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### Why we need a new edition of Ammianus Marcellinus

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## Why we need a new edition of Ammianus Marcellinus

Gavin Kelly, University of Edinburgh

### 1. Introduction: Textual Criticism and History

Who threw the spear that killed the emperor Julian during his retreat from Persia in 363? Julian's paganism meant that this was a matter of ideological controversy among contemporaries, an event inviting providential explanations or atonement. Within a year or two of his death, theories had multiplied – a Persian foe, a Roman Christian traitor, a Saracen mercenary. In due course these provoked further questions: had the hand of providence removed the apostate emperor? were Roman failures after Julian's death the gods' punishment for the failure to avenge it? The question of Julian's killer was much tossed about in contemporary debate by the likes of Ephraim the Syrian, Gregory Nazianzen, and Libanius. And what did Ammianus Marcellinus think, finishing his history in Rome a generation later? According to our editions, it was *uncertain from where* the cavalry spear came (25.3.6).

...clamabant hinc inde candidati quos disiecerat terror/ ut fugientium molem/  
tamquam ruinam male compositi culminis declinaret,/ et incertum <unde> subita  
equestris hasta cute brachii eius praestricta/ costis perfossis/ haesit in ima iecoris  
fibra.

The *candidati* who had been scattered in terror were shouting on both sides that he should avoid the mass of men fleeing as he would the collapse of a badly constructed roof, and – it was uncertain from where – a sudden cavalry spear grazed Julian's arm, pierced his ribs, and stuck deep in the fibers of his liver.

*unde addidit Haupt, incertum del. Wagner, interdum Hermann, [et] incertam Fontaine,  
in certamine Bataui*

But that may not have been what Ammianus wrote at all. The word *unde*, 'from where', is absent from the manuscript tradition (and indeed the apparatus above is a simplified one

that omits several other more easily corrected errors in a relatively short passage<sup>1</sup>). The word ‘uncertain’ by itself makes no sense, but adding *unde* is only one of a number of solutions. J.A. Wagner, a translator and commentator of Ammianus in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, deleted the word *incertum*, taking it as a marginal comment that had made its way into the text;<sup>2</sup> Johannes Hermann suggested *incertum* should be emended to *interdum*, ‘meanwhile’;<sup>3</sup> the Budé editor Jacques Fontaine came up with a double emendation that attached the word to the previous clause;<sup>4</sup> the authors of the Dutch commentary have

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Various versions of this chapter or its parts have been delivered orally before generous and learned audiences in Cork and in many other cities: Cambridge, Cape Town, Edinburgh, Exeter, Munich, Oxford, Padua, Paris, Pisa, Rostock, Tübingen, and Vienna. I fear it would be a hopeless task to try to remember all those who made acute and helpful comments at these events, so I ask for their indulgence. Helpful comments on the written text came from Fabio Guidetti, Michael Kulikowski, Alan Ross, Justin Stover, and George Woudhuysen, as well as from the editors of this book.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter I aim to strike a balance between setting out the main issues clearly and giving the full textual evidence, which I shall sometimes do in footnotes. A fuller apparatus would add: ‘declinaret *AG*, declararet *VB*; subita equestris *SBAG*, subitae questris *V*; hasta cute *G*, has tacte *V*, hasta et *BA*; brachio... praestricto *A*’. The sigla used in this article are as follows (for discussion of their relationships, see section 2 below, and the stemma in fig. 1):

**V** = Vaticanus Latinus 1873 (Fulda, s. IX<sup>1/3</sup>)

**M** = Kassel, Landesbibliothek, 2<sup>o</sup> Ms. philol. 27 + 4<sup>o</sup> Ms. chem. 31. (Fulda/ Hersfeld s. IX<sup>1/2</sup>)

**F** = Florence, San Marco 1 V 43 (Florence, 1423, by Niccolò Niccoli)

**E** = Vaticanus Latinus 2969 (Rome, 1445)

**N** = Parisinus Latinus 6120 (Rome, 1448/64 by Francesco Griffolini)

**W** = Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. Z. 388 (Italy (Florence?), s. XV<sup>med</sup>)

**S** = editio princeps, Sabinus (Rome, 1474)

**B** = edition of Petrus Castellus (Bologna, 1516)

**A** = edition of Mariangelus Accursius (Augsburg, April 1533)

**G** = edition of Sigismundus Gelenius (Basel, July 1533).

I mark Ammianus’ clausulation with a superscript hasta (’); for an explanation see section 4 below below.

<sup>2</sup> Wagner published a German translation in 1792-1794 and his valuable variorum edition collecting the commentaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was published posthumously by C.G.A Erfurdt in 1808: it is also the first edition to include the modern sentence divisions. For his justification for bracketing *incertum* see Wagner 1808, 3.92.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann 1865, 25-26, rightly criticised by Dederichs 1878, 42, and Den Boeft et al. 2005, 67.

<sup>4</sup> It is palaeographically plausible both that *et* could be a dittography and that *u* and *a* might be confused in *incertum*, but *ruinam ... incertam* is an unlikely combination, and one would in any case expect either *et* or some other conjunction to separate the two main verbs *clamabant* and *haesit*.

suggested the plausible but slightly dull *in certamine*, ‘in the fray’.<sup>5</sup> Did Ammianus allude to the fact there was a controversy over Julian’s death – which is the implication of Haupt’s addition of *unde* – or did he brush over it without a mention?<sup>6</sup> On linguistic grounds, *incertum unde* is justifiable by its appearance several other times in Ammianus, as well as other cases where *incertum* is followed by a sort of embryonic indirect question in the same manner.<sup>7</sup> The implication that Julian might have been killed by one of his own side is found a couple of chapters later when some Persians mocked Roman soldiers for having killed an outstanding emperor: ‘for they had themselves heard and also been told by defectors, as an uncertain rumour was going around [*rumore iactato incerto*], that Julian had fallen to a Roman spear’ (25.6.6).<sup>8</sup> Finally, we may add that the Byzantine historian Zonaras, whose text occasionally offers parallel material to Ammianus, has a striking similarity in this case: ἄδηλον ... ὅθεν.<sup>9</sup> It will be clear that my own view is that the addition of *unde* – as printed in the vast majority of editions since the conjecture was made – is very likely to be right, but it is only the most probable solution of a range of possibilities. Nonetheless, the passage is

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<sup>5</sup> Den Boeft et al. 2005, 67-68. It is an admirable trait of the Dutch commentaries on books 20-31 written by Jan den Boeft, Daniël den Hengst, Jan Willem Drijvers (from book 22) and Hans Teitler, that the authors subordinate their own contribution to that of the team, with the result that differences of opinion are avoided and that conjectures are not attributed to individual authors. Accordingly, in my edition of Ammianus they will be designated as *Bataui*.

<sup>6</sup> The suggestion is made with relatively little additional comment at Haupt 1874, 11; Gardthausen 1874 reports in his apparatus that he reached the same conclusion independently (‘sic etiam Haupt’).

<sup>7</sup> 14.1.10 *incertum qua mente*, ‘it is unclear in what mind’; 19.8.10 *incertum unde impetu tam repentino terga uiantum aggressa*, ‘it is unclear from where they attacked travellers from the rear with so sudden a charge’; 24.2.4 *structis Hormisdas insidiis, quem ad speculandum exiturum (incertum unde) praesenserant*, ‘having set a trap for Hormisdas, whom they had intuited (it is unclear how) would come out to examine the terrain’; 31.12.3 *incertum quo errore*, ‘it is unclear by what mistake’; 31.15.4 *incertum quo consilio*, ‘it is unclear with what plan’.

<sup>8</sup> This parallel is adduced by Berger 2006, 702.

<sup>9</sup> Zonaras 13.13 ἄδηλον δ’ εἶναι ὅθεν ἢ αὐτὸν πλήξασα αἰχμή κατ’ ἐκείνου ἐβέβλητο, εἴθ’ ὑπὸ πολεμίου εἴθ’ ὑπὸ τινος τῶν αὐτοῦ εἴτ’ ἐκ θειοτέρας δυνάμεως (‘It was unclear from where the spear that struck him was cast at him, whether by a foe or one of his own men or some divine power’). On parallels between Ammianus and Zonaras and the Byzantine tradition more generally, see e.g. Bleckmann 2007.

likely to be cited, and in this version, in any discussion of contemporary debate on Julian's death.<sup>10</sup>

This case study should remind us of a couple of important points. First, we should remember that the text and interpretation of Ammianus are very far from stable. There are a few texts from antiquity that can be printed with minimal conjectural emendation (Augustine's *Confessions*, say), or whose transmission can be judged pretty good (such as Vergil), but Ammianus is at the opposite end of the spectrum. His transmission is precarious, and while some corrections are fairly certain, in many others the text may be questionable. Editors may simply have printed what they think is more likely right than not, and their successors have accepted it *faute de mieux*: these readings are rarely questioned. Secondly, Ammianus' textual difficulties are not simply a niche affair for philologists: historians working with the text need to be aware of the challenges posed by the transmission (and, conversely, the editor needs to be an adequate historian). Ammianus is our main source for the third quarter of the fourth century and criticism of his text matters in historical terms.

I am working towards a new critical edition of Ammianus, and the aims of this chapter are to explain the reasons that a new edition is needed, the principles on which it is based, and areas where particular progress can be made. I have tried to couch this in the terms accessible to those who are interested in Ammianus but are not necessarily deeply versed in textual criticism, which inevitably means covering ground that some readers will know already and labouring points that may seem obvious to them. While I have tried to use a representative array of case studies, I have striven to pick at least some that are of broader historical interest. Of course, a great deal of textual criticism is about linguistic minutiae that have a limited effect on overall interpretation, but these cases too are important for all readers, because one of the problems that conservative editing has inflicted on Ammianus is to make his style seem more awkward and uneven than it really was. I shall begin by discussing the text's history and recent history of editing, also explaining from a personal view how I became convinced that a new edition was needed (2). I shall go on to discuss the

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<sup>10</sup> The ideological debate on Julian's death is a topic in need of a detailed study, but see e.g. Elm 2012, 454-5. Bowersock 1978, 116-118, offers the most plausible analysis of the realities of Julian's death.

manuscript tradition and transmission in greater detail (3), and then the regular prose rhythm which is so central to the text (4), before some exemplary discussions of individual cases: first, a survey of the small differences understanding prose rhythm can make in the text of a single book (5), then a treatment of a passage with multiple problems (6), and thirdly an example of emendation where previous scholars have not suspected the transmitted text (7). In the conclusions I summarise what a new edition can offer (8).

## 2. The History of Editing

Poggio Bracciolini, a papal secretary attending the Council of Constance, discovered a ninth-century manuscript of book 14 to 31 of Ammianus Marcellinus from the abbey of Fulda: it was the same year, 1417, as Poggio's rediscovery of Lucretius. The manuscript was taken to Italy, where it has resided for most of the time since in the Vatican Library: its shelfmark is Vaticanus Latinus 1873 (I shall generally refer to it as its abbreviation **V** or as the *Fuldensis* or *Fulda ms*).<sup>11</sup> It was copied several times, first by Poggio's Florentine friend Niccolò Niccoli in 1423 (Florence, San Marco 1 V 43 = **F**), but all the fourteen surviving renaissance manuscripts are either copies of **V** or copies of Niccoli's copy, or copies of copies of Niccoli's copy (see table 1: stemma).<sup>12</sup> While as descendants of **V** they have no value in establishing the text (except in a passage of book 31 where a bifolium of **V** was lost after the earliest copies were taken<sup>13</sup>), some of them were copied by or annotated by intelligent renaissance scholars (**V** itself, for example, has notes and corrections in the hands of many humanists including Poggio himself, Niccolò Niccoli, Biondo Flavio, and Pomponio Leto); renaissance

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<sup>11</sup> An excellent digitisation of the ms is available at [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.lat.1873](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.1873)

<sup>12</sup> All this is demonstrated beyond doubt in Clark 1904, correcting some nineteenth-century misconceptions that the codex Petrinus (Vatican City, Arch. Cap. S. Petri E 27) might represent an independent tradition. There have been occasional attempts to see the influence of another branch of the tradition in the Italian manuscripts, especially the renaissance annotations of **V** and the manuscript **E** (Vaticanus Latinus 2969, copied in 1445). See Gardthausen 1917, followed by Pighi 1935, 3 and stemma p. 6, and Pighi 1948, xv-xix, and in decisive response Seyfarth 1962.

<sup>13</sup> The passage lies between 31.8.5 *paulatim* and 31.10.18 *dictu est* and between ff. 200 and 201 of **V** (the folio numbering postdates the loss). The loss was of a bifolium from the centre of its gathering (so rightly Pellegrin (1991), 451), though most previous scholarship referred to a folium. The text should be reconstructed on the basis of the readings of the three direct apographs of **V** extant at this point. **F**, **E**, and **N**; it is not clear whether the pages were still there when Accursius used **V**. Biondo's interventions in **W** (= **W**<sup>2</sup>) should also be checked, as he collated the text against **V** (Cappelletto 1983).

manuscripts and annotations accordingly offer both interesting testimony to the reception of a recently discovered text and sources of conjectures.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, however, it was the worst of these renaissance manuscripts (**R** = Vaticanus Reginensis Latinus 1994), a great-grandchild of the Fuldensis containing only books 14-26, that was the source for the first printed edition, by Sabinus (*S*), in 1474. The second edition, published in Bologna in 1517 (*B*), was even more disastrous: the editor Petrus Castellus dealt with problems by bold conjectures and with lacunae by bold supplements. Castellus made no attempt to seek improvements or further books of the text from manuscripts, even though there were complete manuscripts of Ammianus in four cities near Bologna: Florence, Cesena, Modena, and Venice. After two editions which were mere reprints of Castellus (one attributed to Erasmus, Basel 1518, and another in Cologne in 1527), a much better edition by another Italian, Mariangelus Accursius (or Accorso) of L'Aquila, was published in Augsburg in May 1533. Accursius produced the first edition of books 27-31, and in doing so used the Fuldensis supplemented by a copy of it, also kept in the Vatican, which was full of good conjectures, **E** (Vat. Lat. 2969).

Another Carolingian manuscript of Ammianus had long been at the abbey of Hersfeld, a mere thirty kilometres from Fulda. Poggio had known of it, but despite various attempts he never laid hands on it.<sup>15</sup> But a century later, in 1533 or shortly before, the Basel publisher Hieronymus Froben obtained the Hersfeld manuscript from the abbot of Hersfeld: at this point it apparently already lacked book 31 and the last chapter of book 30. It was for an edition by his corrector Sigismundus Gelenius (Zikmund Hrubý z Jelení), a brilliant Classical scholar responsible for the first editions of many Classical and late antique texts (for example, books 41-45 of Livy, Symmachus' *Relationes*, and the *De rebus bellicis*<sup>16</sup>).

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<sup>14</sup> On this see above all the works of Rita Cappelletto (1978, 1981a, 1981b, 1983, 1985a, 1985b), now supplemented by the excellent recent doctoral thesis of Agnese Bargagna (2020). The outstanding discovery in Cappelletto's work is undoubtedly the claim of Biondo Flavio to have seen an ancient manuscript that contained additional material in book 16, echoes of which Cappelletto then identified in Biondo's *Italia Illustrata* (1983, 1985a, 1985b). While these are at best testimonia, rather than verbatim fragments, they deserve to be given very serious consideration.

<sup>15</sup> See Poggio's letters 1.73 Harth (=1.3.12 Tonelli) and 1.28 Harth (=1.3.29 Tonelli).

<sup>16</sup> For useful discussions of the life and work of Gelenius see Petitmengin 2006a and 2006b, and specifically on Ammianus, Den Hengst 2010. On the editing of books 41-45 of Livy, conventionally

Gelenius used this manuscript to make many improvements, *inter alia* restoring 11 scattered lines of text and a long Greek quotation where the scribe of **V** had left a page and a half blank (17.4.18-23 = ff. 41v-42r). Froben's preface tells us of the loan of the manuscript, of its use in restoring lines that had been missed and particularly in making sense of Greek, but the edition gives no indication of which other changes came from the Hersfeld manuscript.<sup>17</sup> However, he also used earlier editions, and his own fecund talent for conjectural emendation. But the Hersfeldensis was unavailable to scholars after Gelenius' use of it, it is often hard, in cases where Gelenius' text (**G**) differs from other witnesses, to discern whether it represents the readings of the Hersfeld manuscript or his own clever guesswork – except for the small minority of the text where pages of the Hersfeldensis have re-emerged.

It was not until 1875 that six more-or-less complete pages from books 23, 28, and 30 of the Hersfeldensis were rediscovered in the archive at Marburg and were published in the following year.<sup>18</sup> The manuscript had evidently been returned to Hersfeld, where it was taken apart in the late sixteenth century; the rediscovered pages had been used for binding account books in the castle of Friedewald, seven miles from the monastery of Hersfeld. One can even see in them handwriting that seems to be Gelenius' (see [fig. 2](#)). After being stored in Marburg for the next half century (hence the siglum **M**), the six folios were moved to the Universitäts- und Staatsbibliothek at Kassel in 1923. In the 1980s, part of a bifolium from

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attributed to Simon Grynaeus, see Marrone 2009, and on that of the *Anonymus de rebus bellicis*, Ireland 1979, 39-75, and Češka 1987.

<sup>17</sup> It may be worth quoting from Froben's preface (Gelenius 1533, 546): 'In hac provincia strenuam ac fidelem operam nobis nauauit, uir utriusque literaturae non uulgariter callens, emunctaeque naris, Sigismundus Gelenius. Exemplar manu descriptum gratis et alacriter suppeditauit egregius princeps, Abbas Hirsfeldensis.' ('In [improving the text] unstinting and trustworthy assistance came from a man possessed of no mean expertise in both literatures and of a keen sense of smell, Sigismundus Gelenius. The manuscript was supplied swiftly and free of charge by his excellence the Prince Abbot of Hersfeld.') Earlier: 'nos nacti uetustum exemplar manu descriptum innumera loca castigauimus, lacunas aliquot impleuimus, scribarum incuria praetermissas, et in his uersus interdum integros restituimus, graeca omnia quae uel prorsus aberant, uel sic aderant, ut frustra adessent, quum uix a Sibylla quid esset scriptum diuinari posset, reposuimus.' ('Having obtained an old manuscript copy we cleaned up countless places in the text; we filled a number of lacunae that had been passed over by scribes' carelessness; among these we even restored complete lines; we restored all the Greek, which was either completely missing or present in a way that it might as well not have been, since the Sibyl herself could scarcely divine the original.')

<sup>18</sup> Nissen 1876.

book 18 of the Hersfeldensis was discovered, also in Kassel, in the binding of a manuscript of Ps.-Paracelsus and other works from before 1603.<sup>19</sup>

Accursius was a good scholar and Gelenius a very good one, but although their editions represented a considerable advance, Accursius still used Castellus as his base text for books 14-26, and although he claimed to have removed 5,000 of Castellus' errors, many remained.<sup>20</sup> Gelenius' text of the same books also used Castellus (via the virtually identical Basel edition of 1518), as his base text. Both scholars had solved many difficulties, but they had left many others unsolved, and there was also an accretion of imported errors, particularly in books 14-26. From the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries editors laboured unsystematically, if often brilliantly, at solving further problems and scraping away some of the imported errors: highlights included the editions of Friederich Lindenbrog (1609), Henri de Valois (1636), and Hadrien de Valois (1681, the latter presented as a revision of his brother's work).<sup>21</sup>

The first properly critical edition, however, was that of Charles U. Clark (Berlin, 1910, 1915), a young American talent-spotted by Theodor Mommsen. It was a grant from the Prussian Academy of Sciences proposed on Mommsen's vote that enabled Clark to travel to Paris and to Italy to study the manuscripts for his doctorate (published in 1904), and the edition was presented as a collaboration with the more experienced Wilhelm Heraeus, appointed as a sort of supervisor, and his late mentor the palaeographer Ludwig Traube.<sup>22</sup> Clark was the first and still the only editor to have seen all of the manuscripts and to have correctly interpreted their relationship.<sup>23</sup> He had three additional advantages. To start with, he was

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<sup>19</sup> Broszinski and Teitler 1990; for an updated diplomatic text see Kelly and Stover 2016, 127-8. See <http://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1336391032501/1> and <http://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1340964087401/386> for outstandingly high quality digitisations.

<sup>20</sup> The title page boasted of this achievement alongside the first publication of the last five books: 'mendis quinque millibus purgatus, et libris quinque auctus ultimis, nunc primum ab eodem inuentis'. On the closing page (Accursius 1533, 307), he explained that the 5,000 errors were in the books edited by Castellus, 14-26.

<sup>21</sup> On this edition see Kelly 2009a.

<sup>22</sup> Clark 1904, 1910-15.

<sup>23</sup> One possible exception: the Modena manuscript (Bibliotheca Estensis, Lat. 425 = Q, a. 1488) was missed in Clark 1904, though placed in the sigla and the stemma by the time of the edition in 1910. It is not clear whether Clark consulted it personally or not (his name is not on the library's list of readers, but the list may not have been completed consistently). However, he placed it correctly in the stemma: it is a luxury copy of F and of no discernable value to an editor.

the first editor since the rediscovery of six folios of the Hersfeld manuscript, published in 1876.<sup>24</sup> Secondly, he had the benefit of numerous conjectures and linguistic analyses by scholars of Germanophone Europe in the previous half-century.<sup>25</sup> Thirdly, he made excellent use of the discovery of Ammianus' astonishingly regular system of accentual prose rhythm (*cursus*) at ends of clauses, which enabled the decisive identification of many corruptions. Indeed its very title embeds clausulation into the edition: *recensuit rhythmicæque distinxit Carolus U. Clark*. Clark's first volume appeared in the same year as his student Harmon published a still very impressive thesis on the *Clausula in Ammianus Marcellinus*, which underpinned Clark's decisions and proposed many improvements itself.<sup>26</sup> Twentieth-century scholarship warmly accepted Clark's edition as a great advance, while not fully accepting the implications of his approach, especially to *cursus*.

The edition of reference is now Seyfarth et al.'s Teubner (1978), not because it is superior to Clark but because Clark is out of print. Seyfarth is frank about his conservatism, presenting his three main aims as removing emendation designed to make Ammianus conform to Ciceronian language, to have a single critical apparatus unlike the double one of Clark, and to normalise Clark's punctuation, which marked clausulae in a way that seemed to Seyfarth to hinder understanding.<sup>27</sup>

When writing *Ammianus Marcellinus: the Allusive Historian* (2008), I thought Seyfarth's text, while certainly conservative, was good enough.<sup>28</sup> It was writing reviews of the magisterial – and now completed – series of commentaries by Jan den Boeft, Jan Willem Drijvers, Daniël

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<sup>24</sup> The editions of Eyssenhardt 1871 and Gardthausen 1874 had the bad fortune to precede Nissen's discovery.

<sup>25</sup> Jenkins 2017 now makes this burgeoning of scholarship measurable: in the half century before Clark's edition there was an average of near seven items on Ammianus per year, as against less than one per year in the previous half century.

<sup>26</sup> Harmon 1910.

<sup>27</sup> Seyfarth 1978, p.xv: '1. Quam plurimae emendationes secundum linguam Ciceronianam insertae sequestrendae esse uidebantur; 2. apparatus criticus a Clarkio in duas partes diuisus in unum reducendus erat; 3. cum Clarkius interpunctione sua sententias rhythmicè distinxerit, nos sententias singulas secundum regulas grammaticas et logicas separandas esse putauimus, ut lector contextum et citius et melius comprehendere et intellegere posset.'

<sup>28</sup> See Kelly 2008, 9 ('Seyfarth's fine Teubner'). For polite remarks see also Barnes 1998, 202 ('What will long be the standard edition') and 229.

den Hengst and H.C. Teitler that started to raise doubts in my mind.<sup>29</sup> The commentators often advocate 30 or 40 divergences from Seyfarth's text per book, usually persuasively. Roughly 90% of these changes are conjectural emendations by themselves or by earlier scholars in place of the transmitted text, though in a few places they do defend the *paradosis*; my only disagreement was to think them too conservative in emending, especially when prose rhythm was awry.<sup>30</sup> From 2013 I started work on my own translation for the Landmark series,<sup>31</sup> which seemed an irresistible opportunity to bring Ammianus in an accessible but scholarly way to a much wider audience. This was the catalyst for serious work on the text, deepening my understanding of prose rhythm and of the manuscript tradition. When I produced a list of divergences from Seyfarth for the first book that I translated, I realised, first, that I need to produce a study justifying my views, and, secondly, that a new edition was highly desirable and that I was in a position to produce it. Of the three advantages that Seyfarth claimed for his edition over Clark's, only the second, a more readable critical apparatus, was a real improvement. His objection to Ciceronian emendations – and it is true that editors have sometimes classicised where late Latin diverges from earlier language – could better be seen as an openness to believing that virtually any oddity of form is a specimen of authentic 'late Latin'. As to punctuation, while Seyfarth has a clever way of indicating the *clausulae*, he is willing to ignore prose rhythm in constituting the text, and his actual punctuation is more suited to German rather than Latin. But I also found problems in his reporting of the manuscripts, none of which he had seen personally (he was after all working under a communist tyranny that restricted its citizens' movements); this was even the case with E, on which he wrote an important book-length study.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, I came to the conclusion (in collaboration with Justin Stover) that

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<sup>29</sup> These reviews are Kelly 2009b, 2013, 2015b, 2018a. At this point I should signal two other expressions of discontent with Seyfarth's text, Češka 1995 and Colombo 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Indeed Seyfarth's Teubner is much more conservative than his own earlier text (1968-71) with parallel German translation, in which he was constrained by the need to be able to translate what he had printed.

<sup>31</sup> The Landmark Ammianus Marcellinus is a collaboration between myself and Michael Kulikowski as volume editor, with the support and advice of Robert Strassler as series editor. I am responsible for the translation and Kulikowski for everything else (introduction, notes, appendices, as well as the lavish maps and illustrations for which the series is well known).

<sup>32</sup> Seyfarth 1962. In the edition his descriptions of the habits of scribes seem to be taken over from Clark unaltered, as Cappelletto remarked (1981b, 85); he also took over from Clark the notion that the

Seyfarth's understanding of the early transmission could be corrected as well.<sup>33</sup> Let me turn next to the subject of transmission.

### 3. Transmission

It was probably at an early stage that the books preceding the present opening at book 14 were lost. The grammarian Priscian provides our one ancient citation of Ammianus by name (*Marcellinus rerum gestarum XIII*), and it comes from the very start of book 14 (14.1.4, cited in *Inst. Gramm.* 9.51 = Keil 2.486.27-487.3), matching a tendency of Priscian's to quote from the first book of works he cited. Books 1-13 had presumably formed a separate codex.<sup>34</sup> Within the transmitted text, too, there are signs of physical damage at a stage of transmission before the extant manuscripts: it is clear from internal evidence that there is a significant lacuna in book 24, during the account of Julian's Persian campaign (24.7.3).<sup>35</sup> In various other places throughout the text, lacunae are marked as blank spaces in the text, implying an illegible or damaged original, as well as the hope of the readers that the gap might at some point be filled in when another manuscript turned up. While these are found throughout the work, they cluster more densely in certain parts of it (e.g. books 15 and 16).<sup>36</sup> Perhaps the most significant such problem comes in book 29, where V presents a series of blank spaces of c. 3 lines each; the text immediately before and after them tends also to have shorter blank spaces of a syllable or a word or two. Moreover, this series of approximately three-line gaps occurs in a passage of the text where at some point in the transmission two quires of a manuscript were put in the wrong order: book 29 is transmitted in the order 29.1.1-17, 29.3.4-

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Hersfeldensis was in Marburg (Clark 1910, iv = Seyfarth 1978, 1.viii) though it had moved to Kassel 55 years before; he had not sought to view it or have photographs taken, relying on those of Robinson 1936. In the preface (1978, 1.x), he reports that one of his collaborators, Liselotte Jacob-Karau, had looked at some readings of V and E in person in the Vatican Library. For an example of an embarrassing mistake in his readings of E, caused by reliance on photographs, see Kelly (2018b), 244 n. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Kelly and Stover 2016, discussed further below.

<sup>34</sup> Barnes 1998, 30.

<sup>35</sup> For discussion see e.g. Barnes 1998, 205, Den Boeft et al. 2002 ad loc. The lacuna was postulated by Valesius, prompted by the scribe of N. Given that there is no physical gap in the text of V, and the amount of information that appears to be lost, this could easily represent a lost folium or bifolium or two pages skipped in copying.

<sup>36</sup> It is in book 16 that Cappelletto identified the potential loss of a folio: see n. 14 above.

29.5.39 (the section with the repeated lacunae), 29.1.17-29.3.4, 29.5.39-end. Severe damage in one quire and its reincorporation in the wrong place are probably no coincidence.

Although much less of **M** survives, it seems to have had the same problems: the same blank spaces, attempting to represent the *mise-en-page* of the original. Compare, for example, these passages from the Roman digression of book 28, printed first from **V** and then in the shorter lines of **M** (I have italicised the sections of **V** not matched in my quotation of **M** (28.4.26); for an illustration of this section of **M** see fig. 2):

*aequias uirorum fama aduentantes necessaria parari oportere inuentes & testatura  
 tura ancillas capte natura pallidi aspirati pridie consumpta  
 defuncta umromaque ut millius ait. Nec in bus humanis  
 quicquam bos nouunt nisi quod fructuosum sit amicos tamquam pecudes eos*

rum fama aduentantes necessaria parari oportere inuen  
 tes & testatura ancillas capte natura pallidi.  
 aspirati pridie consumpto defuncta. um ro  
 maque ut millius ait. Nec in bus humanis quicquam bos<sup>37</sup>

And the places where Gelenius offers us additional text to supplement a lacuna do not appear to represent any additional evidence drawn from **M** (for example at 28.4.23, where **V** offers the nonsensical *uicet umida gradies* following a lacuna, Gelenius corrects convincingly to *ceruice tumida gradiens* ('pacing with swollen neck'),<sup>38</sup> but **M** is extant at this point and is not the source of Gelenius' correction, as it has an identical reading to **V**. The damage, in other words, was already done before either of our extant manuscripts, which are thus shown to be very closely related indeed.<sup>39</sup>

But the problems are not just physical: there are many self-evident errors on every page, caused, one imagines, by the very normal problem of a succession of scribes of varying competence copying a difficult text of whose sense they had a sketchy grasp and which was

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<sup>37</sup> I have normalised spacing. The size of the gaps is reckoned by Clark (followed in Seyfarth) as: after *testatura* 4 letters in **M**, 11 in **V**; a possible lacuna after *pallidi* of 5 letters at the end of the line in **M**, no lacuna in **V**; after *defuncta* 9 letters in **M**, 15 letters **V**. Neither comments on the larger than usual space after *aspirati* in **M**. The error of *millius* for *Tullius* is notable, and further gross errors can be found in the quotation of Cicero (*bus* for *rebus*, *bos* for *bonum*). See Stover 2017, 309, specifically discussing this passage.

<sup>38</sup> An almost certain conjecture, confirmed by comparison to Cicero *Vatin.* 4 and Lucan 9.700.

<sup>39</sup> See Stover 2017, 307-13 for a discussion of the lacunae and for further references.

probably written in the handwriting of an earlier generation. The Fuldensis itself had perhaps as many as ten different scribes, and this could clearly make a difference (the Hersfeldensis, by contrast, seems likely to have had the same scribe throughout: it certainly does in the extant passages of book 18, 23, 28 and 30<sup>40</sup>). One demonstration of this comes in the fact that the Fuldensis is a little more accurate than the Hersfeldensis for the passages preserved in the new fragments in book 18, whereas in the fragments from books 23, 28, and 30, the Hersfeldensis is far more accurate. This may have to do with the superiority of the scribe for book 18, whose contribution in a distinctive spidery hand runs from the top of 8v (14.7.7 *pulsatae maiestatis*) to the middle of 58v (19.2.6 *infectam sanguine*). Indeed, when this scribe stops writing and hands over to another of far less competence, one whose writing wobbles up and down (Clark marks the change with the words *hic scriba multo negligentior opus ingreditur*, ‘here a far more careless scribe starts operating’), one can see twenty mistakes of copying, word division, and so on in the next fifteen lines, of which eleven are corrected – implying that this scribe added more mistakes than he took from the exemplar. But of course a succession of copyists is responsible for the text that we have it, and we must assume that often the scribes of the Fuldensis, whatever their competence, were copying something that had been corrupted beyond help already by their predecessors. We have already seen above a fragmentary section of the second Roman digression, where no continuous sense may be divined, and it is as well to quote another sentence of that same chapter (28.4.20):

enim uero si quibus in mil      principis regens digressus      rit m      ae ut pro  
uectibus tali preferre      irio lenii praesul existimatur ceter tacitur      dicta solias  
paterfamilias textu      rant aliena et placencia referrent et urile pleraque fallendo.

This is simply uninterpretable. The Dutch commentators eloquently cast doubt on the various reconstructions of scholars, and quote the exclamation of one of their predecessors: ‘Nugae!’<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Pace Nissen 1876, 15, who thought there were three different scribes (see Kelly and Stover 2016, n. 6).

<sup>41</sup> Den Boeft et al. 2011, 204, quoting Wagner 1808 ad loc. They add: ‘it is wiser to let this passage be than to indulge in guesswork’.

I turn now to the two principal problems in the transmission, first, the relationship of the two Carolingian manuscripts, and second, whether readings of the Hersfeldensis can be reconstructed when not extant. As we have seen, these two Carolingian manuscripts are very close to each other in date, origin, and content, with even the lacunae tending to be of identical scope - and are the only authoritative source for the text. Their relationship is thus a matter of interest. Even before its partial rediscovery, it was always clear that the Hersfeldensis could not be a copy of the Fuldensis, since Gelenius had extracted from the former 11 lines of text that the latter missed out and the lengthy Greek inscription of book 17. Either they were copies of the same exemplar or **V** was copied from **M**.<sup>42</sup> Clark, following Traube, saw the two manuscripts as copies of the same original,<sup>43</sup> but since Robinson's article of 1936, the *communis opinio* was rather that the Fuldensis was a copy of the Hersfeldensis: accepted, for example, in *Texts and Transmission*.<sup>44</sup> This was largely because it was more accurate in the passages from books 23, 28 and 30 then known, and despite the fact that palaeographical judgments tended to put **M** slightly later.<sup>45</sup> A further argument was that the line length of the exemplar of **V** (as deduced from lines of text omitted in copying and then restored in the margin or saved from **M** by Gelenius) was sufficiently similar to that of **M** that they were probably to be judged identical. In 2016 Justin Stover and I published an article demonstrating on the contrary that the two manuscript were copies of the same original. The new fragments of **M** were by contrast less accurate than the equivalent passages of **V**; the average length of lines of **V**'s exemplar, as they can be reconstructed (just under 42 letters), and those of **M** (46 letters) are in fact sufficiently different as to prove beyond any reasonable statistical doubt that **V** is not copied from **M**. Our article incidentally made some deductions about the exemplar of **M** and **V**, such as that its pages had an average of 42 characters per line and 27 lines per page.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> So already Mommsen 1872, 231-2. Theoretically one might postulate one or more intermediaries, but that is unlikely given their closeness in date.

<sup>43</sup> Clark 1910-15 I.iv-v; cf. the (unfortunately rather brief) discussions of Traube 1903, and Clark 1904, 62-3). The argument is accepted e.g. by Pasquali 1934, 81 and n. 3 (and subsequent editions).

<sup>44</sup> Robinson 1936; Seyfarth 1962, 8 and n. 1 and 1978, viii; Reynolds 1983, 7.

<sup>45</sup> See Bischoff (1998-2014) 1.1798 for **M** and 3.6862 for **V**.

<sup>46</sup> Kelly and Stover 2016, 119.

The most important question in dealing with the manuscripts, however, is undoubtedly how, in the vast majority of the work where **M** is no longer extant, one can identify its readings in Gelenius' edition, given the fact mentioned above that Gelenius gave no indication which of his readings were taken from earlier editions, which from the Hersfeldensis, and which from his own fertile brain. It is important, as has been understood since Mommsen, to identify his working methods and all other possible sources of his readings. In books 14-26, the two sources other than the Hersfeldensis are, first, the earlier edition that Froben's press had published in 1518, itself a barely altered reprint of Castellus' terrible Bologna edition from the previous year. It was clearly the base text that Gelenius used for books 14-26, as can be seen by the preservation of Castellus' interpolations. The second is the edition of Accursius, published at Augsburg only a couple of months before Gelenius, with the first edition of books 27-31. Gelenius had undoubtedly used Accursius' edition, though Hieronymus Froben's preface to the edition pretends that Accursius does not exist and that this is the first edition of books 27-30. However, Froben and Gelenius only printed the text as far as **M** was extant, and tacitly respected Accursius' copyright in the name of pope, emperor, and the Venetian republic. The standard view is that for books 27-30 Gelenius' sources for the text are the Hersfeldensis and Accursius; in an article which I hope to publish soon I shall show that that view needs to be slightly modified, and that in book 27 and the first chapter of book 28, Gelenius had access to a manuscript copied from **E**.<sup>47</sup>

At any rate, an apparatus needs to record all the readings of Gelenius, when they differ from **V**, and also the readings of the editions to which Gelenius had access when they differ from **V**. These include Accursius for the whole work, and for books 14-26 the Bologna edition (*B*) of 1516 (although Gelenius' source was in practice what Seyfarth calls *b*<sub>1</sub>, the Basel edition of 1517, it makes sense to use *B* and only record *b*<sub>1</sub>'s readings when they diverge: such divergences are very rare, and *B* was the source of most of the distinctive readings; *B* moreover was Accursius' base text). It is common therefore to see in the apparatus that a reading is attributed to *AG* or *BA* or *BAG*. When earlier sources for the readings of *B* or *A* can be found these should be printed. Seyfarth did this systematically with the *editio princeps* (*S*), but ideally an editor should look further up the stemma in those cases. In the case of

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<sup>47</sup> A point already observed in Clark 1904, though thereafter ignored: my article will identify the intermediary.

Accursius' edition, he clearly consulted E as well as the Fuldensis itself, though he relied on B as his base text for Books 14-26. Readings of E and its various correctors should therefore be included if they diverge from V and may have influenced a divergent reading in Accursius; they should also be recorded systematically in books 27 and 28.1, where (as mentioned above) a copy of E was used by Gelenius.<sup>48</sup> In cases where Gelenius' reading differs from V but is the same as either B or A (or E for 27-28.1), there are no grounds for assuming that the text is that of the Hersfeldensis (though sometimes it may have been) and the reading simply has to be judged as a conjecture.

But that does not mean that what is left is the readings of the Hersfeldensis, since Gelenius was a constant and often ingenious conjectural emendator. This can be exemplified by comparing Gelenius' text to the few extant pages of the Hersfeldensis: I have taken as a sample the surviving folios 3-6 (that is 1-4 of those published by Nissen, covering 23.6.37-45, 28.4.21-29, 28.4.30-33 and 34-5.2, 28.5.11-6.5). We find that

- Gelenius has taken a correct reading from M against his other sources on 11 occasions;
- he has a correct reading that is in M but also in at least one of his other sources on 16 occasions;
- he has taken a correct reading from his other sources against M on 47 occasions (all but four of which are generally accepted);
- he has made a conjecture on 42 occasions, of which 23 are accepted by editors, 7 partially accepted, and 12 generally rejected in favour of other conjectures (7) or the transmitted text (5).

It is striking to discover that of the many readings that improve on the Fuldensis and that seem clearly correct, a larger number are Gelenius' conjectures than come from M.

Conversely his response to a corrupt piece of text is often simply silently to leave it out. Take the passage of 28.4.26 quoted above, where two bold and wrong conjectures (*feminas* and *inuitantes*) are balanced by the correct *rebus* (already in Accursius) and *bonum*, but a whole

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<sup>48</sup> Seyfarth was probably too keen to record readings of E because of his previous work on the manuscript. On the other hand, the next edition should be much more systematic about including the readings of renaissance manuscripts: see the conclusions (section 8) below.

troublesome passage, between square brackets below, is simply cut as though it had never been there:

Inde ad exequias virorum *feminas invitantes* necessaria parari oportere *in*uentes [et ~~testatura—ancillas capte natura pallidi. aspirati—pridie consumpto defuncta—um~~  
~~romaque ut millius ait.~~] nec in *rebus humanis* quicquam *bonum*...

This slapdash work is perhaps indicative of the very considerable speed at which Gelenius was working. Identification of the readings of **M** from Gelenius is therefore very far from certain. In the earlier books, **M** may have been less used. An editor needs to gain a sense of Gelenius' working methods and also of how they might have varied across the text.<sup>49</sup>

To sum up the situation with the transmission, we have the readings of **V** and can occasionally identify, usually uncertainly, the readings of **M**; but even if such a recension is a vital task and intermittently improves on the text of **V**, what we can reconstruct of the archetype was already a very corrupt text in some places. The correct identification of the relationship between **M** and **V** makes relatively little difference to the text.<sup>50</sup> More important for solving problems is grasping how Ammianus writes. I now turn to the most important single factor in understanding and improving Ammianus' text.

#### 4. Prose rhythm

For Ammianus, the rhythm of the end of clauses is not metrical, like Cicero's, nor a mixture of the metrical and the accentual like that of most of his contemporaries. Rather, it is fundamentally accentual, with any concern for quantity a purely secondary matter. It was close enough to the systems of his contemporaries to be readily comprehensible to them, but in a sense ahead of its time, as it bears a close resemblance to the rhythmical *cursus* that would become standard in the Middle Ages. But its use had largely fallen into abeyance by

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<sup>49</sup> This is not the place for such a discussion, but I would make two related points, first that it is somewhat likelier that readings of Gelenius can be attributed to the Hersfeldensis in places where he can demonstrably shown to have used it nearby; second that the best way to identify such places is where he presents readings that are different from his sources and similar to **V**. A good example comes in a passage discussed at n. 1 above, 25.3.6 *hasta cute brachii eius praestrecta*, where **V**'s reading *has tacte* is far closer to Gelenius' correct reading than the previous editions to which Gelenius had access; he must have found either *has tacte* or indeed *hasta cute* in **M**.

<sup>50</sup> Kelly and Stover 2016, 125-6.

the time that Ammianus' text was rediscovered in the fifteenth century, meaning that early editors like Accursius and Gelenius were not aware of it.<sup>51</sup> It was only in the late nineteenth century that this system was rediscovered and its applicability to the text of Ammianus quickly apprehended.

It consists of a system whereby, between the last two syllables of the clause to carry the stress accent, there is an even number of unstressed syllables (two or four, or very rarely six, not one or three or five). The four basic types are (where *ó* represents the accented and *~* the unaccented syllable):

I (*cursus planus*): *ó~ó~*

II (*cursus tardus*): *ó~ó~~*

III (*cursus velox*): *ó~~~~ó~*

IV (also *cursus velox*, or *cursus octosyllabicus*): *ó~~~~ó~~*

Let us exemplify with the last sentences of the History, with word accents marked and indicated according to this scheme (31.16.9):<sup>52</sup>

Haec ut miles quóndam et Graécus (I) a Caesare Nérva exórsus (I) ad usque Valéntis  
intéritum (II) pro virium explicávi mensúra (I), opus veritátem proféssum (I)  
numquam, ut árbitror, scíens (I) silentio ausus corrúmpere vel mendácio (IV).  
scribant reliqua potióres aetáte (I), doctrínis floréntes (I). quos id, si libúerit,  
aggressúros (III) procudere linguas ad maiores móneo stílos (I).

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<sup>51</sup> For the use of *cursus* in the Middle Ages, see Jansson 1975, which illustrates well the regional diversity of practice and also proposes a sensible method for identifying a preference for *cursus*. The *cursus* appears to survive rather tenuously from Late Antiquity, but is used by some authors of the Carolingian period; in the high Middle Ages it is comparatively widespread, before fading out by the time of early humanists.

<sup>52</sup> 'These events, beginning from the principate of Nerva Caesar up to the death of Valens, I, a soldier once and a Greek, have unrolled to the best of my strength: it is a work which claims truthfulness and which, so I think, I have never knowingly dared to warp with silence or falsehood. Let the rest be written by men with youth on their side, in the bloom of learning. To those who would embark on this, if it please them, I give the advice to forge their tongues to grander styles.'

Note how Ammianus does not elide at points of hiatus, either after a vowel (*Nerva exorsus*) or a final *m* (*quondam et Graecus*). Notice too how the prose rhythm creates Ammianus' distinctive word order, since he avoids saying *pro virium mensúra explicávi* (three intermediate syllables between *su-* and *-ca-*) and *ad maiores stílos móneo* (one syllable). In the penultimate sentence, it can help us with the text, by inviting us to break after *aetate*: most editions since Valesius have followed him by inserting *et* between *aetate* and *doctrinis*, while Seyfarth followed Blomgren in breaking after *potiores* and presenting an eccentric assyndeton, *aetate doctrinis florentes*. But in fact, the clausulation supplies the likeliest punctuation for us, as printed above.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, it is perhaps best seen as a system equivalent to, though not identical to, modern punctuation. This system is so important to the comprehension of the text that it seems vital for an edition to include it alongside modern punctuation. Clark combined the two, placing at least a comma at every clausula, and using parentheses where modern norms might expect a comma but there was no clausula: thus in this passage Clark places *ut arbitror* in parentheses. Seyfarth used a system of double spacing, not always consistently after punctuation, and a hasta or forward slash (/) when the clausula fell at the end of a line of text. My own current preference is for an unobtrusive supralinear mark. In this article I have been using a superscript hasta(/), though I hope that a published text might have something still less obtrusive. When for some reason there is not a regular clausula where one would be expected on grounds of sense, I have in this article inserted a superscript obelus (†), something I am also considering using in the edition, especially in the apparatus.

Ammianus' clausulation is found throughout the work with practically no exception. It is found with extraordinary regularity: the *cursus planus* (type I) is the commonest, at ca. 45%, types II and III hover in the twenties; type IV, naturally rarer, was calculated by Harmon as occurring only three percent of the time, but my subjective impression is that it becomes commoner in the later books. Harmon found the regularity of Ammianus' *cursus* remarkably high – over 98%.<sup>54</sup> In the remaining 2%, he was able to restore or emend the manuscript reading to present a better text in the majority of cases, and to present a plausible alternative

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<sup>53</sup> See Blomgren 1937, 8; the punctuation I have adopted is argued for by Blockley 1998, 307; it was in fact that adopted in the *editio princeps* of book 31 by Accursius and in editions down to Valesius.

<sup>54</sup> Harmon 1910, 167-8: 60 exceptions out of 3,272 clause endings in his sample.

in almost all. This is far more regular, as Oberhelman's studies have shown, than clausulation in most Latin literary prose (the next highest regularity of adherence to *cursus* identified by Oberhelman is in Symmachus, with a little over 90% (he puts Ammianus at 95%, but does not include type IV).<sup>55</sup> However, Symmachus, like most fourth-century prose-writers, was aiming for clausulae that adhered to metre as well as to *cursus*, called *cursus mixtus* by modern scholars: it is much easier to produce highly regular clausulation on an accentual basis than a metrical one.

Once understood, clausulation is central to interpretation. For the translator and the reader it is key to breaking down the long sentences, and, I would argue, the primary level for understanding the text, more important than the sentence. For the linguist it offers some of the best evidence of how a Latin author of Antiquity heard and produced the language. As Harmon showed, and as I have developed elsewhere, the *cursus* shows exceptions to the normal recessive rule of Latin accentuation (e.g. *adhuc*, *dé-inde*, *dé-inceps*); it shows the employment of the Greek accent on Greek words and names: Alexander the Great was Aléxander Mágnum, his tutor Aristotéles, and his general Séleucus.<sup>56</sup> The aesthetic effect of the clausulae also deserves more attention than it has received.<sup>57</sup>

My focus here, however, is on the text, and there clausulation has a huge role. Sometimes this is simply at the level of punctuation. Having looked at the work's closing passage, let us consider the passage immediately preceding (31.16.8). Ammianus praises a general named Julius, who on hearing of the disaster at Adrianople, organised the massacre of Gothic hostages and military recruits in towns of the eastern provinces. In the first section of this sentence, Seyfarth breaks up the text as follows (I give Rolfe's translation; Hamilton's interprets the text in the same way):

his diebus efficacia Iulii/ magistri militiae trans Taurum/ enituit salutaris et uelox./

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<sup>55</sup> Oberhelman 1987, 81-2.

<sup>56</sup> See Harmon 1910, 208, 212-5, and Kelly 2015a.

<sup>57</sup> Harmon 1910, 203-4, quotes the memorable comparison of the development of Rome to the life of a human being (14.6.3-4), showing how the effects of evenly balanced clauses, and grouping of particular patterns, help to create a stately and dignified style. The same might be said for the epilogue, quoted above. By contrast, passages of narrative will often offer greater variety in the length of clauses.

At that time the salutary and swift efficiency of Julius, the commander-in-chief of the troops beyond the Taurus, was conspicuous

But there are at least two problems: *magister militiae trans Taurum* is not a known office; and the clausula is poor (with three intermediate syllables). The sentence should be read in the manner that Clark punctuated it, which makes a substantial historical difference:

his diebus efficacia Iulii/ magistri militiae/ trans Taurum enituit/ salutaris et uelox./

At that time, the salutary and swift efficiency of Julius, the *magister militum*, shone forth beyond the Taurus.

The clausulation, incidentally, explains why Ammianus uses *militiae* instead of *militum*. But there may be a further bonus: there is evidence from the Cappadocian fathers to place this mass slaughter in Asia Minor, so ‘across the Taurus’ does not mean in Syria or Armenia, but across the Taurus from the point of view of Antioch, Ammianus’ home-town. Ammianus, therefore, is placed in Antioch in late 378 or early 379.<sup>58</sup>

In the famous description of Constantius’ visit to Rome, as the emperor strolled between the seven hills of the city (16.10.14),

he kept thinking that whatever first caught his eye towered above all the rest: the shrine of Tarpeian Jupiter,<sup>59</sup> so far surpassing as divine things surpass earthly ones; bathhouses built up like provinces; the solid mass of the amphitheatre, with its frame of Travertine rock, to the summit of which human vision barely ascends; the Pantheon like a rounded city-district arched in lofty beauty...

The next marvel to strike his eyes appears in V as follows:

elatosque uertices cassili suggestu consurgunt priorum principum imitamenta  
portantes

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<sup>58</sup> See Zuckermann 1991; Kulikowski 2012, 96. Den Boeft et al. 2018 ad 31.16.8 challenge this interpretation.

<sup>59</sup> i.e. Capitoline.

Clearly the reference is to elevated platforms with statues of emperors, and the normal identification has been either with the columns of Trajan, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus, or possibly rostra. Without going any deeper in consideration of meaning, there are two obvious problems here. 1. The nonsense word *cassili* needs to be changed to a known adjective. 2. *Elatos ... uertices*, like the other items viewed by Constantius, is in the accusative, so that *consurgunt* must either be emended into something which is not a verb, or if it stands, a relative pronoun is needed so that *elatos uertices* can be its subject. The reading of Gelenius deals with both problems:

*elatosque uertice scansili suggestus, consulum et priorum principum imitamenta  
portantes*

lofty platforms to whose top you may ascend, bearing the likenesses of consuls and  
earlier emperors

*Scansilis*, climbable, seems just right: its initial *s* is supplied from the preceding *uertices* becoming *uertice*, and a minor change, a final *s* is added to *suggestus* to give *elatosque uertice scansili suggestus*, a nice phrase with the ablatives embedded within the two accusatives. Then *consurgunt* becomes *consulum et*, and since Ammianus elsewhere conceives of early Roman history as the power of the consuls being followed by that of the emperors,<sup>60</sup> *consulum et* is attractive too. But there is a fatal flaw to Gelenius' solution: *scánsili suggéustus* gives a bad clausula. Hence the better solution is to supply a relative pronoun (a proposal first made by Henri de Valois<sup>61</sup>): *elatosque uertices qui scansili suggestu consurgunt*, 'lofty

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<sup>60</sup> E.g. 23.6.9 *sub consulibus et deinceps in potestatem Caesarum redacta re publica* 25.9.9 *ab imperatore uel consule*, cf. 27.4.10 *dum consulare uigeret imperium*.

<sup>61</sup> This proposal was first published in the notes of the 1681 edition published by Henri de Valois' brother Adrien and presented as a second edition of his brother's work of 1636 (see Kelly 2009a on this edition). Modern editions that print it (Clark, Galletier, Seyfarth) attribute to Robert Novák, a scholar of the late nineteenth/ early twentieth century. Clark had printed his collaborator Heraeus' emendation of *consurgunt* to *concharum*. Unfortunately Heraeus nowhere explained his emendation, which is accepted by his collaborator Clark and by the subsequent Teubner editor Seyfarth. Seyfarth understands it as follows: 'die hochragenden Säulen mit ihrem im Innern nach oben führenden Wendeltreppen' (i.e. 'high-towering columns with their internal spiral staircases leading to the top'); Hamilton renders 'lofty columns with spiral stairs to platforms.' Evidently, then, both assume a reference to columns like Trajan's, with a staircase inside and a platform on top – an identification first made by Valesius (1636). For both, *conchae* (lit. shells) mean spiral stairs, a usage not otherwise

pinnacles which rise with a climbable platform, bearing the likenesses of earlier emperors'. This also has the advantage that the reference is definitely to the imperial columns of Trajan and Marcus.

Understanding the *cursus* was rightly judged by one of Clark's reviewers, Robert Novák, to be equal in value to the discovery of a new manuscript.<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately, editors since Clark have paid lip service to the importance of prose rhythm, but have moved away from the implications of it for the text. But the implication of Harmon's study is that any deviation from *cursus* is intrinsically suspicious. While there are inevitably questions that follow on from this (how is a clause defined, for example), this seems to me an essential working hypothesis for an editor.<sup>63</sup>

## 5. Clausulation and the Text of Book 31

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the persistent contribution of *cursus* to improving the text is to take examples from one book alone: I have chosen book 31.<sup>64</sup> What will be evident is that in many cases where *cursus* is unsatisfactory, other elements turn out to be problematic as well, helping to justify emendations for the sake of *cursus* alone.

We can start with a case where the printed text seems to give an unusual sense. When the Goths were displaced southwards, rumours of their arrival spread along the Danube, all the way from the area north of Pannonia to the Black Sea (31.4.2):

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attested, although the similar word *cochlea*, a snail shell, can have that meaning, as at Vulg. 3 Reg. 6.8 (*suggestu cochleárum*, however, gives a bad clausula). For Seyfarth it appears to be a sort of genitive of identity following *suggestu*: a climbable platform of spiral stairs – but the identity of the stairs with a *suggestus* is stretching the meaning of the latter word. For Hamilton, the *suggestus* means, as it should, a platform, but it is hard to see how *concharum* can mean 'with spiral stairs.' A third possible interpretation is that the reference is to the spiral forms of the outside of the columns ('lofty pinnacles of spirals, with a platform that can be climbed'). Considering the well-known definition of columns like Trajan as *cochlides*, which Valesius uses in his commentary on this passage, I suspect that this is what Heraeus meant, but the word order is very strange.

<sup>62</sup> Novák 1911, 293.

<sup>63</sup> Paradoxically, readers who look at clausulae simply in this article will come across so many exceptions that the rule may feel questionable: I urge the readings of long passages, such as the version of book 21 set out in clauses that Harmon 1910 prints at 124-166.

<sup>64</sup> See also my review, Kelly 2018b.

per omne quiquid ad Pontum a Marcomannis praetenditur Quadis/

For the whole region stretching from the Marcomannic Quadi to the Black Sea.

Thus the manuscripts and Seyfarth's edition, but the Marcomanni and the Quadi, both resident in (broadly) what is now northern Austria and the Czech lands, are two separate peoples and are treated so in Ammianus (e.g. 22.5.5); the connective *et* needs to be added before *Quadis*, following Gelenius.<sup>65</sup> While *praeténditur Quádis* works as a *cursus planus*, one of the idiosyncrasies of Ammianus' pronunciation indicated by the *cursus* is that *qu-* is often treated as a separate syllable from the following vowel, rather than as a single labio-velar consonant (thus *quies* invariably has three syllables<sup>66</sup>); in the case of *Quadi*, this vocalised *u* is the norm, occurring on at least four of the five other occasions where the quantity is visible.<sup>67</sup> So the phrase should end *a Marcomannis praeténditur et Qu-ádis*, a *cursus velox*.

In the next case, Seyfarth leaves in the text an unparalleled form, despite being against the *cursus*. After the battle of Adrianople, the Goths sent a message to the townspeople behind their walls urging them to surrender (31.15.6):

per Christianum quendam portatis scriptis et recitatis/ utque decébat contemptátis<sup>†</sup>

Their written message was carried in by some Christian or other, and read out, and was treated with contempt as was only right.

contemptis *Heraeus*

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<sup>65</sup> This conjecture is from Gelenius' second edition of 1546, in which he added the text of book 31 from Accursius to his prior text of books 14-30.9 with a number of improvements; obviously Gelenius did not have the Hersfeldensis to help him at this point. Clark and Seyfarth attribute these corrections to Lindenbrog 1609: Sabbah's was the first edition to attribute them correctly (see Sabbah and Angliviel de la Beaumelle 1999, liv and n. 50).

<sup>66</sup> Harmon 1910, 228-9. The syllabification of *qu-* could well be a feature arising from typical Greek pronunciation of Latin.

<sup>67</sup> 17.12.1 *permixtos Sármatas et Qü-ádos*, 17.13.28 *ruentes in agmina nobilium legiónum Qü-ádos*, 26.4.5 *Pannónias et Qü-ádi*, 30.5.11 *peruasurus opportúne Qü-ádos*; the possible exception is 30.5.13 *transiit in Quádos*, where Ammianus' practice of accenting *-iit* in the perfect of compounds of *eo* perhaps makes the *cursus planus* the likelier interpretation.

But the normal past participle of *contemno*, *contemptis*, restores the prose rhythm. The transmitted form would come from a supposed frequentative, *contempto*, whose very existence is not certain.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, there is an obvious explanation for the anomalous form: the corruption arises by assimilation with *portatis* and *recitatis* earlier in the sentence. Next another case where the text should be amended and assimilation is the likely cause of the corruption. The tribune of the Scutarii Barzimeres and his troops were attacked by a Gothic warband as they pitched their camp (31.8.10):

...fortiterque resistendo pari pugnandi sórte discessisset,<sup>†</sup> ni eum equitum accursus complurium/ anhelum circumuenisset et fessum./

And resisting bravely, he would have left the field on equal terms in the fighting, if the swift arrival of many horsemen had not surrounded him, breathless and exhausted.

discesserat *Clark*

Here there is no need as such to change the text, but replacing subjunctive with indicative, as suggested by Clark, would save the *cursus* (*sórte discésserat*), and the MS reading is explicable as anticipation of the verb ending in *circumuenisset*.<sup>69</sup> The use of the indicative in place of subjunctive in the apodosis of remote conditionals is extremely common in Ammianus, and the case for accepting Clark's conjecture is strong.

Then there are cases where the transmitted text certainly requires emendation, but editions still retain emendations made against the *cursus* in the period before *cursus* was understood. In the digression dedicated to them the Huns are described in our editions as being faithless and inconstant when it comes to truces. Seyfarth prints (31.2.11):

per indutias infídi inconstántes<sup>†</sup>

constantes *V*, inconstantes *N<sup>2</sup>*, *A*, constanter *Mommsen*, et inconstantes *Clark*

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<sup>68</sup> *TLL* s.v. reports a single variant reading in Gaudentius' sermons where the meaning is clearly *tempto*, and an appearance in Tironian notes; *contemptator* has one textually uncertain appearance in a glossary.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Den Boeft et al. (2018) ad loc (p.152): 'it is very tempting, but not absolutely necessary to accept Clark's *discesserat* c.c.'

The reading of **V**, however, has them as ‘constant’. *Inconstantes* is a perfectly understandable, minimal intervention that was made independently both by the corrector of an early copy of **V** and also by Accursius. Once the *cursus* was understood, the clausula *infidi inconstantes* was seen to be poor, with three intermediate syllables, and two suggestions were made, Mommsen’s minimal change of the final *s* of *constantes* to an *r*, to imply paradoxically that the Huns were reliably unreliable, and Clark’s addition of *et* before *inconstantes*, which would entail two syllables having been skipped instead of one and has the additional advantage of avoiding the unusual asyndeton. Seyfarth’s reversion to the reading of Accursius is a display of his conservatism, but where what is conserved is not actually the manuscript reading.<sup>70</sup>

Another example of editors clinging to a reading against the *cursus* comes in the run-up to the battle of Adrianople, when the Goths were playing for time until reinforcements arrived (31.12.12):

...territi barbari/ quoniam pars eorum cum Alatheo et Safrace/ procul agens et accita  
nondum uenerat,<sup>†</sup> oraturos pacem misere legatos./

The barbarians were terrified since the section of them with Alatheus and Safrax, who were some way away and had been recalled, had not yet come, and sent ambassadors to make a plea for peace.

uenerat oraturos *Valesius* (oraturos *iam Blondus* (= **W**<sup>2</sup>) *et N*), foederato raturos **V**,  
foederaturos **EA**, aderat o. *Petschenig*

Among a number of other garbled readings,<sup>71</sup> *foederato*, a real but inappropriate word, was introduced, helped along by a false word division that ascribed the *o* of *oraturos* to the previous word. *Valesius*’ *uenerat* gives the right sense, but a poor clausula (*nóndum uénerat*: *Petschenig*’s *aderat* has the same problem); we should print *aduenerat*, which gives a good

<sup>70</sup> He was probably influenced in this choice by his tendency to follow Blomgren 1937, an ardent proponent of the idea that Ammianus was prone to using the so-called asyndeton bimembre, i.e. two adjacent nouns or verbs unconnected by *et* or another connective. For another mistaken interpretation in book 31 thanks to Blomgren, see n. 53 above on 31.16.9.

<sup>71</sup> **V** has *Safrago* for the ablative of the Goth elsewhere named as Safrax and *accito*, the first corrected initially to *Safrage* by Gelenius and to *Safrace* by Lindenbrog, the second by Gelenius (here too Gelenius’ correction is attributed to Lindenbrog in editions before Sabbah’s: see n. 65 above).

clausula and is no further distant from the transmitted text, though it is possible that some other pluperfect is the true reading.

On several occasions in this book, oddities in *cursus* can be solved by assuming that two words have been transposed, an easy form of corruption in Latin because often undetectable on grounds of sense alone. At 31.3.1 Ammianus indicates the traditional name of the Alani who live next to the Gothic grouping of the Greuthungi as being Tanaitae (from the river Tanais or Don):

Halanorum... quos Greuthungis confines/ Tanaitas consuetúdo nomináuit<sup>†</sup>

consuetudo Tanaitas *Batavi transp. dubitanter*, T. n. c., *ego*, cognominavit  
*Heraeus*

There is no particular reason for Ammianus to have failed in his normal practice here, and the transposition *consuetudo Tanáitas nomináuit*, suggested by the Dutch commentators, is easier than assuming that Ammianus abandoned his astonishingly consistent practice.<sup>72</sup> A still stronger case comes in the complicated syntax of 31.10.21:

is [Maurus nomine comes] est quem praeteritorum textu rettulimus/ ambigenti super  
corona capiti imponenda Iuliano Caesari,<sup>†</sup> dum inter eius armigeros militaret,/  
arroganti astu fidenter/ torquem obtulisse collo abstractam./

It was this Maurus, as I reported in my account of earlier events, who, when Julian Caesar was hesitating about the crown that was going to be put on his head, boldly and with arrogant cunning offered him a torque taken from his own neck, at the time when he was serving among Julian's standard-bearers.

A break for the reader is absolutely necessary after the mention of Julian, and so the case for transposing, to read *Caesari Iuliano*, seems very strong to me (this was originally proposed by the Loeb editor J.C. Rolfe).<sup>73</sup> Ammianus uses the title Caesar both before and after the

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<sup>72</sup> Den Boeft et al. (2018) ad loc. (p. 39), though they reject their solution with the words 'it seems better to accept an incidental irregularity.' It seems superior in word order to the alternative transposition that I had posited, and also to Heraeus' <cog>*nominavit*, which as the commentators point out, would lead to a series of *con-/con-/cog-* affixes.

<sup>73</sup> See Rolfe (1939), 343.

name, the former 15 times and the latter 11: frequently the order is dictated by the needs of prose rhythm (as for example at 14.1.1 and 15.13.2, referring to Caesar Gallus).

My final example from book 31 of where a poor clausula should be amended away comes in the introduction to Valens' obituary (31.14.1):

Perit autem hoc exitu Valens/ quinquagesimo anno contiguus,/ cum per annos  
quattuor imperasset et decem/ parvo minus.<sup>†</sup> cuius bona multis cognita dicemus et  
vitia./

And with such a death perished Valens, close to his fiftieth year, when he had held imperial command for fourteen years, a little less. We shall tell of his good qualities and his faults, which are widely known.

The words *parvo minus*, a little less, are only loosely connected to the main body of the sentence, as in the translation. Moreover, the Dutch commentators note that, 'although easily understood, it is without parallel.'<sup>74</sup> This is correct: the Latin for a little less, found over four hundred times in the Library of Latin Texts, is *paulo minus*, while *parvo minus* is found here only. One would no more say *parvo minus* than one would *magno magis* (which occurs zero times, against over 4,000 for *multo magis*). Admittedly, the idea of qualifying the length of a reign is paralleled at the death of Valentinian, said to have died aged 54 in the twelfth year of his reign less 100 days (*aetatis anno quinquagesimo et quarto,/ imperii minus centum dies secundo et decimo,/ 30.6.6*), so it is not absurd that Ammianus might have been more precise than giving a total in years;<sup>75</sup> however, in this case *parvo minus* is factually incorrect. Valens had been emperor for well over fourteen years (to be precise, fourteen years, four months, and twelve days, from 28 March 364 to 9 August 378) at the time of his death. Thirdly, it fails

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<sup>74</sup> Den Boeft et al. (2018) ad loc. To the references given by the commentators, add Češka 1995, 16, who exhibits similar concerns to those expressed here but posits a lacuna after *parvo minus*.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. the deaths of Gallus (14.11.27), for whom age and length of reign are given purely in years (the latter, *quadrennio* having been rounded up); Constantius (21.15.3), where the years of rule have been lost and the age corrupted in transmission but he is said to have lived a few months past his last birthday. For Julian and Jovian (25.3.23, 10.13), only the age is given. There are some errors in the parallel tradition (see Den Boeft et al. (2018), 245), though none have exactly the same as Ammianus.

to produce a regular clausula<sup>76</sup> – even though Ammianus had indulged in a hyperbaton to produce one immediately beforehand, *cum per annos quattuor imperasset et decem*, ‘when he had reigned for four years and ten’. All of this would suggest that the two words do not belong, and a reason for them to have made their way into the text is not hard to find: they are a gloss explaining the word *contiguus*, ‘close to, touching on’, in the line above. The gloss may have been either marginal or interlinear in an ancestor of the Fuldensis (our only authoritative source for book 31), but the distance is almost exactly one line, which averaged 42 characters in the immediate archetype of the Fuldensis.<sup>77</sup>

In this section I looked first at four examples of corrections, where Clark printed what I believe to be the correct text but Seyfarth in his Teubner perversely reverted to either the manuscript reading or a previous vulgate:<sup>78</sup> of the conjectures I would print, one is by Gelenius (31.4.2), two by Clark (31.8.10, 31.2.11), and one by Clark’s collaborator Heraeus (31.15.6). The next four are cases where no edition hitherto has printed the text that I propose: one suggestion by the Dutch Commentators (31.3.1), one by Rolfe (31.10.21) and two by myself (31.12.12 and 31.14.1). With the exception of the last, these emendations are small and undramatic alterations which mainly change the style rather than the meaning. They are very much in the spirit of the incremental changes made by Clark, but they show that more work of this sort is to be done. If there is one consistent sort of change that they do make, it is that they regularise the text: the asyndeta *infidi inconstantes* and *Marcomannis... Quadis* are removed,<sup>79</sup> as is the anomalous form *contemptatis*. Examples of this sort of correction can be multiplied across the text, where the transmitted text has unexpected forms – an active verb instead of an expected deponent,<sup>80</sup> a simple verb instead of a more

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<sup>76</sup> To pre-empt any suggestion that *parū-o* be treated as three syllables, consonantal *u* is only turned into a vowel in Ammianus’ clausulae after *q* (see n. 66 above) or *s* (as in *suadeo*, *suetus*).

<sup>77</sup> Kelly and Stover 2016, 119. Incorporated glosses do not seem to be a widespread cause of corruption in Ammianus, but another likely example is pointed out in Den Boeft et al.’s commentary on book 31.16.2: *uiaticum [cibus] et bidui dilationem*.

<sup>78</sup> In all four of these cases, Seyfarth followed Clark in his first, bilingual edition. Sabbah’s edition agrees with Clark in 31.4.2 and 31.15.6 and with Seyfarth in the other two places.

<sup>79</sup> In the following notes I give a handful of other examples from the later books. For asyndeta cf. e.g. 25.3.17 *inferens <uel> repellens* (Heraeus); 29.2.22 *nóta <ac> peruulgáta* (Gelenius).

<sup>80</sup> e.g. 29.4.5 *quid acciderat suspecti*<sup>t</sup> (*suspencti V*) should be *suspicati* (*suspectus* can have active meaning, but is not found in Ammianus).

idiomatic complex one,<sup>81</sup> and other such changes.<sup>82</sup> Linguistic scholarship has tended to pull in the other direction, looking for spiky late antique forms and abrupt writing, but though Ammianus' Latin is undoubtedly distinctive in some ways, the *cursus* tends to prove that he was a less eccentric writer than sometimes thought.

## 6. A vexed passage

I turn now to one of the common problems that faces the editor, dealing with passages that offer multiple points of difficulty. The third chapter of book 29 is marred both by large and small lacunae that are explicitly marked and by other errors, including unmarked lacunae. The story of the popular charioteer Athanasius being killed at the stake for magical practices is not attested elsewhere, though the notion that charioteers were practitioners of magic or associated with them is well-known in the period and in Ammianus.<sup>83</sup> The text is full of problems including in *cursus*, and what Seyfarth prints is not construable, but it has undergone some basic repairs from that in V (29.3.5):

Athanasius fauorabilis tunc auriga/ suspectus cum uulgari leuitate<sup>†</sup> ut uiuus incendi iuberetur<sup>†</sup> si quid temptasset huiusmodi/ non multo postea ueneficiis usum merebatur,<sup>†</sup> nulla delata uoluptatum artifici uenia/ ignibus aboleri praeceptus est./

ita *ante* suspectus *addidit* Rolfe; cum EA, eum V, ei G, cum artium malarum iurasset Mommsen; leuitate EAG, –tante V; huiusmodi AG, hiius- VE; cuius *ante* non G, quem *vel* quoniam Valesius, quoniam se Mommsen, imprecaretur<sup>†</sup>; idemque Heraeus; usus Gardthausen; ferebatur<sup>†</sup> G, fatebatur<sup>†</sup> Mommsen, incessebatur Clark, nullaque Gardthausen, uenta VA, uenia Gel.

A continuous translation is not possible, but the first two clauses might be rendered 'Athanasius, then a popular charioteer, being suspected with vulgar levity (?); the next two 'that he might be ordered burned alive if he had tried anything of this sort'; and the last two, one clause being omitted, 'with no pardon being extended to a man who gave people

<sup>81</sup> 27.4.10 *montibus <de>fluentem*; 26.9.4 *neque secus <e>uenit*. Ammianus could have used *uenire* for *euenire*, but here the clausula argues against and in the other two (26.1.5, 29.1.26) the initial *e* could have been lost by haplography.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. at 29.4.5 read *animati <sunt> iudices!*.

<sup>83</sup> See e.g. Lee-Stecum 2006; Amm. 26.3.3, 28.1.27, and 28.1.25.

pleasure, he was ordered to be killed at the stake.’ Whose is the *uulgaris leuitas*? What was the charioteer suspected of? Is it Valentinian who orders an advance death sentence or Athanasius who calls it down on himself? What sense can be made of *usum merebatur*? Is a connective missing between the two last clauses?

Seyfarth has made a few straightforward corrections (*leuitate* for *leuitante*, *huiusmodi* for *hiusmodi*, *uenia* for *uenta*); the most significant decision of those that he does take, as noted by the Dutch commentators, is about whether *eum* should be amended to *ei* (Gelenius’ reading, which might after all represent the Hersfeldensis) or to *cum* (whether understood as a preposition governing the following words *uulgari leuitate* or as a conjunction. In the former case, *ei* must mean the emperor, and the *uulgaris leuitas* must be what the charioteer was suspected of; the emperor ordered in advance that he should be executed if he attempted anything of the sort. Such an interpretation can be helped along with Rolfe’s addition of *ita*, which might well have fallen out in such a lacunose passage, but which is not strictly necessary. It must be admitted that it is hard to see how *uulgaris leuitas* (a permanent character trait) can be referred back to as a potential future crime, and also how an accusation of magic fits it. Sabbah cites *CTh* 9.4.1, a law of Theodosius that mentioned the possibility that *leuitas* can be a cause of treasonous talk. The argument is ingenious but its joins are tenuous.<sup>84</sup>

If *cum* is read, the emperor is no longer involved, and the *uulgaris leuitas* can no longer be the reason for suspicion. In this case supplements are certainly needed. If it was the charioteer who, with vulgar frivolity, called down the death sentence upon himself if he had done anything of the sort, the verb needed is, as Heraeus saw, *imprecor*: this is an attractive solution because it gives an ideal meaning for *uulgaris leuitas*. But Heraeus’ placement of it after *huiusmodi* has two problems: Ammianus’ rhythm elsewhere invariably shows the accentuation *huiúsmodi*, so *huiusmodi, imprecaretur* is a bad clausula (unless the secondary accent on the first syllable of the word is assumed to create a one-word clausula, *imprecarétur*: a controversial solution<sup>85</sup>). Better would be to restore the word after *leuitate*, where it would create a *cursus uelox*. The second problem is that we still lack an explanation

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<sup>84</sup> Sabbah and Angliviél de la Beaumelle 1999 ad loc.

<sup>85</sup> Harmon 1910, 185-186.

of why the charioteer was suspected, and need to posit another lacuna. So a simpler and better solution may be to assume a single larger lacuna, with a different form of the verb: following *suspectus* we have lost both an explanation of what the charioteer was suspected of, at which we can only guess, and a new clause beginning *et imprecatus* (the loss of the passage can be explained by *saut-du-même-au-même*). *Cum* will now be a preposition, always the likelier solution given the following ablative, and the sentence as a whole runs more smoothly, with no need for intervention before *non multo postea*. Admittedly, we still have the problem of the lack of regular clausulae at *leuitate* and *iuberetur*. The latter, perhaps does not require a clausula break, especially considering that we are in the reported speech of the charioteer;<sup>86</sup> my own suspicion is that in the former case Ammianus might originally have written *leuitate uulgári*.<sup>87</sup> To summarize discussion of the first part of the sentence, I think that there is a strong case that the charioteer jokingly called down death on himself, rather than that the emperor was involved, but such a case requires at least one lacuna to be posited.

It is all but impossible to construe *non multo postea ueneficiis usum merebatur*, or to gain from it the sense required of an accusation of using magic. Gelenius wrote *beneficiis usum ferebatur* ('it was said that he had used favours?'); but while *ferebatur* is attractive in sense and only one letter different (Sabbah prints *ueneficiis usus ferebatur*, he was said to have used magic), it is also against the *cursus*. An idiomatic and palaeographically plausible solution comes from Clark, *ueneficiis usus incessebatur*: the word is used for fierce accusations. However, it can be improved on one point of detail: comparison to other passages (14.7.6, 15.7.2, 17.11.1, 24.2.11, 25.6.6) suggests that Ammianus wrote <ut> *ueneficiis usus incessebatur*.

One final problem in Seyfarth's text must be dealt with, the lack of a connective between the two main verbs of the sentence. Sabbah recognizes the problem at least, printing a semi-colon, but Gardthausen's addition of *-que* seems most in accordance with Ammianus' style, and perhaps slightly likelier to have been lost than *et*.

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<sup>86</sup> Quotations and short pithy bursts of (usually direct) speech are virtually the only context where less regularity can be identified in the *cursus*, presumably as a way of setting this part of the speech aside, almost as a form of code-switching.

<sup>87</sup> However, transposition would also rescue the clausula in the case of *iuberetur incendi*.

To summarize my recommendations: **either** read *suspectus* <...../ *et imprecatus*> and perhaps also transpose *cum leuitate uulgari*<sup>l</sup> **or** <...> *suspectus/ cum uulgari leuitate* <*imprecaretur*><sup>l</sup> (adapted from Heraeus); read Clark's *usus incessabatur*<sup>l</sup> with the addition of *ut* before *ueneficiis*; read Gardthausen's *nulla*<*que*>.

Athanasius, then a fashionable charioteer, was suspected of [...], and with vulgar levity <called down the curse> that he should be ordered burned alive if he had attempted anything of the sort; not long afterwards he was assailed with claims of using magic, and with no mercy for a man who gave people pleasure, it was commanded that he be killed at the stake.'

But we should note that although improvements can be made, not everything can be restored.

### 7. A conjecture in a previously unsuspected passage

Finally, I would like to give an example of what is sometimes seen as the characteristic form of textual criticism: the one-off conjecture, in the tradition of Richard Bentley, on a passage which makes grammatical sense and has seemed adequate to previous readers. For all their notoriety, such corrections are significantly less common in editing than the incremental changes shown above. Conjectures of this sort can prompt hostility in those conservative in their philology, because they go against the idea that the transmitted text is only to be changed when it cannot possibly stand.<sup>88</sup> In book 19 of Ammianus, the Persians under Sapor are besieging the city of Amida, and the Gallic legions enclosed within the city, unsuited to siege warfare, long to make a sortie by night, and they are eventually given permission (19.6.7-8):

atque ipsum spiritum reprimentes cum prope uenissent,<sup>l</sup> conferti ualido cursu quibusdam stationariis interfectis/<sup>l</sup> exteriores castrorum uigiles ut in nullo tali metu sopitos obruncant.<sup>l</sup> <his perpetratis<sup>89</sup>/ superuenire ipsi regiae, si prosperior iuuisset

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<sup>88</sup> An absurd idea, as if errors only ever produce unreadable texts. And I would argue that at this point the transmitted text cannot stand on grounds of sense,

<sup>89</sup> I print Heraeus' supplement and Haupt's correction: obruncant. his perpetratis *Heraeus*, obruncatis **V**; leui reptantium *Haupt*, reuetempdentium **V**. One could also read *tendentium*.

euentus,/ occulte meditabantur./ 8. uerum audito licet leui reptantium sonitu/  
gemituque caesorum/ discusso somno...

And suppressing even their breath once they came close, packed together, at a powerful run, after killing some of the pickets, they cut down the guards outside the camp, who were slumbering since they had no fear of anything like this. Having done this, the Gauls secretly dreamed of falling upon the royal tent itself. 8. But when the sounds of their crawling, though slight, and the groans of the slain were heard, shaking off sleep...

It is strange that a logical problem in this account has never, to the best of my knowledge, been pointed out. At one minute the Gauls are holding their breath as they approach, at the next they are advancing at a powerful run, and then they are crawling quietly into the camp. It is hard to run quietly, and translators have struggled with the phrase *conferti ualido cursu*, sometimes trying to tone down the sense of *cursus* from that implied by the related verb *curro*, sometimes trying to shift the meaning of *ualidus* (Rolfe: 'they rushed violently upon them in close order'; Hamilton: 'then in close order they made a furious charge' Seyfarth: 'dann liefen sie, dicht zusammengeschlossen, mächtig los', Sabbah: 'au coude à coude, dans une course impétueuse'). It was in trying to translate this that it occurred to me that the problems focused on the word *cursu*, which is inconsistent with the Gauls' later crawling, and that what was needed was not a reference to their speed but, complementing the word *conferti*, 'close packed', to their formation. So I thought of the word *cuneus*, a wedge, which is often used by Ammianus for a tight formation, but is also close in palaeographical terms. And in fact a search through the text showed that this formation was found in a number of other places alongside *conferti* (*confertique in cuneos densos*, 19.13.1; *confertis cuneis*, 20.11.6; *conferti in cuneum*, 31.15.4), and also alongside the adjective *ualidus* (*ualidissimos cuneos*, 17.2.1); one can also find parallels for the ablative following *conferti* (e.g. *globis conferti*, 14.2.5), so there is no need to amend beyond *conferti ualido cuneo*, 'packed together in a powerful wedge formation'. This is clearly superior too in uniting the two ideas in the phrase, which should be followed by a mark of clausulation in the text.

## 8. Conclusions

It is my hope that this chapter, in the first place, helps readers of Ammianus, especially those whose interest is primarily historical, to understand the nature of the textual problems and the need for checking the apparatus before basing any argument on the text, as well as why a new edition is desirable.

A new edition will be based on a clearer understanding of the relationship of the two ninth-century manuscripts and of how they were written, as well as of the working methods of Gelenius. Equally important is an appreciation of the workings of Ammianus' language, above all prose rhythm. I hope in a companion volume to provide an overall view of the transmission, a survey of the workings of prose-rhythm, and a book-by-book series of critical notes justifying my decisions. I think that the text can be improved in dozens of places per book, largely by accepting carefully justified conjectural emendations. A new edition will be much clearer on the additional hands of V and much more authoritative in identifying authors of conjectures (including, thanks in large part to the work of Cappelletto, anonymous hands in renaissance manuscripts).

It will also be obvious that in my view this text will be more similar to that of Clark than that of Seyfarth. But though I have been critical of Seyfarth, the immensely difficult circumstances of working in the DDR must be acknowledged. So must the advantages of the twenty-first century scholar, with editing software, with clear, magnifiable colour digitisations of most of the manuscripts, with the vast majority of early editions accessible via Google books or archive.org, with far quicker wordsearches available, alongside better than ever critical tools. It is important too that one can access nearly all these tools at the same time; no need to make a note to chase up later. All this should make this a brilliant age for philology.

Ammianus' text has reached us by a tenuous route and in a damaged condition. It cannot be made perfect, but much of the damage can be undone, partly by understanding the manuscript tradition, partly because it is a long text and certain elements of style and usage, above all his prose rhythm, are exceptionally regular and distinctive. We can use Ammianus to correct Ammianus.

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