

J. den Boeft, J. W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst, H. C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXVII*, Leiden: Brill, 2009, pp. 349, ISBN 978-9004180376.

The latest volume of the Dutch commentary on Ammianus amply lives up to the exalted reputation already won by its predecessors. There are frequent examples throughout the book of the commentators' sound textual judgement. Thus 1.1: the defence of the perfect *pertulerunt*; 1.2: the preference for *proximae* (Vm2) over *primae*; 1.2: the addition of *in* before *societatem*; 2.3: the defence of V's *urgente instante*; 2.6: the deletion of *et* (Müller) and the adoption of *insueta* (AG), which makes sense on the reasonable assumption that this particular contingent of Alamanni had never encountered Roman troops before; 2.8: the defence of V's *constratos*; 3.11: the support for Clark's *affluente*; 4.5: the defence of Henri de Valois' *densitatae*; 4.7: a good case made for inserting *ad* (Gelenius) before *Aegaeum*; 4.14: likewise for Rolfe's *calidisque*; 5.1: a good, though inconclusive, discussion of the relative merits of *longae* and *iugis*; 5.6: the addition of *ad* (Gelenius) before *transmittendum*; 6.1: the reading *convivio* (G); 6.8: the addition of *ad* (Adrien de Valois) before *expolitus*; 6.10: the addition of *et* before *animo* and the acceptance of Petschenig's *clamorum* for V's *clarimorum*; 7.7: a good case made for Petschenig's *agminis* and *habet*; 7.9, 8.2, 8.10: good discussions of the textual problems; 8.5: the removal, with Gelenius, of *que* after *tractus*; 8.9: the acceptance of Gelenius' *tutaque*; 9.1: likewise of Löfstedt's *crebros*; 9.2: the preference for E's *venturi*; 9.4: the addition of *altius* (Müller); 10.3: the defence of G's *audax et fortis*; 10.11: the addition of *fuit* (G) after *proximus*; 10.15: a good discussion of Petschenig's *hastilibus* for the feeble and otiose *hostilibus*, with the plausible suggestion that Ammianus took *verritis* as a noun; 11.5: the preference for G's *minutus* against V's *munitus*; 12.12: likewise for G's *lassatis* against V's *laxatis*.

Some choices are more debatable. At 1.3 the change to *festina*, though certainly better than *summa*, seems tautologous even by Ammianus' elastic standards. V's *firma* might stand, in the somewhat elliptical sense that the bridge, though swiftly built, was nevertheless solid. At 3.9 the plural is puzzling, as the commentators admit, whether *adlenimenta* or *lenimenta* be read. It may therefore be necessary to assume some deeper corruption. At 3.11 change is certainly needed, but Petschenig's *quas tale negotium excitarat* is better than the commentators' own suggestion of *quem* (= *populus*). At 6.7 the sense of unity conveyed by V's *nobis* ('you the troops and I the emperor') surely makes it preferable to Bentley's *vobis*, adopted by the commentators. At 6.8 the defence of Henri de Valois' *succreturum* needs more argument; it should be made clearer that this reading requires the datives *laudibus* and *factis* to be construed with both *concinentem* (which cannot stand alone) and *succreturum*. 28.2.14

is hardly helpful, since it offers *ad* + accusative, not a dative. It is perhaps unfair to call *in maius* at 9.4 pleonastic: the idea of motion contained in *in* suggests or at least emphasises the notion of an escalating process. This is true of all the examples cited. At 10.6 the comments on the badly damaged text are sensible as ever, but surely obelisation is the only proper course; similarly with V's *longo nitu* at 10.7. In 10.13 the commentators argue for A's *coiere* against *coire* (VEG) 'in view of the rarity of the historical infinitive in Ammianus'. But the admitted rarity of the historic infinitive is not a good reason for hunting it to extinction, and the same fact might be used to support its retention as the *lectio difficilior*.

The commentators' judgement on questions of linguistic interpretation is usually equally commendable. 1.1: *iam* is rightly taken with *formidati*; 1.3: *ponte transmisso* is indeed an ablative absolute; 1.5: a good explanation of *fiducia diu standi*; 5.3: the syntax is correctly explained despite the misleading punctuation adopted by Clark and Seyfarth, and it is rightly argued that *sublatus fiducia* has no negative connotations here; 5.6: similarly *pertinacia* is here not pejorative; 6.1: *ostenderit* is correctly interpreted; 6.3: it is probably right to follow Marié on the meaning of *studiis altioribus*; 6.9: *ut domum paternam diligere* is rightly understood; 6.14: *Gratiani* is correctly referred to the boy Gratian, not his grandfather; 9.4: a good note on the sarcastic use of *consurgentem*; 9.6: the interpretation of *inevitabilis* is correct; 10.3: as is that of *qualibet... strage*; 10.7: it is right to take *iniecta* as nominative with *flamma*, while the interpretation of *manu* is also correct; 11.3: a good note on the sense of *familiarium*; 11.4: also on that of *fatendum est* and on the meaning of *magnanimitate coalitus*; 12.6: and on the meaning of *muliebria palpamenta*; 12.10: *pro tempore* is correctly understood.

Only rarely might something more or something different be said. At 6.2 *tamquam* is perhaps more likely to be authorial comment, given Ammianus' general disapproval of Rusticus Julianus. At 7.7 it is probably correct to accept Wistrand's explanation of *suspendi* and *reliqua*, but more discussion would have been welcome. In 6.8 *maiestas* of soldiers is indeed remarkable. But *auctoritate* at 21.5.5 is neither a close nor a very savoury precedent, given the disreputable nature of Julian's usurpation and revolt, of which Ammianus was well aware. At 12.11 the second, elliptical interpretation of *circumspectantes* seems the more attractive of those offered.

The historical side of the commentary too is generally full and reliable. At 1.1 it is probably right to reject Drinkwater's view that Valentinian was deliberately provoking the Alamanni. The discussion of the reasons for Jovinus' anger at the crucifixion of the unknown Alamannic king (2.9-10) is also good, though surely *facinus atrox* suggests disapproval of the mode of execution. Also at 2.10 a convincing case is made that Valentinian came out to meet Jovinus as he passed Rheims on his way to Paris. The argument might be strengthened if *redeunti* is given its full force. The introduction to chapter 3 includes a measured discussion of the grounds for including the story of Terentius. At 3.1 a thorough treatment of the province Tuscia leads to an attractively simple solution. At 3.2 it is correctly argued that *urbe* refers to Rome, and there is a good discussion of the

meaning of *pistor* in this passage. Other subjects well handled in this chapter include Symmachus' father's wine business (3.4), beggars from the Vatican (3.6), the papal rivals Damasus and Ursinus (3.12-14) and the sense of *nummi* (3.15).

The note on 4.4 highlights the problems in Ammianus' account of Rome's dealings with the Scordisci but, pardonably enough, provides no answers. An excellent note is that on the misplacing of Didius' campaigns (4.10). Athanaric, the Greuthungi and Tervingi are well treated at 5.6, and it is rightly argued that the *metus* of 5.7 is that of the Goths for the Romans, not the Romans for the Persians, *pace* Lenski. There is a good discussion at 5.9 of the chronological and climatic evidence for the peace treaty of 369, actually to be dated to February or March 370, so not at a time of great heat!

The treatment of the case of Diodorus at 7.5 could hardly be conclusive, but it may surely be said that *comes* here must signify *comes rei militaris* if the passage is to make any sense at all. Eupraxius' advice to Valentinian at 7.6 is well handled, while at 9.2 *ut prae se ferebat ipse* is correctly interpreted, with sound comment on Valentinian's caution in general. So too at 10.10 the allusion to Valentinian's caution is rightly understood as sarcastic. At 9.5 *id enim... causas* is well interpreted, and at 9.10 there is a good discussion of the significance of Praetextatus' measures concerning the *Maeniana*. At 12.18 it is rightly argued that Sapor is not alluding to any stipulation concerning Iberia in the peace treaty of 363.

On a few matters the treatment is less satisfactory. The introduction to chapter 5 claims that Valens and Athanaric met on a ship in the Danube to conclude terms. The notes on 5.9 say nothing further on this issue or on the meaning of *inde*. In fact Valens and Athanaric must have come on separate ships from opposite banks of the river, and it seems highly unlikely that either boarded the other's vessel at any stage in the proceedings. Nor do the notes on 5.10 mention the irony of the fact that Athanaric died at Constantinople despite his vow never to set foot on Roman soil. (It should also be noted that in Vell.2.101.1, cited on 5.9, Gaius Caesar is not Caligula but the adopted son of Augustus.)

At 9.5 a reference to ostracism seems impossible to sustain. Even if *multitudo* is not equivalent to the whole population, the idea here is still that of a minority of innocents suffering along with the guilty in some sort of collective, whatever its size, whereas ostracism was strictly about individuals.

At 12.1 there is no discussion of Ammianus' claim that Sapor was breaking the peace by intervening in Armenia, which makes sense only if the historian believed, or affected to believe, that the peace guaranteed Armenian independence. Similarly at 12.13 nothing is said about the possibility that Valens interpreted the peace in this way and so believed that Sapor had broken it. The importance of the fact that Valens' Gothic war was now over is, however, rightly noted. At 12.10 the refusal to bestow regalia on Papa does indeed show that Rome was not allowed to aid any king of Armenia. But it also indicates that she must have abandoned any claim to nominate a candidate for the Armenian throne. (On all these matters, cf. *Chiron* 26, 1996, 278.)

But whatever disagreements and reservations may arise on points of detail do not detract from the solid merits of this volume, which make it well worthy of its place in this exemplary series of commentaries. Long may it continue!

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