes, it is apparent that they are really the comments of Ammianus himself for they cover the same ground as those mentioned in Julian’s obituary at 25.4.17-18.

Scholars have tended to downplay the possibility that these may in fact be Ammianus’ criticisms. Belayche sees Ammianus as quoting only a “well-known Antiochean satire” which contained these comments. This as may be, but it is important that the author mentions this ‘satire’ and, further, shows marked agreement with its theme. Julian’s love of popularity and his unkempt appearance conflicts with Ammianus’ requirement that emperors look and act the part. Indeed, it may be said that although Ammianus has cause to criticise Julian for a number of failings, the most consistent of these concern his lack of ceremony and dignity. Julian’s ribbing by the Antiochenes proves his failure as a model of Xenophontic kingship (Cyrop. 8.1.42: πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ὑπερ φέρειν τι εἰς τὸ δυσκαταφρονητότερος φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀρχομένοις).

3.3.3 The usurper Procopius as a failed emperor (26.6)

Ammianus consistently criticises Julian for failing to maintain the appropriate dignity for an emperor. Returning to 21.16.1 (‘imperatoriae auctoritatis cothurnum ubique custodiens, popularitatem elato animo contemnebat et magno’), it is unlikely that Constantius’ maintenance of ceremony should also arouse Ammianus’ ire. Flower reads cothurnus negatively, and he also sees it as depicting a similar scenario to the failed usurpation of Procopius. But it is better to see the imagery of Constantius, who disregards vulgar popularity and takes care to be seen as an emperor, as a contrast to the specious attempt of Procopius to seize the throne. The Procopius episode of 26.7-26.9 reinforces Ammianus’ image of a majestic

553 Belayche 2002: 110.
554 Cf. Mommsen 1996: “Few rulers can compare with Julian in terms of humanity, courage, education or spirit, and yet the overall impression of him, in spite of all these noble traits, is a disagreeable one, because of his gross lack of deportment, tact and self-control, but above all of good looks and charm”.
555 In a different context, M. F. Williams 1997: 72 has also seen criticism of Julian in the account of his acclamation by the troops in Gaul.
emperor rather than undermining it as per Flower because it demonstrates the principle that legitimate emperors must uphold a majestic bearing. Not only this, Procopius’ appearance as an ‘emperor’ serves to alienate rather than integrate Roman onlookers, thus causing him to fail catastrophically at playing the imperial game.

The picture of Procopius is laced with impropriety and his appearance is consistently remarked upon, to a degree matched only by Julian. Procopius had been driven to live the life of a wild animal (26.6.4: ‘ferinae vitae’) and was deprived of all human contact. Infiltrating Constantinople, he remains unrecognised due to his leanness and unkempt appearance (26.6.6: ‘ignotus ob squalorem vultus et maciem’). Appearance is key during the early part of the Procopius passage: even the resident Roman official, Valens’ father-in-law and partner-in-crime Petronius, is “ugly in spirit and appearance” (26.6.7: ‘animo deformis et habitu’). The portrayal of the would-be usurper does not improve as 26.6 progresses: he “lay in wait like a beast of prey” (26.6.10: ‘subsidebat ut praedatrix bestia viso’), and although he manages to win over the local military force he appears more their prisoner than ruler (26.6.14: ‘sed in modum tenebatur obsessi’).

This scene neatly inverts the traditional picture of the ‘reluctant emperor’ topos which Ammianus uses to good effect especially in the narrative of Julian’s proclamation at 20.4. Although Julian too is virtually held captive by his soldiers in Gaul until he accepts their demand that he become emperor (20.4.18), he is cast by Ammianus as attempting to avoid his accession until it became physically dangerous for him to keep refusing the honour. Procopius, on the other hand, had sought the throne and his soldiers were enticed not by his personal charisma but by hope of greater reward (26.6.13: ‘qui pelllecti spe praemiorum ingeniunt’). The unseemly circumstances of Procopius’ accession are exacerbated by the comparison to Didius Julianus who infamously bought the throne on the death of Pertinax (26.6.14).

Now that the illegitimacy of Procopius is assured, the description of his own imperial ceremonial can be appreciated. Unlike with Constantius
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(16.10), and Julian outside Vienne (15.8.21), Procopius’ farcical appearance serves to alienate rather than integrate the beholding Romans. The image presented by Procopius is utterly ridiculous. He is unable to find a purple robe and so had to make do with a scrap of purple cloth (26.6.15: ‘purpureum pannulum’) such that the whole scene is reminiscent of a staged farce: “just as sometimes on the stage you might think that a splendidly decorated figure was suddenly made to appear as the curtain was raised, or through some mimic deception”.

The usurpation is worthy only of mockery (26.6.16: ‘ludibriose’) and may be contrasted with Julian’s acclamation. Julian too struggled to find an appropriate purple token initially, rejecting as improper several early offerings, but eventually settled for the ornament from a standard, thus making the transition to legitimate emperor (20.4.18).

In contrast, the procession of this new ‘emperor’ is tinged with impropriety and in fact inverts some of the details of the successful processions of both Constantius and Julian. Of particular interest is the contrasting reception of Procopius’ procession to those of his colleagues. For fear that the populace would attempt to pelt the retinue with roof tiles, the soldiers enclose the ‘emperor’ with shields which rattle together gloomily (‘lugubre concrepantium’). The contrast with 16.10 is marked. Constantius can witness the entirety of the City from his carriage, and all the citizens call his name. Julian too is greeted by a great stream of people when he arrives at Vienne and Constantinople. But here Procopius and his entourage are virtually hidden from sight, jammed beneath a ceiling of shields. Tellingly, the imperial party is neither resisted nor favoured by the people (26.6.17: ‘nec resistebat populus nec favebat’). Instead, it is treated with complete apathy.

Both Julian and Constantius are raucously received by their audiences but Procopius is scarcely even a curiosity.

556 26.6.15: ‘ut in theatrali scaena simulacrum quoddam insigne per aulaeum vel mimicam cavillationem subito putares emersum’.
557 In his wide-ranging survey of imperial ritual from the republic to late antiquity, Latham 2016: 150 judges indifference on the part of the audience to be even more damaging to an emperor than public criticism or ridicule.
This scene shows how improper imperial ceremony could alienate rather than integrate onlookers. Flower too notes the absurdity of 26.6 and he is right to deem Procopius a “comic parody of a proper ruler”. But he goes too far in his suggestion that Procopius “comes across as nothing but a simulacrum, an artificial and ridiculous creation that belonged in the false world of theatre”. The problem with Procopius is not that he appears theatrical; it is that his unworthiness leads him to butcher the theatrical intricacies of legitimate imperial power. That is to say, for Ammianus, there is no “false world of theatre”; rather it is the false Procopius who fails at the theatrical game. Flower’s analysis assumes that there is a layer of empty ceremony which must be peeled away from the core of reality to access the ‘true’ emperor. On the contrary, this layer of ceremony is itself a necessary part of his imperial conception because it contains the visibly majestic part of the office which had the potential to affect onlookers and, ultimately, maintain the identity community.

3.4 Conclusion
Ammianus intends his readers to ‘consume’ the sight of the dignity and bearing of the emperors. The emperors are an expression of Rome’s grandeur, and it is this grandeur which unites identity members. This ideology has a universal audience and is an expression of his ‘outsider’ perspective. This image of the emperor has no room for the civilis-type of rule which prevailed before Diocletian, as some have suggested. Ammianus has a peculiar interest in the power of imagery to dictate behaviour, and the emperor’s ceremonial is an expression of this interest. Ammianus’ aim is to foster inclusivity and unification as part of his outward-looking identity model.

558 Flower 2015: 830.
559 Ibid. Cf. the commentary of Wallace-Hadrill on 16.10 in the Penguin translation of Ammianus (1986: 450) and the contrast between “the false pomp of Constantius and the true pomp of Rome […] To Roman eyes such pomp was hollow”.

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Chapter Four

4.1.1 Book 31: Huns, Goths, and Romans as a conclusion to Ammianus’ identity model

Some scholarship has regarded the final book of the RG as out of place in several respects. On the structural level, Barnes takes issue with the “anomalous” numbering of the 31 books as they have survived in the manuscripts and argued that the 18 that survive emulate the hexadic structure of Tacitus’ Histories and Annals which circulated as a combined work of 30 books in the 4th century. According to Barnes, what is now book 31 was in fact originally 36. This view, though it has little direct bearing on the argument here, reflects a modern unease with Ammianus’ final instalment. This unease is evident also in the work of Sabbah who, reflecting on the book’s content, deems it merely to contain the “overflow” which “led [Ammianus] to exceed the intended total” of 30 books, again after the fashion of Tacitus. Most recently, Kulikowski argues that it stands out as “anomalously monographic”.

Although these scholars reach different conclusions regarding the purpose of the final book, they all agree that it is in some sense out of place, and both Barnes and Kulikowski, albeit for different reasons, deem it “anomalous”. Kulikowski, for instance, argues that book 31 was written earlier than the rest of the history. For Kulikowski, the Hun and Saracen digressions and the monographic subject matter suggest a composition immediately after Adrianople and an engagement with a contemporary debate on the significance of the defeat for Roman fortunes. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to go through his points exhaustively, but his comment on the monographic nature of the book is a useful departure point.

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561 For a thoughtful response to Barnes’ hypothesis see Frakes 2000.
563 Kulikowski 2012: 86.
564 On the lively contemporary debate see Lenski 1997 and Chauvot 1998.
There are other explanations for the content of book 31, chiefly concerned with reinforcing, first, at the end of the RG, the moral and behavioural basis of Roman identity through an exploration of Romanness/barbarism (§ 4.2.1); and second, policing the boundaries of identity through the creation of a “pure ‘Other’” in the Huns (§ 4.3.1). This act serves to bind together around an idea of Romanness the multi-ethnic empire. The chapter concludes that book 31 performs a multifarious function in Ammianus’ historical scheme and is integral to his identity agenda.

4.2.1 Polarities deconstructed: a blurring of Goth and Roman

The Huns are only the first entry in what is a catalogue of barbarism in the final book and, as Burgersdijk has recently pointed out, they are scarcely mentioned after their appearance early in book 31. Although Burgersdijk has much to say on the content of the Hun digression and its ‘othering’ agenda, he fails to place the digression in its context as a precursor to Ammianus’ wider discussion of Romanness and its antithesis. While Burgersdijk is right to say that the Huns are cast “in order to corroborate specific ideological purposes” concerning the “waning imperial power of the Romans”, his picture of the final book can be both nuanced and broadened.

Burgersdijk argues that the Huns represent a “blurring” of the line between culture and barbarism and that this in turn is an implied criticism of Valens, the emperor responsible for allowing the Gothic migration. This section argues that although the line between barbarism and culture is blurred in the final book, the Huns are not involved. Rather, it is the interplay between the Goths and Romans in the first portion of the narrative that demonstrates a blurring of behaviour. This is something that Burgersdijk misses since he focuses exclusively on the digression.

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565 The notion of a pure ‘other’ is explained in Cartledge 1993: 56 with reference to Herodotus’ Scythians. The Scythians are discussed in relation to the Huns in the second section.
566 Burgersdijk 2016: 120.
567 Ibid., p. 129.
568 Ibid., p. 131.
The behavioural dimension of the final book has also been analysed recently by Moreno. She sees a transition, typified in the final book, from traditional Roman virtues to a set of qualities which are far less noble but more pragmatic. According to Moreno, Ammianus subordinates Roman action to the principle of *utilitas*, thereby suspending moral judgement on the Romans. Instead, she argues, he favours charting the ‘grades’ of barbarity exemplified by the Goths, Huns, and Saracens as a way of proving that excessive treatment of foreigners was a necessary evil in the contemporary empire. Although Moreno is right to stress Ammianus’ interest in immoral behaviour she, like Burgersdijk, does not do enough to account for the nuanced portrayal of Goths and Romans in the first part of the book.

This is an extreme manifestation of the ‘outsider’ perspective which Ammianus takes towards Roman identity, whereby the Goths become a contribution to his integrative argument – up until the last moment they are cast as potential Romans; it is only when they are finally goaded into defending themselves against Roman depredations that they become a threat to be destroyed. The Goths, like all barbarians (except the Huns), are not so different that they cannot be made Roman. Ammianus undermines the polarity of ‘Roman’ and ‘barbarian’ such that it is hard to tell early in book 31 who belongs to each group.

This view accords with some recent work which has argued that reading ancient sources through polarities misses a great deal of nuance in these sources. Skinner and Gruen have been influential proponents of this view, but it dates at least to the early 1990s when Rutherford called for the destruction of polarities as “material structures of inequality and discrimination”. Consequently, they have argued that polarity-thinking must be eradicated. Although there are limits to this mode of thinking

569 Moreno 2014: 42.
570 Ibid., p. 44: citing the massacre of the Goths at 31.16.8, Moreno argues that it exemplifies “la inversión de valores, posiciones y conductas entre el anterior modo de vida y el de este siglo iv”.
571 Skinner 2012; Gruen 2011, 2013b (with reference to the works of Cicero).
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(discussed in § 4.3.1), Skinner and Gruen are right to stress that many sources do advance a nuanced approach to outsiders, and Ammianus is one such.

4.2.2 Roman barbarism in the final book as an identity argument

Ammianus focuses as much on Romans in the final book as he does barbarians. This allows him to lay the groundwork for a furthering of his integrative agenda since, by pinpointing behaviour as the marker of Roman identity, he implies that it can be assumed even by extreme ‘outsiders’. This behavioural basis was examined in the first chapter on the army, and in the previous chapter with reference to the emperors. Here, Ammianus pursues a consistent argument for a barbarising of Romans through moral decline, thereby allowing him to soften by comparison the portrayal of the actual non-Romans, the Goths. Unlike the styled ‘outsiders’ dealt with so far, the Goths are genuine foreigners. But they too are a contribution to Ammianus’ identity argument.

This argument of moral decline is revealed at several points in the final book. Ammianus recalls how the old Romans had revived the empire by their ancient temperance (31.5.14: ‘sobria vetustas’) which caused them to rush to a noble death on behalf of their country (‘ad speciosam pro re publica mortem’). Nowadays, he says, men are infected by the softness of a looser mode of life (‘solutioris vitae mollitie…infecta’). This infection must have arisen recently, for Ammianus appends several exemplars of “ancient temperance”, the latest of whom is the emperor Aurelian (d. 275).

There is similar language elsewhere in the history concerning a perceived decline of morals and the noble action of older but by no means ancient emperors. Ammianus mentions several veteres principes known for their

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573 The argument of moral decline is a trope. Gärtner and Ye 2008: 330 compare Ammianus to Sallust and Tacitus in this respect.
574 E.g. Austin 1972b: 77: “What does concern Ammianus […] is the widespread failure of Roman arms to resist, contain and remove a strong force of invaders: in his opinion it is due to the poor moral standards and often ineffective leadership of the military personnel given the task of dealing with them”.
575 This section is perhaps an allusion to Cic. Rep. 5.1-2 which notes the decline of ancient morals in similar terms to Ammianus.
noble acts: Caesar, the Decii, and Galerius. Galerius is an interesting choice given that he ruled the empire into the 4th century, and his selection suggests that Ammianus regards the Constantinian dynasty as initiating moral corruption. This recognition of a periodisation demarcating a recognisably different past time from contemporary time is a tactic Ammianus also uses with adoratio (15.5.5).

Even early in the RG, Roman corruption is present. When Julian enters the royal palace after the death of Constantius, he finds a “hotbed of all the vices” (22.4.2: ‘vitiorum omnium seminarium’) which, again, infected (‘infecerint’) the state with lust (‘cupiditas’). The language of pollution is significant. In this instance, Ammianus implies that rottenness at the centre of the empire had caused a decline in general morality at least since the reign of Constantius. Other clues in the text point to a period when behaviour declined. Julian condemns Constantine in a letter to the senate as an “innovator and a disturber of ancient tradition received from history” (21.10.18: ‘ut novatoris turbatorisque priscarum legum et moris antiquitus recepti’). It is unclear how far Ammianus himself holds this view, and he even chastises Julian slightly later for hypocrisy, but the terms of Julian’s criticism chime with Ammianus’ own complaints throughout the history concerning Roman behaviour having deteriorated to an almost terminal degree.

The final book is the logical consequence of, and conclusion to, corrupt Roman behaviour. The post-Julianic books especially are known for their dark dystopianism. Jovian begins his reign by ceding an unparalleled amount of land to the Persians (25.9.9), an act which Ammianus regards as

577 Some scholars have taken this and other indications to argue that Ammianus is deeply anti-Christian (Elliott 1983; Barnes 1998). G. Kelly 2008: 156 suggests that Ammianus’ “exposure as an enemy of Christianity...is the most important advance in modern Ammianean scholarship”.
578 Ammianus does refer in general terms to the “time of Constantius” (14.5.9: ‘sub Constantio’) as significant for its excessive punishment of innocent individuals (cf. 14.5.6: ‘...quod Constanti tempus nota inusserat sempiterna’), which would suggest that he places a great deal of blame for moral decline at Constantius’ feet, if not his father’s.
579 Drijvers 2012: 87: “Ammianus presents the Roman Empire under the Valentiniani as a society of disorder and repression”; cf. Humphries 1999: 124 for the “atmosphere of fear and adulation which pervades the Valentinianic narrative”.

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Disgraceful. Moving to the Valentiniani, Ammianus spends much of book 28 lamenting the savagery of them and their associates. He begins with a long narrative explaining the trials with which Valentinian unjustly oppresses the Romans (28.1) before recounting at great length the travails of the Africans at the hands of the Roman general Romanus (28.6). Book 29 runs similarly. In the East, Valens’ man Heliodorus “attacked the very pillars of the patriciate” (29.2.9: ‘patriciatus columina ipsa pulsavit’), while in the West Valentinian “united with the majesty of his position serious licence” (‘maiestati fortunae miscenti licentiam gravem’). There are few positive outcomes for Ammianus after Julian’s death and those that are positive usually involve successfully repulsing a seemingly resurgent barbarian world.\textsuperscript{580}

Book 31 is simply the climax of this corrupting process and to show this Ammianus uses an outside group in the Goths. But the Goths are not passive recipients of Roman misdeeds – they demonstrate both that the divide between ‘Roman’ and ‘barbarian’ is not as stark as might be thought, and also that there is an integrative possibility inherent in Ammianus’ identity scheme. Ammianus implies that if Romanness is a behavioural process rather than a permanent state, it can be assumed by true outsiders (external barbarians rather than just ‘outsider’ Romans).

Given that Ammianus devotes space to examples of Roman barbarism in the books prior, it is no surprise that he focuses, in the first part of book 31, on further narrowing the conceptual gap between the two groups. The conduct of the Romans supervising the transportation of the barbarians across the Danube indicates how Ammianus lays a great deal of blame for the defeat with the empire, specifically un-Roman behaviour and a mistreatment of (genuine) foreigners. When Ammianus discusses the two

\textsuperscript{580} One of Valentinian’s consistent qualities is the diligence with which he fortified the frontiers, e.g. 28.2.1 for his great and useful works (‘magna concipiens et utilia’) on the frontiers; and Ammianus approves of Valens marching to war having disregarded the very flimsy excuse (‘excusationem vanissimam’) of the Goths for why they offered troops to the rebel Procopius.
men, Lupicinus and Maximus, who oversee the migration of the Goths into the empire, his moral criteria are prominent (31.4.10):

The overseers’ treacherous greed was the source of all our evils. I say nothing of other crimes which these two men, or at least others with their permission, with the worst of motives committed against the foreign newcomers, who were as yet blameless.581

The behaviour of Valens’ supervising officials is scarcely Roman, and Ammianus is more interested in demonstrating this rather than dwelling on the misdeeds of the immigrants. The barbarians are almost absolved of any wrongdoing as far as the outbreak of hostilities is concerned. Lupicinus and Maximus are highly immoral and possessive of stained reputations (‘hominis maculosi’), and they strive to outdo each other in rashness (‘temeritas’). Ammianus makes the question of morality even clearer, and he explicitly protects the Goths from a charge of wrongdoing: the foreigners are as yet innocent (‘peregrinos adhuc innoxios’). The Goths are not Roman, but they themselves suffer at the hands of officials who, in the behavioural sense, are not Roman either. Ammianus muddies the distinction between the two groups to demonstrate both the extent of Roman corruption and to show the subjective basis of Romanness.

Ammianus bridges the conceptual gap between the Roman reader and the Gothic victims by arousing pity for them. Although it is still possible to pity even a bitter enemy, the extent to which Ammianus goes to explain the suffering of the Goths at Roman hands makes it hard to tell who is Roman and who is not. The plight of the Thervingi (31.5.1-2) is an example of his blurring process - the Roman commanders deprive them of food and sell dog flesh to them at exorbitant prices, a foul (‘turpis’) trade. The Thervingi are so hard-pressed by this despicable (‘nefandus’) practice they necessarily consider rebellion (‘ad perfidiam instantium malorum

581 ‘Quorum insidiatrix aviditas materia malorum omnium fuit […] ut alia omittamus, quae memorati vel certe, sinentibus eisdem, alli perditis rationibus in commenate peregrinos adhuc innoxios deliquerunt’.
subsidium verti mussabant’). The language is highly emotive and akin to the vocabulary of pollution Ammianus uses earlier to describe the general decline in morals.

The portrayal at this banquet of Lupicinus and the Gothic chieftain Fritigern is a study in contrasts which again blurs the divide between Roman and barbarian. The former is deep in his cups and half-asleep (31.5.6: ‘dum in nepotali mensa ludicris concrepantibus, diu discumbens vino marcebat et somno’). Lupicinus, having heard that Goths outside Marcianople had killed a large Roman contingent in the mistaken belief that some of their number were being kidnapped, orders the execution of the Gothic guards who had accompanied their chieftains to the feast. Ammianus does not explicitly condemn this act, and Burns has seen it as reflecting the Roman supervisors’ desperate desire to rescue the situation rather than as purposely provocative, but it is implied from the immediate context that the foreigners have been wronged by a series of un-Roman behaviour.

The difference between this episode and that at 31.16.8, where Ammianus commends the slaughter of unwitting Goths, is one of context. In the latter case, the Goths had annihilated a Roman army with an emperor, thus were deserving of extermination in turn; in the former case, the Goths are in a place of sanctuary and victims of Roman wrongdoing. Throughout the RG, it is normally the barbarians who breach ordinary human decency: for instance, they break hard-earned pacts for no reason at all. But here, the Romans are guilty of improper conduct while the Goths are a helpless party.

In contrast to the somnolent Lupicinus, Fritigern is quick-witted (31.5.7: ‘expediti consilii’) and manages to orchestrate his escape, claiming that he must restore order among his fellows outside who had rioted in the belief that their leaders had been murdered “under a pretence of hospitality”

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583 The Alamanni are frequent culprits: e.g. 17.6.1: ‘inter quae ita ambigua, luthungi Alamannorum pars Italicis conterminans tractibus, oblii pacis et foederum, quae adepti sunt obsecrando…’; 21.3.1: ‘didicit enim [Julian] Alamannos a pago Vadomarii exorsos, unde nihil post ictum foedus sperabatur incommodum, vastare confinis Raetiis tractus’.
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(31.5.7: ‘humanitatis specie’). Against the view that Ammianus blurs the line between the two groups, it may be that Fritigern falls under the cunning barbarian archetype of an Arminius and so does not threaten but rather conforms to the Roman/barbarian polarity.\textsuperscript{584} There is an element of this: even before the banquet narrative Fritigern possesses a native cunning (31.5.4: ‘genuina sollertia’) and he purposely marches slowly to Marcianople in the hope of rendezvousing with other Gothic groups while still obeying Roman summons. At the same time, however, the breach of humanitas by the Romans introduces a standard of behaviour and indicates a Roman transgression against that standard.

Ammianus’ even-handedness on the question of behaviour reveals the nuance of his account. Lupicinus’ attempt to murder the Gothic leaders seems to be a definitive statement of un-Romanness, for the episode recalls the two other instances of the assassination of a foreigner at a banquet which Ammianus regards as most disgraceful crimes and which also lead to justified unrest. The first is the slaughter of king Gabinius of the Quadi, a disgusting breach of the sacred duty of hospitality (29.6.5: ‘hospitalis officii sanctitate nefarie violata’). As with Fritigern, it is through a feigning of humanitas (‘humanitate simulata’) that Gabinius is killed. This murder, Ammianus says later at 30.1.1, was a crime (‘scelus’) which directly caused (‘excitavit’) the difficulties the West was experiencing with the Quadi.

In the same section as the murder of Gabinius (30.1.1), Roman crimes against foreign people affect the East too. In a case of foreshadowing, Ammianus reveals how the Armenian king Pap came to be killed. His murder is a dire wickedness (‘dirum facinus’) and impius. The wording recalls the Tauric Thracians whose brave deeds (28.4.32: ‘fortia facinora’) are commemorated by the skulls of the slain and the sacrifice of

\textsuperscript{584} Vell. 2.118.1-2 introduces the Germans as a race born for lying (‘natumque mendacio genus’) before moving on to Arminius himself, a German prince who saw in his Roman superior’s negligence an opportunity for treachery (‘segnitia ducis in occasionem sceleris usus est’). Haynes 2013: 3 groups Arminius with Viriathus and Tacfarinas as paradigmatic examples of the ‘enemy within’.
It is indicative of the Thracians’ barbarity that what is considered brave in their case is a serious crime in the Roman. Ammianus expands on the theme of Roman criminality in an especially vivid scene describing Pap’s demise (30.1.22):

...and at a banquet, which ought to be respected even on the Euxine Sea, before the eyes of the god of hospitality a foreigner's blood was shed, which bespattered the splendid linen cloths with foaming gore, was more than enough to sate the guests, who scattered in utmost horror.

Ammianus sets Roman duplicity in high relief with an unfavourable comparison to customs on the Black Sea. The episode recalls Ammianus’ earlier passage on the origin of the Euxine Sea, ironically named for the inhospitality of the horrifically savage tribes that live on its shores.

By linking a foreigner’s death with the image of foaming blood, Ammianus recalls Virgil’s words that the Tiber will foam with much blood when the Trojans reach Italy and once more have cause to fight Latin versions of Achilles. Virgil emphasises the point of foreignness in the subsequent lines, claiming that the Trojans will again blame a foreign bride and foreign marriage for their travails (Aen. 6.93-4: ‘causa mali tanti coniunx iterum hospita Teucris externique iterum thalami’). Ammianus redeployes the Virgilian context to focus on Roman mistreatment of a foreigner, and to show how, in doing so, they become more like Black Sea barbarians. Just as Ammianus takes a Gothic perspective above to illustrate un-Romanness, so

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585 For the Euripidean background see above, n. 398.
586 '…inter epulas quae reverendae sunt vel in Euxino ponto, hospitali numine contuente, peregrinus cruor in ambitiosa lintea conspersus sanie satietati superfuit convivarum, horrore maximo dispersorum'
588 22.8.33: ‘…inter quos immani diritate terribiles Arichi et Sinchi et Napaei, intendente saevitiam licentia diuturna, indidere mari nomen inhospitali, et a contrario per cavillationem Pontus εὐξείνος appellatur, ut εὐήθη Graeci dicimus stultum et noctem εὐφόρνυν, et furias εὐμενίδισας’.
589 Aen. 6.87, 89-90: ‘et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno […] alius Latio iam partus Achilles, natus et ipse dea’. But see too Aen. 4.664-5 referring to Dido’s suicide: ‘ensemque cruore spumantem sparsasque manus’.
too here does he adopt an Armenian one for the same purpose. This technique is an extreme expression of Ammianus’ ‘outsider’ perspective, an example of how he meditates on the relationship between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’.

Ammianus furthers the sense of Roman barbarity with his claim that Lupicinus and Maximus were the “source of all our troubles” (31.4.10: ‘quorum insidiatrix aviditas materia malorum omnium fuit’), echoing that pertaining to the Huns as the “first cause of our various disasters” (31.2.1: ‘sementem exitii et cladum originem diversarum’). Sure enough, upon escaping from the city, Fritigern and his comrades ride off to “set in motion the various incitements that lead to wars” (‘moturi incitamenta diversa bellorum’) which again emphasises how the Goths resort to war as a reaction to Roman aggression.

As soon as Fritigern escapes, Ammianus offers a programmatic statement regarding the difficulty in recording exact numbers of dead in the upcoming struggles (31.5.10) which also implicitly accepts that Roman misbehaviour causes the troubles about to overtake the empire. On the theoretical level, the episodes concerning Roman malpractice are a neat inversion of traditional polarities and signify that being Roman is concerned with appropriate behaviour. This prepares the ground for an exploration of identity’s integrative potential as regards even genuine (barbarian) outsiders, since it preserves the option for them to join the community irrespective of their ethnicity.

4.2.3 Goths and the potential for Romanness

It is not just Roman barbarism that characterises the final book. Ammianus’ identity agenda allows him to go further than simply casting the Goths in a sympathetic light as a way of undermining Romans. The barbarians seem to be Romans-in-progress for the initial portion of the final book. This shows

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590 Cf. Sabbah 1978: 236: “Une partie, au moins, de la narration est inspirée par la tendance qu’on pourrait plutôt s’attendre à trouver chez un patriote arménien”.

591 Austin 1972b: 78-9 argues that this action by Lupicinus “may have been a frightened response to the realisation of the dangers inherent in a combination between the two Gothic groupings”. But that Ammianus offers Lupicinus no excuse, let alone any strategic justification, shows quite how seriously he regards this breach of hospitality.
not only how the foundation of Roman identity for Ammianus is, as far as possible, a matter of integration, but also that the basis of that identity is behaviour. By their behaviour (resisting the Huns), the Goths almost become Roman; but it is also through their behaviour (attacking Rome) that they hijack that identity process. The Goths, then, are an extreme expression, at the end of the RG, both of Ammianus’ integrative stance towards ‘outsiders’, and the behavioural basis of identity.

Scholars have argued that Ammianus favoured a hard-line policy towards the Goths especially. Matthews long ago placed Ammianus alongside Synesius as advocating this view. Sivan and Kulikowski have also suggested that Ammianus places the massacre of the Goths by the Roman commander Julius (31.16.8) immediately after Adrianople as a way of criticising Theodosius’ open policy towards the Goths. Chauvot follows the same line of argument, that Ammianus sees the Goths simply as a foreign body to be obliterated:

Par la suggestion, l’insinuation et la multiplications des effets de réel, Ammien aura mis en oeuvre toutes les ressources de sa rhétorique pour dépeindre dans les Goths un corps étranger à faire disparaître du monde romain.

Chauvot also argues that any sympathy Ammianus has for the Goths is overridden by the potential damage they could do as intruders. Such views are correct for the latter part of the narrative, when the Goths become open enemies, but they ignore a great deal of nuance in the Goths’ presentation prior to their revolt.

Ammianus advocates a policy whereby non-Romans are treated as potential members of the Roman community until they prove otherwise. There are limits to this position: integration cannot occur if the number of incomers is too great, and if it is possible to eradicate a barbarian group with little risk it is always preferable. In the case of the former condition,
Ammianus several times laments the impossible number of immigrants as certain to bring disaster. As regards the latter, he also commends the slaughter of Goths (31.16.8) and, elsewhere, a band of Saxons with whom the Romans had just concluded a peace (28.5.7). Ammianus adopts a pragmatic approach towards genuine outsiders which allows for both integration and annihilation as the situation demanded.

The Goths are an example of both his integrative and, when this fails, hard-line methods. Following the attempted assassination of their leaders, the Goths kill a sizeable number of Romans (31.5.9). Ammianus implies that this was justified as self-defence and prefers to focus on the deeds of Lupicinus which caused the barbarians to act. That this battle did not prejudice Ammianus against them is revealed by his continued sympathetic portrayal even after the episode. Slightly later, another group of Goths “demanded without arrogance” (31.6.2: ‘sine tumore poscebant’) that they be given supplies and money to fund their migration into Asia Minor. Once more it is the action of a Roman official that causes the situation to degenerate.

In reaction to the Goths having ransacked his villa, this man musters “the lowest of all the people” (‘imam plebem omnem’) and orders the Goths to depart for Asia Minor without assistance or else face destruction (‘in eorum armavit exitium’). What happens next once again reveals the Goths’ hopeless situation (31.6.3):

The Goths, disheartened by this unexpected ill-treatment, and terrified by the attack of the citizens, rather excited than well-considered, remained immovable; but when they were finally driven desperate by curses and abuse, and a few missiles were

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31.4:5: ‘plebem transferant truculentam’; 31.4.6: ‘infaustos transvehendi barbaram plebem ministros, numerum eius comprehendere calculo saepe temptantes, conquievisse frustratos’ etc.

596 ‘Adversus quos Lupicinus properatione tumultuaria coactus militibus […] Barbarique hoc contemplate, globos irrupere nostrorum incauti’.

597 That the barbarians do not possess arrogance here is extraordinary for it is a trait frequently ascribed to them, e.g. 17.13.5: ‘cum genuino fastu [referring to the Limigantes]’; 25.4.25: ‘at in Galliis barbarico tumore gliscente…’. Arrogance, as ch. 3 showed, is also a Roman vice.
hurled at them, they broke out into open rebellion and slaughtered a great many people.⁵⁹⁸

Like the mismanagement of the migration by Lupicinus and Maximus, and the mangled assassination attempt on the Gothic leadership by the former, this episode places Roman misbehaviour at the forefront of the narrative. The barbarians are cast as victims. Not only are they disheartened by the Roman reaction, they are terrified (‘perterriti’). Despite this, they initially remain passive. Indeed, the phrase Ammianus uses to describe their stillness, *steterunt immobiles*, is indicative of their genuine bravery and their potential for Romanness, for it is used often to describe *Roman* courage in the face of overwhelming danger: for instance, Ammianus’ esteemed commander Ursicinus stood immovable against the slanders put about at Constantius’ court (15.2.3: ‘vir magnanimus stabat immobiliis’).

Another example shows more clearly the slippage between Roman and Goth. Ammianus’ favourite emperor Julian, when challenged by the Alamanni to put off construction of a fort in their territory, scorned their warnings and “remained steadfast in the same attitude of resolution” until the work was done (16.12.3: ‘in eodem gradu constantiae stetit immobiliis’).⁵⁹⁹ Fontaine has argued that Ammianus borrows the phrase from Virgil especially and that its use pertaining to Julian casts that emperor as a Roman Stoic, a Marcus Aurelius reincarnated.⁶⁰⁰ If so, given that that the above instance (31.6.3) is the only time it applies to a named *barbarian* group, the quasi-Romanness of the Goths deserves emphasis. The Goths display a very Stoic courage, if Fontaine is right, and it is only when they are driven to the utmost state of desperation (‘ad ultimum’) and receive fire that they retaliate with brutal force. As is well known,

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⁵⁹⁸ ‘Quo malo praeter spem Gothi perculsi, et concito quam considerato civium assultu per tertiti, steterunt immobiles, laceratique ad ultimum detestatione atque convivis, et temptati missillum iactibus rariss, ad defectionem erupere confessam, et caesis plurimis’.
⁵⁹⁹ Cf. 21.5.3 and Julian’s address to his men upon turning open enemy to Constantius: ‘stando immobiliis, virtutis vestrae nimirum firmamento confisus’.
⁶⁰⁰ Fontaine 1982: 538: “cet héritage sémantique, enrichi par le stoïcisme romain, parvient à Ammien, apologiste d’un empereur à la fois philosophe et soldat: Julien, par lui un nouveau Marc Aurèle.”
Ammianus has sets of vocabulary for Romans and barbarians, and this slippage demonstrates the Goths’ capacity for Romanness as defined by appropriate behaviour as well as the un-Romanness of them themselves.

Ammianus’ view that the Goths are potential members of the Roman community can be seen in 31.3 with the sympathetic portrayal of the Gothic king Ermenrich who appears more than simply a noble barbarian. As earlier, Ammianus creates a slippage of behaviours. The king is extremely warlike (‘bellicosissimus’) and brave (‘fortis’). *Bellicosus* is a common word in Ammianus and is used of both Romans and barbarians indiscriminately. It may be significant, however, that this is the only instance of the superlative in the entirety of the RG. Further, nowhere is a barbarian leader defined for his warlike spirit; whenever Ammianus applies the term to barbarians it is to a particular tribal group. Conversely, individual Romans are freely described as warlike, including the emperors Trajan and Septimius Severus (25.8.5). As for his brave actions (‘fortis’), such a straightforwardly positive word is incredibly rare when applied to non-Romans.

In casting the Gothic king Ermenrich in quasi-Roman terms, Ammianus temporarily joins him to the civilised community arranged against the Huns. Though Wolfram takes it as indicative of a Gothic saga which derives its meaning from the “heroic pathos of a threatened or dying kingdom”, the exemplary death of Ermenrich also implies common values with the Romans. After attempting to stand firm (‘fundatus’) against the Huns’ onslaught he resolves to meet his death and commits suicide on his own terms in a possible Stoic fashion (31.3.2: ‘voluntaria morte’). A heroic suicide is not of course restricted to Romans, and it may be that Ammianus is praising barbarian independence as per Wolfram, but it has a long...

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602 Though see 27.10.3 for the Alamannic king Vithicabius who is “bold and brave” (‘audax et fortis’).
604 Cf. the suicide of the kind-hearted Martinus at 14.5.8 who, after failing to assassinate the murderous Paul the Chain, choose to kill himself rather than see his constituents suffer at Paul’s hands.
pedigree in Latin, as expressed in the famous suicide of Thrasea Paetus in the time of Nero.\textsuperscript{605} For his brave efforts in withstanding the Huns, Ammianus rewards Ermenrich with a solidly moral, almost Roman, portrayal. This portrayal of a barbarian leader is unique in the RG and may be contrasted to the utter barbarity of the Huns against whom he fights.

Gray has argued with reference to Herodotus that:

\begin{quote}
The construction of noble barbarians poses a problem for otherness, but the rhetoric is obliged to work in internal and sometimes localised polarities...it can create inconsistencies.\textsuperscript{606}
\end{quote}

In this case, Ammianus’ portrayal of Ermenrich undermines the polarity between Roman and barbarian in the early part of the final book. Chauvot thinks that the Goths are simply “un corps étranger à faire disparaître du monde romain”;\textsuperscript{607} while this is true as soon as they turn open enemies, such a view underestimates the extent to which the Goths and their leaders approach Romans in their behaviour. The king’s Gothic successors possess similar values. His immediate heir, Vithimiris, falls battling the Huns; and Saphrax and Alatheus, both noted for their courage (‘firmitate pectorum noti’), resist for a time before cautiously ordering a withdrawal. Caution (‘cautus’) is a positive and overwhelmingly Roman trait as ch. 1 showed.\textsuperscript{608} Ammianus sees these particular Goths as members of the same civilised community as the Romans if not actual Romans themselves, and they foreshadow the Goths noted above. The pro-Gothic bias here even led Maenchen-Helfen to suspect that Ammianus used a Gothic informant for this part of the narrative.\textsuperscript{609} This is an extreme expression of his ‘outsider’ perspective, whereby the ‘outsiders’ are not even Roman but barbarian.

To best underline the nuance in Ammianus’ account, specifically how he envisages a policy of ‘foreign’ integration rather than immediate

\textsuperscript{605} Tac. Ann. 16.34-35.
\textsuperscript{606} Gray 1995: 207.
\textsuperscript{607} Above, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{608} E.g. 14.10.14: Constantius declares himself cunctator et cautus; 15.8.13: Constantius urges Julian to be cautissimus in leading the troops; 21.5.5: Julian declares that he is cautus in war.
\textsuperscript{609} Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 11.
extermination, it is useful to contrast it to that of Eunapius, his contemporary. Eunapius’ account of the preamble to Adrianople is fragmentary and must be reconstructed via Zosimus, but what there is confirms a picture which differs markedly from that of our historian, especially in the hostile way it treats the Goths as truly barbaric. In a lengthy fragment, Eunapius explains how, during the supervised crossing of the Danube by the barbarians, some of them cross unauthorised and are killed by the Roman officers, who are in turn cashiered. For his part, Eunapius laments both the fact that loyal Romans who kill the enemy are treated so harshly, and that those who advocated a hard-line policy towards the immigrants are mocked in Valens’ court.

The difference in approach becomes starker when Eunapius describes the conduct of the Romans in greater detail. Although he accepts that the officials were wrong to pick out pretty Goths for their own sexual gratification, he couches this not as an affront against the Goths themselves but as a dereliction of duty in that this caused them to be lax in fully disarming the immigrants:

Quite simply, each of them had decided that he would fill his house with domestics and his farm with herdsmen and sate his mad lust through the licence which he enjoyed. Overpowered by the Scythians in this disgraceful and criminal manner, they received them with their weapons as if they were some long-standing benefactors and saviours.

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610 Fr. 42, pp. 58-64. The fragments and page number referred to in what follows are the numbering and page of Blockley’s The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire (vol. 2, Liverpool, 1983). The English translation is also Blockley’s.

611 οἱ τε παραδυναστεύοντες βασιλεῖ καὶ δυνάμενι οὐγίστον κατεγέλων αὐτῶν τὸ φυλοπόλεμον καὶ στρατηγικὸν, πολιτικοὺς δὲ οὐκ ἔφασαν εἶναι.

612 As is his wont, Ammianus does not mention these lurid details but focuses on the Goths’ lack of food. Ammianus’ unwillingness to discuss sexual anecdotes, a practice contrasting most notably with his peers Aurelius Victor and the anonymous author of the Augustan History, was noted by Blockley 1975: 34. For a different view, in a different context, see Masterson 2014: 156ff. who argues that Ammianus’ Julian is a portrait of “same-sex sexual attractiveness” (p. 167).

613 ἕκαστος δὲ ἀπλῶς αὐτῶν ὑπελάμβανε καὶ τὴν οἰκίαν καταπλήσσειν οἰκετῶν καὶ τὰ χωρία βοηλατῶν καὶ τὴν ἐρωτικὴν λύσαν τῆς περὶ ταύτα ἔξουσιας, νικηθέντες δὲ ὑπὸ
The issue in Eunapius is not the injustice of the Goths’ treatment by the Roman officials as it is in Ammianus, but rather the fact that they are able to retain their arms in spite of this treatment. Indeed, the only thing that is truly disgraceful in the whole enterprise is that the Roman officers are seduced by Gothic wiles. Eunapius holds the view that Goths are impossibly barbaric (42.43-44: πολύ τι βάρβαρον...) and that they should be killed, and he criticises the punishment of those Roman officers who fulfil their duty in doing so.

There is none of the detail of Ammianus who is clear that the Goths were virtually goaded into attacking the empire as soon as they had made the crossing. Instead, it is the Goths who are the chief villains in the crossing and its aftermath, and the Roman part, which comprises a significant portion of the Ammianean narrative, is relegated to the margins. This part of Eunapius’ text furthers his agenda that the ‘Scythians’ were working from within to destroy the empire. At several points he refers to the Goths en masse as a fifth column. Thus, he reckons that “instead of the desert of deepest Scythia they were beginning to take over the Roman Empire” (42.42-43: οἱ γε ἁντὶ τῆς Σκυθῶν ἐρημίας καὶ τοῦ βαράθρου τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆν ἀρχῆν ἀπελάμβανον); and that like Cadmus’ dragon teeth the Scythians would spring up from the earth where they had settled.

This view is also held with a little modification by Synesius of Cyrene in de Regno. Synesius, writing in the 390s, draws a clear line between Romans and barbarians:

Before matters have come to this pass, one to which they are now tending, we should recover courage worthy of Romans, and accustom ourselves to winning our own victories, admitting

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tούτων νίκην αἰσχράτην καὶ παρανομωτάτην, ὥσπερ τινὰς εὐεργέτας καὶ σωτῆρας παλαιοὺς μετὰ τῶν ὄπλων ἔδέχαντο (fr. 42.36-40 [Blockley, p. 61]).

614 Cf. Blockley who, in his commentary on this fragment, calls Eunapius’ account “blindly ‘patriotic’”.

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no fellowship with these barbarians, but disowning their participation in any rank.615

Synesius develops the point in the subsequent section with his claim that those brought up with different customs cannot be trusted to behave with honour. According to Heather, Synesius “warns of the general danger posed to the state by foreign soldiery”. 616

Ammianus, however, distinguishes between two distinct Gothic groups who, though they are both mistreated by Romans, are explicitly not working together, though Fritigern does harbour hopes of doing so (31.5.4). According to Ammianus, the second group, led by Sueridus and Colias, had “long since been received with their peoples” (31.6.1: ‘cum populis suis longe ante suscepti’); cared only for their own welfare (‘salutem suam’) and “looked on disinterestedly at all that took place” (‘otiosis animis accidentia cuncta contuebantur’). This act of demarcation between the Gothic groups belies the totalising rhetoric of Eunapius and Synesius. Ammianus distances the Gothic groups, protecting them from the charge that their rebellion was long in the making. Further, he sets up a scenario where those who are inculcated with Roman custom are the main culprits. Synesius argues that custom is almost a primordial given and that the Goths do not have Roman custom renders them permanently under suspicion. Ammianus holds a different view.

The difference between Eunapius-Zosimus and Synesius on the one hand and Ammianus on the other is striking. It would be wrong to deem Ammianus pro-barbarian, for he reverts to his normal way of describing typical ‘barbarian’ conduct after the Goths commit to rebellion – they behave with great cruelty, “growling madly” (31.7.8: ‘immaniter fremens’) and are possessive of insane leaders as if wild beasts (31.7.9: ‘hostes et male sanos eorum ductores, ut rabidas feras’). After the Roman defeat at

615 Πρὶν οὖν εἰς τούτο ἦκεν, ἐφ’ ὁ πρόειςα, ἡδη ἀνακτητέον ἡμῖν τὰ Ῥωμαίων φρονήματα, καὶ συνεθιστέον αὐτουργεῖν τάς νίκας, μηδὲ κοινωνίας ἀνεχομένους, ἀλλ’ ἀπαξιούντας ἐν ἄπασῃ τάξει τὸ βάρβαρον (de Regno 23C [Migne PG 66.1092-1093]). The English translation is Fitzgerald’s (14.9).
Adrianople he also commends the efficacy (31.16.8: ‘efficacia’) of a Roman commander who massacres all the Goths under his command lest they join their fellows in attacking the empire. Ammianus is also clear that the acceptance of so many people into the empire is a doomed course of action (31.4.6).

Yet, before the Goths attack Rome, they are described sympathetically. Ammianus’ argument causes him to emphasise Roman immorality and even identity-loss on the one hand, and the integrative potential of his identity model on the other – the Goths, up until their final rebellion against Rome, are treated as potential members of the empire, “as friendly people submissive to our rule” (31.5.5: ‘ut dicioni nostrae obnoxiam et concordem’). Submitting to the empire does not necessarily confer a Roman identity, but it is at least an initial step on the path to an identity. Further, although there is the odd skirmish prior to rebellion at 31.6.3, for instance at 31.5.5, these are always the result of Roman misdeeds, and the Goths are shielded from blame. There is an element of potentiality in Ammianus’ Goths that there is not in other accounts.

Ammianus’ casting of the Goths as quasi-Roman is seen also slightly after the Ermenrich episode when he describes how the Gothic peoples are as unaware of the Huns as their Roman counterparts (31.3.8):

Yet when the report spread widely among the other Gothic peoples, that a race of men hitherto unknown had now arisen from a hidden nook of the earth, like a tempest of snows from the high mountains, and was seizing or destroying everything in its way [Athanaric] cast about for a home removed from all knowledge of the barbarians.617

The Huns are confirmed as a race of men (‘hominum genus’) yet their chthonic, almost non-human, qualities are affirmed with their hiding places

617 ‘Fama tamen late serpente per Gothorum reliquas gentes quod invisitatum antehac hominum genus, modo, nivium ut turbo montibus celsis, ex abdito sinu coortum apposita quaque convellit et corrumpit [Athanaricum] quae sitabit domicilium remotum ab omni notitia barbarorum’.

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within the earth. The most significant feature, however, is that the Gothic tribes consider the Huns barbarians. Ammianus makes the Gothic king Athanaric the section’s subject and it is he who acts to preserve the greater part of his people (‘populi pars maior’) by seeking out a new homeland far from the Huns. A kind of temporary fraternity between Romans and Goths is implied since both peoples are horrified by the Huns’ barbarity. Ammianus confirms the Huns’ foreignness relative to the Goths through his claim that the latter wished to flee the “thunderbolts of a foreign Mars” (‘peregrini fulminibus Martis’). In this statement, Ammianus engages with his own rhetoric concerning identity ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’.

A possible counter-argument to this position could be that Ammianus does not bring Romans and Goths closer together so much as use the Goths’ fear of the Huns to enhance that people’s barbarity. There is undoubtedly an element of this, and the way that Ammianus renders the Huns as alien as possible is discussed below (§ 4.3.1). But this argument would also ignore the decidedly positive descriptions of the Goths prior to their rebellion and the difference between the account of Ammianus and that of a Eunapius. As was noted above, Eunapius reveals a similar fear of the Huns, but whereas Ammianus focuses more on Roman than Gothic misdeeds, Eunapius presents a straightforwardly anti-Gothic narrative whereby both the Goths and the Huns are barbarians to be feared and crushed. Ammianus, however, though he too preserves the option of exterminating the Goths later in the narrative, stresses their potential for Romanness for as long as he can. As a result, and again unlike in Eunapius, the Goths emerge from the early part of book 31 as akin more to Romans than Huns.

In support of this argument, the Burgundians (28.5.11ff.) offer an interesting parallel. The Burgundians’ descent from Roman settlers causes them to fight in concert with Valentinian against the Alamanni (28.5.11: ‘quod iam inde a temporibus priscis subolem se esse Romanam Burgundii sciunt’). The Burgundians are not Roman: they cause terror to the provincials when they muster for the joint campaign (‘terrori
nostris...maximo’), but there is a degree of slippage here between Roman and barbarian.\footnote{Chauvot 1998: 391-2 too notes the Burgundians as a “problem case" in that they are neither fully barbarian nor Roman.}

Not only do the Burgundians know for a fact (‘sciunt’) that they have Roman blood, they possess an ancient custom (28.5.14: ‘ritus vetus’) concerning temporary kingship which Ammianus compares to that used by the Egyptians. It is unusual for a barbarian tribe to have ancient customs to compare with the civilisations of Rome, let alone Egypt, which Ammianus calls the cradle (22.16.20: ‘incunabulum’) of all religion. These details combine to present the Burgundians as a familiar, even kindred, people to the Romans which goes beyond recognising ‘the enemy of my enemy’. The Burgundian example shows that Ammianus can, on occasion, elevate some barbarians to a conceptual level much nearer the Romans than not. The Goths are an example of this, and an extreme expression of his ‘outsider’ perspective as regards identity.

Returning to 31.3.8, Ammianus engages in a process of relational ‘othering’: although the Goths are of course outsiders to Roman eyes, their foreignness does not compare to that encapsulated by the Huns. Consequently, the Goths are placed within the world while the Huns are relegated to the periphery. Rowan has argued that the “idea of the barbarian was dependant on the frontier”.\footnote{Rowan 2004: 38.} The Huns’ arrival causes Ammianus to push back his conceptual frontiers so that they, and not the Goths, are the true barbarians. This definitional act underlines their existence outside of conventional society whilst also forcing the Romans and Goths closer together.

This section also underlines how crucial to Ammianus’ idea of identity is the notion of a fatherland, and here again there is a suggestion of the Goths’ similarity to the Romans. Whereas the Huns have no definable origin – they live either by the ocean or in the crevices of the world – the Goths, having been driven from their “extensive and wealthy lands”
Defining a Roman Identity

(31.3.1: ‘patentes et uberes pagos’) by the first Hun onslaught, strive to find a new home (31.3.8: ‘domicilium’) and seat (‘sedes’) as quickly as possible, and it is in hope of this that they seek a refuge (‘receptaculum’) on Roman lands. Poo has argued that cultures often describe a foreign land as fertile to justify future conquest. But here, Ammianus does so to create common ground. In this small section, the Goths are associated with several words which indicate homeland and belonging. In another verbal link between Roman and Goth, two of these words are used by Ammianus at other points to refer to Rome itself: Constantius on his visit to the city wishes to stay longer “in the most revered seat of everything” (16.10.20: ‘augustissima omnium sede’), and he also calls it the “home of all the virtues” (14.6.21: ‘virtutum omnium domicilium’). Ammianus even labels Rome the “asylum of the whole world” (16.10.5: ‘asylum mundi totius’) which resembles the Goths’ own quest for a refuge (‘receptaculum’) in the empire.

Roman readers can therefore see in this passage not only a kind of kinship with a truly foreign people (Goths), but also the essence of their own identity and, conversely, the non-identity of the Huns, who have no home, and cannot even say whence they come (31.2.10: ‘nullusque apud eos interrogatus respondere unde oritur potest’). Ammianus’ relatively open attitude to the Goths reflects his peculiar interest in the interplay between Romans and non-Romans in book 31. In several instances, the Romans are the focus of the narrative, especially the way they mistreat the other party; but with Ermenrich, Ammianus adopts a Gothic perspective to an unprecedented degree such that the first half of the final book (before the Goths are goaded into attacking the empire) is a clash of worlds: civilised (Romans and Goths) against barbaric (Huns). That Ammianus creates a conceptual relationship between the two peoples is indicative of his integrative approach towards foreign- and Roman-ness in general and stands in contrast to the more hard-line approaches of some of his peers. Although Ammianus does not make the Goths Roman, he at the very least

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620 Poo 2005: 94.
sees them as part of the civilised world and thus implicitly capable of assuming Romanness.

The monographic nature of book 31 is not out of place as some have suggested. It is a fitting end to Ammianus’ moralistic project on the one hand, and it recapitulates Ammianus’ outward-looking attitude towards ‘foreigners’ on the other. In the case of the Goths, these foreigners are not Roman. But they at the very least possess the capacity to join the Roman community and need not be treated as harshly as a Eunapius argues. Further, if it be accepted that the final book is designed as the logical consequence of decades of immorality and malpractice, some of which is highlighted above, it is easy to understand why Ammianus dwells at length on Adrianople and its context, much of which is caused by Roman misbehaviour.

4.3.1 Polarities constructed: creating the ultimate ‘other’ as a means of defining Roman identity

Now that the Huns’ appearance in the narrative has been contextualised, the digression itself (31.2.1-12) merits discussion. Ethnography is an excellent medium through which to examine identities. Merrills sees ethnography fulfilling “important polemical functions”.621 These “polemical functions” in Ammianus’ case are nothing less than the definition of Roman identity as against an utterly barbarian non-identity. Kaldellis has demonstrated that ethnography encouraged Romans to think not so much about the barbarians under discussion but about themselves and their own society;622 and Skinner, whilst contesting the utility of polarities, has argued that ethnography signals “the mechanisms and processes by which discourses of identity and difference were variously constructed and found expression”.623 This is the purpose of Ammianus’ Hun digression, but whereas Skinner seeks to nuance the portrayals of foreigners in the items

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621 Merrills 2004: 225.
622 Kaldellis 2013: 25.
623 Skinner 2012: 44.
of his study, the Huns may be understood straightforwardly as the antithesis of Romanness.

The Huns are distinct from all others in the RG, even from their nomadic cousins, the Saracens (14.4) and the Alans (31.2), for a reason: if the Goths demonstrate the integrative potential of identity, the Huns are a reassertion of an impermeable barrier between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’. Anthropologists have shown how necessary theoretically impermeable barriers are to forming identity, since “self-definition depends on antithesis, identity on counter-identity”.624 Bauman has referred to some types of identity formation as inherently “agonistic” and this is the attitude Ammianus takes towards the Huns to a far greater extent than for their nomadic cousins, the Saracens and Alans.625

This theory of a clearly defined and unambiguous opposition is somewhat unfashionable in current scholarship. Andrade thinks that although ancient authors “policed” the boundaries of identity and employed dichotomies, scholars themselves should resist binary oppositions.626 Skinner and Gruen, whose views formed the basis of the previous section go even further. They argue that polarities in general should be eradicated as unable to account for the nuance even in ancient representations of other peoples. As Cameron has noted with reference to the term ‘pagan’, however, it is obvious that dichotomous thinking flattens the variety of ‘lived’ identity and is a thin veneer over a bewildering complex of fluid categories.627

Identity expressed through literature is different in that it can be sharply prescribed. It is going too far to argue that polarity-thinking should be jettisoned completely because it promoted an incorrect image of a “reified and highly abstract notion of [Greek] identity rooted in a structuralist view of “self” versus “Other””,628 or that “[t]o stress the stigmatization of the “Other” as a strategy of self-assertion and superiority dwells unduly on the

626 Andrade 2013: 31.
627 Cameron 2011: 27.
628 Skinner 2012: 50-1.
negative, a reductive and misleading analysis”. This is because some sources, Ammianus included, do make use of explanatory polarities to demonstrate Roman superiority over their barbarian enemies, and do “dwell unduly on the negative”.

Describing foreigners in derogatory terms is a way of “instigating a sense of group self-identity by emphasizing a very different ‘other’”. This technique exaggerates and distorts the reality of a foreign group for literary or psychological effect. On this view, since the possibility that Ammianus may wilfully distort the messy reality of lived identity is taken for granted, the question becomes why he does this: to cast the Huns as an ultimate ‘other’ and thereby police the boundaries of his integrative identity model.

4.3.2 Biological ‘othering’: policing the boundaries of Roman identity

Identity boundaries were introduced in the previous section with reference to the Goths and the way in which Ammianus confounds those that exist between Romans and barbarians. Here, the phenomenon is analysed in more detail. The importance of boundaries in defining identity has long been recognised. Barth argued some time ago with reference to ethnicity that it is the “ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses”. Haarman has argued similarly, that identity is “definitely subject to cultural diversity and ethnic boundary marking”. More recently, Neil has suggested that the “boundary exists not as the interstitial area between two entities; rather, it is the boundary itself that defines each entity”. Ammianus uses the Huns as just such a boundary case and as a way of defining Roman identity by showing what it is not.

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629 Gruen 2011: 356.
630 Poo 2005: 81.
631 Oltean 2009: 93 for the importance of ’Otherness’ in identity formation. See too Vlassopoulos 2015: 52-3 referring to the Lydian in Xen. Anab. 3.1.30-32: “The alterity discourse is only employed in a certain context and for pursuing a particular strategy”.
632 Barth 1969: 15.
634 Neil 2012: 52.
The Hun digression is a performance of ethnicity during which the nomads perform the features which define them as especially barbaric. This performance reveals a subjective ethnic construction in which the Huns are situated in a timeless and spaceless environment into which the Roman reader can glimpse, in the manner of a visitor to a zoo, the boundaries of his identity. Gruen has argued that the Romans had no ethnic bias:

Like modern scholars they did not agonise about problems of identity. They felt no urgency to distinguish their ethnic essence from the inferior make-up of lesser folk. They lived in a multi-cultural world and saw it as integral to their own heritage.635

The sources on which Gruen bases his argument do not reach Ammianus, but it is hard to read the digression and not think that Ammianus is exactly distinguishing a Roman ethnic essence “from the inferior make-up of lesser folk”. Although Ammianus certainly sees his own time as a “multi-cultural world”, and his history is an attempt to fashion a Roman identity which could exist in that world, this does not stop him also from exhibiting prejudice towards ethnically marked individuals, nor does it mean that he does not believe in a hierarchy of ethnic quality. This section shows that Ammianus casts the Huns as biologically distinct from all other peoples in the RG as a means of limiting his integrative identity model.

One of the most important markers of the Huns’ distinctiveness is their comparison to animals. Before moving to this aspect of the Huns, it is worth noting the relative freedom with which Ammianus uses animal metaphors to describe all his characters, Roman and barbarian. Ammianus’ use of such rhetoric to illustrate morally lamentable behaviour is well known.636 In most cases the metaphors illustrate the unusually savage behaviour of Romans and barbarians. Those who disturb the peace in some way are usually beast-like. The Isaurians are like snakes emerging from their holes in springtime when they raid the local area (19.13.1: ‘ut solent

635 Gruen 2013a: 17.
636 Burrow 2007: 161: Ammianus has an “addiction to animal similes”.
verno tempore foveis exsilire serpentes’), and the Goths after their rebellion track the Roman general Frigeridus like beasts (31.9.3: ‘ut feriae’).

Romans receive animal metaphors even more frequently. The Valentiniani and their associates are usual culprits. Valens is likened to a raging wild beast trained to fight in the arena (29.1.27: ‘in modum harenariae ferae’); Rusticus is hungry for human blood like an animal (27.6.1: ‘bestiarum more humani sanguinis avidus’); and Maximinus has the spirit of an animal during the treason trials (28.1.38: ‘spiritus ferini’). On the face of it, there appear to be few differences in how barbarians and Romans are described through animal similes – as a comment on moral worth.

This is the view of much scholarly work. Barnes’ chapter on Ammianus’ stereotyping reckons that in the majority of cases it undermines the character and has a “highly negative connotation”. Drijvers concurs, suggesting that Ammianus’ predilection for animal comparisons shows that there was a growing “inhumanity and irrationality” under the Valentiniani. In a still influential article on the matter (which both Barnes and Drijvers cite without comment), Weidemann offers a great deal of evidence from Ammianus to conclude that he applies animal imagery to Romans and barbarians with relative freedom, pointing out that the behaviour of specific individuals or groups generally calls for an animal simile. These arguments are compelling as far as they go but are still open to attack from two angles. Firstly, they fail to distinguish between simply behaving like an animal and being portrayed as an animal. There is such a distinction in the text which has not been fully appreciated by scholars.

Secondly, Weidemann especially does not fully grasp the definitional subtleties to which Ammianus puts his ethnographical digressions, especially that on the Huns, which he strangely does not mention at all in his analysis of animal imagery. As with much of the earlier work on these

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638 Drijvers 2012: 89.
digressions, Wiedemann underestimates the individuality of each digression and the purpose of each. Undeniably Ammianus fulfills the “rules of his genre” in writing his excursus, but this section will show how he casts the Huns as a biological as well as a cultural ‘other’. As such, he may be deemed a practitioner of what Isaac has called ‘proto-racism’ which regarded the state of a target group as “constant and unalterable by human will, because they are caused by hereditary factors or external influences, such as climate or geography”.

Although Isaac’s study has caused some controversy, especially in its range of source material, his definition of proto-racism is apt for Ammianus’ Huns. The Huns are exactly like animals in a zoo, and this sets them apart from the rest of the barbarians: their animal imagery presents them as excessively barbaric in a way that it does not for others in the text. This implies that they scarcely have even the potential to become Roman, consequently serving as a suitable boundary case for his outward-looking identity model and a counterpoint to the potential Romanness of the Goths.

Appearance is one of the first things Ammianus mentions about the Huns, which implies that he regards them as a group intrinsically different from all other peoples hitherto defined (31.2.2):

...the cheeks of the children are deeply furrowed with the steel from their very birth, in order that the growth of hair, when it appears at the proper time, may be checked by the wrinkled scars, they grow old without beards and without any beauty, like eunuchs. They all have compact, strong limbs and thick necks, and are so monstrously ugly and misshapen, that one

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640 Ibid. p. 201.
641 Isaac 2006: 23. A similar view can be found in Dench 1995: 12 who argues that there is not a permanent barrier between Greeks and barbarians (Italians) because “the terms in which the polarity is defined are cultural, rather than somatic [so] it is possible for barbarians to become accepted as Greeks”.
642 The review of Fergus Millar 2005: 87-8 raises this issue.
643 Maric 2014: 78 argues similarly for Cicero, that he labelled his opponents beasts to deny them moral consideration and “to exclude them from the state’s legal system and thus deny them the legal rights and protections claimable only by ‘truly human’ citizens”.

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might take them for two-legged beasts or for the stumps, rough-hewn into images, that are used in putting sides to bridges.644

Ammianus’ equation of the Huns to eunuchs reveals their extreme liminality. The historian despises eunuchs,645 and his equation of the Huns with them is suggestive of their permanent ‘otherness’. Ammianus mentions the permanence of a eunuch’s ‘state’ in the first of the surviving books. During his first Roman digression at 14.6.17 he describes the “throng of eunuchs” (‘multitudo spadonum’) trooping in columns, “sallow and disfigured by the distorted form of their features” (‘obluridi distortaque lineamentorum compage deformes’).

The theme of actual deformity as opposed to simple moral degradation is continued as he mentions queen Semiramis as the first to “do violence to nature, turning her from her intended course” (‘vim injectans naturae, eandemque ab instituto cursu retorquens’). In fashioning eunuchs, Semiramis perverts “the original fountains of our seed” (‘primigenios seminis fontes’). A close connection between the Huns and eunuchs is implied also by the characterisation of their threat at 31.2.1 as the “seedbed of destruction” (‘sementem exitii’). This surely refers to the Huns as the first cause of the Gothic movements into the empire, but it also alludes to the natural force of their portrayal. Like the eunuchs, they too are an example of nature wronged.

644 ‘...ab ipsis nascendi primitis infantum ferro sulcantur altius genae, ut pilorum vigor tempestivus emergens, corrugatis cicatricibus hebetetur, senescent imberbes absque ulla venustate, spadonibus similis, compactis omnes firmisque membris et opinis cervicibus, prodigiose deformes et pandi, ut bipedes existimes bestias, vel quales in commarginandis pontibus effigiat stipites dolantur incompte’.
645 E.g. 14.11.3; 15.2.10; 22.4.2. See also 23.6.18 which states that a certain noxious vapour affected all but eunuchs! In his work on eunuchs in late 4th century authors, Tougher 1997: 173-4 has written that the elite resented eunuchs not only because of their nature but also because they came to wield a great deal of influence over the emperors; he says that “traditional officialdom resented the physical barrier of eunuchs that had been placed between them and the emperor”. Tougher’s emphasis on the eunuchs as a “physical barrier” is pertinent to the Huns who are themselves physically excluded from becoming Roman by virtue of their ‘somatic animal-ness’. For attitudes more generally see Tougher 2008: 96ff.
There is one notable exception to Ammianus’ hatred and ‘othering’ of the eunuchs which may mitigate the permanence of the portrayal. The eunuch Eutherius is a good man for his defence of Julian at court (16.7.4-8). He even cultivates the virtues of loyalty and restraint (16.7.6: ‘fidem continentiamque virtutes coluit amplas’) and is especially trustworthy. Ammianus tries frantically to explain away the anomaly: he is flabbergasted that a good eunuch exists and is categorical that Eutherius is the only exception; he makes a great play at 16.7.8-10 of having read all ancient history for comparisons and found none (‘neque legisse me neque audisse confiteor’). The way he explains Eutherius’ unusual qualities is revealing, for it recalls once more the natural ‘state’ of eunuchs irrespective of the surprising exception: “among brambles roses spring up, and among savage beasts some are tamed” (16.7.4: ‘sed inter vepres rosae nascuntur, et inter feras non nullae mitescunt’).

Ammianus is not dealing here with metaphorical animal similes; he has in mind flora and fauna of the natural world of which the eunuchs are all but a part. That there is a eunuch who is not a beast is almost impossible and he can scarcely believe it: it is more likely, he says, that a Numa and a Socrates would lie under a sacred oath.646 This is a foretaste of the kind of conceptual categories Ammianus uses for the Huns. In their case, however, they are categorically untamed (31.2.12: ‘indomitus’). Just as the eunuchs have a physical and irreversible disability so too do the Huns possess physical traits which muddies their human status, thereby precluding them from becoming Romans.

Ammianus consolidates the animal-like picture of the Huns in the first half of the passage. Although they have the outline (‘figura’) of men, their bodies are “compact and firm” (31.2.2: ‘compactis firmisque membris’) yet “deformed and crooked, such that you might think them two-legged beasts or bridge stumps” (‘deformes et pandi ut bipedes existimes bestias, vel quales in commarginandis pontibus’). This extraordinary statement goes

646 16.7.4: ‘ea re quod si Numa Pompilius vel Socrates bona quaedam dicerent de spadone, dictisque religionum adderent fidem, a veritate descivisse arguebantur’. 208
far beyond the animal metaphors employed for Romans and barbarians.
Many characters are compared to animals in the way they behave:
Ammianus’ patron Ursicinus is like a lion of huge size and terrible savagery
(19.3.3: ‘leo magnitudine corporis et torvitate terribilis’), and the infamous
Paul the Chain is like a viper in his concealing his true nature (14.5.6:
‘coluber quidam sub vultu latens’). But the Huns are the only people
described as animals.
Further, not only are the Huns described as animals but to compound the
comparison their feeding habits are scrutinised: they eat semi-raw “any
kind of meat whatever” (31.2.3: ‘semicruda cuiusvis pecoris carne
vescantur’). The lack of specificity as regards their food, and their
ignorance of cookery, implies the indiscriminate feeding habits of animals,
and they are unique in this respect. The Saracens enjoy both milk and fowl,
while the Alans subsist on meat, milk, and fruit.647 Like animals, the Huns
are happy outdoors and avoid buildings like tombs, preferring to range
over the mountains and forests. They also have great difficulty walking on
two feet (31.2.6: ‘vetant incedere gressibus liberis’), preferring to spend
their days and nights on horseback:

From their horses by night or day every one of that nation buys
and sells, eats and drinks, and bowed over the narrow neck of
the animal relaxes into a sleep so deep as to be accompanied
by many dreams.648

These details undermine the Huns’ humanity to an extent which goes
beyond the moral criteria Ammianus usually employs to assess both
Romans and barbarians. There is a sense that they are unprecedented in
their behaviour and, consequently, sub-human.

The defining feature of the Huns for Ammianus is their bodily form. The
way that he describes their horsemanship is revealing in this sense for it

647 Saracens: 14.4.6; Alans: 31.2.18-19. These are standard nomadic feeding habits.
648 ‘Ex ipsis quivis in hac natione pernox et perdius emit et vendit, cibumque sumit et
potum, et inclinatus cervici angustae iumenti, in altum soporem ad usque varietatem
effunditur somniorum’.

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differs sharply from that of their nomadic brethren. The Alans’ skill at riding is a positive aspect (31.2.17-20) compared to the Huns who are described negatively as virtually dependant on their horses to survive. This is an important distinction and is worth explaining in more detail because it implies that while the Alans conquer nature, the Huns are merely part of it.

The Huns are noted as so dependent on their horses that they in fact struggle to walk at all: “their shoes are formed upon no lasts, and so prevent their walking with free step. For this reason, they are not at all adapted to battles on foot” (31.2.6: ‘vetant incedere gressibus liberis. Qua causa ad pedestres parum adcommodati sunt pugnas’).

Ammianus has already made it clear that the Huns are virtually “two-legged animals” (‘bipedes bestiae’) yet they struggle even to walk on the feet they have. This description of the Huns as two-footed animals, and their inability to walk properly, sets them apart from the Alans who can fight on foot but “regard it as contemptible” (31.2.20: ‘incedere pedibus existimat vile’). Ammianus reinforces the distinction between how both races utilise horses by quite literally dehumanising the Huns, denying them even full use of their feet. This is ‘othering’ of the most extreme kind. The belief that a group is permanently handicapped in some way is an example of proto-racism. In the case of the Huns, all their failings, encapsulated in their subhuman bodily form, are deemed unalterable. Such a picture of barbarity stands apart from Ammianus’ otherwise flexible scale of Romanness and barbarity: Goths can display Roman behaviour, Romans can display barbaric behaviour, but the Huns are of an entirely different order.

In support of the biological ‘otherness’ of the Huns in Ammianus as opposed to simply cultural or moral, Claudian offers an interesting parallel. In Rufinum book 1 has a mini excursus on the Huns (lines 323-331). Though it is dangerous comparing a poet and a historian, it contains some details in common with Ammianus, including the custom of child cheek-cutting and

649 Jerome Ep. 60.17 with reference to the Huns complains that the Roman soldiers flee before an enemy which can barely walk.

650 Isaac 2006: 23.
the Huns’ great speed which has led to a consensus that Claudian read his contemporary.651 As with Ammianus, the chief focus is their appearance: “hideous to look upon are their faces and loathsome their bodies” (325-6: ‘turpes habitus obscenaque visu corpora’). But there is more than surface appearance to the Huns’ bestiality. Lines 329-30 explain: “their double nature fitted not better the twi-formed Centaurs to the horses that were parts of them” (‘nec plus nubigenas duplex natura biformes cognatis aptaut equis’).

Of immediate interest is their equation with the centaurs who possess a double form: man and horse. If Claudian had read Ammianus, as has been claimed, it is an interesting allusion; but even if it is not a conscious echo it reveals how the Huns were regarded by contemporaneous intellectuals, as representatives of a type of bodily barbarity usually found in myth.652 The highly rhetorical nature of Claudian and the poetic genre within which he works is very different to Ammianus’, but this does not damage the argument that Huns are cast as a biological ‘other’ rather than merely, like ‘normal’ barbarians, a cultural and moral one. Like Ammianus, Claudian also distinguishes the animal-Huns from the rest of the barbarian horde arrayed against Stilicho.653 Perhaps it reveals something of Ammianus’ style as a writer that he engages in the kind of word games found in a highly classicising poet; but it also shows clearly that Ammianus sees a difference between behaving like an animal and behaving as an animal. This distinction forms the basis of his biological ‘other’.

The Huns are noted in all the sources as fearsome riders. Claudian regards them as part animal. Ammianus the sober historian must have known that the Huns were not genuine animals, but it is interesting that he deploys

651 cf. Elton 1996: 17, 27; G. Kelly 2008: 114 n. 41, though Ross 2016: 2 cautions against regarding it as certain. The similarity of their Hun portrayals would seem to confirm the argument for a reading. The two authors are associated also by dint of their being native Greek-speakers writing in Latin (and non-Christian), and they used to be regarded as members of the ‘circle of Symmachus’ (Cameron 2011: 362).
652 Cf. Tac. Germ. 46.6 and the Hellusii and Oxiones who seemingly have the faces of men but the bodies of animals. Tacitus, unlike Ammianus here, reckons that these hybrid peoples live only in fabled stories (‘cetera iam fabulosa...’).
653 Claud. Ruf. 1.301-327.
similar language to Claudian. Ammianus also suggests that they are “virtually joined to their horses” (31.2.6: ‘verum equis prope affixi’). This may only be an appreciation of their superb horsemanship, but if so the verb *affigo* is unusual for it implies an actual part of their person and renders them centaur-like.654

Claudian is even more explicit: not only are they similar to centaurs but they themselves possess a double nature (‘duplex natura’) which makes the comparison all the more real. Ammianus does not go so far as to suggest that they have a double nature, but it is revealing that Claudian decided that this was the feature he wished to emphasise in his own digression of just a few lines. For both authors, animal-ness is a core part of the Huns’ identity as it is not for barbarians and Romans. This focus on appearance, especially for so short a digression as the Hun, is unprecedented in the RG.

The other ethnographic digressions, though much longer, scarcely mention appearance. Ammianus devotes three chapters of book 15 to Gaul and its peoples yet notes only that they are tall, pale, of a ruddy complexion, and possessive of a frighteningly stern gaze (15.12.1: ‘celsioris staturae et candidi paene Galli sunt omnes et rutili, luminumque torvitate terribiles’). The picture can be developed further. The Thracians are said at the end of their digression to have a lasting vigour to their bodies thanks to the fresh dew of the area in which they live (27.4.14: ‘et perenni viriditate roris asperginibus gelidis corpora constringente’); and in the longest excursus of them all, the Persians have an ambling and unsteady gait (23.6.80: ‘vagoque incessu se iactitantes’). Even the nomadic Alans are noted cursorily as tall, blonde, and handsome (31.2.21: ‘proceri autem Halani paene sunt omnes et pulchri, crinibus mediocriter flavis’).

Ammianus does not treat appearance at all systematically in the other ethnographic digressions, yet for the Huns it defines their narrative. This act not only binds Romans closer together in view of a common enemy but

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654 So Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.139 claims that Cicero’s *officium* is a part of his *animus* and fixed as a part of his core (‘penitus adfixa atque insita est’).
has the added consequence of softening the barbarity of other peoples like the Goths who are at the very least a known quantity: their barbarity is ‘traditional’ and easily assimilable, or, if necessary, eradicable. Meanwhile, Ammianus uses the Huns to demonstrate what true barbarity really is.

The Huns are the antithesis of Romanness through their physical ‘otherness’. They also lack a capacity to understand morals (31.2.11: ‘inconsulторum animalium ritu, quid honestum inhonustumve sit, penitus ignorantes’), and in this they are also likened to animals. If the honestus advena represents the core of Romanness (ch. 3), then the Huns’ incapacity to recognise that standard of behaviour bars them from acquiring an identity at all. It is significant that this is the only instance of the literal negation of honestus in the extant text because it once more marks the Huns out as terminally ‘other’. Since Romanness for Ammianus is defined through appropriate behaviour, the Huns would retain the potential to become Roman as the Goths do. To destroy the Huns’ Roman potential, Ammianus exacerbates their barbarity to an unprecedented degree.

4.3.3 The Huns’ extra-terrestrial origins as a comment on Roman belonging and a case of identity boundary marking

Ethnographic digressions are “self-conscious literary artifacts created for a competitive literary scene”. Ammianus’ digression on the Huns engages with the competition to serve his own literary identity agenda in the RG. The way that Ammianus uses his source material augments the Huns’ obscurity and their extra-terrestrial qualities, enhancing the ‘otherness’ created by their biology. Some scholars who approach the digression as a window into genuine Hun traditions, miss this intentionality, lamenting Ammianus’ vagueness or blatant inaccuracy. For instance, King argued some time ago that the entirety of the digression was, if not wilfully fictitious, then at least based on fatally flawed information.

655 Kaldellis 2013: 2.
Although there have been more recent accounts of Ammianus’ Huns, King advances the particular claim that Ammianus ‘Scythianises’ the Huns in order to invest his account with an aura of ancient authority. 657 This is an argument followed in the most recent contribution on the digression, by Burgersdijk, who argues that Herodotus book four was the “main model” for the Huns at 31.2, noting that many of the Scythian tribes mentioned by Herodotus occur also in the RG. 658 Richter also sees Scythians at the root of Ammianus’ Huns, though derived from Justin rather than Herodotus. 659 However Ammianus accessed the Scythians, whether via Herodotus or later sources, they are regarded as most akin to the Huns.

Here, it is argued to the contrary. Ammianus disassociates the Huns from the Scythians to cast them as an otherworldly force unknown to history. This contributes to the ‘othering’ process by differentiating them even further from the rest of humanity who all implicitly possess the potential to become Roman. In placing the Huns outside the known world Ammianus reminds his readers of the imperial identity they share irrespective of ethnicity and polices the boundary of his identity model. The focus Ammianus places on the Romans’ sense of belonging was noted in ch. 2, but it is brought once more to the fore by the Huns and again shows how they are the literal antithesis of Roman identity in that they have an origin seemingly outside of the world.

In this subsection, the focus is the Huns’ hazy and inhuman origins. This aspect is a key part of Ammianus’ argument for the basis of Roman identity, since he places the Eternal City as the fatherland of all Romans regardless of geographical location and ethnicity. Given that the Huns possess no origins, they become Roman identity in the negative. Ammianus

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657 King 1995: 84: "Ammianus was attributing traits to the Huns that he expected his readers to recognize as Scythian, to accompany his more bluntly identified 'Massagetae'"; p. 89: Ammianus "attempts to shape his description to resemble earlier descriptions of Scythians".


mystifies the Huns’ origins as a tool of identity definition – the Huns have no origin and no home, but Romans do.

Ammianus devotes a section of 31.2 to the question of origins (31.2.10):

They are all without fixed abode, without hearth, or law, or settled mode of life, and keep roaming from place to place, like fugitives, accompanied by the wagons in which they live; in wagons their wives weave for them their hideous garments, in wagons they cohabit with their husbands, bear children, and rear them to the age of puberty. None of their offspring, when asked, can tell you where he comes from, since he was conceived in one place, born far from there, and brought up still farther away.660

The Huns’ lack of a settled home and hearth exacerbates the picture of barbarism. For Ammianus, who envisaged Rome itself serving as the hearth for all Romans, this is an especially damning deficiency. Irrespective of where Romans lived, they could always look to the Eternal City as the locus of their identity. The terms of the Huns’ nomadism recall the language used in the earlier digressions on Rome. The Huns are without seat (‘sedes’), hearth (‘lar’), or law (‘lex’) and are constantly on the move. The Eternal City, however, is not only an asylum (16.10.5), but is both sedes (16.10.20) and lar (16.10.13) and is supported by leges which are deemed the everlasting foundations and moorings of liberty (14.6.5: ‘fundamenta libertatis et retinacula sempiterna’).

This linguistic echoing is not just pertinent to Romans; in this respect, the Huns are distinguished once more from their nomadic brethren. The Saracens, although they too are constantly on the move and without the trio of features, at least have a certain origin amongst the Assyrians (14.4.3: ‘apud has gentes, quorum exordiens initium ab Assyriis...’). The

660 ‘Omnes enim sine sedibus fixis, absque lare vel lege aut victu stabilis dispalantur, semper fugientes similis, cum carpentis in quibus habitant: ubi coniuges taetra illis vestimenta contextunt, et coeunt cum maritis, et pariunt, et ad usque pubertatem nutriunt pueros. Nullusque apud eos interrogatus respondere unde oritur potest, alibi conceptus natusque procul, et longius educatus’.
Saracens are a known quantity, representative of the ‘standard’ nomadic archetype. For their part, the Alans’ habitat and way of life is incredibly primitive, especially in the way they circle their wagons and feed like animals (‘ferino ritu’), but their wagon homes, says Ammianus, could even be called a kind of *civitas* (31.2.18). In the sense used here, *civitas* means ‘community’ rather than city-state but it comes with ideological connotations of social cohesion and permanence irrespective of nomadic status: according to Cicero, one of the first markers of humanity is the desire to live in a society.\(^{661}\)

The Alans’ societal promise exemplified by their *civitates* is significant. Lewis has argued that *civitas* identity in ancient and late antique Gaul superseded other categories of belonging such as ethnicity since it had been a permanent feature of life since the time of Caesar whereas other markers were more nebulous and flexible and hence less attractive as a prime marker of identity; the *civitas* identity, she says, was “the basic unit of politics and of war” and thus held enormous symbolic and political power.\(^{662}\) This is also reflected elsewhere in the RG. Ammianus was likely an Antiochene and the pride he held in his own civic community can be seen at points in the text; he was especially proud of its street lighting which was as bright as day (14.1.9). For the Alans, their possession of at least a semblance of a *civitas* structure greatly softens their portrayal and contrasts with the straightforwardly alien picture of the Huns. Like the Goths, whose own wealthy and extensive lands were ravaged by the Huns (31.3.1: ‘late patentes et uberes pagos’), the Alans have a kernel of commonality with Rome in that they too possess a locus of belonging.

The extra-terrestrial quality of the Huns is shown at the very beginning of the digression with respect to their mysterious origins (31.2.1):
The people of the Huns, but little known from ancient records, dwelling beyond the Maeotic Marshes near the ice-bound ocean.\footnote{‘Hunorum gens monumentis veteribus leviter nota, ultra paludes Maeoticas glacialem oceanum accolens’.
}

Ammianus introduces the Huns’ liminality by having them unknown to history and living quite literally on the edge of the world. This fact makes them incomparable, less than human, and outside of the human community shared by Romans, Goths, Saracens, and Alans.\footnote{Wiedemann 1986: 190 notes that those living on the margins of the world could be both superhuman and subhuman.
}

To the Roman mind, no outside people is truly unknown. During his long Persian excursus, Ammianus draws comfort from the knowledge that history favoured Rome in conflicts between the two powers, despite the occasional Persian victory (23.6.9: ‘non numquam abiere victrices’). The Huns, however, are new to history. Not only does this make them uniquely anti-Roman, since it is precisely an awareness of history encapsulated by the \textit{mos maiorum} that distinguished Romans,\footnote{Pina 2004: 148.
} it also renders them highly dangerous and a threat against which to unite and to destroy. The Huns instantiate the boundary of identity.

Further, Ammianus’ placing of the Huns on the edge of the world and possessive of hazy and inhuman origins increases their sinister strangeness. To be sure, peoples living on the edge of the world were not always bad.\footnote{E. James 2009: 10 notes the good and the bad of the most distant barbarians in the Roman conception.
}

The Hyperboreans were an Ocean-dwelling people who had entered the Greek conception early on via a fragment of Hesiod.\footnote{Hes. Fr. 98 24. For discussion see Skinner 2012: 63-4.
} They appear to have been received as a virtuous and idealised race.\footnote{Bridgman 2014: 3.
} Their location did not render them savage but instead made them more heroic. Pindar thinks them to be followers of Apollo, and Herodotus also mentions their
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religion. They exist in the borderlands of divine and human and live a life free from toil and illness.

Though Ammianus understandably makes no mention of the Hyperboreans and he generally rationalises the stories of Greek myth after the fashion of his time, the Huns, like the Hyperboreans, also inhabit their own world but of a much darker hue which seems to exist outside the worldly community. This in turn eases the process of Roman self-definition because it reinforces for Roman readers that they all share the same homeland in Rome (16.10.5: ‘asylum mundi totius’). Ocean’s “atavistic quality” imbues the Huns with a non-human flavour and the icy environment exacerbates this picture. There is an aura of primordial terror about the Huns – Ammianus calls them the “seedbed of destruction” (‘sementem exitii’) which hints at their temporal primacy, an aspect closely associated by the Greeks with Ocean itself. The Huns as seedbed positions them simultaneously as a creative and a destructive force for it was they who produced the wrath of Mars (31.2.1: ‘Martius furor’) which was to overrun the Roman world.

Ammianus literally alienises the Huns. This process polarises the Huns such that their ‘otherness’ may inversely reveal Romanness; they also serve as an impermeable boundary to the otherwise outward-looking identity model Ammianus creates. To reveal how Ammianus alienises the Huns, this rendering them irredeemably barbaric, it is useful to compare his account to those offered by other writers. The Huns were already a known force by the time Ammianus published which makes his mystifying their origins even more striking and further the present argument that he does so intentionally, as a means to create an ultimate ‘other’, rather than through incompetence as King and others would have it.

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669 Pind. Ol. 3.16; Hdt. 4.32ff. For the possible linking of the Hyperboreans to the Sea of Azov see Bridgman 2014: 21-23.
670 Pind. Pyth. 10.27ff.
671 E.g. 19.4.3 for his rationalisation of Apollo’s plague before Troy.
672 Romm 1994: 25.
673 Cf. Pl. Tht. 152e. Hom. Il. 14.201 claims Ocean was the “origin of the gods.” For these references and others see Romm 1994: 23.
There are fleeting references to the Huns in the orators Themistius and Pacatus. Pacatus says only that some Huns were settled in Pannonia. Themistius, in a speech delivered in 383 (Or. 16.207c), perhaps refers to them as Massagetae which came either from his reading of Herodotus (1.215-16) or else had by this time entered the intellectual tradition. The equation of the Huns with the Massagetae on the part of Themistius is interesting - Ammianus himself does not make this connection, although he does use the Massagetae as a parallel: his Massagetae are the Alans (31.2.12: ‘Halanos...veteres Massagetas’). It is noteworthy that Ammianus refuses to engage with Themistius’ identification given the likelihood that he was aware of the earlier author’s work. This refusal results in Ammianus’ Huns not having any ancient precursor at all. The Hun excursus reflects Ammianus’ desire to place them as a group utterly outside the realm of civilisation and knowledge and into that of myth and chthonic origins.

Matthews suggests that the Huns are not compared to previous peoples because they are so new. He further suggests that the Huns are “indefinable” to the Romans in the 4th century which again arises from their novelty. But the Huns’ novelty would actually make it more likely that contemporary authors would raid the ancient sources for comparisons. Eunapius is a case in point:

The first account of the history of the Huns, written at a time when no one had anything clear to say about their place of

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674 Richter 1974: 343 thinks that the reference of the second century geographer Ptolemy to the ‘Chuni’ could mean the Huns. Richter posits a putative early history for the Huns on the basis of this, but it is surely casting back into history the relatively well-formed (though tellingly short-lived) Hun society of the 5th century under Attila. Most scholars reject the identification.

675 Pan. Lat. 2.32.4. For discussion see Ladner 1976: 20.

676 For the background see the introduction to their translation of the speech by Heather and Moncur (2001: 255).

677 The reference to Themistius is taken from Heather and Moncur’s translation of his orations (2001: 275).

678 For Ammianus’ allusion to Themistius in another context see G. Kelly 2008: 268. Kulikowski 2012: 95 sees Themistius and the conciliatory pose he takes towards the Goths as the “main target” of Ammianus’ final book.

origin and where they were living when they overran Europe and crushed the Scythian nation [the Goths], I have collected from the ancient authors and set down according to the criterion of probability.\textsuperscript{680}

The first port of call for Eunapius is the ancient sources. Despite being one of the earliest sources on the Huns himself, he, like Themistius, still trawls the ancient writers for parallels which he duly finds. Quite which ancient people Eunapius offered as a potential parallel can be gleaned from Zosimus who used the earlier historian as a source.\textsuperscript{681} Though Zosimus is initially unsure whether the Huns are Scythians and expresses some doubt over the identification with Herodotus’ Royal Scythians, he concedes that they probably crossed the Cimmerian Bosphorus from Asia into Europe.\textsuperscript{682}

The implication is that the Huns have some sort of relationship to the Scythians.\textsuperscript{683} Like Eunapius, Ammianus also attempts to place the Huns in the historical record upon first encountering them. He claims at the beginning of the excursus that they are only “little known from the ancient records” (31.2.1: ‘monumentis veteribus leviter nota’), which implies that he had read earlier sources for clues as to the Huns’ origin. Unlike Eunapius, however, he makes no mention of Scythians. He mystifies them to make them as alien an ‘other’ as possible.

The careful means by which Ammianus differentiates the Huns even from other barbarians let alone Romans does not prevent the Hun excursus comprising a great deal of stereotypical material. The most interesting feature of the digression when compared to Eunapius-Zosimus is how Ammianus manipulates the topoi he uses to sharply distinguish his Huns

\textsuperscript{680} Eunap. fr. 41 (Blockley): Τὰ μὲν οὖν πρῶτα τῆς συγγραφῆς, οὐδενός οὐδὲν σαφὲς λέγειν ἔχοντος δὴν τε ὄντες οἱ Οὐδὲνι δὴ τοῦτο εἰκότας λογισμοὺς εἰρήταται...
\textsuperscript{681} Phot. Bibl. 98.2.66. For discussion see Paschoud 1989: 187-190 and Roger Blockley’s comments to his translations of the fragments (1981-3).
\textsuperscript{682} Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 9 perhaps lends Zosimus’ words more certainty than they possess when he claims that Zosimus posits a concrete link between the Huns and the Royal Scythians. He is clear that “it was not known” (οὐκ ἐγνωσμένον) whether they could be equated to Herodotus’ Scythians.
\textsuperscript{683} Zos. 4.20.3-4.
from the Scythians and further his alienising aim. Rohrbacher has argued that Ammianus’ account of the Huns was “drawn nearly verbatim” from Justin and Livy.\(^{684}\) With respect to the former author at least this is a sizeable overstatement for it misses the extent to which Ammianus reshapes the material he uses.

Maenchen-Helfen detected clear borrowings from Justin as regards the Huns’ propensity to wear clothes of rodent fur and to remain mounted on their horses for everyday tasks, but that aside the picture of the Scythians in Justin is radically different from Ammianus’.\(^{685}\) Ammianus excises all mention not only of the Scythians themselves but even inverts the numerous positive assessments of those people in that source. The following examples demonstrate this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justin 2.2 on the Scythians</th>
<th>Amm. Marc. 31.2 on the Huns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justitia gentis ingeniis culta, non legibus</td>
<td>Inconsulterum animalium ritu, quid honestum inhonestumve sit, penitus ignorantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice is observed among them, more from the temper of the people, than from the influence of laws.</td>
<td>Like unreasoning beasts, they are utterly ignorant of the difference between right and wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurum et argentum non perinde ac reliqui mortales adpetunt</td>
<td>auri cupidine immensa flagrantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They do not seek gold and silver in the manner of other mortals.</td>
<td>They burn with a monstrous desire for gold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atque utinam reliquis mortalibus similis moderatio abstinentiaque alieni foret; profecto non tantum bellorum per omnia saecula terris</td>
<td>Hoc expeditum indomitumque hominum genus, externa praedandi aviditate flagrans immani, per rapinas finitimorum grassatum et</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{684}\) Rohrbacher 2002: 226.

\(^{685}\) Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 13-15 comparing Amm. Marc. 31.2 to Justin 2.2 (clothes) and 41.3 (horses).
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omnibus continuaretur
And would that other men had like temperance, and like freedom from desire for the goods of others. There would then assuredly be fewer wars in all ages and countries.

Lacte et melle vescuntur
They eat milk and honey.

radicibus herbarum agrestium, et semicruda cuiusvis pecoris carne vescantur
They eat the roots of wild plants and the half-raw flesh of any kind of animal whatever.

The above table shows the extent to which Ammianus adapts his possible source material. All positive aspects of the Scythians, as well as their name, are excised to produce a picture of pure barbarism entirely of his own making. This not only positions the Huns as “megabarbarians”, but as outside ethnography altogether and completely unprecedented. Ammianus does not attempt, as Eunapius does, to alleviate the Huns’ novelty. He plays with the conventions of ethnography to emphasise the Huns’ ‘otherness’ by offering an intentionally vague account of their origins while redeploying Scythian stereotypes.

This point can be developed by comparison to Jerome. Like Eunapius, Jerome adopts a similar tactic both of recognising the Huns’ novelty and by equating them to ancient peoples. He emphasises their savagery and notes that they are a new threat “with whom we have recently become acquainted”. In the same passage he links them with the “Nomad tribes,

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686 Heather 2010: 212.
687 Adv. Iovinian. 2.7.
and the Troglodytes, and Scythians...” to describe how they enjoy eating half-cooked meat. This detail is also in Ammianus and has led scholars to suggest that Jerome had derived this detail from his reading of the historian.  

Though ultimately unprovable it is interesting that Jerome may have read Ammianus’ account which makes no mention of the Huns as Scythians yet still associated them with the Huns in his own work. Jerome groups the Huns with the rest of the nomads as following the same custom of eating undercooked meat. Ammianus on the other hand sees this custom as peculiar to the Huns; the Alans who are less savage eat flesh (presumably cooked though Ammianus does not say categorically) and drink milk after the fashion of Herodotean nomads. Ammianus thus makes the Huns as distinctive as possible. Unlike Jerome, who may have read Ammianus’ account, he refuses to equate them with the Scythians from Herodotus or other sources.

Returning to the RG, concrete Herodotean peoples only appear after the Hun excursus finishes at 31.2.12 which again suggests that the Huns are intended to be somewhat different from the archetypal nomads. Well-known Scythian tribes like the Massagetae, Sauromatians, and Budini all make an appearance during the Alan portion of the digression. Even the cannibalistic Anthropophagi appear at 31.2.15. The educated reader will have started the Hun digression with the expectation of meeting standard tropes, the product and sign of an author’s paideia. Though he may still detect them as lying beneath the surface in some form, the explicit references are put off until the Alan part of the narrative, giving the impression that the Huns are something new and to be comprehended on

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688 Maenchen-Helfen 1955: 384, followed by Cameron, in his review of Demandt, who concludes that Jerome may have read Ammianus “hot off the press” in 393 (1967: 61). Syme, in his own review of Demandt, rejects the assertion (1968: 218). Most recently Rohrabacher 2006 has argued that Jerome planned to model his never completed ecclesiastical history on his close reading of Ammianus.

689 Shaw 1982.

690 Hdt. 4.102ff. for these peoples, with Burgersdijk 2016: 127.

691 For the cultured climate of the last decades of the 4th century see McLaughlin 2014. For a broader picture, see Brown 1971: 32; 1992: 36ff. and Mennen 2011: 9.
their own terms. The Huns are uniquely barbarous and Ammianus even appropriates the characteristics of Herodotus’ extreme ‘other’, the Man-eaters, to his Huns; especially the notion that these people are the most savage of all men who live without laws or justice:

ἀνδροφάγοι δὲ ἀγριώτατα πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἔχουσι ἣθεα, οὐτὲ δίκην νομίζοντες οὐτε νόμῳ οὐδενὶ χρεώμενοι: νομάδες δὲ εἰσὶ ἐσθητά τε φορέουσι τῇ Σκυθικῇ ὁμοίῃ (Hdt. 4.106)

The Androphagoi have the most savage customs of all men and have no notion of either law or justice: they are nomads, wearing a costume like the Scythian.

Hunorum gens...omnem modum feritatis excedit [...] Omnes enim sine sedibus fixis, absque lare vel lege aut victu stabilis dispalantur...coniuges taetra illis vestimenta contexunt (Amm. Marc. 31.2.1, 10)

The people of the Huns...exceed every degree of savagery. They are all without fixed abode, without hearth, or law, or settled mode of life...their wives weave for them their hideous garments.

Ammianus does include his own version of a cannibalistic tribe but his man-eaters at 31.2.15 are only cursorily covered: there is no mention of their other features from the earlier writer. Instead, the Huns assume the same role as the cannibals in Herodotus, the most barbarous of all, though Ammianus hides any overt mention of the connection between the two tribes. Where Herodotus mentions his barbarians’ explicitly Scythian clothing, Ammianus says only that the Huns wear “foul clothes” (‘taetra vestimenta’) and fails to mention the Scythian detail present in Herodotus. The Huns fulfil the truly extreme role of the Androphagoi but are not cast as Scythian.

The non-‘Scythianness’ of the Huns is important. Referring to the Huns, Whately has recently argued that Ammianus “explicitly calls [them] a
people of Asiatic Scythia”, citing only RG 31.2.692 This seems to be a reference to the chapter heading which does indeed group the Huns with other people from that region (‘de Hunnorum et Alanorum, aliarumque Scythiae Asiaticae gentium sedibus et moribus’). G. Kelly has shown, however, that these headings were an invention of Adrien de Valois in his 1681 edition of Ammianus’ text.693 Kelly notes that the headings occasionally gloss information not found in the text proper, citing the 28-day reign of Silvanus at 15.5.694 The chapter heading at 31.2 should be read similarly, as glossing information not found in the text. Against Whately, the Huns are explicitly not Scythians. This is so Ammianus can mystify the Huns’ origins, thereby rendering them completely ‘foreign’ and the antithesis of Romanness. As a result, the Romans glimpse the basis of their own identity and the boundaries of Ammianus’ characteristically inclusive, outward-looking model are maintained.

The vagueness of Hun origins in Ammianus is unusual and contrasts with his standard method of (attempted) zealous accuracy. At the start of his Alan section he claims to correct the confused opinion of earlier geographers, and in the Gallic section he claims to have weighed up earlier accounts and found Timagenes to be the best.695 The vagueness in the early portion of the Hun account thus suggests that Ammianus intentionally pushes the Huns to the world’s margins. The tradition of classical ethnography on the barbarians ensured that the Greeks and Romans were fully informed about the origins of their barbarian neighbours, though the Romans were arguably more systematic in their ethnographic interest.696 This interest goes back to Homer,697 but the work of the republican geographers and ethnographers especially reduced the

693 Kelly 2009.
694 Ibid. p. 240.
695 31.2.12: ‘…veteres Massagetas, qui unde sint vel quas incolant terras (quoniam hoc res prolapsa est), consentaneum est demonstrare, geographica perplexitate monstrata…; 15.9.2: ‘Ambigentes super origine prima Gallorum, scriptores veteres notitiam reliquere negotii semiplenam, sed postea Timagenes, et diligentia Graecus et lingua…’.
696 Momigliano 1975: 59.
entire world to reason — demonstrated by the breadth of Strabo’s *Geography*, which even had a section on the nomads.698

Ammianus’ ethnographic efforts cannot compare with the enormity of the *Geography*, but there are similar processes in play regarding geography as a colonising discourse in cases other than the Hun excursus. For instance, Ammianus tells with pride how the ancient Romans managed to build a sturdy highway in the face of barbarian attacks and rugged terrain, as if they almost succeed in subduing nature and the barbarians in one enterprise (15.4.3); he speaks in wonder at the marvels of Egypt but finishes his lengthy digression with the blunt remark that Egypt was once ruled by its own kings but had been subdued by Octavian and “received the name of a province” (22.16.24: ‘provinciae nomen accepit, ab Octaviano Augusto possessa.’); and his Gallic digression pointedly starts with Octavian (15.10.2).699

Strabo’s writing, in the heyday of Roman expansion, has been regarded by Clarke as reflecting the world ambitions of both Pompey and Caesar which envisioned Rome as coterminous with the world.700 Maas has also suggested that Strabo’s book develops “new visions of the inhabited world and Rome’s mastery of it”.701 In the same way, Ammianus’ ethnographic portrayals demonstrate this dominance at a time when Rome’s relationship with the barbarians was, in actuality, changing to an arguably more fluid situation. There was plentiful information on barbarian origins which not only suggested a world understood but also implied the existence of common ground, if not actual ancestral links, between the theoretically dominant Roman power and the barbarian tribes.702 The Hun digression

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698 Strabo’s picture of the nomads is radically different to Ammianus who is not generally thought to have read that author, though he does cite Timagenes, a contemporary of Strabo’s (15.9.2). Interestingly, however, at 7.4.6 Strabo calls the nomads “warriors rather than brigands”. This is a distinction also made implicitly by Ammianus when he characterises the Huns as the ‘greatest fighters (‘bellatores’) of all’ at 31.2.9. Generally, he calls ordinary barbarians *latrones* or *grassatores* (e.g. 16.12.6; 27.9.7; 30.6.2).
699 15.10.2. See Woolf 1996: 364-5 for this passage.
700 Clarke 1997: 106.
701 Maas 2007: 68.
702 Momigliano 1975: 11 on the “triangle” of Greece-Rome-Judaea and the sharing of “barbarian wisdom”.
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displays none of these imperialistic features such that they appear set apart from the rest of the barbarians. This vagueness renders them ethnographically problematic for they do not map on to previous models of extreme barbarism.

But this artful vagueness also places the Huns as utterly without origins and thus without an identity. This in turn reinforces for the RG’s readers how important is their own fatherland and history to their identity. Earlier work has suggested that the digression is so vague because the Huns were a new phenomenon and so accurate information on the Huns was lacking. While this was the case, as Ammianus himself admits, it does not explain why he takes a selective approach to his source material. He might have been expected to equate this new nomadic tribe with the Scythians of ancient history as some of his contemporaries do, for they were the standard nomadic archetype in the ancient world. Instead, he utilises the accounts of Scythians in earlier sources to provide him with information for the Huns. In the process he excises all mention of the Scythians and all positive assessment of that people. The result is a picture of unadulterated barbarism of course, but also a picture of a people who can scarcely even be called human.

For Ammianus and many other writers, history and origin underpinned identity. He proudly proclaims at the end of the history that he has written “as a soldier and a Greek”. reveals the notion of a shared antiquity that determines diplomatic contact between the Roman and Persian empires; and even the barbarian Burgundians claim to share historical connections to the empire which arguably raises them above the lowly status of the other tribes. The Huns’ novelty ensures that they have no history at all, and the barbarity of their customs renders them unable to become Roman. In showing the Huns as possessing no origin, Ammianus casts them as without an identity at all and a way for Romans to understand the basis of their own. Ammianus provides a sense of

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704 Hartog 1979: 1137.
705 Barbero 2007: 35.
belonging for his readers. The Huns exemplify Romanness in the negative and are thus a useful identity tool.

Given the questions of identity with which Ammianus deals, it is little surprise that the RG ends with two episodes which meditate on the boundary between ‘Roman’ and ‘barbarian’, and which indicates that ethnicity was on the author’s mind as he finished writing. The execution of the Gothic soldiers by the commander Julius has already been noted as Ammianus building a failsafe into his integrative identity agenda by preserving the option of extermination. The episode is accompanied by his observation that it was a rarity that the commanders of Julius’ units were all Romans (31.16.8: ‘rectores, Romanos omnes, quod his temporibus raro contingit’). In this section, then, there is a clear dividing line between Roman and Goth, and it is the Romans who act decisively to maintain the integrity of their community.

Two sections prior, however, the efficacy of an undeniably barbaric action is emphasised. Ammianus records how a Saracen defender of Constantinople, wearing a loincloth and with streaming hair (‘crinitus quidam, nudus omnia praeter pubem’), runs wildly into the Gothic ranks, slits the throat of an enemy, and proceeds to drink the man’s blood (31.16.6):

The barbarians, terrified by this strange and monstrous sight, after that did not show their usual self-confidence when they attempted any action, but advanced with hesitating steps.706

This episode has been variously interpreted. Halsall, for instance, sees it as a humorous passage in that Ammianus spends much of book 31 stressing the Huns’ and Goths’ savagery but allows for the Saracen to cow even them.707 Woods, on the other hand, see it as an entirely serious comment

706 ‘quo monstroso miraculo barbari territi, postea non ferocientes ex more, cum agendum adpeterent aliquid, sed ambiguis gressibus incedebant’.
707 Halsall 2002: 98: “the Goths may have been barbarous, may even have been amongst the most barbarous, but they were not that barbarous!”; p. 99: “His punch line, as with the best jokes, is understated. Instead of describing them fleeing in terror, Ammianus
on extreme barbarism, even taking it to be a sign of cannibalism. Whately is more circumspect, noting that Ammianus’ portrayal of Saracens is generally nuanced. He argues that the deed “is not, in Ammianus’ mind, indicative of the Saracens as a people, as troublesome as they might be: the fact that he took the time to highlight the act demonstrates how unusual it actually is.” Whately is correct to stress the nuance of the account, particularly the observation that the sheer strangeness of the act is the exception that proves the rule.

However, the unprecedented nature of the blood drinking is also an argument that, to defend Rome, ordinary boundaries between ‘Roman’ and ‘barbarian’ must at times be suspended, just as they are established in the portrayal of the Huns and the slaughter of the Gothic soldiers. The language in fact bears a striking resemblance to that used of the Galli in Amida who start out as antagonists but by their effective action become Roman. Though there are slight differences between the passages, the process and result are similar. In the Amida narrative, the Gauls are driven to frenzy by the sight of Roman prisoners being paraded before the walls (19.6.3); here, the Saracens rush from the city as soon as they spot the enemy (31.16.5). In both case, there is a distinct lack of ratio. While in Amida it is the Gauls themselves who hew at the gates to be released on the enemy (19.6.4), in this passage it is the enemy who are “almost knocking at the barriers of the gates” (31.16.4: ‘obicesque portarum paene pulsantes’). Despite the lack of ratio, however, both groups possess a hint of Romanness: the Saracens sally out confidently (‘fidenter erupit’); the Gauls too fight the Persians in an infantry engagement having sallied out very bravely (19.5.2: ‘erumpentes […] fidentissime…’).

Thus far in the narrative, conventional, even traditional Roman, tactics have proved ineffective – the Goths repel the Saracens’ onslaught, just as the Persians had the Gauls’ own attack. This sets the stage for a more simply says that the Goths were more careful afterwards (as we might put it, ‘they didn’t do that again in a hurry’).
unusual strategy, and Amida is again a useful parallel. Following the failure of conventional tactics, the Gauls decide upon a covert night attack on the Persian camp, “praying for the protection of heaven” (19.6.7: ‘orantes caeleste praesidium’) before they leave. Meanwhile the Saracens had also been driven to act by the “power in heaven” (31.16.4: ‘caeleste numen’). Indeed, the supernatural quality of the blood-sucking Saracen is emphasised: “the oriental troop had triumphed from a strange event, never witnessed before” (31.16.6: ‘orientalis turma novo neque ante vise superavit eventu’). This language, while it does not excuse the upcoming display of blood-drinking, at least depicts it as a necessary evil inspired by heaven – having sallied out in defence of Constantinople and failed in their objective to repel the Goths and avert a siege, there is no other course of action left to these Saracens.

After prefacing the deed, Ammianus describes it in detail and focuses especially on the utterly demoralised Goths (31.16.6). This is paralleled in the Amida narrative, where Ammianus dwells on the disbelieving Persian magnates as they survey the carnage wrought by the Gauls (19.6.13). Amida, of course, falls to the Persians in spite of the Gauls’ efforts, but in this passage Ammianus is clear that the Saracen’s act contributes towards the saving of the city.

It is going too far to claim that the Saracens, thanks to the decisive act of one of their number, are rendered Roman, as the Gauls are. For one thing, unlike the Gauls, they are not formally received into the Roman community (19.6.10-12); for another, the Saracens, as nomads, certainly exhibit a more serious barbarian quality than the Gauls who are, irrespective of Ammianus’ nuance towards ‘foreign’ vocabulary, provincials. The point is rather that Ammianus, right at the end of his history, is restating how fundamental to the contemporary empire is the interplay between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreigner’. The Saracens before Constantinople and the Goths slaughtered by Julius (31.16.8) are contrasting contributions to this argument.
4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the final book of the RG is not anomalous, but rather concludes Ammianus’ identity argument in a number of ways. The nuanced portrayal of the Goths in the first portion of the book and the entirely negative one of the Roman overseers demonstrates how Romanness is chiefly a matter of appropriate behaviour, and to show this Ammianus adopts a conscious, and extreme, ‘outsider’ perspective. That the Goths also seem to display quasi-Roman behaviour in the early narrative also demonstrates that Ammianus imagines a largely integrative model of Roman identity, with the failsafe that, if the foreigners move against Rome, as the Goths do, they are to be exterminated. Ammianus’ relative openness to ‘foreignness’ contrasts sharply with the views of some of his peers. At the same time, however, the Huns are Ammianus’ attempt to show not only what Romanness is by imagining what it is not, but also a means of fostering identity cohesion by the artful creation of a group who could not join that identity. The Huns are pure barbarism and incurably ‘other’, demonstrating that although being Roman is concerned with integration, there is a limit that must be continually observed if the empire is to survive.
5.1 Conclusion

Ammianus devises a model of Roman identity fit for his own times, a world which had seen a hitherto unprecedented intermingling of Romans and non-Romans. This self-aware historian recognises his own time and its immediate past as quantifiably ‘different’. Occasionally, this recognition is explicit – from the observation that Diocletian was the first Augustus to introduce the foreign and regal custom of adoratio against the custom of the principes (15.5.18), to the acknowledgement that, in some parts of the army at least, it was rare nowadays for Roman commanders to be Romani themselves (31.16.8).

At other times, Ammianus implicitly recognises contemporary realities, especially as regards how he frames the contribution of Romans somehow marked as ‘foreign’ in the text. Julian fights against Franks in Gaul (20.10.2), but it is Franks also who strive, as loyal soldiers, to protect a Roman commander (yet another Frank) from the machinations of corrupt courtiers (15.5). Meanwhile, it is Gallic soldiers, long part of the empire yet conspicuously marked as ‘foreign’ in the early part of the Amida narrative, who appear as paradigms of Roman martial valour after their successful action against the Persians (19.6). Moreover, it is a Romano-Persian who can stand in the ancient capital and testify to the power of Rome (16.10.16) before an emperor who in fact behaves as if he is a tourist in, not a ruler of, the Eternal City (16.10.13).

There are limits to Ammianus’ integrative programme, and his picture of Roman interaction with external barbarians is entirely traditional. Battles are fought against familiar foes such that Constantius can observe to his men that the Limigantes’ guerrilla tactics had caused even the maiores to feel fear (17.13.27); and Julian can regale his troops with stories of past Roman conquerors of Persia in his own expedition to that country (23.5.16). But the final book also describes the coming of a people who are conspicuously unprecedented and uncharted (31.2.1). The Huns’ appearance renders even the Goths quasi-Roman as the latter defend their native soil (31.3.2-3). Yet when the survivors seek succour in Roman lands,
they are persecuted and seem to be victims once again, before finally succumbing to barbarism and being justifiably destroyed by one of the commanders who was in fact a Romanus (31.16.8: ‘rectores Romanos omnes, quod his temporibus raro contingit’). 710

This thesis argues that these features of the RG are not coincidental details in the history, but part of a wider identity scheme. Ammianus formulates this as a response to the situation of the contemporary empire in which those people doing the most to uphold the state are ‘outsiders’ of some description. Depending on circumstance, these people are soldiers, ethnically marked Romans, or, simply, Romans somehow ‘other’ to a given situation. Since ethnicity is not a viable marker for Roman identity (genuine ethnic Romans are in the minority), Ammianus defines it along behavioural lines, thereby allowing it to be claimed by those who behave appropriately.

In this sense, his identity model is ultimately integrative since it envisages Romanness as a largely open category: even the Saracens exhibit a glimmer of a martial identity during their defence of Constantinople (31.16.5). Only the Huns are denied a Roman potential, since in their utter barbarity they lack even the capacity to ‘learn’ Romanness (31.2.11). To define his model, Ammianus cultivates an ‘outsider’ perspective, and uses his own identity as a former soldier and a Greek (31.16.8: ‘miles quondam et Graecus’) to signal this. In this formulation, miles signals Ammianus’ position in the imagined community of the soldiers; Graecus his styled ‘foreignness’. Both categories inform, and comprise, his Roman identity.

Since Ammianus writes from such a perspective, however, and since many of his most important characters are themselves ‘outsiders’ of various descriptions, Ammianus can paradoxically generate a strong sense of ‘insiderness’ underpinned by the integrative properties of his identity model. This insider/outsider dynamic is at the heart of identity in the RG. In chapter 1, the martial Romanness Ammianus describes effectively

710 As is noted above (p. 196), once the Goths commit to the revolt and become enemies to be exterminated, Ammianus describes them as he would any barbarian (or Roman): e.g. 31.7.8: ‘immaniter fremens’; 31.7.9: ‘hostes et male sanos eorum ductores, ut rabidas feras’.
integrates conspicuously ‘foreign’ Romans by defining identity as a behavioural-cultural status. Men like Malarich (15.5.4-6), Arintheus (26.8.5), and Victor (31.12.6), in acting bravely and thoughtfully in service of the state, become part of the imagined community of soldiers irrespective of their origins. More than this, they become exemplars of Romanness.

It is not just the imagined community of soldiers whom Ammianus makes Roman, however. The civic brand of Romanness described in the first part of chapter 2 leaves aside the question of behaviour (and soldiers) and instead presents the City as the majestic lodestone of identity for all Romans; indeed, the peculiarly outward-looking nature of Ammianus’ narrative strongly implies a broad audience. Ammianus returns to behaviour in the second part of the chapter, using as his definitional tool the unworthy deeds of the metropolitan Romans, setting these against the hypothetical *honestus advena* (14.6.12). Ammianus’ digressions on Rome (14.6; 28.4) assume a moralising tone which underpins a calculated process of ‘othering’. Through this process, Ammianus casts the metropolitans as a barbarian people, and transfers Romanness to those ‘outsiders’ whom they so despise.

A key part of the ‘outsider’ perspective as analysed in chapter 3 is how Romans view the emperor, especially his ceremonial, which serves to bind Romans around the idea of a majestic figurehead, the representative of Roman identity. In Ammianus’ conception, the emperor cannot be the *civilis princeps* so praised in the past by Pliny and revived again by Eutropius, because such a figure, stripped as he is of high-blown imperial regalia, cannot adequately be ‘seen’ and celebrated by the various members of the community. Visibility, the act of Romans looking in on the emperor from without, is a key component of the office, and Ammianus sees it as a stage show to be observed and ‘consumed’ by a Roman audience (16.10; 15.8.21). On this reading, viewing the emperor becomes a communal event and Romans can anchor their identity to the trappings of the office, irrespective of the emperor’s (usually poor) personal qualities.
Thus, while Constantius and Valentinian are both accused of exhibiting tyrannical behaviour, their respect for the dignity of the office should not be understated, nor their contribution to Ammianus’ identity scheme minimised.\textsuperscript{711}

The final chapter demonstrates both the integrative and exclusivist elements of Ammianus’ identity model, as well as its behavioural basis. In both senses, book 31 is a fitting conclusion to Ammianus’ identity argument because it covers issues raised throughout the RG. In the first instance, as in the digressions on Rome, Ammianus blurs the boundaries between ‘Roman’ and ‘barbarian’ behaviour. The Romans who oversee the Goths’ movement into the empire appear more barbarian-like than the people they are charged to supervise (31.4.10).

The Goths, meanwhile, are cast as victims such that their eventual rebellion is inevitable. When Ammianus describes their struggles against the Huns, he renders them quasi-Roman, and their leaders seem to be Stoic heroes (31.3.2ff.). However, if the barbarians and Romans are intermingled at times in the final book, the Huns are a group who define the boundary of Romanness. The Huns’ barbarism is permanent, and they demonstrate how, though identity is a behavioural status, it is not endlessly flexible. In the Huns, Romans everywhere can witness their own identity in the negative and Ammianus can finish the RG with an outside group which cannot join the community at all.

This thesis has attempted to show that Ammianus is interested in what makes a Roman. Scholars have long argued that Ammianus was either pro- or anti- barbarian, but it is better to see him as adopting a far more nuanced position than many have so far allowed him. The RG describes processes of integration and exclusion as a means of identity definition for the contemporary Roman world. Ammianus is not unique in his views, and the preceding chapters have mentioned a number of other authors, from his own time and earlier, who have adopted a similar approach. But few

\textsuperscript{711} Constantius’ tyranny: e.g. 19.12.16ff.; and Valentinian’s: 29.3.1. Constantius’ upholding of the imperial majesty is noted in ch. 3. Valentinian himself appears majestic at 30.9.6.
authors develop so systematically a belief in a Roman identity so divorced from the inhabitants of the capital on the one hand and directed towards signposted ‘outsiders’ on the other. Blockley has argued that Ammianus’ sphragis alludes to Cicero and possibly Virgil.\(^{712}\) It is suggestive that these two authors, who exhibit sensitivity as regards the dialogue between ‘Roman’ and ‘foreign’ in their works, and who meditate consistently on what defines these identities, should be in Ammianus’ mind as he finished the RG.

It is perhaps going too far to deem Ammianus a Cicero for his own times, but he does cultivate an ‘outsider’ perspective to define Romanness for these styled ‘outsiders’, and as an identity accessible to a wide range of potential Romans. As has been argued, this definitional position is itself a response to the reality of the contemporary empire in which the best ‘Romans’ are to be found on the periphery rather than the ancient centre. In devising this model of identity, Ammianus hopes to define a type of Roman able to maintain the empire. This Roman, although not an inhabitant of the City itself, will nevertheless come to understand what being Roman is and, by this process, guarantee the eternity of Rome, which will last as long as there are men (14.6.3: ‘victura dum erunt homines Roma’).

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