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**HISTORY, RHETORIC AND THE FICTIONALIZATION OF HISTORY:  
THE KING PAP OF ARMENIA EPISODE (AM, RES GESTAE 27.12.9-  
30.1)**

**Historia, retórica y la ficcionalización de la historia: El episodio del  
Rey Papa de Armenia (AM, *Res gestae* 27.12.9-30.1)**

**ABSTRACT:** What we analyse in the king Pap of Armenia episode is how Ammianus describes a complex political and religious background, by using a rhetorical approach and a very varied narrative and dramatic register: a fictional plot, full of adventures, theatrical and dramatic, diverse in its staging and striking and impressive in its details. The fictionalization of the account and the use of the rhetoric, aided by many contrasts, ominous prolepses, defined characterizations, theatrical re-enactments, and details (rather than facts) which converge to make a banal historical reality but one that is attractive for the reader, will mask a historical truth, but they serve the ultimate aim of the historian: the decadence of Rome was not only due to Adrianopolis, but to the loss of the moral values. In sum, a good example of fictionalized history.

**KEY WORDS:** History, Rhetoric, Fictionalization of history; Drama, Ammianus; Pap of Armenia.

**RESUMEN:** Lo que analizamos en el episodio del rey Papa de Armenia es cómo Amiano describe un contexto político-religioso complejo, utilizando un planteamiento retórico y un registro narrativo-dramático muy variado: una trama novelesca, repleta de peripecias, que también es teatral y dramática, con una puesta en escena muy impactante e imprevista en los detalles. La ficcionalización del relato y el empleo de la retórica, ayudados por múltiples contrastes, ominosas prolepsis, definidas caracterizaciones, teatrales escenificaciones, y detalles (más que datos) que convergen hacia una realidad banal históricamente pero atractiva para el lector, enmascaran una verdad histórica, pero sirven al propósito último del historiador: la decadencia de Roma no se debió sólo a Adrianópolis, sino a la pérdida de los valores morales. En suma, un buen ejemplo de ficcionalización de la historia.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Historia, retórica, ficcionalización de la historia, drama, Amiano, Papa de Armenia.

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*Introduction*

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST HISTORIANS OF ROME.<sup>1</sup> He was a Greek by birth, born in Antioch according to traditional sources, and a committed pagan, as seems to be indicated by his work and his *laudatio* of Julian.<sup>2</sup> Ammianus' history, despite its connection with the classical spirit of traditional

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<sup>2</sup> Or maybe he was an apostate, like the Emperor. Cf. BARNES (1998: 83).

Rome, has an evident Hellenic world-view; hence his Latin, richly nuanced but imbued with Greek expressions, and the universal approach of his history, emphasised in the many geographical *excursus* concerning the provinces where action takes place. However, the essentially analytic structure of the *Res Gestae* fits the needs of its times, comprising the life and accomplishments of the emperors, their political activities in each part of the Empire, and the geographical division between East and West, each with its respective problems, their main cities always being contrasted with the eternal Rome. Our historian, in his need to integrate all these elements, is obliged to provide a complex account, both literary and historical. His approach is not linear, because it cannot be so; his almost innumerable characters contrast with and highlight the main ones; his narrative (so abundant in events of the most various kinds) is rich and varied, but paints a grim picture; and his rhetoric functions effectively on different levels of the narration. There are numerous events organized and resolved in a way quite different from Livy's. And the characters are briefly but efficiently sketched out by the author, who portrays them by their behaviour or any other distinguishable feature: these characters, according to Ammianus, are not known for their noble or exemplary conduct.<sup>3</sup> They tend to be mostly negative figures: dark, sinister, wicked, selfish, weak or tragicomical (like Procopius), more pragmatic than intelligent. The leading characters, moved by their baser passions, dominate a political scene pervaded by conspiracies and vileness, while the minor characters (the courtiers and their henchmen) play their own part with intrigues and manipulation; the following social panorama is far from being optimistic or positive. Sometimes, even those characters who attempt to help others (such as Cylaces and Artabanus) end up being sacrificed by those whom they helped: this is what happens, for example, to the king Pap of Armenia (27.12.14). The historian offers a colorful and impressive spectacle, whose staging has led to a well-known debate on the objectivity of the historian: the influence of rhetoric in Roman historiography cannot be denied, as well as Ammianus' ability to manipulate his narrative. The dramatic value of several passages, as the one we will study in this paper, is not always easy to recognize.

Here we have an apparently minor episode, seemingly independent of the main narrative, but nonetheless relevant to it. It is formed by different scenes, guided by the actions of its many characters, and its development combines various narrative levels: it is a bit novelistic (some adventurous and picturesque elements can be found); a bit tragic (there are crimes and injustices aplenty, while the rulers prove to be mean and cruel); and overall very dramatic, both in the theatrical influence over the characters' personality and in the dramatic disposition of the settings, which

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<sup>3</sup> Some of them are barely known (if not altogether unknown) but nonetheless useful to illustrate the social circles of the time.

comprise two large sequences (27.12 and 30.1) with different formal registers on each. This episode contributes to underlining the general presentation of the story-line, gradually moving towards the final Roman disaster (Adrianopolis) that will be caused by the loss of the eternal values which made Rome the ruler of the whole world: we can clearly see in this episode that Valens proves to be as negative a character as Shappur.

The structure of the passage, roughly speaking, is this:

- I. *Presentation of Pap (27.12)*
  - a. Introduction: prologue, Shappur and his intrigues (27.12.1-3), and the death of Arsaces (27.12.4)
  - b. Artogerassa is attacked, actions of Cylaces and Arrabanes, Pap's flight from the city (27.12.5-12), capture and burning of the city. Arintheus is sent.
  - c. Shappur's guile, Pap's injustices, death of Cylas and Artabanus; war between Valens and Shappur for Armenia (27.12.18)
- II. *Death of Pap*
  - a. Transition: from the death of the king of the Quadi in the West to Pap's death in the East (30.1). Preface to the capture and death of the king (30.1.2-3).
  - b. First part: Pap's capture and his flight. Crossing of the Euphrates on improvised rafts (30.1.8-9). Crossing of the mountains (30.1.11-15).
  - c. Second part: Assassination of the king (30.1.17-22). The crime is insincerely justified by the sycophants of the Emperor.

#### I *Presentation of Pap (27.12)*

It is well-known that if Polybius narrated the creation of the Roman people Amiannus recounted their disintegration.<sup>4</sup> What is certain is that, beyond the specific details and isolated gruesome passages,<sup>5</sup> his account exudes a disturbing acrimony and profound despair, thanks especially to the concurrence, multiplication, interrelation, *gradatio*, projection and contrast of such kinds of references. But that

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. ALONSO NUÑEZ (1975: 192).

<sup>5</sup> Plots, betrayals, deaths, convictions and torture, or simple ones, but continuous and repeated injustices and vengeance...; Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.33.3) had already lamented the inclusion of these passages.

expressive, funereal baroque style, superior to a large extent to that of Tacitus, as we have already highlighted elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> is combined and rounded off with a complex internal mechanism (structure; subject matter selection; silences; contrasts, allusions, echoes or intertextuality...), more difficult to perceive, by means of which suggestion is achieved, with no explicitness at all.<sup>7</sup> In fact, it is easy to show how, from the coming to power of Valentinian and Valens, and much more so after the twenty-eighth book, a very marked decline began, which, as Livy revealed centuries earlier,<sup>8</sup> pointed to the widespread disaster in which Rome was to be immersed: the combination of catastrophic internal and external factors with the stark narrative and factual contrast that Ammianus establishes — the disaster of Adrianopolis is responded to by the unexpected intervention of the Mount Taurus army commander, Julius,<sup>9</sup> villainous and pragmatic, at the end of the account—, impose on the reader the sensation that the author intended.

The passage we analyse this time also contributes to this idea: the rise to the throne and death of Pap of Armenia. It is yet another reason for this series of passages that Ammianus' account configures; a series of mosaics whose colouristic *tesserae* help to shape, with their individual contribution within a defined whole, a bright fresco (beautiful or macabre). With regard to art and applying it to the poetry of the fourth century, but with good reason in the case of Ammianus' prose, it is what Michael Roberts called "*The jeweled style*".<sup>10</sup>

Our goal is to analyse, on the one hand, the way in which Ammianus has combined the substantial and traditional elements of historical accounts with the selection and disposition (*inventio* and *dispositio*) that highlight the intended effect. In short, the rhetorical planning that accompanies it, especially in what contributes to controlling the message and the interests of the historian, removing the rest. And, on the other hand, to highlight the fictionalization process of the account increased in the latter part of the episode, within parameters that enhance or conceal the author's

<sup>6</sup> For Tacitus, cf. BARTHES (1993-4: 1247-9). For Ammianus, cf. MORENO (2013: 44, n. 125).

<sup>7</sup> Ammianus, *The elusive historian* (as KELLY (105-158) entitles his biographical chapter 3), playing with the words of the title of the work) is often unclear, even when he recognizes his competence, as in the army (*quondam miles et Graecus*, 31.16.9). MARTIN-GAILLARD (1981,142) compares his intentional vagueness —a distancing that seeks to avoid the pedantry of precision (*ib.*)—, with the accuracy of Caesar, and the demands of Polybius.

<sup>8</sup> ... *labente / lapsi sint / praecipites donec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus...* (Prol. 9-10).

<sup>9</sup> It is the complete reversal of the values that Rome had defended and incorporated. Cf. also MORENO (2013: 44).

<sup>10</sup> There are different nuances in those who use this expression. ROBERTS (1989: 132) applied it to the different scenes that make up the striking result of a text. SMITH (1999: 89) saw the diversity of narrative forms of which the long Julian passage is composed. We refer the different episodes, acts or scenes, dynamic or static, very noteworthy and with a certain independence that mark out the central account.

purpose: a very impressive and spectacular configuration (visual and theatrical: sequences, scenes, characterizations and sets of different characters in action...); varied (different registers, levels and resources: fictional, anecdotal, tragic); and heavily contrastive, with very marked strokes, in colours and darkness. In fact, the dual purpose of the historian —(a) to keep quiet the anti-Roman and un-Christian nature of Pap compared to his never mentioned enemy, the *katholikos* Narses;<sup>11</sup> and, at the same time, (b) to bolster the guilt of Valens and his team, clumsy, devious, crafty, and, as such, worthy antagonists of the Persian sovereign—, scarcely to be disclosed among the heap of more or less entertaining and original information he offers, with the *variationes fortunae* his characters undergo. That is his skill. That, and projecting the value of the assassination on the ending of the work, like yet another state crime that stains the track record of Rome, steering her to her (deserved) end; it is, as Poncet highlighted with regard to the work of Rosen, yet another indication of the internal causes of the failure of the imperial policy of this time.<sup>12</sup>

The episode, divided into two parts (presentation of the main character and the character's death), brings to the fore the difference in register to which the historian resorts in each case: the fictional value and adventure; the dramatic one of *enargeia*, with the different acts and scenes that the process is made up of, marking its progression;<sup>13</sup> and how he resorts to different echoes, nuances and resources of different tenors and different authors, in a mixture of typical genres of the moment, also within the idiosyncrasy of the historical account itself. It is what Rowland Smith highlighted with regard to the long fragment about Julian, where different techniques are linked and combined, from epic ones to philosophical debate, or eulogy; and his title, *Telling Tales*, incorporates well the essence of the Pap adventure, with its many ups and downs, in connection with the incidents that the protagonists of the novel experience, and the fiction, together with the vagueness that can be discerned behind the stories.<sup>14</sup> All this does not in the least mean that this is a collateral episode. It plays an important role in the structural scope of the text, with the swing or division between West / East (26.5.15), with their different problems and issues; and it brings into play a fundamental aspect of the historical account, already noted by Livy in his transition from the twenty-first book, with the sceptical Flaminius to the disaster of

<sup>11</sup> Cf. BARNES (1998: 81) and DEN BOEFT *et al.* (2009: 267-8).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. PONCET (1969: 620) and ROSEN (1968). And this despite his vaunted faith in sovereign Rome: *ut domina suscipitur et regina...* (14.6.6). Perhaps the answer is to be found in the time difference: maybe then the situation was not as onerous as now; the fall seems to increase with Book 28.

<sup>13</sup> In the sense of the genre that is represented and seen; again we testify to the importance of spectacle in the work of Ammianus —Livy had already fostered it (FELDHERR 1989)—, whose awareness may be seen in the case of the material stored *causa theatri* (29.6.11); and the episode of Petronius Probus in Sirmium (29.6.9), whose characterization (*adsuetus / praestricus / oculosque vix attollens / ambigens / immobilis*) includes a good final dramatic/comic antithesis (27.11.2).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. SMITH (1999: 89-90).

Trasimene, which is the disposition of the endings of the episodes projecting on the immediate future: a large scale prolepsis, without hardly any specific reference,<sup>15</sup> and not unique in Ammianus, but it is one of the most notable ones. In fact, the resource is used to close another two episodes related in tone and characteristics to this one: the first (i) starts with the deeds of Antoninus (18.5.8), the deserter of the imperial guard who goes over to Shapur for economic reasons, taking his family with him (18.5.1-2), although this latter is of lesser importance (20.6.1) than that of Pap; and (ii) the deeds of Craugasius, with his beautiful wife and daughter (18.10.2), benevolently treated by Shapur,<sup>16</sup> whose adventure, more amorous than in the case of Pap (19.9.3-7), ends happily. The art of Ammianus, at times very subtle, brings both characters together (19.9.7-8), albeit leaving it in second place. It is not coincidental that the two (the former very angry, like Shapur), should later open up the important matter of the conquest of Singara (20.6.1).

The presentation closes the dense Book 27, and with only this topic devoted to the East (27.12),<sup>17</sup> which sets the scene already for the main elements of the story:<sup>18</sup> the treacherous death of Arshak (§ 3), Shapur's wiles, attempting to take Artogerassa (§§ 5; and 12); his flight from the city, on the advice of his mother (§ 9); and then, those of his unexpected protectors (§11), and, finally, the unjust action of the young king, assassinating them (§ 14), on unconditional surrender to the Persian. Considerably later will come the assassination (30.1), which opens the penultimate book of the work, in which the death of Valentinian is described (30.6), and his characterization (30.7-9), parallel with and antithetical to that of Valens in the last one (31.14).<sup>19</sup> This chapter (30.1), from the historical and political point of view, is completed with the immediate exchange of ambassadors over Armenia and Iberia (30.2) of both sovereigns: what is suggested, although utilizing different formulas (fictional and rhetorical), is the geographical-military and political use of the zone for each of them.

The opening of the fragment is unique for the episode in general, unlike the epilogues, that are different for each part, and fulfils well its informative and

<sup>15</sup> Cf. GENETTE (1989: 95 and 121-4). Unlike the multiple internal mentions that bind the contexts at other times.

<sup>16</sup> The echo of Alexander and Sisymbria hovers over the passage (18.10.3), in which, however, the differences are very important: the allusion to the burkha —the black veil that covers her up to her lips— and the selfish attitude of Shapur, who seeks to use her as a bargaining chip to obtain Nisibis, far from the very generous attitude of the Greek with his mother and wife of Darius.

<sup>17</sup> Except the brief references to the Syrians (27.9.6-7).

<sup>18</sup> In narratology (PITCHER 2009: 132), the term applies to the events “as they are ‘dispositioned and ordered in the text’; and the ‘fabula’, ‘all events which are recounted in the story, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order’”.

<sup>19</sup> Briefer, and less nuanced and organized: no military and literary education (31.14.5); interference in the administration of justice, lack of moderation and infinite cruelty (29.2.10-17).



rhetorical function: with the topic *a persona*,<sup>20</sup> the change of scene of the action is presented (from West to East): *Rex vero Persidis...*;<sup>21</sup> then, the general psychological motivation of the character is added to launch into the taking of Armenia (*dulcedini rapinarum addictus*) also similar to the previous one, when the Persian king burnt with desire to acquire Mesopotamia (20.6.1). Thus, keeping the substance of the elements the same, the structural value of the expression, the geographical and narrative transition, the wishes of the king to seize the area, and its political and human tenor,<sup>22</sup> Ammianus draws a parallel between the two circumstances; increasing by the echo of the fatality of the first (the disaster of Julian), the second, before driving forward the action with the reasons for the opportunity to attack Armenia: the deaths of Julian and Jovian, with whom he had signed a “shameful” pact; and, especially, now makes that fundamental historical motif clear in the passage: *iniectabat Armeniae manum ut... dicioni iungeret suae*. A motif that will be reiterated threateningly at the end: *suumque parabat exercitum ut... subverteret omnia, ...*(§ 18). An ominous dramatic prolepsis, as we have mentioned, which, in addition, offers a fine contrast with the justifications that, from the opposing side and centuries earlier, had been offered by Corbulo,<sup>23</sup> and with which it closes, not completely, but rhetorically, the first epilogue; a conclusion whose starting point is the contrasting attitudes of the sovereigns (27.12. 17-18) on the share-out of Iberia. Very well illustrated with the parallel and antithetical participial formulas (*Quae imperator doctus... / His percitus Sapor...*), each passage is then resolved in a very different way: in the case of Valens, with a skilful contrast between his usual cruelty and the desire here to smooth out tensions, his *consilium* and his *prudencia* are highlighted, the two typical *virtutes* of the *dux* which the Roman emperor never appeared to have and which will be forgotten at Adrianopolis..., and which lay bare the historical explanation that he took, the division of Iberia, as the most logical one;<sup>24</sup> thus, without the fallacy of the argument being noticed, the Roman sovereign appears as a good political organizer. In the case of Shapur, on the other hand, exclamatory mood dominates (§ 18). Certainly there is

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<sup>20</sup> The already “long-lived Shapur”, a similar formula to the one used after the proclamation of Julian, when the Persian, *truculentus rex ille Persarum, ...*, was to launch his attack against Singara. We cannot enter into the problem of the shape and publication of the work, which is complex and has been carefully studied (MATTHEWS 1989). But this subtle parallelism helps to make the narration inclusive, with recurrent leitmotifs that contribute to bring the themes together.

<sup>21</sup> Earlier Ammianus has dealt with Valentinian’s campaign against the Alamanni (27.10), and presented the important Petronius Probus (27.11), whose conduct will be highlighted later (28.1.31; 29.6.9-19).

<sup>22</sup> Avarice (18.10.2); pride or arrogance (19.1.3-4).

<sup>23</sup> What was worthy was that the Roman people were to recover the conquests of Lucullus (99 B.C.) and Pompey (69 B.C.), ... (Tac, *Ann.* 13.34.2).

<sup>24</sup> For the generalization based on incomplete information or the oversight of alternatives as fallacious arguments see WESTON (2005: 124-5).

an objective recapitulation of the data<sup>25</sup>, but by way of contrast, it is presented subjectively and emotionally: it is Shapur who shouts (*pati se exclamans indigna*), revealing his feelings<sup>26</sup> —, with an *amplificatio*<sup>27</sup> —the stark reality of intimidation: to subvert it all—, which appeals not to mercy as we shall see later (§ 7), but to fear.

The second (30.1.22-3), however, does boost the emotive value, on several fronts.<sup>28</sup>

(i) It recapitulates the crime against Pap, recriminating the forms,<sup>29</sup> plus the infringement of legality and hospitality that Valens has committed.

(ii) It evokes the bloody way in which this crime had been carried out, contrasting it with the surrounding adornment (*in ambitiosa linteā*); he resorted to the living presence of the gods (*hospitali numine contuente*).

(iii) He plays with the lexis (*cruor / conspersus spumante sanie satietati superfuit*) to stress the visceral nature of the action and the anguish those present suffer, which underlines the gravity of the event.

(iv) And, as an ending, before resorting to the topic *exemplum* of Roman integrity compared to the attempted assassination of Pyrrhus, the authority of a dead man, the hero Fabricius Luscinus, is invoked, for him to repent this change in Rome's attitude. The footnote, almost a maxim, with its venerable language on the *reverentia* of the past, closes this first *exemplum*.

Then, Sertorius' theoretical contrast is added; an imprecise addition on the Hispano-Roman,<sup>30</sup> which is further clarified in the reference to Demosthenes: one crime does not mitigate another, even though it has not been punished. But the *exempla*, although they bring the episode to an end, within the typical moralizing

<sup>25</sup> ... *quod... quod*. Objectivity continues with the preparation of the army and the improvement in the weather...

<sup>26</sup> He “feels scorned”, a sentiment that Gallus had also shared (14.7.12), in the midst of his problems and evils, when Constantius sent Domitianus to take him to Italy (14.7.10).

<sup>27</sup> *Ad Her.* II 30.47. Logically, there is no way of fitting together the ten topics adduced —fifteen in the *De inventione* (1.53-54.100)—, for this kind of resource that the author adjusts to his material.

<sup>28</sup> It may be summarized in *indignatio* (against the adversary, although here he is a Roman: Valens) and the *conquestio* (a *commiseratio* because of the indignity of Rome now). Cicero (*supra*) notes among the topics the granting of speech to the dumb or inanimate beings —or dead, as in this case Luscinus (1.54.109)—; or recriminating something that should not have happened (§108), such as the criticism of regicide.

<sup>29</sup> Deceit as a means, and sullied trust.

<sup>30</sup> Plutarch, who links the act to a love affair (Sert. 26), presents the intriguing and ambitious Perpenna, inviting him to a supper in Osca to commemorate a non-existent victory, and giving a signal to one Antonius, who was beside him, on dropping a glass of wine. Florus only establishes that *suorum scelere et insidiis* (II 10[III 22],6). Velleius does state it: *inter coenam* (II 30.1).



historiographer's technique and the need to maintain the dignity of the account,<sup>31</sup> they do not serve as a historical close to the fundamental subject matter. The direct political struggle for the kingdom will come later, in the following chapter, with the embassies and the dispute of both sovereigns (30.2): on the one hand Shapur, whose mood swings between concern, sadness, irritation, pride, anger again, decisive contempt, and cruel threats (§§ 7-8); and on the other hand an emperor over whom eventually hangs, in a further prolepsis, this latter on the main line of argument,<sup>32</sup> the imminent Gothic threat (§ 8).

At the beginning, the subject matter was based on a clear chronological sequence deriving from Shapur's attitude:

a) *primo*, devious attempts against the Satraps

b) *dein*: the assassination of Arshak, attracted *per exquisitas periuriisque mixtas inlecebras*.

c) *deinde*: Iberia, with the expulsion of Sauromag and the crown for Aspagur, with the visible and public insult brought to life in the symbol of the *diademate addito*; an external referent, always visible, of luxury and power, and a point of contrast with the next Pap case, sent by Valens to Armenia *sine ullis insignibus...* (27.12.10),<sup>33</sup> but later *regaliter vocatus* (30.1.4) to be annihilated.

d) and the start of the main nub of the narration with a very Caesarian absolute ablative of synthesis and transition: *quibus ita studio nefando perfectis*.

It is the death of Arshak, very theatrically described,<sup>34</sup> which introduces the *crux* of the matter: it gives way to the actors and enables, in a typical *dynamic* scene,<sup>35</sup> the development of the subsequent movements: invited *in convivium*, captured treacherously, tortured and finally executed, the brief report reveals the change in register with which Ammianus handles the data on each occasion. Brief and informative, but without renouncing the macabre nuance of the historian's clarifications (29.1.37-40), it underlines the expressionist baroque style of the epoch and the historian's own taste, on a very different plane to the subsequent one by his son (30.1.19-22): this one is longer, much more dramatic and meticulous in its details, more lively in the *actio*, and much more theatrical on the stage; in any event, both show that *ekphrasis* is never superfluous, nor does it lack functionality.<sup>36</sup> Here

<sup>31</sup> Cf. SABBAAH (1978: 416-9).

<sup>32</sup> Homodiegetic and complete, cf. GENETTE (1989: 122-30).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. also 27.12.14: *maiestatis regiae velamento...*

<sup>34</sup> Especially in the way he is taken from the banquet, and the various acts of torture.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. TODOROV (1971: 121) and (1981: 11, 66 and 88). Albeit curiously, in itself *static*.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. FRANÇOIS (2012: 138).

the main elements of the representation (27.12.3),<sup>37</sup> not of the simple *evidentia*, are transmitted using three notes: a) movement: his transfer, that is active in which they take him from the party; and passive for him, who “is dragged” (*trahi*); tragic, too, because *fortuna* takes him from a playful environment, in which he was important and happy, to the place of his death (*ad castellum... § 3*); and, as an antithesis to any kind of *adventus* or triumphal return, “through a concealed postern”;<sup>38</sup> b) visualization, both the sensationalist impact that the event produces on the recipient of the information due to its painful, almost tangible nature,<sup>39</sup> and the deprivation of the sense of sight itself which he suffers: *effossis oculis*; c) together with the futile “ornament” which he is granted (*vinctum catenis argenteis*),<sup>40</sup> and typical or illustrative of this eastern zone, as clearly exemplified by the triumph of Aurelian over Zenobia of Palmyra taken “in golden shackles” —on feet and hands, and *torques*, also of gold, around her neck—, to *act as a spectacle* for the People of Rome (*HA Aur. 30.2*). In both cases ostentation further darkens, by contrast, the fall from favour of the character and the tone of the account. In fact, Ammianus, to insist on it, compared to the initial *per exquisitas... illecebras* (§ 3), adds two last notes on the demise of the king: (1) the painful torture, obvious thanks to the graphic *hapax, discruciatus*;<sup>41</sup> and (2) the execution, with the typical expression<sup>42</sup> of the official punishment: the sword (*ferro poenali*). The brief exercise in historical fictionalization seeks more to impress the reader than to inform him.

But it is the traditional turn of phrase *quibus... perfectis* that gives way now to the main actors in the fragment (*Cylaci spadoni et Artabanni*, the wife of Arshak, and Pap) setting the scene of the action: Artogerassa, the place of refuge of the former and custody of the riches of the kingdom; from here Pap will flee (§ 9),<sup>43</sup> and then

<sup>37</sup> Not of the image which would be a static concept. The introduction, however, that highlights the more psychological part, without even leaving out the physical suggestion of such caresses, completes the picture with the voice that remains outside the direct indication —*per exquisitas periuriis mixtas inlecebras...* It is the same as he does with Pap.

<sup>38</sup> Ammianus frequently stresses with this term (*latentem*), in its different categories, the devious way of acting of the imperial hub, Shapur too (§ 14); and the *allamannus* Rando (27.10.1).

<sup>39</sup> If the pain is psychological it hurts the recipient's sensitivity less; it is transmitted with greater difficulty, and requires more expressive capability, but involves more artistry. Blood is much more sensationalist.

<sup>40</sup> Even for the author himself (§ 3). Ammianus appears to be more restrained than others. Cf. DEN BOEFT (2009: 272)

<sup>41</sup> A reference that takes the same macabre path of the epic procedure, and Lucan applauding the force of the amputations and the limbs dislocated or wrenched off in the battle. Cf. DINTER (2013, 36-38).

<sup>42</sup> For the parallel, cf. the punishment of the *curiae* Romulus and Sabostius (21.12.20).

<sup>43</sup> The topic is presented as an “addition” (§ 9). For the narrator, the main reason for the dissension between Rome (*inter nos*) and Shapur is the *inopina defectio* of Cylaces and Artabanus (§ 7-9), and the *nequesque Persarum (infra)*, provoked by the attack by the *iuentus... velox* (§ 8).

Cylaces and his companion, outwitting Shapur, through “the heights of the mountains, the depth of the forests and the undulating hills”; details all of which, although not necessary for the story, make a huge contribution to framing the situation and suggesting the atmosphere, defining the type of account (adventures) that is used.<sup>44</sup>

The sequence of this *urbs capta*, which, as Menander recommended in his treaty *On Epideictic Genres* (I 344-46), includes, by way of a traditional prologue, the reasons for its solidity,<sup>45</sup> focusses its thematic originality on the surprising action of the eunuch Cylaces,<sup>46</sup> and the *dux* Artabanus;<sup>47</sup> and its rhetorical distinctiveness, in the inversion of several traditional parameters:

a) The brevity is greater because here the dramatic value does not fall on the siege,<sup>48</sup> but on its consequences.

b) The physical and circumstantial difficulties of the place, topics and both with echoes of Livy, even in their expression,<sup>49</sup> are not determining factors for the action, nor for the passage,<sup>50</sup> as occurred in Heraclea (*AVC* 36.23.6).<sup>51</sup>

c) There are women’s laments, but not after taking the fort, but when Arshak’s wife shouts (*beiulante*),<sup>52</sup> faced with the sad fate of her husband and the proposition

<sup>44</sup> Such as the expressions that describe this attack (§ 8): the besiegers, asleep, without noticing him because of their *passibus insonis*, calmly snore away (*stertitur*).

<sup>45</sup> Physical: the wall; and human: treasure; and the widow and her descendants.

<sup>46</sup> Very suitable as such for the salacious and very expressive characterization, attributed to him: *aptusque ad muliebria palpamenta* (hapax). In the episode of the rich merchant Antoninus (supra), parallel in some points to the latter, they are described as *feri et acidi semper carentesque necessitudinibus ceteris divitias solas ut filiolas incundissimas amplectuntur* (18.5.4); cf. TOUGHER (1999, 64-73).

<sup>47</sup> Always in the background, cf. the immediate *Artabanne adscito* (§ 6), which involves the inclusion in a duo. There is no action, *dictum* or gesture which makes him independent and marks him out.

<sup>48</sup> Such as in Pirisabora (24.2.9-22) and Singara (20.6), which, even though sharing some topics with the latter, or *viceversa* —a mission is sent, which grants a deadline, although it does not convince the besieged—, it is infinitely richer in details of the attack and the defence. It is to that end when the deserter Antoninus is referred to for the last time (20.6.1).

<sup>49</sup> ... *asperitate montana* (for the former cf. 15.10.2 and 10; is also applied to Count Fortunatianus (29.1.5), indirectly linked to the process against Theodore; or the violence of the diseases) // *rigente tunc caelo nivibus et pruinis...*

<sup>50</sup> A different case for both is that of an unnamed fortress on the way to Ctesiphon, when faced with Julian’s attack (24.5.6), which was about to cost him his life, and where he seems to have lost his traditional calm (24.5.6-7 and § 10-11).

<sup>51</sup> A siege which was completely dominated by the conditions of the geographical features. In the *Res Gestae*, even the cases of Bezabde (20.7.1), or Maogamalcha (24.4.10), or the most undiscovered, Thiluta, in the middle of the river (24.2.1), concentrate interest on the internal vicissitudes of the process; as in Singara with its duration, its battering ram and its tower (20.6).

<sup>52</sup> An infrequent verb (4 occasions), linked to passages of notable physical and moral harshness: the cruelty of Gallus (14.7), where Luscus, the one who shouts, is burnt alive as the inciter

of both characters handing over the city who do not want to provoke the cruelty of Shapur.

d) And such a proposal, like the response, is resolved indirectly, so the traditional rhetorical possibility of any kind of parley is rejected.<sup>53</sup>

e) But, on the other hand, in a good, double reversal of classical approaches, what is modified is not the situation, but the frame of mind of the messengers. Suddenly, the two characters change their approach: *in misericordiam flexi*. Ammianus only uses this noun in one other very expressive and visual scene: the Sarmatian king Zizais, throwing down his arms prostrates himself on the ground,<sup>54</sup> imploring before Constantius II, and, unable to speak, arouses such “compassion” in those who watch the act, that, as happens here, he obtains what he wanted; and precisely from whom, by being in a superior position,<sup>55</sup> is able to grant it. The historian is well aware of the Livian tradition, but, for this reason, is capable of modifying it perceptibly and skilfully:<sup>56</sup> the actors (the wife), instead of arousing compassion in the readers, fulfilling the topical function of tragedy, with such background theatre, arouse it in the two interlocutors,<sup>57</sup> who are seen as capable of suffering what the other is suffering.<sup>58</sup> Then, Ammianus will repeat the underlying idea, although varying the

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of the riots; and Montius torn limb from limb...; or that of the boy who Ammianus found abandoned by his mother because he was holding back her flight from the enemy (18.6.10). Also in that of Maximinus’ servants (28.1.36), Mucianus and Barbarus, despite the feigning.

<sup>53</sup> In the case of Bezabde, leader of the Christian community (*Christianae legis antistes*), with his gestures and movements, he manages to be allowed to leave the city to go and parley with the Persian king (20.7.7). His arguments are not accepted; and Ammianus lets all the weight of suspicion of a possible denunciation about the most accessible places in the wall fall on Shapur.

<sup>54</sup> Such as the penitents (17.12.9-10); the long scene brings together several of these topics, highlighting the physical nature of the action, which accompanies, by antithesis or complement, the humility of the requests.

<sup>55</sup> The pitier, then, must be in a superior position to the pitied. Cf. KONSTAN (2001: 50).

<sup>56</sup> Without dwelling on it, two details that are not to be found in Ammianus: Livy frequently resorts to the doublet (3.56.11); sometimes to antithesis (3.50.7), and on other occasions intensification (7.30.11). It is the *Populus Romanus*, or the Senate, the target of his entreaty, or the agent of mercy (7.30.11). And the expressions are very varied, more rhetorical (26.29.6/ 24.26.15/ 40.10.2); and more numerous (30 appearances). This scene can also be compared with that of the ambassadors of Carthage, raising the unbearable pressure of Masinisa (42.23.10).

<sup>57</sup> The result is the fast decision —not a generous one: Ammianus, with his usual negative tone, does not fail to immediately chime in with: *et spe potiorum erecti...*—, explained in detail, of a sudden departure to massacre the enemy. Beyond the topics (confidential conversations; time set at night; even the oath), what is noteworthy is the atmosphere of secretiveness that the historian creates and the shape of the scene that envelops the contenders with their different ways of behaving and how they are characterized (§§ 7-8).

<sup>58</sup> KONSTAN (2007: 11) stresses that the very happy or arrogant ones do not usually have it (*ib.*), and it is offered to those who are worthy of it, that is, those who suffer undeserved misfortunes. And Ammianus is playing with the anticipation of the future tragedy: Cylaces, with Artabanus, may be thinking about the hypothetical problems that they could be afflicted with, and, in fact, will be afflicted with in the future: Pap will have no “mercy”.

term and the interpreters: the two characters “seduced” (*illecti*) by Pap’s *humanitas*, will request Valens to appoint him king of Armenia. In the finest tradition of historical accounts,<sup>59</sup> Ammianus adduces a psychological reason for a political event (§ 9), and prepares the characterization of the young king to confront him immediately, on the one hand, with the stupidity of Valens who allows himself to be seduced by his incompetent advisers, amongst whom Terentius, an *orthodox and pious Christian*, whose characterization (30.1.2), could be related to such a characteristic;<sup>60</sup> and, on the other hand, with his own weakness, yielding to Shapur’s wishes, to whom he sends the heads of his two protectors, whom he kills following the same procedure (*blanditiarum inlecebris*, § 14) as the one used against his father (*per exquisitas... inlecebras* § 3).<sup>61</sup>

Certainly, it is this double triumph of the Persian, the psychological one (§ 12) and the one in war, that is brought into the final part of the fragment. Ammianus makes him “contemplate” the passage of time in desperation, stressing the summer, with its “parched” fruit trees, and the frequent (in these cases) *sidere flagrante brumali*,<sup>62</sup> before the *aperta praedatione* underlines the emphatic and self-evident physical way that he conducts the conquest —a new contrast compared to the opacity and guile with which he has acted earlier (§§ 2-3).<sup>63</sup> But Pap’s treachery to those who had helped him (Cylaces and Artabanus), has an even greater projection: in short, the superiority of the Persian is accepted.

Two final important details highlight other narrative and argumentative techniques used by Ammianus in the fragment: one, the appearance, but not the presentation, of a figure who, by way of leit-motif, until putting an end to Pap, marks the main stages of his itinerary; it is the famous *Terentius dux*, who Valens asks to take him back to Armenia (27.12.10); and then (§ 16), without Ammianus resorting to any of his dramatic flashbacks to enhance his role, used as an indirect weapon to do away with him (30.1.2-3). From the standpoint of the general organization of the account,

<sup>59</sup> Substantially Livian, and Thucydidean before him. Cf. REINHOLD (1985: 22): Thucydides was the first historian to use human nature “*as motive force in history*”.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. DEN BOEFT (2009: 283). In other cases Ammianus maintains his neutrality, or praises some members of this *religio absoluta et simplex* (21.16.18). The definition demonstrates that he knows about it: *absoluta* implies the completeness of its doctrine, which requires no changes and *simplex*, its lack of ambiguity. Cf. NERI (1992: 59-60).

<sup>61</sup> In general, it is a term, and a procedure with which Ammianus emphasizes many endings. Here the contrast is important and the intensification of the antithetic parallel.

<sup>62</sup> DEN BOEFT *et al.* (2009: 286) point to the “idiosyncratic” nature of the phrase, which appears with similar notes in other cases: Bezabde (20.7.11), which Shapur intends to take before the winter; antithetically, a little before Strasbourg (16.12.15); and in Daphne (22.13.4), with the drought which dried up rivers and fountains.

<sup>63</sup> In fact, both the tricks and the opposition between what is open and what is concealed is always promoted; yet another parallel, in the Antoninus episode (cf. 18.5.6).

by not presenting him in this initial action, the historian makes perfectly clear<sup>64</sup> the secondary value that he gives to him, despite being a prominent personality, a much-vaunted catholic; with his impressive description later—some well-chosen terms: *demisse*<sup>65</sup> *ambulans, semperque submaestus, sed, quoad vixerat, acer dissensionum instinator*<sup>66</sup> (30.1.2-3)—, and the hypocrisy he exudes, the perversity and inefficiency of the disastrous group of Valens’ advisers, who “exaggerate the crimes” of the king of Armenia, increases.<sup>67</sup>

And the fine orchestration of the last passage maintains the two foci of attention with regard to the dual purpose intended:

a) The (necessary) information about the areas of conflict, with the see-sawing of events (Armenia/ Iberia), with the further clarification about Shapur’s make-up, which is variable and accommodating, as required, who manipulates Pap like a pawn, who will later suffer himself punishment for such an attitude, served up by General Trajan (30.1.19).

b) And the rhetorical shape, which leaves unresolved the future as a reality and a threat. Thanks to this, the connection with the subsequent fragment (30.1), which continues to have a bearing on the crimes, and making the narration swing from West to East, is easily linked, despite the huge leap in time and narrative.

## II. *Death of Pap (30.1)*

The second act of the episode maintains the antithetical and complementary contrast of the main characters, although now it will be Valens, with Rome in the background, who aided by the conspirators who “plot” the machinations,<sup>68</sup> and

<sup>64</sup> On the forms of characterization, place and value, differences (portrait; relationship; outline..., between main and secondary figures), or applied physiognomy, etc., cf. SABBAAH (1978, 419-53).

<sup>65</sup> This adverbial *bapax* has been used as an adjective in respect of Julian, whose “lower lip was somewhat drooping” (25.4.22), but who had seemed to them to have “come down from the heavens” (22.2.4), almost like Mamersides, who does “come down” using a rope from the fort (24.2.21). And whom *Genius, demissus et maestus* (20.5.10), fears having to abandon. His friends gather round him on his death bed, *demissos et tristes* (25.3.15).

<sup>66</sup> Ammianus only applies the term to the unfortunate Nigrinus too, accused of being the instigator of the uprising in Aquileia (21.12.20).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. SABBAAH (1978: 424).

<sup>68</sup> A graphic *consarcinabant* (30.1.2), which opens the part aimed at the *evidence* that justifies the historian’s assertion (30.1.1). The verb with this value very often appears: with the very perverse notary Paulus (14.5.6), and in respect of Ursicinus (14.9.2); the cruel Maximinus (28.1.12); Pergamius, who “embroils” the cause in excess (29.1.25); the forged letters (15.5.5; and 12); and the trap plotted by Rufinus (16.8.4). It only applies in the true sense in the case of Julian (22.9.11), speaking of the chlamys that an aspiring emperor has woven, reported by another; and in the clothes interwoven by the Huns (31.2.5).



highlights with his evil the ultimate reason for the fall of Rome. But what dominates the passage is the novelty of the expressive forms of which it is composed: the echo of the story, with the descriptive brevity and simplicity in the depiction of situations; the ease of comprehension, with substantially fictitious details in the two main courts; and the fictional incidents,<sup>69</sup> with the role of fate,<sup>70</sup> which attracts the reader, who ceases to care about the substance. Thus, the multiplication and diversification of details act as a means of *disinformation* making it possible to leave out the important political and religious background of the issue, which the uninitiated reader fails to perceive.<sup>71</sup>

The transition from the problems of the West to those of the East is achieved using the same topic for both areas: a crime; in the former, the attempt on the life of Gabinius the king of the Quadi (29.6.5), by order of Marcellianus (29.6.3-5), son of the proud, hypocritical and cruel Prefect of Rome, Maximinus,<sup>72</sup> and not much better than him, in the latter (30.1.11), the *dirum...facinus* of Pap. But with notable differences for each actor and his representative value.

(i) First, Gabinius, as a person, is of no importance; he has no particular characteristic, except his natural lack of fear; and only two actions are predicated about him (political / personal) with the two participles: *poscentem*, his (reasonable) request that the *statu quo* between Quadi and Romans be maintained (29.6.1-2) / *digredientem*: his departure from the banquet.<sup>73</sup>

(ii) The space where the crime is committed is of no importance: there is no ritual, or drama; no description; no multiplication of remarks to offer a vivid picture of the situation, as did happen in the case of Pap, where the author allows himself to be carried away by the atmosphere of the scene that he is recreating (30.1.20-21): rich food, the echo of the music and singing in the spacious halls, which evoke the hedonistic sensuality of the area; and, of course, the complement of the wine,<sup>74</sup> who inflames the passions and induces the owner of the mansion to leave *per simulationem*

<sup>69</sup> In the proper sense, and in the most general of incident, episode, occurrence. In it more worlds and characters are recreated than situations (story).

<sup>70</sup> Always the basis of tragedy: from *felicitas* to disaster.

<sup>71</sup> Neither the Christians, inclined to the Roman side (as a counterbalance to the Sassanid influence in the area, and the progressive extension of the “Magian religion”; hence the request for Pap’s return to Armenia); nor the role of Narses, all of which can always be related to the problem of Ammianus regarding such *religio* (cf. n. 2, 50, and 57, and the suggestion concerning the possible denunciation of the bishop, 20.7.8) are anywhere to be found. Cf. BARNES (1998: 81) and DEN BOEFT *et al.* (2009: 267-8).

<sup>72</sup> A serpent... (28.1.7; 28.1.18; 31 and 35); now, furthermore, an ill-fated prevaricator (29.6.3).

<sup>73</sup> The reason is only a detonator that triggers actions that end up giving way to other more notable or more enhanced elements: such as the attempt to kidnap Constantia (§ 6.7).

<sup>74</sup> With Alexander the Great in the background.

*naturalis cuiusdam urgentis...* This latter an expression, furthermore, with an important echo, within his apparent humility, because Caracalla was assassinated, according to the *Historia Augusta*, when he withdrew *ad requisita naturae discessisset* (Cc. 7.1); and Ammianus describes, in the *excursus* of the Persians (23.6.79), his discretion in these acts, so different from Roman indifference: ... *nec ad requisita naturae secedens facile visitur Persa*; doubt about where the expression comes from, and the relationship between the two works has been the source of much ink spilling.<sup>75</sup>

From this moment on, the account becomes an almost paradigmatic exercise in the typical distortion of genres in this epoch in which the borders between them, where unwritten laws have maintained their strength so far, begin to blur. Invention does not replace history in respect of the basic facts (30.1.18), and Ammianus himself insists on offering the *causa* of the events which he “has known” (§ 1)<sup>76</sup> to strengthen an approach from which he will immediately escape. But imagination, the enemy of *fides historica*, takes possession of the account in the three main sequences of which it is composed: a) the flight of the king, with the crossing of the Euphrates on the wineskins (§ 5-10); b) and then over the mountains (§§ 12-16); c) and death (§ 19-21). With such events, entertaining the first two and pathetic the last, the historian achieves his dual purpose: to distract the reader from the real historical problems,<sup>77</sup> and shapes a very novel fragment, where the sense of spectacle dominates the background —with the wonderful; or, at least, adventurous (§§12-15), or risky ending in comedy, with Pap happy in his kingdom (§ 15), or tragedy, with his death (§ 21)—; and form: the scenic sequence of the drama which enables the different episodes to be separated from the gradual advance of the argument. In fact, one of the fragments of the episode (that of the way through the mountains, §§ 11-16) is perfectly defined by the appearance and performance of the *extras*: Danielus and Barzimeres (§§ 11 and 16), sent to capture the king by Valens, first of all annoyed by his escape (§ 11), and then seized by inexplicable hate (§18). In his final appearance, Ammianus multiplies the negative notes against them: by indirect means, with the judgement of those who attack them after their failure (...*venenatae serpentes*); and direct ones, with a nuance already well-proven in the work: sharpening his claws “to hurt” (*nocituri*).<sup>78</sup> His action, as in the earlier case of Shapur, will initiate the next and final act: the death of the sovereign.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Sallustius, *Hist.*, Fr. 16363.1.1, Quintilian 8.6.59 and Herodian 4.13.4 for the verb ἀνεχώρει.

<sup>76</sup> Compared to the *rumores* (“false accusations”) or the *incentiones Circeas* of the advisers (§ 17).

<sup>77</sup> Religion and political partisanship. Here, as Macrobius notes (*Com. Somnum Scipionis* II), only the love aspect is missing.

<sup>78</sup> Like Petronius Probus (*ut noceat*, 27.11.5); the cruel Maximinus (28.1.10); or Constantia and Gallus, ready *ad nocendum* (14.1.2).

But before this pathetic and flexible closure, the historian includes the two anecdotes that are good examples of the use of descriptive resources to boost the fiction's logic<sup>79</sup> and the role of chance. One is the crossing of the Euphrates, when, after skilfully outwitting the *moderator provinciae* who intended to stop his flight (§§ 6-7), with arrows shot wide of the mark with which he wanted to scare and not injure, Pap and his men arrived at the river, for which there were no boats to cross it. Ammianus places the sovereign and his generals on beds held up by wine-skins,<sup>80</sup> tilting them in order to avoid the movement of the water, until they reached, after great difficulty, the other bank; whereas his men, with great difficulty, crossed the furious current on horseback (§ 8). Without the echo becoming an allusion,<sup>81</sup> the hazardous adventure (§§ 8/ 9 / 10) evokes earlier passages and heroic deeds: Caesar trying to reach his ships, with his mantle between his teeth and taking care that the documents he was carrying in his hand did not get wet (Suet. Caes. 64); or Hannibal's encounter with Olcades, Vaccaei and Carpetanos on the Tagus (21.5), with the brief commentary that Livy makes about the difficulties of the infantry to sustain themselves in the watery medium, compared to the safety of the cavalry. The historical and rhetorical *docere* fulfils a *delighting* function,<sup>82</sup> and implied in this is the active role from which the echoes of tradition may be recognized.

For this reason the evocation will be completed with that of Sallustius in the next phase, when an unknown *viator*, a providential *deus ex machina*, ends up resolving the problem for the king and his men who are lost in the area. Without precision or identity, because it is only a matter of inducing a memory, that of the Ligurian, who looking for snails finds the solution for Marius in the face of Jugurtha (93.2), is inescapable; as in allusion, what matters is the passage from the notional to the emotional feeling, which is the one which reaches the recipient of the message.<sup>83</sup>

In fact, for this final fragment the historian has played with a perfect division of the material, adapting the topics and language, to the various blocks and transitions. Here, with the dominion of nature at the centre, the agile narration only seeks to inform and entertain: i) unknown mountains and valleys in which it is easy to get lost (§ 12); and riders who pursue and are pursued; ii) and a river, a determining geographical feature in the works of Ammianus, a degree of difficulty and a touch of human improvement, and a good setting for the physical description

<sup>79</sup> The expression belongs to ZANGARA in one of her sections (2007: 194)

<sup>80</sup> *quorum erat abundans prope... copia*. The area, very rich in wine-growing facilitated their abundance.

<sup>81</sup> For her, "full of elegance and refinement", since it implies subtlety and culture in the reader, cf. SABBAH (1978: 515) and KELLY (2008: 165-6).

<sup>82</sup> For the detailed analysis of the term, passages and characteristics, cf. SABBAH (1978: 377-9). But the responsibility of the conclusion, in the various echoes, is ours.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. CONTE (1989: 97).

and, above all, the personal heroic deeds in the actors,<sup>84</sup> which adds yet another nuance of emotion and empathy on the part of the recipients of the work. And by way of contrast, closing it with the prologue of the next (§ 17), the negative elements of politics: a) Valen's desire for vengeance, and his advisers, outwitted by Pap's superior intelligence; b) hypocrisy, and the crafty and devious procedures with which situations are handled (confidential letters...); c) or the typical accusation of "Circean spells" with the so-called fog by which, changing his appearance and that of his men, Pap managed to escape (§ 17).

But the register changes in the last part of the episode; the pure *delectatio* to which the intrigue contributed, somewhat tragically at times, where the author creates for the reader the illusion of seeing with the developments, and actions of the actors, making way for the climax of the last supper; pure theatre, due to the setting and the actions of the characters in it, described with minute detail and great vividness, and where what generates added tension is the attack of the *scurra* in contrast to the convivial atmosphere that is created; and in which the field of the senses (sight; sound; taste: *exquisiteae cuppediae// vino*), and the precision of movement,<sup>85</sup> clashes with the fierceness of the executor,<sup>86</sup> compared with the victim's inability to defend himself. The noteworthy precision of all the wounds<sup>87</sup> are opposed, once again, to the attempt to save his life *omni ratione*, and the violation of all human and divine rights. Both Zangara (245), highlighting the personal mental image that each reader conjures up from the elements provided, and Webb, who, regarding the depiction and the Aristotelian perspective, develops *enargeia* ('vividness'),<sup>88</sup> coincide in emphasizing that combination of visual luxuriance and emotion which the authors of *Progymnasmata* (41) presupposed, and the account Ammianus offers here.

The publicist function of the passage, completely wiping from the recipient's mind the substantive issue (religion and partisanship), fulfils the intended mission. Fictionalization of history, with its 'verisimilitude',<sup>89</sup> replaces its intended informative objectivity, without the reader realizing it, or noticing the difference. Ligota may have been partly right when observing the notion of historic reality was foreign to the

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<sup>84</sup> Or the characterization, as in the scene of peace in the midst of the course of Macrianus and Valentinian (30.3.3).

<sup>85</sup> There are many: he gets up (from the *torum*), with his dagger unsheathed; he falls (*procurbuit*); is beaten (*ictibus*); and run through: ... *perforato*...

<sup>86</sup> ... *lumine ferociens... barbarus asper / scurra* (§ 20).

<sup>87</sup> The pierced breast; the numerous blows; and the *deformis*.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. WEBB (1988: 52): "the key to the definition of *ekphrasis*".

<sup>89</sup> Cf. MORGAN (2011: 555): "Fiction is neither truth nor lie: both sender and recipient recognize it for what it is".

historical thinking of Graeco-Roman antiquity.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, perhaps, Gabba when saying that traditional history, focused on military and political and constitutional matters, always coexisted with other forms of historical accounts, aimed at a different public.<sup>91</sup> But maybe the division has disappeared and, as this episode illustrates, Ammianus also writes for this audience, whom he censured earlier (28.4.14) and who reads Juvenal and Marius Maximus...

### *Conclusion*

This passage, as we have attempted to demonstrate, despite its brevity, exemplifies well some of the main features of the *Res Gestae*, especially the practice of fictionalization of history: an occurrence far more frequent in a time when the genre was not so regulated as it is today, according to the rules of historical positivism and the demand for an accurate presentation of the facts. Ammianus succeeds in making an impression on his readers on account of his narrative and dramatic methods: his story becomes a changeable drama where the characters express, through their actions and behaviour, the historian's world-view and opinions. This accumulation of people and events has an important effect on the minds of the audience: they easily forget the deeper motives lurking behind this confusing reality or the author's silence on other actors,<sup>92</sup> or again the orthodoxy of figures like the "evil" general Terentius, rewarded by Valens with the construction of a Church and whose daughter was a 'deaconess'.<sup>93</sup> Finally, in the long term there is an even worse problem: Rome, without the political insight and the magnanimity of its former leaders, is condemned to the defeat at Adrianopolis.

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. LIGOTA (1982).

<sup>91</sup> Cf. GABBA (1981:52).

<sup>92</sup> Like the Armenian Christians, whose *katholikos* Narses was killed by Pap. Cf. BARNES (1998: 81, nn. 71 and 92).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. DEN BOEFT (2009: 238).

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