Classical Quarterly **49.2** 579–605 (1999) *Printed in Great Britain*

ROMAN POLICY ON THE RHINE AND THE DANUBE IN AMMIANUS*

In memoriam Henry Blumenthal

On the northern frontiers, as on the eastern,[1] Ammianus conceives of Rome's policy as fundamentally defensive. The essential requirement is to keep the barbarians out, or, if past negligence or failure has let them in, to drive them out, then keep them out for the future. But throughout his work there emerges a consistent constellation of themes.

Roman action is almost always a response to barbarian frontier violations, whether current or in the recent or more distant past. It takes two forms: the building and maintenance of frontier defences and the mounting of punitive or pre-emptive strikes. On occasion a conflict of priorities may arise between these two modes of defence. A successful expedition often enjoys the advantage of surprise, which reduces the enemy to fear and consequent submission, either instantly or after a swift and crushing defeat. Submission, provided it be sufficiently abject, will normally lead to the granting of peace, secured by the taking of hostages and gaining for the Romans the promise of future obedience and, more tangibly, recruits, the return of prisoners, and the provision, where appropriate, of supplies and building materials.

Barbarians, whether Germans or Goths, conform to a depressing stereotype. By nature they are arrogant and savage to the point of madness, often behaving more like wild beasts than men. Their self-abasement in defeat is never sincere, for they are treacherous and cunning, and if the constraint of fear is once removed they revert to type. Even when Ammianus admits that they have some grounds of complaint against Rome, the justice of their cause is soon forgotten, obliterated by a welter of allusions to their frenzied and bestial behaviour.

These themes remain constant and recur in the narrative of almost every campaign. But at the same time Ammianus manipulates them with great subtlety to present or imply a variety of judgements on the motives and achievement of the emperors and others concerned.

1. CONSTANTIUS ON THE RHINE, 354 (14.10) AND 355 (15.4)

The campaign of Constantius against the Alamanni in 354 establishes the most common motive for Roman action, namely barbarian incursions into Roman territory. The targets, two Alamannic kings, Gundomadus and Vadomarius, are said to have been guilty of frequent raids on those Gallic lands which bordered on their own (14.10.1).

A complication is at once introduced (2–5), in the shape of the supposed plot to destroy the praetorian prefect Rufinus, Gallus' uncle. It is hard to believe in this tale,

* I am grateful to John Davies for his comments on a draft of this paper; he is not of course responsible for any errors and defects that may remain. I have also benefited by the constructive suggestions of *CQ*'s editor and anonymous referee.

[1] See R. Seager, *CQ* 47 (1997), 253ff. As in that article, my chief concern is with Ammianus' perception of events rather than what actually happened, except in so far as that sheds light on the historian's distortions and omissions.

which seems designed to discredit Constantius by presenting him as more concerned with political bloodletting than with the welfare of the provinces. He next appears as indecisive and dependent on a stroke of luck before he can make progress. Prevented by the Alamanni from bridging the Rhine, he was unsure what to do, when suddenly a guide with expert local knowledge appeared out of nowhere (6–7). Ammianus' language underlines the fact that this was the sheerest fluke, not the result of planning (7). The army could have crossed unobserved and ravaged the entire region, but the plan was allegedly betrayed by Germans in the Roman service,[2] and so the element of surprise was lost (7).[3]

The response of the Alamanni also reflects no credit on Constantius. They decided to seek peace, but not for the reason that might be assumed, namely that they were afraid of the emperor and his army.[4] Instead Ammianus offers religious grounds: unfavourable omens or sacrifices that warned against joining battle (9).

The nature of their request seems at first to display features of what will soon become a familiar pattern. They send envoys to beg pardon for their crimes and peace (9). But comparison with other similar situations reveals that a much more abject degree of self-abasement is usually required and recorded of petitioners than is shown by the Alamanni here.[5] This hint that their attitude was perhaps not humble enough is confirmed by the description of how peace was made and what followed (10). After lengthy secret discussions it was unanimously agreed to grant the peace which was being sought on just terms. In other words it was the Alamanni who dictated, or at least suggested, the conditions.

It is hardly surprising that Constantius felt the need to justify to the troops his decision to make peace with an enemy who remained undefeated and had not even been moved to seek terms by the fear of defeat.[6] Ammianus makes him begin by apologizing that so much preparation and effort had apparently been for nothing (11), thus coming close to admitting the inertia he later repudiates (15). His version of the Alamannic approach differs significantly from that presented in the preceding narrative.[7] He claims that the kings and their peoples were moved by fear of the army's reputation to send envoys to beg pardon and peace (14). Instead of the narrative's *legatis* (10), he uses the more loaded term *oratores*, and stresses, as the narrative had not done, their suppliant posture. He then lists his reasons for granting their request (14). It avoided risking the uncertainties of battle; it would gain recruits (which the Alamanni had promised); it would enable the Romans, without incurring loss, to check the blasts of their ferocity, which had often proved ruinous to the provinces. Finally, victory, he says, is more secure when the enemy is not defeated in battle but submits of his own accord, for such a one knows from experience that Rome will show courage towards rebels but gentleness towards suppliants.

[2] Ammianus states clearly that the treason of the German officers was no more than a rumour (7: *ut quidam existimabant*). It is argued by P. A. Barceló, *Roms auswärtige Beziehungen unter der Constantinischen Dynastie (306–363)* (Regensburg, 1981), 25, 31–2, that they had in fact been sent to negotiate a peaceful settlement with their kinsmen. This is possible, but not compelling.

[3] For surprise and its importance, see e.g. 20.10.2, 21.3.8, 29.4.2, 30.5.14, 31.10.12, 31.11.5.

[4] For fear stimulating barbarians to make peace, see e.g. 17.1.12, 17.12.13, 17.13.2–3 (feigned), 21, 19.11.6, 15, 27.5.3, 29.6.16, 31.12.12.

[5] For self-abasement, see e.g. 16.12.15, 17.1.12, 17.8.5, 17.10.3, 9, 17.12.9–10, 13, 17.13.21, 19.11.6, 20.10.2, 27.5.7, 30.5.1, 30.6.1–2, 31.4.1, 4, 13, 31.10.17.

[6] The task Constantius sets himself here is in essence similar to that performed in 369 for Valens by Themistius (*Or.* 10), though Constantius is more pragmatic, whereas Themistius descants on his favourite theme of *philanthropia*; see below, section 6.

[7] Barceló (n. 2), 26.

The third and fourth of these reasons are the most interesting. The third, with its stress on the absence of Roman casualties, unashamedly rejects automatic punitive measures in favour of negotiated settlements and implies that concern for the provinces which Ammianus had hinted that Constantius lacked. The fourth reinforces this preference for negotiation while using language which again misleadingly suggests that the Alamanni had displayed a much greater degree of subservience in making their request than had in fact been the case.

Ammianus' comment on the effect of this speech is ruthlessly deflating (16).[8] It was, he says, greeted with unanimous praise and approval—not because the men were convinced by its arguments, but merely because they thought that Constantius was successful only in civil wars, and so had no desire to fight foreigners under his command.

So a treaty was made, in the form that was customary among the Alamanni.[9] The details of its terms are not recorded, and the end of the campaign is flatly described, with no hint of celebration (16). Yet despite Ammianus' reluctance to allow Constantius any credit, the arguments for peace that he puts in the emperor's mouth are by no means unimpressive. The Germans too were not eager to fight, but the reason Ammianus offers (9) is hardly adequate. It may well be that both sides were in this sector evenly matched, so that a potentially durable settlement might seem to both worth the effort of protracted and detailed negotiation (10).

Repeated frontier violation is again the motive for the declaration of war in 355 on two Alamannic peoples: the Lentienses and another whose name is lost (15.4.1). On this occasion it was judged honourable and useful that Constantius himself should remain in Rhaetia, while Arbitio advanced to attack the barbarians.[10]

Arbitio was ambushed and suffered heavy casualties (7–8). Ammianus' comments on the consequences evidence another common theme: the tendency of barbarians to savagery, arrogance, and madness.[11] Their victory, he says, enhanced their ferocity and caused them to utter arrogant threats (9). The effect on Roman morale was correspondingly deleterious. The advent of Roman arms should strike fear into a savage enemy.[12] But now the evidence of their recent disaster terrified most of the Romans (10). While Arbitio hesitated, three tribunes went out to fight (11–12). The text is a shambles, but it is at least clear that they succeeded in routing the enemy. Constantius again returned to Milan, but this time he is described as joyful and triumphant (13).

His attitude is hardly unreasonable. There had been some fighting, as there had not in the previous year, and although it had begun with a defeat, that defeat had been adequately avenged.[13] What is more surprising is that this year Ammianus is prepared to acknowledge his achievement. It may be that Constantius' celebration of the tribunes' success serves to highlight yet more vividly Arbitio's incompetence, and that on this occasion his unwavering hostility to Arbitio weighed more with Ammianus than the desire to deny Constantius any credit.

[8] Barceló (n. 2), 26.

[9] On this practice, see P. Heather in W. Pohl, *Kingdoms of the Empire* (Leiden, 1997), 69.

[10] The text is defective, but the general sense is clear enough.

[11] N. Bitter, *Kampfschilderungen bei Ammianus Marcellinus* (Bonn, 1976), 59ff., 76, 84; R. Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Columbia, 1986), 33ff., 54ff.; T. E. J. Wiedemann in I. S. Moxon, J. D. Smart, and A. J. Woodman, *Past Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1986), 194ff.

[12] For fear at the approach or first sight of Roman arms, see e.g. 16.11.8, 17.1.3, 6–7, 17.2.1, 17.10.3, 17.12.4, 21, 17.13.3, 18.2.14, 27.2.6, 30.5.13, 31.7.7.

[13] There seems to be no good reason to assume (despite Barceló [n. 2], 28) that Constantius is being criticized here for avoiding the action and then claiming credit for others' successes. Contrast 16.12.70 on Julian in Gaul.

2. CONSTANTIUS ON THE DANUBE, 358 (17.12–13) AND 359 (19.11)

Under 357 Ammianus records that Constantius was alarmed by reports that the Suebi were mounting raids into Rhaetia, the Quadi into Valeria, and the Sarmatae into Upper Moesia and II Pannonia (16.10.20). In consequence he hastened to Illyricum. Of Rhaetia nothing more is heard for the present beyond a claim put in the mouth of Constantius himself that he had secured the approaches to it (17.13.28), but his campaigns on the Danube in 358 and 359 are treated in considerable detail.

The first, against the Sarmatae and Quadi, arose, as indicated above (16.10.20), from the familiar cause of raids across the border (17.12.1). The narrative of Constantius' response is presented in terms highly favourable to the emperor.[14] It is stated at the outset that he mounted an invasion across the Danube guided by good fortune (4).[15] The rapidity of his advance led the barbarians to flee in terror, but most were annihilated (4–5). The survivors fought on, joined by the Quadi (7–8). However, both were defeated, and an invasion cowed the Quadi. In their fear they came to seek peace in suppliant fashion (9), allegedly confident that their plea would be granted because they knew that Constantius was inclined to leniency in such matters (9).[16] Any details of the negotiations and settlement have vanished in a lacuna.

When the text resumes, the attitude of the Sarmatian king Zizais is even more flattering.[17] He drew up his men to make his petition, but when he beheld Constantius' majesty he was so overwhelmed that he fainted, and even afterwards was at first deprived of the power of speech through fear (9). His eventual request was the predictable one of pardon for his crimes (10). His followers too were at first too fearful to speak, but then outdid their king in self-abasement (10). Throughout, the language places the heaviest possible stress on the prayerful attitude of Zizais and his men (9: *preces*, *orare*; 10: *supplicauit*, *ad precandum*, *orandi*, *precibus*, *supplicandi*).

Fear may also have been the motive that drove other Sarmatian princelings to seek similar terms (11).[18] They declared their readiness to accept unfavourable terms to compensate for their past offences and were eager to make unconditional surrender.[19] They were permitted to keep their homes provided they returned their captives, gave hostages, and promised prompt obedience to future orders.

This example of clemency inspired an approach by Araharius and his Quadi and the Sarmatian Usafer (12). But Constantius suspected that their desire for a treaty might be feigned and an attack might follow. So those who were pleading on behalf of the Sarmatae were ordered to wait while he first considered the case of Araharius. The fear and abject attitude of the Quadi are again highlighted (13); they too gave hostages

[14] Barceló (n. 2), 62ff.

[15] It is probably too subtle to interpret *laetioris* as 'happier than usual', implying that, although the campaign was a success, this was an exception to the rule. (Thus G. Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin* [Paris, 1978], 188, n. 60. *Contra*: J. Szidat, *Historia* 21 [1972], 713, though of the two parallels he cites only 26.7.15 is apposite; 20.11.32 is a genuine comparative.)

[16] The allusion is presumably to Constantius' generous treatment of the Alamannic kings in 354, but it is not certain that the comparative has pejorative overtones (as implied by Sabbah's translation; *contra*: De Jonge ad loc.). Contrast the unquestionably hostile judgement of Julian (*Ep. Ath.* 280B).

[17] Barceló (n. 2), 63.

[18] Most editors read *pauor* 'fear' (E) for V's nonsensical *patior*, but the correction cannot be regarded as certain; see De Jonge ad loc.

[19] On *deditio* at this time, see the various views of R. Schulz, *Die Entwicklung des römischen Völkerrechts im vierten und fünften Jahrhundert n.Chr.* (Stuttgart, 1993), 136ff.; G. Wirth in Pohl (n. 9), 16ff.; Heather (n. 9), 61ff. (the best treatment); E. Chrysos in Pohl (n. 9), 192ff.

on demand. Usafer was then allowed to make his petition (14), despite the objections of Araharius.[20]

The Sarmatae, as long-standing clients of Rome, were ordered to be free and to provide hostages (15).[21] There followed another huge influx of petitioners (16), encouraged by the lenient treatment of Araharius. They too were granted peace on condition that they gave hostages and returned their prisoners. The liberation of the Sarmatae was followed by the appointment of Zizais as king (20), but there are strong hints of mutual distrust. The Sarmatae wanted guarantees of their freedom (19), and nobody was allowed to leave until the Roman prisoners had been returned.[22]

Constantius then moved to Bregetio to deal with the Quadi (21). They too proved suitably submissive. At the appearance of the army in their land they threw themselves at the soldiers' feet. Granted pardon, they did what they were told and gave their children as hostages to guarantee their observance of the conditions imposed.

Next Constantius marched against the Amicenses, a division of the Limigantes (17.13.1).[23] They were guilty of many crimes, thus far unpunished, but familiar in kind: together with the free Sarmatians, they had violated the Roman frontier. However, it was decided—Ammianus does not say why—to treat them more leniently than their crimes demanded: vengeance was to be limited to transplanting them (2). The defensive thinking behind this decision is made clear; the aim was to deprive them of further opportunities for raiding Roman territory (2).

The Limigantes appear to have expected something worse. Their guilty conscience made them fear military reprisals (2–3). To meet this presumed threat they prepared trickery, weapons, and prayers. Their first direct contact with the Romans takes a familiar form (3). Smitten as if by a thunderbolt at the sight of the army, they begged for their lives, promising an annual tribute, troops, and obedience. But Ammianus' comment puts their sincerity in doubt, since he says that their gestures and expressions made it clear that if they were ordered to emigrate they would refuse,[24] inspired by the supposedly impregnable strength of their geographical position.[25]

At Constantius' request they came to the bank of the Danube (5). But there was now no sign of fear or obsecration; their attitude instead displayed their customary arrogance and they had no intention of doing what they were told.[26] Eager to prove that they were not intimidated by the presence of the Roman army, they adopted a contumacious pose designed to show that they had come only to refuse obedience. In short, their behaviour is presented point by point as the exact opposite of what it had earlier appeared.

Constantius had, however, foreseen that this might happen and had secretly disposed his forces to entrap the Limigantes (6). This information raises the possibility that he had always intended to attack them, however they behaved; in other words,

[20] On Constantius' diplomatic policy of dismantling larger units in the interests of easier control and manipulation, see Barceló (n. 2), 64, 71.

[21] The details of their liberation and the background of their subjection to the Limigantes are provided in 17ff., all in a manner complimentary to Constantius' power.

[22] The Sarmatae had good cause; see Barceló (n. 2), 65.

[23] Ammianus treats this campaign in virtual isolation from what has gone before, alluding only indirectly (17.12.19) to the fact that Constantius intended to use Sarmatian troops against the Limigantes. See Barceló (n. 2), 65.

[24] This must imply that the Limigantes were already aware of the Roman plan to move them elsewhere. Hence their initial fear of a Roman attack must have been based on a lack of confidence in Roman good faith.

[25] Described at length in 15.4.

[26] Contrast the promise of obedience in 15.3.

that the Limigantes had been right to be suspicious. But in his speech he warned them in gentle terms against ferocity.[27]

The reaction of the Limigantes recalls and perhaps clarifies what was said above (3) about their original plan. With a mixture of cunning and frenzy, they decided to try battle with prayers. The triad of *uersutia*, *precibus*, and *proelium* here recalls that of *dolos*, *ferrum*, and *preces* in 3. But this time it is clear that their intentions are deceitful and that their prayers will be feigned in order to facilitate an attack.

What follows is utterly bizarre. In order to get to close range, the Limigantes (presumably more than once) threw their shields forward, then advanced to pick them up, thus gradually gaining ground, according to Ammianus, without any indication of deceit! That this grotesque stratagem should have been adopted is hard enough to believe, but that it was put into practice without arousing suspicion is surely incredible.

One thing is certain about what happened next: the Romans attacked first (8).[28] Ammianus' observation that the fading light made further delay inadvisable seems to suggest that they had always intended to do so, even without good cause. But in 359 Constantius was to take similar precautions, in case the Limigantes caused trouble (19.11.8), and it is possible to interpret the Roman initiative here as no more than a reasonable response to the peculiar behaviour of the Limigantes. Constantius was obviously not prepared to compromise on the question of emigration and was ready to take harsh measures to crush resistance.[29] But his ingrained distaste for unnecessary military adventures makes it hard to believe that he wanted the Amicenses to refuse in order to have a plausible excuse to attack them.[30] Had they been prepared to accept his ultimatum, the Amicenses would surely have been treated in the same way as the Picenses, who learned from the fate of their neighbours.

The Limigantes directed their attack against Constantius in person (8). Ammianus' choice of language brings out both the seriousness of the threat to the emperor's safety and the stereotypically barbarian savagery and madness of his assailants.[31] A potent combination of anger and caution gave the Romans the upper hand (9–10), but even in defeat the Limigantes showed an intransigence which gave the lie to their earlier pose of submission. None sought pardon, threw down his weapon, or begged for a quick death, and they ascribed their defeat to ill-fortune, not their deserts (10–11).[32]

The Romans followed up this success with extreme ruthlessness (12ff.). Enslavement put an end to the arrogance of the non-combatants (12),[33] while survivors and deserters were hunted down and killed. All perished, by the sword, by fire, or by flood (14–15), which permits the highly panegyrical conclusion that the elements of fire and water gave aid to the anger and courage of the victors (15).[34] Ammianus speaks in flattering terms of a Roman victory won in difficult conditions (18).

[27] *Lenius* here echoes *lenius* in 2. Since at that point there was no suggestion of bad faith on Constantius' part, the repetition may be meant to indicate that he was still sincere.

[28] Noted by Barceló (n. 2), 68, in the course of an account of events which is extremely hostile to Constantius and the Romans.

[29] It is possible that his attitude was in part at least dictated by the need to conciliate the free Sarmatians.

[30] Thus Barceló (n. 2), 66ff.

[31] Cf. 8: *oculis . . . et uocibus truculentis*; 9: *furoris amentiam*; *acriter imminentes*.

[32] Specific contrasts: 11: *nec . . . exorauit celerem mortem* :: 3: *uitam precati*; 11: *alienis uiribus potiusquam conscientiae suae iudicio* :: 2: *scelerum conscientia*; 11: *fortunae non meriti* :: 2: *lenius . . . poscebat*.

[33] *Fastu prioris uitae* here echoes *cum genuino fastu* (5), suggesting that their humiliation was well deserved.

[34] For the obedience of the elements to commanders blessed with *felicitas*, cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.12.4; 11.9.1ff.; 8.7.3, 14.4–5, 15.1; 7.9.4; 6.13.3; 5.10.4; 4.32.6. Note also the Tiber's active support of

The neighbours of the Amicenses, the Picenses, were the next to be attacked, with assistance from the Taifali and the free Sarmatians (19–20). Terrified by what had happened to their kinsmen, they were uncertain whether to resist or surrender (21). Eventually they decided in favour of surrender. Their attitude was a cause for satisfaction, for their supplication was another feather in the cap of the victors, and they were forced to abase themselves not only before the Romans but also before their former masters whom they had enslaved (21). Their surrender then followed (22). Abandoning their licentious madness, they agreed to do what they were told and change their habitation.[35] But their native savagery remained unchanged and eventually led to their undoing, as Ammianus notes in a comment that prepares the ground for the events of 19.11 (23).

The tone of the summary that follows (24) is highly complimentary to Constantius, stressing the greatness of the task that had confronted him and the completeness of his success. He was hailed as Sarmaticus for the second time and delivered a celebratory speech to his men (25). In it praise is divided between the rank and file and himself (26). The scope of the enemy's activities is at times grossly exaggerated (27–8), and he goes further than the narrative had in 24 in exaggerating the difficulties that had faced him and the ease and completeness of his victories (28). A display of felicity and courage had paved the way for clemency and leniency in their season (28ff.).[36] The defensive thinking behind the decision to transplant the Limigantes is again acknowledged (30): its object was to prevent their doing further damage to the Romans.

Constantius sums up the gains made as fourfold (31ff.). First revenge, then the preservation of the property of Rome's subjects; for the men, booty; for himself the honorific title. So, amid more enthusiastic celebrations than usual, prompted in part by the hope of further profit, Constantius returned in triumphal pomp to Sirmium (34).[37]

In 359 news came that the Limigantes, as he had feared they might, had abandoned the lands in which he had settled them and once again moved close to the frontier (19.11.1).[38] They are presented as typical barbarians, roaming unchecked in their customary fashion and threatening general disruption if they were not driven out.[39] So Constantius moved to put down their arrogance without delay (2). Two factors made this easier: the troops hoped that booty would be plentiful, as it had been in 358, and supplies were already at hand.

The tone is again highly favourable to Constantius. Two tribunes were sent to ask politely why the Limigantes had left the homes assigned to them at their own request after a treaty of peace, and were now wandering here and there and threatening the frontier in defiance of the agreement (5). The language is carefully chosen. The emotive word *laribus* is heavily loaded: their 'home' is where Constantius chose to put them, not where they had previously lived of their own volition. Their alleged request

Constantine against Maxentius (12.17.2, 18.1) and that of the Save for Theodosius against Maximus (2.34.4). See R. Seager, *PLLS* 4 (1983), 132, 135, 138, 144, 146, 148, 151, 155, 161.

[35] In 23 *parere imperiis* underlines the difference in their attitude from that displayed by the Amicenses in 5: *non iussa facturi; ut iubenda repudiarent*.

[36] See Seager (n. 34), 145, 147, 149ff., 153f., 160ff.

[37] Sabbah (n. 15), 188, n. 60, sees *alacrior solito* as a further ironic deflation of Constantius' achievement. But see Szidat (n. 15), 713.

[38] They were still on their own side of the river, cf. De Jonge ad loc. and the translations of Rolfe and Seyfarth, against that of Hamilton.

[39] *Genuino more* here perhaps picks up the allusion to their native savagery in the advance notice at 17.13.23.

to be transplanted is emphasized, without mention of course of the threat of annihilation that had driven them in desperation to make it.[40] The nature of their offence is also precisely defined: thus far they are only 'knocking on' the frontiers, but have not yet actually violated them.[41]

On the surface their response seemed appropriate for barbarians confronted with the might of Rome. They were terrified and begged Constantius for forgiveness (6). But their fear led them to lie: when they asked to be allowed to cross the river and present their case, and promised to go anywhere in the Roman world, live peacefully, and pay tribute, they were not sincere. Constantius' reaction (7) draws the first critical comment from Ammianus. He was delighted by the possibility of a peaceful solution. This is clearly consistent with his avowed belief (14.10.11ff.) that one should fight only when all else fails.[42] But Ammianus ascribes a discreditable motive, greed, and brings the influence of the emperor's flatterers into play.

Just as he had done in 358, Constantius took elaborate military precautions against possible treachery (8), while the hypocrisy of the Limigantes is even more forcefully brought out in what follows (9). Although they knew (it is not clear how) of the Roman counter-measures, they continued to plan an attack while feigning prayers and adopting a suppliant posture. Constantius was apparently still ready to take this at face value and was preparing to deliver a speech of great leniency (10).

Despite what Ammianus says of the tribesmen's hostile designs, in his narrative the crisis seems fortuitous. An isolated member of the emperor's audience, smitten with savage madness (which hardly suggests calculation), threw his shoe at the tribunal and uttered the tribal warcry. The rest then followed him in what has all the appearance of an unpremeditated attack on the emperor's person (10–12).[43]

The Roman counter-attack that followed is described in panegyrical tones (13ff.). Stress is laid on the devotion of the troops to Constantius and their concern for his safety (13), their courage, and their justified anger against a treacherous enemy (14).[44] All this, of course, justifies the bloodbath that ensued (14–15). Those not killed in the first onslaught were stricken with terror, which moved some to beg for their lives, but their prayers were in vain (15). It is clear, however, that the Romans had not run amok, but were carrying out someone's conscious decision to exterminate the enemy: when they had all been killed (and not before), the retreat was sounded (15). Whether that decision was taken by Constantius in person is not made clear.

Throughout his account of Constantius' operations on the Danube Ammianus seems ready to take the official version more or less at face value, in sharp contrast to his treatment of the campaign of 354 on the Rhine.[45] Only the emperor's readiness to seek a peaceful solution, if the Limigantes had proved tractable (7), rouses him

[40] This on the assumption that V's *adtributis* is retained. The paradosis is more pointed than the correction *attributa*, since it makes the Romans claim that the Limigantes had requested not merely a treaty but a new home, even though that claim may be false, since it goes beyond 17.13.23, where Ammianus says only *sunt assensi* 'they agreed'.

[41] Thus De Jonge ad loc.; *contra*: Sabbah in his translation.

[42] Barceló (n. 2), 68–9, notes other cogent motives for Constantius' moderation: the need to deal with Persia as soon as possible, with a minimum of casualties and the possibility of fresh recruits.

[43] Against any drastic undermining here of the official report (as suggested by Sabbah [n. 15], 189–90), see R. Seager, *PLILS* 9 (1996), 194–5

[44] That the Limigantes were not merely deceitful but in breach of their treaty is recalled by the label *rebelles* applied to them in 15.

[45] Noted, though not explained, by Szidat (n. 15), 719. For a succinct but sound estimate of Constantius' strategy on the northern frontiers, see Barceló (n. 2), 70.

briefly to malice. Various factors may play a part in explaining this phenomenon. On the Rhine Constantius could be seen as in direct competition for glory with Julian, whereas on the Danube this factor did not come into play. More importantly, one beneficiary of Constantius' generosity in 354 had been Julian's enemy, Vadomarius. As for the Limigantes, Ammianus believed that even compulsory deportation was less than they deserved (17.13.2). He has little or nothing to say in their defence, merely hinting that the attack on the emperor was less premeditated than imperial propaganda claimed.

The essentially defensive nature of Roman policy is reaffirmed by the statement that Constantius took what steps were necessary to ensure the security of the frontiers before returning to Sirmium, having taken vengeance on a treacherous enemy (17). This last in a sustained series of references to the bad faith of the Limigantes (cf. 17.13.3, 7; 19.11.4, 9) must leave the reader convinced that they thoroughly deserved their harsh fate.

3. JULIAN ON THE RHINE, 356 (16.1–5), 357 (16.11–12, 17.1–2), 358 (17.8ff.), 359 (18.2), 360 (20.10), 361 (21.3–4)

It was concern at the way in which Gaul was being repeatedly overrun by barbarians that inspired Constantius with the fatal idea of making Julian Caesar, despite the for once prudent warnings of his courtiers (15.8.1–2). The disruption of the peace of the frontiers by barbarian incursions is a key theme of his speech to the army (6). The ultimate object is as ever defensive: to ensure that the boundaries of the empire are inviolate in future, though to achieve that end it will be necessary to curb the arrogance of the tribes (7).[46] His words to Julian reveal the same preoccupations (13). It is the protection of the Gallic provinces that he entrusts to his Caesar, to bring them relief from their afflictions. So three years later he was to look back on Julian's appointment as designed to guarantee the safety of Gaul (17.13.28), and he made the point once more in a speech to his troops after Julian's usurpation (21.13.13).[47] His conviction that fighting should be viewed as a last resort recurs in exaggerated form in the words *si hostilibus congredi sit necesse*—it is after all hard to see what Julian could have achieved without engaging in warfare. But the object of war is to bring about peace: he tempts Julian with the prospect of joint rule over a pacified world (14).

Before the campaign of 356 Ammianus brings out the tension between Julian's military aspirations and the sober realities of the task that awaited him. The Caesar dreamed of battles and slaughtering barbarians while preparing to reconstruct his shattered province (16.1.1). Nevertheless, the narrative to come is set firmly under the rubric of the twin imperatorial qualities of courage and divine favour (2), while the proleptic summary of Julian's achievement (5) concentrates on the preferred themes

[46] This justifies both punitive expeditions and pre-emptive strikes across the Rhine, which should not therefore be seen as instances of Julian exceeding his brief or as a new strategic departure after Strasburg. (Thus Barceló [n. 2], 35–6, 40.) This view can be traced back to Lib. *Or.* 18.68. See G. A. Crump, *Ammianus Marcellinus as a Military Historian* (Wiesbaden, 1975), 64–5. For barbarian arrogance, see e.g. 15.8.7, 16.4.16ff., 16.12.2ff., 17.13.5, 8–9, 31.7.2–3, 9, 31.8.4, 9, 31.9.1, 31.12.6, 31.15.2ff.

[47] Cf. 15.8.13: *tutelam . . . Galliarum*; 28: *tutelaque peruigili Galliarum*; 21.13.13: *tuendis praefecimus Galliis*. A similar conception of Julian's mission is to be found in Lib. *Or.* 12.44, 48ff., 18.36. When writing what Constantius might want to hear, Julian himself espoused comparable views (*Or.* 1.7C, 9D); see also *Ep. Ath.* 279A–D.

of military panegyric at the expense of such mundane matters as treaties and settlements: he laid Germany low, pacified the Rhine and brought death or captivity to bloodthirsty kings.

Julian was confronted with the familiar problem of unchecked barbarian incursions (16.2.2), and in particular an attack on Autun.[48] The narrative also presents what will become familiar features: signs of dissension between Julian and his staff (3, 9) and hints of his tendency to rashness (5, 10–11). The objective for the moment was merely to recover lost ground. Julian set about regaining seven towns held by the barbarians and succeeded in recovering one (12–13). His next goal was to recapture Cologne (16.3.1), the destruction of which had been reported just after his appointment as Caesar (15.8.19). His achievement there, as presented by Ammianus, was of a kind that might have pleased his superior. He terrified the kings of the Franks so that their frenzy abated, established a beneficial peace, and regained the valuable fortress-city—all, it would seem, without the need for military action (2), a good example of the principle championed by Constantius.[49]

During the winter of 356/7, which he spent at Sens, Julian was concerned with the morale of his troops and the problem of supplies, but his main aim remained the same: to drive the barbarians out of Gaul (16.3.3). The language adopts a moral tone that justifies severe punitive measures: the tribes had conspired to inflict harm on Rome. But before he could take the initiative, Sens was besieged (16.4.1ff.), while Julian was frustrated by the paucity of his forces and the lack of support from the *magister equitum* Marcellus.

There follows the panegyrical interlude at 16.5. Here we are told of the victories in which he routed the barbarians (14), but greater emphasis is laid on economic recovery. The barbarians, meanwhile, were behaving in an archetypal manner that proved the urgent need for repressive measures (16). Appropriate clichés are paraded: barbaric madness (18) and the comparison with wild beasts (17). This sets the scene for the campaign of 357, after the interlude of the supersession of Marcellus and the failure of his plot against Julian (16.7, 8.1).[50]

The situation at the outset of the campaign was the inevitable one of uninhibited barbarian activity (16.11.3). Julian's efforts to ambush the Laeti, who had attacked Lyon (4), were hampered by sabotage and misrepresented by false reports to Constantius (5ff.).[51] Nevertheless the advent of Roman forces produced the desired terror in the barbarians (8). Despite a further attempt at sabotage by Barbatio, Julian inflicted mass slaughter on the enemy (8ff.) before turning aside to repair the fortress at Tres Tabernae (11). The tension between these widely different types of operation is enhanced by the description of the purely defensive function of Tres Tabernae: to prevent the customary German inroads into the interior of Gaul. The speed with

[48] On Ammianus' exaggeration of Julian's role in this year, see Barceló (n. 2), 34; Crump (n. 46), 17. That Julian was at first only a figurehead was well known to Libanius (*Or.* 18.42–3), Eunapius (fr. 16.2), and of course Julian himself (*Ep. Ath.* 277D–8A).

[49] See Lib. *Or.* 18.47. For the likelihood that Ammianus exaggerated the significance of the Frankish occupation of Cologne and for the possibly undistinguished role of Ursicinus in these events, see J. F. Drinkwater, *Francia* 24/1 (1997), 2ff.

[50] The narrative pays as little attention as possible to Constantius' readiness to listen to and act upon Julian's complaints about Marcellus. See R. Seager in T. W. Hillard, R. A. Kearsley, C. E. V. Nixon, and A. M. Nobbs, *Ancient History in a Modern University*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, 1998), 282.

[51] On this campaign, the divergent accounts of Ammianus and Libanius, and Julian's feud with Barbatio, see Barceló (n. 2), 34–5; Crump (n. 46), 18ff.; Sabbah (n. 15), 266–7, 466ff.

which Julian completed the task is emphasized before a further diatribe against Barbatio (12ff.), which raises in passing, without expressing an opinion, the possibility that his efforts to undermine Julian were made on Constantius' orders.

The urgent need to curb the arrogance of the barbarians and drive them out of Gaul was made vividly manifest when no less than seven Alamannic kings marched on Strasburg (16.12.1). Thinking that Julian was afraid, they impudently ordered him to withdraw from the lands that they had won by battle (3).[52] Ammianus' choice of words again highlights their insolence, savagery, and frenzy (2–3),[53] and underlines how mistaken they were about Julian's state of mind: far from being afraid, he was amused by their presumption, but otherwise unmoved (3).

The arrogance of Chnodomarius receives particular and colourful notice (4), though Ammianus admits (5) he had some grounds: a defeat inflicted on Decentius, the sacking and destruction of many rich cities, and a lengthy period of ranging unopposed over Gaul, while his confidence had of course been increased by the recent defeat of Barbatio. His humiliation after the battle is lovingly stressed. He had expected Julian to be afraid (3), but now, himself driven to extremes of fear, he surrendered (60), and when he was brought before his conqueror, his self-abasement was extreme (65).[54]

The preamble to the battle makes it clear that the decision to fight was in essence taken by the rank and file.[55] Julian wanted to wait until the following day (12), but the troops were eager to engage at once (13). So too were the officers, especially Florentius, but their principal reason was that, if they did not, the men would be impossible to control (14). They were also encouraged by the lack of opposition they had encountered in 356 and the way in which, in winter 356/7, things had gone as such matters should: the Germans had begged humbly for peace, which had been duly granted (15).

But Ammianus stresses how much the situation had changed (16). Then Constantius too had been in the field, threatening the Alamanni through Rhaetia, while Julian kept them penned up and neighbouring tribes too were hostile.[56] Now Constantius had departed, local differences had been patched up, and the defeat of Barbatio had given them encouragement. Moreover, in the previous year Vadomarius and Gundomadus had been granted peace by Constantius, but in the meantime Gundomadus had been murdered and Vadomarius' people, allegedly against his

[52] That this Alamannic coalition was a response to Julian's aggression is plausibly argued by Barceló (n. 2), 35. Lib. *Or.* 18.52 presents a very different version of the German ultimatum, in which they claim to have settled on lands granted by Rome and produce letters from Constantius to prove it. (In *Or.* 13.24, however, his language had been much closer to that of Ammianus.) The two versions are not necessarily incompatible. The Germans might have claimed that they had won the lands by force of arms and that Constantius, unable to expel them, had accepted the fait accompli and granted them title. Ammianus would then be emphasizing the theme of barbarian presumption, Libanius that of Constantius' weakness and inertia.

[53] For similar vocabulary, see Julian in his speech before Strasburg (31) and Ammianus' retrospective description of the envoys' message (17.1.1).

[54] Bitter (n. 11), 96ff.

[55] Ammianus is obviously concerned to ensure that the blame for such a risky engagement is distributed as widely as possible, while leaving Julian in the clear. Thus Sabbah (n. 15), 170, though he perhaps goes too far in claiming that the battle was fought in defiance of Constantius' orders. There is a parallel with Julian's supposed innocence and passivity at the time of his usurpation, though there Ammianus makes it clear between the lines that he is well aware of the truth. (For references and brief discussion, see Seager [n. 11], 114–15; id. [n. 50], 282–3.)

[56] That these dissensions were fostered, if not actually instigated, by Constantius is highly likely; see Barceló (n. 2), 30.

wishes, had gone over to Rome's enemies. The inclusion of these matters here serves to glorify Julian's achievement in obtaining such a crushing victory against such odds when forced to fight against his better judgement. It is, however, regrettable that the events are not narrated in more detail in their proper context.[57]

Ammianus' comment that Julian longed for battles (16.1.1) is recalled by the opening words of his speech to the troops, where he declares that both he and they have been yearning for the chance to fight (30).[58] The motive he cites is a moral one, appropriate to the occasion: the expiation of past disgrace and the restoration of Roman honour (31).[59]

After the victory, Julian wished, despite the initial reluctance of his troops, to follow up his success by crossing the Rhine and proving to the Germans that they were not safe even in their own territory (17.1.2). The Germans were, as was proper, thunderstruck by the appearance of a Roman army in their land, but not, it would seem, sufficiently so to make a sincere request for peace. Instead, they merely feigned a desire for peace in order to gain time, sending envoys to insist that their treaties were still valid. Then they changed their minds, and sent exactly the same message as they had before the battle, threatening war if the Romans did not withdraw from their lands (3).

Julian acquired advance knowledge of their intention and mounted a raid across the Rhine (4ff.). The narrative is not easy to follow. The barbarians, suitably shocked and terrified (6–7), fled, leaving the Romans to carry out some devastation and repair a fort (11). This made the Germans afraid (12) and moved them at last to genuine pleas for peace of an adequately humble nature.[60] That Julian was spoiling for further conflict is perhaps suggested by his response.[61] Peace was granted, but only for ten months, to allow time to complete the fort and equip it with artillery.

Three kings who had aided those defeated at Strasburg then swore to keep the peace, refrain from attacking the fort, and even provide supplies for its garrison if required (13). Fear was again the crucial factor in determining barbarian behaviour, as it is when Ammianus sums up the situation in Gaul a little later (17.5.1).

Over the winter of 357/8 Julian dealt with some Franks who had been plundering regions left undefended by his absence (17.2.1). When the army returned they too fell victims to fear and occupied two abandoned forts. But Julian mounted a siege and brought about their surrender (2–3). Also during the winter an Alamannic tribe, the Juthungi, ravaged Rhaetia, but were driven off by Barbatio (17.6.1–2). Their bad faith in breaking the peace for which they had sued is emphasized (1).[62]

At the beginning of the season of 358 the Alamanni are described as savage to the point of madness after the defeat at Strasburg (17.8.1). Julian was eager to take the field. He had two targets. First (3) the Salii, a Frankish tribe who had dared to settle without permission on Roman soil.[63] They compounded their offence by offering peace terms which would permit them to retain these lands as if they were their own,

[57] Crump (n. 46), 18.

[58] See 31 on the long-awaited day. For Julian's aggressiveness from 357 on, see Drinkwater (n. 49), 8.

[59] For the theme of restoring honour, see 32.

[60] Lib. *Or.* 18.69.

[61] Barceló (n.2), 37.

[62] See De Jonge, Sabbah ad loc. For Ammianus' minimisation of the threat and Barbatio's achievement, see Barceló (n. 2), 60ff.

[63] For Julian's own views on a similar situation, see *Or.* 1.7C. But he claims a further motive, which Ammianus omits: the Salii were refusing entry to ships from Britain unless the Romans paid a toll (*Ep. Ath.* 280B–D). Ammianus also plays down Julian's aggressive arrogance (as does Zos. 3.6).

provided they remained quiet. Julian proposed complex counter-conditions, then, as soon as the envoys departed, attacked the Salii with lightning speed and reduced them to a suitably suppliant frame of mind (4). Victory paved the way for clemency and their surrender was duly accepted.[64] Then, with equal speed, he attacked the Chamavi, who had shown similar presumption (5). They too were reduced to a proper attitude, sending suppliant envoys, who grovelled at Julian's feet. They were granted peace on condition that they returned to their own territory.[65]

But Julian did not forget that his task was to set the provinces on a secure footing (17.9.1), and repaired three derelict forts on the Meuse. Lack of supplies then produced a near mutiny (2ff.). Ammianus admits (6–7) that the men had good grounds for complaint, since they had received no donative and no pay since Julian's arrival. But he insists that the blame lay with Constantius, who had starved Julian of funds, and claims that this was done from deliberate malice, though his alleged proof (7) is hardly convincing.

When the mutiny had been quelled, the army crossed the Rhine to attack the Alamanni (17.10.1).[66] Despite Severus' loss of morale (2), the appearance of the Romans was enough to inspire a change of attitude in the king Suomarius (3). Previously fiercely intent on damaging the Romans, he now hoped for nothing more than to retain his lands. His suppliant posture won him a friendly reception, and he begged for peace in abject fashion. Peace was duly granted, with forgiveness for his past offences, on condition that he returned his Roman captives and provided supplies on demand, with penalty clauses like those for any other contractor (4).

Julian then attacked Hortarius (5–6). He too was reduced to begging for pardon, swore to obey orders, and promised to return all his prisoners—a point on which the Romans laid much emphasis (7). But in fact he produced only a few prisoners,[67] so Julian took hostages until all had been restored (8). Hortarius, when summoned, was appropriately impressed (9). The peace terms required him to supply building materials for the repair of towns and wagons for their transport. (He could not, like Suomarius, supply corn, since his land had been devastated.)[68]

The summary with which Ammianus rounds off his account of the year's activities concentrates solely on the reduction of the arrogant to submission (10). Kings who had formerly been immensely puffed up and accustomed to grow rich on the plunder of Roman territory now submitted to the yoke of Roman power and obeyed Julian's orders as if they were subjects born and bred.

In 359 Julian found it necessary to make an urgent expedition against some Alamannic cantons whose arrogance had not yet been broken and who might dare monstrous things if they were not crushed like their fellow-countrymen (18.2.1). As usual, Ammianus highlights Julian's desire to move quickly, and again there is some tension between his two main objectives, namely conquest and defensive reconstruction. Before the battles began, he wanted to regain and fortify various towns and build granaries (3). These aims were quickly achieved (4–5). No less than seven cities were recovered and repaired, and Ammianus notes that the kings who had agreed to do so sent building materials in their own wagons (6). However, he attributes their compliance only to fear (5).[69]

[64] See above, n. 35. [65] On these campaigns, see Barceló (n. 2), 38–9.
[66] See Lib. *Or.* 13.30–1, 18.75ff.
[67] The text is uncertain, but the general sense fairly clear.
[68] On clauses concerning prisoners, supplies, and assistance in rebuilding, see Schulz (n. 19), 29–30. [69] See in general Lib. *Or.* 18.81.

Another familiar theme then recurs: dissension between Julian and his officers (7). Florentius and Lupicinus wanted to bridge the Rhine at Mainz, but Julian was reluctant to march through the lands of pacified peoples for fear that the behaviour of the army would drive the Germans to break their treaties (7). Meanwhile the Alamanni mustered opposite Mainz, threatening Suomarius if he did not prevent the Romans crossing (8). Julian's plan was therefore adopted, both to protect friendly tribes and to avoid unnecessary casualties (9ff.).

The narrative is interrupted by the curious episode of Hortarius' banquet (13). Ammianus insists that Hortarius intended no disloyalty to Rome, but he also claims that the Roman surprise attack on the departing guests (which, if it had been successful, would have left large numbers of the Alamanni leaderless) was not planned but happened by chance. This is hard to believe.[70]

The appearance of the Romans on the German side of the Rhine provoked the usual reactions of shock and terror (14). With their hitherto untamed frenzy allayed, the Alamanni prepared to emigrate. Again the speed of Julian's movements is emphasized. Leaving Hortarius' kingdom unharmed, he spread devastation as far as the border between the Alamanni and the Burgundians (14–15). There the Romans prepared to receive the brothers Macrianus and Hariobaudus, who had come to beg for peace (15). They were followed by Vadomarius, armed with a letter of warm commendation from Constantius (16). Macrianus, seeing Roman troops, weapons, and standards for the first time, was duly impressed and pleaded for his people (17). After due deliberation, peace was granted to Macrianus and Hariobaudus, but no reply was given to Vadomarius, who was acting as ambassador for three other kings, Urius, Ursicinus, and Vestralpus, on whose behalf he pleaded for peace (18).

The ground for hesitation, according to Ammianus, was fear that, once the army had departed, these kings would not abide by a peace obtained through the agency of others (18). It seems that the Romans would not trust any German ruler who had not abased himself in person sufficiently to convince them that he would be afraid to break any peace that was granted him, even if he felt tempted to do so. This is at least consistent with what follows (19). An expedition was mounted, burning crops and houses, and capturing and killing many men. This prompted the kings to send envoys of their own to beg for peace, which was granted, with emphasis, as on previous occasions, on the return of Roman prisoners.

Ammianus seems somewhat embarrassed by this exercise, which he relegates to the relative syntactical obscurity of a prepositional phrase. He states that the victims were moved to beg for peace, as if they themselves had committed these offences (capturing and killing men, burning crops and houses) against the Romans.[71] This constitutes a condemnation of the Roman action, the more striking because Julian (whose name is conspicuously absent) must bear the responsibility. It must be said, however, that the tribesmen were not entirely blameless; their frequent raids, on which they had acquired the captives they now agreed to return, must surely have done some other damage.

Julian's first campaign after his proclamation as Augustus was against a Frankish

[70] For other such assassination attempts against barbarian leaders, see 27.10.3–4 (Vithicabius), 29.6.5 (Gabinius), 31.5.4ff. (Fritigern and Alavivus).

[71] 18.2.19: *tamquam ipsi haec deliquissent in nostros*. Mommsen added *non* before *ipsi*. But this change produces a somewhat illogical train of thought, and does not exculpate the Romans, since *deliquissent* would still refer to their conduct as well as that of the Germans. (See De Jonge ad loc.)

tribe, the Atthuarii (20.10.2).[72] Their offence, unbridled incursions into Gaul, is familiar, as is the speed with which Julian moved to take them by surprise. Many were captured and killed, and the survivors were reduced to supplication. Julian granted them peace, thinking that this would benefit those whose lands adjoined their territory. As in the previous year, fighting was followed by consolidation. Julian reinforced the frontier defences (3), and recovered a number of places that the barbarians were holding as if they were their own. These he fortified with special care before returning to Vienne for the winter.

In 361 Julian faced trouble from an unexpected quarter, the territory of Vadomarius (21.3.1). The *comes* Libino was sent to deal with the problem, but was defeated and killed (2–3). Ammianus then records the rumour that Constantius had encouraged Vadomarius to engage in border violations to keep Julian tied down (4). Appropriate caveats are inserted (4: 'if faith is to be placed in rumour'; 5: 'if it deserves credence').[73] Vadomarius was duly arrested and sent to Spain (21.4.1–6). Julian's advertised motive, to prevent his wilfully disturbing the hard-won stability of the provinces, once more puts in a nutshell the priority of protecting Gaul against attack and the perceived nature of the barbarian threat (6).[74]

Julian then moved against those who had killed Libino (7). Yet again he made a successful surprise attack (8). Some were killed, others were permitted to surrender at their own request; to the rest peace was granted when they begged for it and promised to behave themselves.

The later history of Julian's reign offers one interesting and confirmatory comparison. In 362 he took measures in Thrace and along the Danube which display exactly the same preoccupations as informed his work on the Rhine (22.7.7). Cities and border fortifications were repaired, and he was also concerned about the welfare of the troops along the river, whose task it was to prevent barbarian incursions.

The necrology has two references to the Gallic campaigns. The first (25.4.10) gives battles priority over building. The opening words of the second (25.4.25) are corrupt, but what is sound is noteworthy for yet another allusion to the speed with which Julian operated and gross exaggeration of the German threat. The Germans are said to have been scattered throughout Roman territory, which is reasonable, and to have been on the point of breaking through the Alps to ravage Italy, which is ludicrous.

The overall thrust of Ammianus' account of Julian's time in Gaul is clear. Julian was heroically successful in performing precisely those tasks which Constantius had

[72] It is unclear why Barceló (n. 2), 45, thinks they were the innocent victims of Julian's unprovoked aggression in a campaign undertaken solely to boost the morale of his troops. There is no obvious reason why the derelictions ascribed to them should not have been genuine.

[73] V has *et dignum*. But Mueller's emendation of *et* to *si* must surely be adopted to save Ammianus from contradicting himself in the space of four lines. Other sources are less coy about Constantius' guilt: see Lib. *Or.* 13.35, 18.107, Eunap. fr. 14.1, Jul. *Ep. Ath.* 286A, 287C, Mamertinus *Pan. Lat.* 3.6.1.

[74] Barceló (n. 2), 46–7, is highly critical of Julian, on the grounds that the raids were directed against Rhaetia and were therefore not Julian's concern, and that Vadomarius himself probably knew nothing about them, since he is hardly likely to have invaded a region over which his patron Constantius held sway. However, Ammianus does not say that the target was Rhaetia, but regions bordering on Rhaetia (21.3.1), so this argument fails. That Julian was eager to seize on any pretext to lay hands on Vadomarius cannot be doubted, but equally he can hardly be blamed, once he had decided on civil war, for not wanting to leave at large in his rear such an enthusiastic supporter of Constantius. That he (and Ammianus) should then present this fundamentally selfish motive in terms of the welfare of the provinces is only to be expected.

entrusted to him[75]—the restoration of the frontier defences of Gaul and the humbling of the barbarians (even if his order of priorities was not quite the same)—and he did this despite a conspicuous lack of support and actual sabotage by the emperor and his creatures and the weakness and cantankerous temper of his army. There is never any suggestion that Julian's achievements were less than they appeared or were reported to be, and on the one occasion when Ammianus may have felt that a pre-emptive strike against presumptuous barbarians was perhaps excessively harsh, he is careful to play down his hero's part in proceedings. He is probably right to see no significant change in Julian's approach to his mission either after he was given supreme command or even after his usurpation. Constantius might have frowned on the way in which Julian had provoked the revolt that led to the battle of Strasburg, but once that had been done the battle had to be fought, even if it might have been more prudent not to fight at that precise moment. The only major step Julian took of which Constantius must unequivocally have disapproved was the arrest and deportation of Vadomarius, but by that time Constantius' wishes were no longer relevant. Although Julian was undoubtedly more adventurous, his views on both the aims of Roman frontier policy and the means by which those aims should be realized as yet differed little from those of Constantius himself.

4. VALENTINIAN ON THE RHINE, 365 (26.5), 366 (27.1–2), 368 (27.10), 369 (28.2), 370 (28.5), 372 (29.4), 374 (30.3)

The first recorded problems with the Alamanni in the reign of Valentinian coincided with the rising of Procopius (26.5.7–8). The situation was the familiar one of raids across the frontier (7), but the motive is one not previously mentioned: they had taken offence when offered cheaper gifts than usual.[76] It appears from Ammianus' account that both sides were at fault. Valentinian proposed first to aid Valens against the usurper (9ff.), but gave way to the advice of his counsellors, who claimed that his presence was needed to save the Gallic provinces, and the pleas of the cities not to leave them unprotected when the glory of his name would frighten off the Germans (12–13). He made for Reims, where Ammianus leaves him for the moment.

He picks up the story at the same point (27.1.1), with a reprise of the theme of frontier violations which needed to be curbed. The first commanders sent against the Germans, Charietto and Severianus, were both killed and a standard was temporarily lost (2–6). Dagalaifus took over, but was recalled to share the consulship with Gratian (27.2.1).

The first to score a success was Jovinus (1). He made cautious preparations and took great care of his army on the march. He was able to annihilate a large party of barbarians, falling upon them unawares. When he then set out in pursuit of another band, Ammianus highlights his careful advance and use of reliable scouts (2). He soon achieved another crushing victory (3). His scouting arrangements are stressed yet again (4), and both his preparations for battle and his tactics are praised (5). Although they were initially terrified (6), the Germans recovered, but in the end Jovinus won a

[75] As noted by Barceló (n. 2), 48.

[76] On gifts to barbarians, see P. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford, 1991), 114; Heather (n. 9), 70; P. Heather and J. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991), 23–4; Schulz (n. 19), 38–9. For possible exaggeration of the Alamannic threat, see Drinkwater (n. 49), 11.

third victory (7). After the battle he was able to proceed through open country with no fear of an ambush (8).

Jovinus returned to Paris, where he was greeted with delight by Valentinian and shortly afterwards elevated to the consulship (10). The lessons of his success were clear. Caution, and especially the proper use of information supplied by trustworthy scouts, bring victories and freedom from the dangers of ambush. But Valentinian's own campaign in 368 (27.10) suggests that he had not heeded them.[77]

Ammianus places the entire campaign under the rubric of the emperor's caution (27.10.1), but the qualification 'as he himself thought' hints that the tone is ironic, as is amply confirmed by what follows. Rando's raid on the ungarrisoned Mainz (1–2) was neither prevented nor punished, and Ammianus stresses the city's vulnerability (1–2). There follows the assassination of Vithicabius (3–4), which Ammianus greets with excessive jubilation, though Vithicabius was allegedly guilty of conventional provocation (3).

A major expedition was then planned against the Alamanni (5), because of their untrustworthiness. Their spells of self-abasement and submission never lasted very long, and they soon began to threaten again. The beginning of the campaign deliberately recalls that of Jovinus in 366. Again there were careful preparations, careful progress, and prudent use of scouts (6ff.).[78] It is perhaps significant that Jovinus was among those present. But the time and place of engagement were chosen by the enemy, and the final plan was arrived at in haste (9–10)[79] Valentinian, convinced that he knew better than the scouts, set out to find a more convenient route. He rode straight into an ambush and was lucky to escape with the loss of no more than his helmet and his dignity (10–11).[80]

After this farcical episode came the battle proper (12ff.). The Romans were first rested and fed (12); during the fighting their army extended its lines (13); the enemy were at first terrified but then recovered and put up a vigorous resistance (13–14). All these features recall the third of Jovinus' victories in 366 (cf. 2.5–6), and it is tempting to believe that he directed this operation too.

The clearest and most elaborate statement of the defensive nature of Roman frontier policy occurs under 369 (28.2).[81] Valentinian made plans, praised by Ammianus, to fortify the entire length of the Rhine from Rhaetia to the sea, not only on the left bank but in some places on the right as well (28.2.1). The work was on a grand scale, involving at one point the diversion of the Neckar (2ff.). Its accomplishment is celebrated in panegyric style as a joint achievement of the emperor and his men (4).

Valentinian then decided to build a fort in German territory on Mt. Pirus (5–6). This provoked an embassy of Alamannic dignitaries, the fathers of the hostages who had been taken in accordance with the terms of the treaty as a guarantee of lasting peace (6). But their demeanour was at odds with the implications of their words (7). Superficially they adopted the humble posture and tone required for all dealings with

[77] For the campaign of 27.10, see Seager (n. 43), 191ff. The treatment there is defective in that it fails to note the close relationship between 27.10 and 27.2, on which attention is therefore concentrated here. Sabbah (n. 15), 205–6, comments on Ammianus' favourable attitude to Jovinus, but makes no connection with 27.10.

[78] Some specific verbal parallels between 2.1 and 10.6ff. deserve notice. Careful preparation: 2.1 :: 10.6. Cautious progress: 2.1 :: 10.6; 2.2 :: 10.7. Reliable scouts: 2.2 :: 10.8.

[79] All this contrasts sharply with Jovinus' complete control of the situation at 2.5–6.

[80] Again contrast Jovinus' freedom from such dangers at 2.8.

[81] See Crump (n. 46), 114ff. He suggests (124) that Valentinian's aims were not solely defensive, but 'future Roman punitive expeditions' (125) are a part of defensive strategy.

the Romans, but their message, though courteously phrased, was a thinly veiled threat. The fortune of the Romans had been raised to the skies by consistent good faith. Let them not therefore, forgetful of security, fall into the error of trampling on agreements and embarking on an unworthy design. That the unstated alternative was war is indicated by Ammianus' comment (8) that, when their arguments were ignored, they departed lamenting the fate of their sons. Indeed, the speed of the German attack, which wiped out the entire Roman force with the exception of the notary Syagrius (8–9), demonstrates that it had been planned in advance in the event of the unfriendly answer they must surely have expected.[82]

Despite this provocation no immediate reprisals are recorded. When Ammianus next returns to the Rhine frontier, under 370 (28.5), Valentinian's chief preoccupation is to crush the arrogance of Macrianus, who is presented as a typical barbarian troublemaker (28.5.8). The emperor planned to save on manpower by using Burgundian troops against the Alamanni (9), though he promised them that he would cross the Rhine in person with a Roman army (10). The Burgundians were enthusiastic: they claimed Roman descent and had their own quarrels with the Alamanni (11). But when they arrived Valentinian was still engaged in building fortifications. This is perhaps the most deleterious instance of the conflict of priorities between deterrent or punitive expeditions on the one hand and frontier reinforcement on the other, already apparent during Julian's time as Caesar. Valentinian did not appear on the appointed day or keep any of his other promises, and even refused the Burgundians' reasonable request for protection on their way home (12–13). Their kings, understandably furious (13), killed all their prisoners and returned to their own lands. Hence the only attack on the Alamanni recorded for this year was made through Rhaetia by Theodosius (15).

The next notice of activity on the Rhine comes from 372 (29.4), when Valentinian was still concerned about Macrianus, who is presented as a growing threat (29.4.2). Ammianus begins (1) with a favourable judgement on the emperor's policy. Valentinian, he says, chose the more valuable course, but what that course was cannot be determined with certainty.[83] The emperor wanted to take Macrianus alive, just as Julian had captured Vadomarius (2). It is unclear whether this benchmark was set by Valentinian himself or added by Ammianus, but the comparison certainly serves to highlight Valentinian's eventual somewhat farcical failure. As often with Roman expeditions across the Rhine, Valentinian enjoyed the initial advantage of surprise, but the noise made by Roman troops, despite their commander's efforts to keep them quiet, alerted Macrianus' retinue to the danger (5). Unfortunately, a lacuna makes it impossible to determine whether this commander was Theodosius, who had been sent ahead with the cavalry, or Valentinian himself.[84] Ammianus firmly places the blame on

[82] Ammianus' account is probably derived from Syagrius' report, see Sabbah (n. 15), 157ff.

[83] V offers *forticen regendus uerius milite barbaris quam pellendis*. Heraeus' *foret in* for *forticen* should be accepted. The minimum change that would then produce acceptable grammar is *regendis* for *regendus*, but 'controlling the barbarians with troops rather than expelling them' makes little sense. The general sense is clear enough: something was better than driving the barbarians off. Common sense suggests that this was keeping them out. (Compare the repeated emphasis on Valentinian's work in strengthening the frontier defences.) The most attractive reading is therefore *in coercendis uerius limite* (Clark), i.e. 'in restricting them by a frontier', but it is hard to justify elevating any conjecture to the text.

[84] For Ammianus' somewhat complex and very cautiously expressed attitude to the elder Theodosius, see R. Seager, *Histos* 1 (1997) forthcoming (already available in the Internet version).

the rank and file, exculpating both Valentinian and his generals (6), even though he had stressed the commander in question's inability to control his men (5).

A notice under 374 (30.3) begins with a brief allusion to the familiar combination of fighting and fortification. Valentinian had returned from ravaging several cantons of the Alamanni and was engaged in building a fort near Basel, when he heard of the invasion of Illyricum by the Quadi (30.3.1). He was at first eager to move quickly against them, but was persuaded to wait till spring because of the worsening weather and the threat still posed to Gaul by neighbouring kings, above all Macrianus (2–3).

So Macrianus, who was also, as events were to show, inclined to accept a treaty, was courteously invited to Mainz (4). However, his extreme arrogance suggested that he thought any treaty would be made on his own terms, and he came to his bank of the Rhine with head held high. Valentinian met him more than halfway by embarking on a boat and proceeding to within negotiating distance of the German bank (5).[85] That he is called by the title Augustus, not by name, is surely intended to emphasize the degree of this concession. After much discussion, friendship was established by an oath. The terms are not recorded, but they must have been generous, since Macrianus abided by them and remained a faithful ally for the rest of his life (6). Valentinian then returned to winter quarters in Trier (7).

Ammianus' portrait of Macrianus verges on caricature. The king begins as the archetype of barbarian arrogance, then suddenly turns without warning or explanation into another stereotype, that of the faithful ally. No doubt he came to a rational decision that peace would be in his own best interests, and he surely realized the strength of his situation. The language throughout underlines the advantage he enjoyed. He had to be handled with kid gloves (4, 6), and the course of the negotiations confirms that his reading of the situation in 4 was no more than the truth. Valentinian was desperate to leave a settled situation behind him, and so Macrianus was well placed to dictate terms. Ironically, this was to prove far more beneficial to Rome than the sort of treaty that the Germans broke as soon as they had recovered from the punitive expedition that imposed it.

The sections of the necrology which have a bearing on Valentinian's conduct on the Rhine (30.7.5ff.) place heavy emphasis on the defensive aspects of his work. There appears to be an allusion (5) to his desire to protect or fortify the citadels and towns on the river, though the text is uncertain. But he is unequivocally praised (5–6) for the measures he took against invasion, reinforcing the armies and building forts and look-out posts on both sides of the river to protect the Gallic provinces against the Alamannic raids to which they had been exposed ever since the death of Julian (6). The assassination of Vithicabius is again justified (7) on the grounds that he presented a serious threat to peace.

5. VALENTINIAN ON THE DANUBE, 373 (29.6) AND 375 (30.5–6)

When the Quadi, after years of quiet, caused trouble in 373, Ammianus grudgingly admits that they had just cause for complaint (29.6.1). The problem stemmed once more from Valentinian's plans for frontier defence.[86] Ammianus alludes again to his burning desire to strengthen the frontiers (2), which led him to want to establish a

[85] It is clear from Ammianus that Macrianus remained on shore. This is correctly understood by Schulz (n. 19), 46; *contra*: Heather (n. 76), 120; Heather and Matthews (n. 76), 26.

[86] Crump (n. 46), 126–7.

base on the far side of the Danube, in the lands of the Quadi, as if these had already been brought under Roman jurisdiction.

Despite the protests of the Quadi, the execution of the project was entrusted to Marcellianus, son of the praetorian prefect Maximinus (2–3). The language Ammianus uses to describe the clash between Marcellianus and Gabinius, king of the Quadi, is striking. Marcellianus, puffed up because of his father's high position, did nothing to placate those who would lose their lands (4), while Gabinius modestly requested a postponement (5). Pretending to agree, Marcellianus, with feigned humanity, invited Gabinius to a banquet and in shameful violation of the laws of hospitality had him murdered. It is as if the conventional roles had been reversed. Gabinius behaves in a civilized manner, Marcellianus like a barbarian; when he appears to display a 'Roman' quality, it is a sham (5).[87]

This outrage not surprisingly roused the Quadi and their neighbours to frenzy. They sent raiding parties across the Danube, did a great deal of damage, and almost captured Constantius' daughter on her way to marry Gratian (6ff.).[88] Now joined by the Sarmatians, they continued to range widely, and though they were deterred from attacking Sirmium, they defeated two legions that were sent against them (8–14).

The only success was won by the future emperor Theodosius in Moesia (15). He repeatedly defeated the free Sarmatians, who were also violating the frontier. Familiar desirable consequences ensued (16). Their arrogance lost its fire; they were afraid and begged for pardon. When peace was granted, they abided by the treaty. But there are ominous undertones. Ammianus describes them as conquered for the time being and makes it clear that their compliance was occasioned only by fear, especially as a strong Gallic contingent had just arrived to give Illyricum enhanced protection, a formulation which reveals yet again an essentially defensive outlook.

In spring 375 Valentinian set out from Trier for Illyricum (30.5.1). He was met on the way by Sarmatian envoys, who protested the innocence of their people in extreme suppliant mode. The emperor refused to give an answer until he had investigated on the spot, yet when he arrived he made no enquiry into the murder of Gabinius or the causes of the subsequent upheavals (2–3). Throughout the summer he remained at Carnuntum, preparing for an attack on the Quadi, described as instigators of the dreadful disturbance (*tumultus atrocis*) (11). The justice of their cause seems to have been forgotten, even though *atrocis* here echoes *cuius rei tam atrocis* of the murder of Gabinius at 29.6.6. Eventually two columns crossed the Danube, the second commanded by Valentinian himself (15). In true barbarian fashion the Quadi were stunned to see the Roman army in their land (13). Valentinian advanced, slaughtering and burning with the advantage of surprise (14), before withdrawing for the winter, allegedly without losing a single man.

The expedition brought the Quadi to a suitable frame of mind (30.6.1). Envoys came, pleading for peace and forgiveness and promising to provide recruits and other benefits. It was decided to grant them a truce, though only because a lack of supplies and the lateness of the season made further campaigning impossible (2). So they were admitted to the presence. At first their humble posture and attitude left nothing to be desired. They made excuses, perhaps not convincing, claiming that any hostile acts had been the work not of their leaders but of bands of foreign brigands. But then they

[87] Seager (n. 11), 68.

[88] The further brief notice at 30.3.2 presents these events in conventional fashion as just another typical frontier violation with overtones of barbarian presumption, with no mention of the extenuating circumstances.

became less apologetic, claiming that their conduct was justified, not, intriguingly, by the murder of Gabinius, but by the original attempt to build the fortress, which they criticized as unjust and inappropriate. It was his fury at this piece of presumption that brought on Valentinian's fatal apoplectic fit (3ff.).

The account of Valentinian on the Danube is too inconclusive to invite much comment. But Ammianus' presentation of his activities on the Rhine displays one outstanding feature, namely the sharp contrast in evaluation between his achievements in the field of frontier reinforcement, which are highly praised, and his performance in battle and in negotiation, which is never much applauded and more than once held up to ridicule.[89] Again the desire to glorify the dead Julian seems to have played a major part. Not only is Julian seen as setting the standard for dealing with the German menace (27.1.1, 30.7.5), but his capture of Vadomarius is said to have inspired Valentinian's desire to lay hands on Macrianus (29.4.2), a parallel that can only highlight Valentinian's ignominious failure. But Vadomarius is not the only German ruler to come to mind when one considers Valentinian's dealings with Macrianus. His arrogance recalls that of Chnodomarius, but whereas Chnodomarius was defeated and utterly humiliated by Julian (16.12.58–61, 65), Macrianus conspicuously got the better of Valentinian. Thus every reminiscence of Julian's achievement serves to undermine that of Valentinian, even though Ammianus is honest enough to admit that the emperor could not be blamed for Macrianus' escape and that the consequences of the peace were beneficial, despite the manner of its conclusion.

6. VALENS ON THE DANUBE, 365 (26.6), 366–9 (27.5), 376–8 (31.4ff.)

The Goths first forced themselves on Valens' attention during the rising of Procopius (26.6.11). He learned that they were planning to make incursions into Thrace and so sent troops to guard the points at which they might make the attempt. They are interestingly characterized as still untouched by Roman arms and on that account extremely savage. That this should be said of the Goths is particularly striking because of their long period of acknowledged friendship with Rome.[90] Valens had another complaint against them: they had sent troops to help Procopius (26.10.3). When in 366 he sent Victor to enquire why they had done so (27.5.1), he reminded them that they were Rome's friends, bound to her by a peace of long standing. They claimed that their error was venial because of the usurper's link with the house of Constantine, but Valens was not impressed and decided to attack (2). Thus for Ammianus Valens is responding, as emperors so often do, to barbarian provocation of two kinds: the threat of the usual frontier violations and the actual assistance rendered to Procopius. Of possible Gothic discontent with the existing treaty he says nothing, but it is known that the Goths had asked Julian for a revision of its terms, which he refused (Lib. *Or.* 12.78). Unfortunately the terms of the treaty of 332 are far from certain, so that further speculation seems futile.[91]

In 367 he crossed the Danube unopposed, but the customary fear at the approach of a Roman army (3) had caused the Goths to withdraw, and so he could find no

[89] Drinkwater (n. 49) is too simplistic. His own assessment of Valentinian's achievement (13) is very hostile.

[90] On the treaty of 332 and subsequent relations between the Theruingi and Rome, see E. A. Thompson, *Hermes* 84 (1956), 377ff.; Heather (n. 76), 108ff., 116–17; Schulz (n. 19), 32, 51.

[91] For instance, of the scholars cited in n. 90, Heather accepts a clause permitting free trade, inferred from Them. *Or.* 10.135C–D, but this is rejected by both Thompson and Schulz, though their alternative explanations are quite different from one another.

opposition to overcome or terrify. All he could do before returning to base was to send Arintheus on a mission against the stragglers (4). In 368 the flooding of the Danube prevented any invasion (5), but in 369 Valens attacked the Greuthungi (6), inspiring a desirable change of heart in Athanaricus, who at first dared to resist but then fled in terror.

It seemed an opportune moment to end the war (7).[92] The enemy's fear had been increased by Valens' long stay in their country and the interruption of trade meant that they were starving. So they sent repeated embassies in a suitably humble spirit. Valens, who had not yet been led astray by his flatterers, decided to grant peace (8). Victor and Arintheus were sent to the Goths and reported that they agreed to the proposed terms (9). Typically Ammianus does not see fit to tell his readers what they were.[93] However, Athanaricus claimed to be bound by an oath never to set foot on Roman soil.[94] So, since it would have been unbecoming for Valens to cross to meet him, the peace treaty was concluded on boats in midstream.[95] After receiving hostages from the Goths, Valens then proceeded to Constantinople (10).

The cavalier manner in which Ammianus treats this peace is remarkable: perhaps, with Edirne looming, he felt it hardly mattered. That he should fail to report the terms is all too familiar, but other omissions are more striking. He perhaps implies that the Romans won the war (7). But he never makes it clear why they decided to make peace when they had achieved no noteworthy success, and his approval is unequivocal (8), even though a similar decision by Constantius on the Rhine had earned his scathing contempt.[96] Nor does he offer a view on who won the peace, in sharp contrast to his account of the negotiations between Valentinian and Macrianus.[97] On the one hand, the Goths are presented as suppliants (7); on the other, Valens had to meet Athanar-

[92] Themistius had already prepared the ground in 368. *Or.* 8.114C implies unmistakably that although the Goths were behaving in an arrogant manner, they were going to be let off lightly. See Heather (n. 76), 117; Heather and Matthews (n. 76), 14ff.

[93] For discussion, see Sabbah (n. 15), 352ff.; Heather (n. 76), 115ff.; R. C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy* (Leeds, 1992), 32–3; Schulz (n. 19), 50ff.

[94] Heather (n. 76), 120, suggests that Athanaricus' oath may have been invented to save Valens' face.

[95] The implication of both Amm. 27.5.9 and Them. *Or.* 10.133C is that Valens and Athanaricus were on separate ships. (Thus Schulz [n. 19], 46; *contra*: Heather [n. 76], 118; Heather and Matthews [n. 76], 25; Blockley [n. 93], 33.) This is only to be expected; neither security nor dignity would have allowed either ruler to set foot on the other's vessel.

[96] See above, section 1 and n. 6. Constantius' speech on that occasion has much in common with the elaborate justification offered by Them. *Or.* 10.131D-2A (already put in a nutshell at 130D). Cf. Heather (n. 76), 118; Heather and Matthews (n. 76), 14ff.

[97] Themistius on the other hand works overtime (*Or.* 10.132A, 133C–D, 135C–D, 140A) to insist that Valens dictated the peace, which he granted only as an act of charity when he could, had he wished, have annihilated his terrified, grovelling opponents. His protesting too much is perhaps the strongest argument in favour of the view of Heather (n. 76), 116ff., and Heather and Matthews (n. 76), 20–1, that the terms favoured the Theruingi more than the Romans. But even if this is so it is hard to believe that Themistius actually admits that the peace was a compromise, as is implied by the translation of *Or.* 10.135A offered at Heather and Matthews (n. 77), 43: 'cast down in spirit by those aspects of the treaty in which he had lost his case but exulting in those in which success had fallen to him'. The sense required for διελέγχθη, 'had lost his case', is somewhat unnatural, as is the assumption that τῶν σπονδῶν, 'of the treaty', is partitive, rather than being governed directly by ἔτυχε, 'he secured'. More importantly perhaps, why should Valens' tame publicist suddenly reveal that everything he had said previously about Valens' crushing victory in the debate was in fact false? We should expect Themistius to be saying 'Athanaricus was downcast because he had been defeated in debate but elated because he had secured peace'; in other words, the fundamental antithesis should be between διελέγχθη, 'he was worsted in argument', and ἔτυχε τῶν σπονδῶν, 'he secured the peace'. This would at least be

icus in midstream (9). Perhaps most striking of all, given his intense interest in frontier defences,[98] is his failure to mention the elaborate defensive works undertaken by Valens allegedly along the entire length of the Danube.[99] Again the contrast with his treatment of Valentinian's labours on the Rhine could hardly be greater.

The arrangements seem to have remained undisturbed till 376, when the fatal chain of events was set in train that was to lead to Valens' defeat and death at Edirne. Under pressure from the Huns, the Theruingi under Alavivus asked his permission to settle across the Danube (31.4.1). Their demeanour was appropriately submissive (1, 4), and they promised to live peacefully and to provide troops if required. Valens' flatterers urged him to agree, stressing the financial gain that would accrue. As Ammianus remarks with bitter hindsight, every effort was made to ensure that no man who might help to overthrow the Roman state was left behind (5). Permission was duly given them to cross and settle in parts of Thrace.[100]

So, says Ammianus, the barriers of our frontier were unbarred (9). He clearly sees this decision as a crucial betrayal of the most fundamental principle of Roman frontier policy, namely that the frontier existed to keep out the barbarian hordes. The first to be admitted were Fritigern and Alavivus, who were, on Valens' orders, to be given lands to cultivate and supplies to tide them over in the meantime (8). There followed the ruthless exploitation of the Gothic refugees by the corrupt Roman administrators of the plan (10–11). Despite his conviction that the Goths should never have been let in, Ammianus concedes that Roman greed was the root cause of the evils that followed (10) and that crimes were committed against foreigners who had as yet done no wrong.

The next to request leave to enter Roman territory was Viderichus, king of the Greuthungi (12). Despite the submissive attitude and tactful words of his envoys he was refused (13). Athanaricus, fearing a similar rebuff because he had humiliated Valens in 369, withdrew to inaccessible regions. That he should fear Valens' anger is hardly surprising, and he could certainly expect a refusal were he to ask permission to cross the Danube. But his actual behaviour suggests that he was afraid of something worse: a Roman punitive expedition.

Because of the misconduct of the Roman officials, the Theruingi were still near the river, and Lupicinus, who is cast as the arch-villain,[101] fearing a revolt, used troops to move them on (31.5.1–2). This enabled the Greuthungi to cross while the troops were otherwise occupied and the crossing-points unguarded (3). The blame for these developments is unequivocally assigned to the Romans.[102] So too the treacherous behaviour of Lupicinus at his banquet for Fritigern and Alavivus (4–7) is described (4) as another

consistent with what has gone before, and would preserve the parallel between Valens' achievement in negotiation and the familiar pattern of Roman success in the field: victory followed by clemency in the granting of terms. Whether the text as it stands can bear this interpretation is questionable; it might be worth considering emending at least the second οἷς, 'in respect of those things which', to ὡς, 'because'.

[98] Crump (n. 46), 117.

[99] Them. *Or.* 136A, C. The conception of defensive strategy presented by the orator here, with peace guaranteed by a readiness for war, since in the long term only fear keeps barbarians in check (138B, D), is virtually identical with that of Ammianus.

[100] On problems connected with the nature of this settlement, see Heather (n. 76), 122ff., who rightly stresses that the terms were quite favourable to the Theruingi. It is possible that their conversion to Christianity occurred at this time, perhaps as a condition of the agreement, cf. P. Heather, *GRBS* 27 (1986), 289ff.

[101] Perhaps the scapegoat of an official enquiry, see Heather (n. 76), 132–3, 141.

[102] For events leading up to Edirne as a catalogue of Roman errors, see Bitter (n. 11), 107.

more atrocious act, which was to lead to destruction for the Romans.[103] The respectful attitude of the mass of the Goths is also emphasized (5).

It is only when Fritigern and his companions make their escape, bent on stirring up war in various ways (7), that Ammianus for the first time attributes a hostile initiative to the Goths, and then only under extreme provocation. This is then reinforced by his comment that all the Theruingi were now eager for war and began to burn and pillage, which led to a defeat for the Romans through first the rashness, then the cowardice of Lupicinus (8–9).

The next deterioration in the situation was also brought about by the Romans, this time in part at least by Valens himself. Ammianus is at pains to point out (31.6.1) that there was no unity among the Goths. Sueridus and Colias at Edirne, who had been admitted long since, were content to keep out of these upheavals, for their chief priority was their own well-being. But then they were suddenly ordered by Valens to cross to the province of Hellespontus (2). Although they asked modestly for their expenses, food, and time to prepare, their request was refused by the chief magistrate of the city, who threatened force if they did not move forthwith. They were then abused and attacked by the citizens (3).

With some subtlety Ammianus uses the same language to describe the reaction of the Goths to this treatment as he frequently employs to portray the effect on barbarians of the appearance of a Roman army: they are shocked and terrified. But instead of being reduced to surrender and submission they are driven to open revolt. Turning to Fritigern, they joined him first in an attempt to besiege Edirne, then, on his advice, in plundering undefended areas, in which they enjoyed great success (3ff.).

The tale of Roman error continues with the bad planning of Profuturus and Traianus (31.7.2). But from this point on the Goths are portrayed as the conventionally crazed barbarian enemy (2–3).[104] The gravity of the situation was shown by Valens' request to Gratian for reinforcements, which led to the sending of Frigeridus and Richomeres (3–4). This inspired Merobaudes to fears which reveal the usual preoccupation with defence: that Gaul, deprived of its defenders, would be vulnerable to raids from across the Rhine (4). The situation before the battle at Salices is striking. The Goths were, as might be predicted, stricken with fear by the presence of the Roman army facing them (7). But the Romans too were afraid of opponents who are characterized as rabid beasts (9).

In 377 the Romans again seem to have been unable to cope. When Valens sent Saturninus to assist Traianus and Profuturus, the Goths were penned up in the Haemus range, but Saturninus deliberately let them escape, for fear that his forces would be overwhelmed if they broke out of their own accord (31.8.3ff.). Ammianus accepts that this was a sensible move in the circumstances (5), even though it led to the devastation of the whole of Thrace (6ff.).

The most striking feature of his narrative is, however, its constant insistence on the savagery and bestial nature of the Goths. Before they escaped from Mt. Haemus they were driven by savagery and want (4), and once they had broken out they attacked Dibaltum like wild beasts loosed from their cages (9), then tracked Frigeridus like animals on the hunt (31.9.1).

Nevertheless Frigeridus achieved a success that enables Ammianus to revert briefly to the conventional language of Roman victory. He establishes a typical contrast be-

[103] That Lupicinus is unlikely to have acted on his own initiative is plausibly suggested by Heather (n. 76), 132–3.

[104] Bitter (n. 11), 105.

tween the Roman, a most cautious commander (4), and Farnobius, whom Frigeridus came upon ranging unchecked (3). Farnobius' death removed the threat he had once constituted (4), whereupon Frigeridus found the survivors reduced to a suitably submissive condition. They were duly resettled in Italy. It can therefore be read as an ominous sign when shortly afterwards Frigeridus was replaced (31.10.21–2).

In 378 Fritigern was afraid that Sebastianus might destroy his people by a surprise attack, while they were scattered and intent on plunder (31.11.5). He therefore planned to lead them to regions where they need fear neither hunger nor ambush. This might suggest that for the Romans there was no urgent need to force a confrontation. But Valens, aware that Gratian was on his way to lend assistance (6), was eager to fight before his colleague arrived (31.12.1). This policy was clearly ill-founded. It was based on false information about enemy numbers (3), and was advocated by the emperor's flatterers, even though Gratian by letter and some of Valens' officers in council advised caution (5ff.). Valens is described as smitten with shameless heat (3), while burning barbaric arrogance is ascribed to the Goths (6): it seems as if there is little to choose between them.

Then came a letter from Fritigern, asking for a grant of the whole of Thrace, with all its crops and flocks (8). If this were conceded, he promised perpetual peace. He presents his people in an interesting manner, as exiles driven from their ancestral homes by the rapid incursions of savage tribes. It is as if he were inviting the Romans to view the Goths as a naturally settled and civilized people, victims of the sort of barbarian invasions with which the Romans themselves were all too familiar: a people, in short, much closer in culture to the Romans than to the Huns.

But Ammianus is convinced of his insincerity (9), because he also sent a private letter to Valens, urging him to threaten battle, since otherwise he would be unable to calm the savagery of his people and win them to acceptance of terms advantageous to Rome. However, the envoys accomplished nothing, for they were regarded as untrustworthy.

Nevertheless, there were further attempts at negotiation before the battle, which Ammianus again dismisses as a trick to gain time (12–13). The scene begins conventionally: the barbarians are terrified and send envoys to plead for peace (12). Valens again showed his overconfidence by scorning their rank and demanding that ambassadors of greater distinction be sent (13), though the avowed objective, the conclusion of a lasting peace, suggests that he was not yet determined to fight at all costs. But the Goths deliberately delayed, to give their cavalry time to arrive during the bogus truce. Meanwhile Fritigern asked the Romans to send noble hostages. This proposal was approved, and Richomeres duly set out (14ff.). But his initiative was thwarted by the undisciplined behaviour of certain Roman units (16). Richomeres was recalled, and the fatal battle began before Fritigern's sincerity could be put to any serious test (17).

After the disaster at Edirne (31.13), the bestial frenzy of the Goths receives even heavier emphasis during the account of their abortive siege of the city. Victory made them still more savage, like beasts that have tasted blood (31.15.2), and there are repeated allusions to their ferocity and madness (3, 4, 14). Their letter demanding that the defenders surrender moves Ammianus to condemn them as monstrously presumptuous (5). After abandoning the siege they returned to more characteristic barbarian behaviour, ranging unchecked throughout the northern provinces (31.16.7).

Certain criticisms may be made of Ammianus' understanding of the events leading up to the disaster. It is unlikely that Valens was delighted at the prospect of admitting

the Theruingi, and he seems to have struggled vainly to control a situation that was getting increasingly out of hand.[105] Ammianus' conception of the nature of barbarian tribes may have led him to underestimate the capacity of the Goths for planning and co-operation.[106] It may also explain his insistence on the insincerity of Fritigern's avowed desire for peace. If so, his reluctance to believe that a savage could ever act in good faith took precedence over his dislike of Valens, since if Fritigern's offer of peace had been genuine, the emperor's desire to fight and fight quickly would have been an even greater proof of folly.

7. GRATIAN ON THE RHINE, 377–8 (31.10)

The campaign of Gratian against the Lentienses in 378 was a response to the most conventional of causes, namely frontier violation in breach of an existing treaty (31.10.2). As on other occasions, the invaders were encouraged by the knowledge that the emperor was, or in this case would soon be, occupied elsewhere (3). The description of the situation further east is somewhat strange: 'to repel the inhabitants of the border regions' suggests nothing more than the usual type of frontier raid, yet 'conspiring for the destruction of the Roman state' acknowledges the gravity of this particular case, to a degree that perhaps goes beyond the evidence.

So in 378 the Lentienses tried to cross the Rhine but were repelled (4). This caused them to become more fiery and arrogant in their incursions (5). But again they were defeated by Nannienus and Mallobaudes (6ff.), and their king Priarius was killed (10).

Gratian therefore decided that, since they were treacherous and devoted to causing trouble, they must be exterminated (11). The Lentienses, like so many others taken by surprise at his arrival, were at first at a loss, then took to the hills (12). The campaign proved more difficult than expected for the Romans, involving first a blockade, then pursuit when the tribesmen escaped (13ff.). Realizing that Gratian was intent on their destruction, the Lentienses decided to surrender, with appropriate humility (17). Troops were demanded from them, which they provided, and they were then allowed to return home. Despite his supposed determination to destroy them, Gratian was no doubt happy to make a settlement that would allow him to hurry to the east, knowing that the situation at his back was reasonably secure, at least for the time being.[107]

8. CONCLUSION

It is clear from Ammianus' narrative that, though emperors might come and go, the policy of Rome on her northern frontiers remained essentially the same. That policy was fundamentally defensive, and comprised two principal elements: the restoration, improvement, and upkeep of defensive works; and the mounting of expeditions. These expeditions might have one or more of three closely related functions: to drive out barbarians who were invading or had even settled in Roman territory; to punish those guilty of these derelictions by subjecting them to invasion in their turn; and to serve as a deterrent against future incursions by both those who had made them in the past and those deemed likely to offend, though they had not yet done so.

A successful expedition follows a standard pattern. The barbarians are stunned and

[105] See Heather (n. 76), 128ff., for a detailed presentation of this view.

[106] Heather (n. 76), 135ff.

[107] This is compatible with Ammianus' estimate of the victory: it tamed the western tribes; that is, the most urgent objective had been achieved.

terrified by the appearance of Roman forces in their land. They grovel and beg to be allowed to surrender, either at once or after a swift and overwhelming defeat. Provided they display a sufficient degree of self-abasement, their crimes are graciously forgiven and they are granted a peace treaty. In the technicalities of this process, such as *deditio* and *restitutio*, Ammianus has little or no interest, and he is casual in reporting the terms of treaties. Generally speaking, he is concerned only with those clauses which illustrate the character of his protagonists and those of which the breach or the observance contributes to the dynamics of his ongoing narrative.

The obvious point of reference for his outlook is Virgil's immortal formulation of the mission of Rome: . . . *pacique imponere morem, parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* ('to make peace the customary state of affairs, to spare the submissive and bring down the arrogant by war') (*Aen.* 6.852–3).[108] How Virgil conceived of the practical relationship between these complementary duties is not immediately obvious, but need not detain us here. For Ammianus, reducing the arrogant and sparing the submissive are certainly more often than not successive stages in a single process, not alternative approaches to be dictated by different circumstances. As for making peace the norm, that for him is little more than a dream.[109] His pessimistic or simply realistic appraisal is that barbarians usually keep the peace only as long as they live in fear of potential Roman reprisals.[110]

His priorities do not always appear entirely consistent. His disparagement of the attitudes of Constantius and Valentinian is of course intended to exaggerate Julian's achievements, but he seems to show a genuine enthusiasm for Julian's more aggressive and interventionist stance, in which the element of war against the arrogant loomed large. Yet his comment on Valens' admission of the Theruingi (31.4.9) suggests that, however satisfactory it might be to celebrate victories won over barbarian hordes on their own ground, the trauma of Edirne had convinced him, if he had not believed it already, that the primary purpose of frontier policy must be to keep them out.

University of Liverpool

ROBIN SEAGER
rseager@liv.ac.uk

[108] That the debellation of the arrogant was an essential element even in a defensive strategy is most clearly shown by Constantius' formulation at 15.8.7.

[109] Perhaps significantly, the vision of lasting peace is ascribed to Constantius (15.8.14).

[110] For peace through fear, see the passages cited above, n. 4. For breaches of the peace, see 17.6.1, 19.11.5, 15, 26.5.7, 27.5.1, 31.10.2 and esp. 27.10.5 and 28.2.6ff. (See also 17.1.3, 18.2.7, 18.) Contrast 30.3.6.