

## Symmachus. *Oration I*. To Valentinian. 25 February 368 or 369\*

### Introduction

*Oration I* is probably the earliest of Symmachus' extant orations and may have been delivered at the same time as *Oration III* addressed to Gratian; it is earlier than *Oration II*, delivered 1 January 370. Symmachus covers the topics usual to a panegyric of an emperor, beginning with Valentinian's and Valens' family and earlier careers, especially Valentinian's. The 'deeds' portion of the oration, the part that is often of most interest to historians, includes Valentinian's election as emperor, his choice of his brother and son as co-rulers, his preference for the western provinces, rather vague assertions about his martial activities in defending the borders, and praise for his decision not to desert his chosen provinces to assist Valens in fighting off the usurpation of Procopius.

For a brief outline noting topoi usual to panegyric, see Del Chicca 1985: 95–96.

### Translation

1 . . . You are natives<sup>1</sup> of the whole world, an attainment reached in one place by birth, in another by benefit of your labors. Or should I not justly call Africa your native land as well,

---

\* C. Sogno p. 2 writes that Symmachus made the trip to Trier in the winter of 367–368; on p. 6 with n. 39 she notes that Praetextatus was still urban prefect in the fall of 368 and this would have helped Symmachus' selection as one of the envoys. So I am not sure if she thinks the travel was 367–368 or 368–369 and whether the oration was delivered in 368 or 369. Her n. 38 to p. 6 says "Seeck 1883, xlvi–xlvii. For the date of the celebrations for Valentinian's *quinquennale*, see Chastagnol 1987, 255–66." Chastagnol says it is 368, adduces coinage, vota; cited with approval by Salzman 2006: 353 n. 5. Callu is also in favor of 368 and writes in n. 1 to p. 12 of *Oration 2* that if *Oration 1* was indeed given in 368, Symmachus could have undertaken a second, longer trip to Trier to speak both on the occasion of Gratian's tenth birthday (18 April 369) and, after a summer of campaigning, at the beginning of Valentinian's third consulship. Seeck ccx dates *Oration 1* to 369, as does Hall 1. Pabst 137 (rightly, according to Mause 1994: 11 n. 40) says that one cannot fix the date, as one cannot for *Or.* 3. Pabst 306 writes that Ausonius accompanied Valentinian and Gratian in 368 and 369, and Symmachus in 369. Raimondi 95 with n. 28 offers a date of 369, as does Portmann 46. Bruggisser 1987: 139 believes that *Oration 1* and 3 were delivered on the same occasion in 369. Rees 2002: 167 n. 84 concurs, in passing: see n. 1 to *Oration 3*.

See also what Symmachus says in section 16 below: "Now you bring the lustrum of your regnal years to a close." But one could say that to announce the beginning as well as at the end of the period, and *lustrum* is not necessarily identical with the term *quinquennialia*. Various authors assume the date of Symmachus' arrival at the court to be 369, but if Symmachus is speaking in February 369, the latest date consistent with the reference to the *quinquennialia*, how did he manage to travel there from Rome so early in the year? In arguing about the date of Ausonius' poem and relationship to Symmachus, Shanzer 1998b: 285 refers to Matthews 1975: 32, who refers to Seeck xlvii for the date of 369; see also Shanzer 1998b: 289. Coşkun 2002: 413–419 dates Ausonius' allusions to Valentinian's campaigns to the summer of 369. Kelly 2013: 273 says 368. I look forward to Sogno's further work on the dating.

which was first to teach you, in military attendance on your father,<sup>2</sup> what sort of prince you ought to be? You would never think that you had served for others: the Augustus-to-be sought for himself whatever he defended previously; tender youth preserved what mature felicity would govern.<sup>3</sup> There you first learnt to be patient of heat and dust, after Illyrian snows had covered your cradle;<sup>4</sup> after you had drunk hewn ice not long before,<sup>5</sup> transported, as it were, to other elements, you patiently tempered the thirst of parched Libya. In short, as if marked out for the helm of the world itself, by exchanging the various regions of heaven you laid claim to the use of every point of the compass. Your long absence today cannot justly be harmful to the provinces,

---

<sup>1</sup> Symmachus addresses both Valentinian and the absent Valens, as was the custom when there was more than one Augustus. Although Gratian had also become emperor, he is not included in the remarks about Valentinian's and Valens' attendance upon their father.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pacatus to Theodosius, *P.L.* 2.8.3 where the orator compares the younger Theodosius to other famous men serving under their fathers: Scipio Aemilianus, Hannibal, Alexander. The emperors' father was named Gratian, nicknamed Funarius for the episode reported by Ammianus 30.7.2 and the *Epitome* 45.2. Ammianus 30.7.2–3 surveys his career: after holding the positions of protector and tribune, Gratian *comes praefuit rei castrensi per Africam*. He later served in Britain, and retired before the usurpation of Magnentius in 350. His service in Africa must, according to this passage, be dated after 320–321, when Valentinian was born (Ammianus 30.6.6 says that he was 54 when he died in 375). It is impossible to tell exactly how old Valentinian was when he accompanied his father to Africa. *Contubernium* must not be pressed as evidence that Valentinian had attained young adulthood; cf. tender youth, and the Illyrian snows on his cradle, immediately below, and "raised in a hot [climate]," §2. On the elder Gratian, see further *PLRE I* Gratianus 1, O. Seeck, *RE* 7 (1912) s.v. Gratianus 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Pacatus to Theodosius, *P.L.* 2.10.3. Symmachus is not the only author to use *felicitas* to describe the imperial estate: see discussion in del Chicca ad loc. Thus felicity was several things to a late Roman emperor: a term of direct address, a description of his exalted position, an attribute necessary to the ruler.

<sup>4</sup> Valentinian was born at Cibalae in Pannonia (Zosimus 3.36.2; Libanius *Or.* 19.15 & 20.25 refers to Valens as the younger of the imperial brothers born there). Callu 41 n. 3 observes that Symmachus cites Illyria rather than Pannonia due to the enhanced prestige of the area since the time of the Tetrarchs; he cites Aurelius Victor 39.26 and 40.1. The *topos* of enduring privation and extremes from the cradle can be applied not only to future rulers; cf. Ammianus 31.2.4 (the Huns). Also in Ammianus 27.6.8–9 Valentinian tells the troops that Gratian has not had the same kind of upbringing as his father and the soldiers, but that he will learn to endure the same circumstances. Sabbah 1978: 342 suggested that Ammianus may have used this passage in Symmachus as a source for writing up the elevation of Gratian. C. Sogno p. 11 believes that Symmachus heard the story after he arrived at Trier and put the allusion into his oration to good effect. Callu 41 n. 4 allows that the borrowing could have gone in either direction, but notes also the similarity to Horace *C.* 1.8.4 *patiens pulveris et solis*. Heim 171–172 discusses Ammianus' reasons for describing the acclamations of Julian, Valentinian, and Gratian, and on 164–165 compares the parallel accounts of the elevation of Julian and Gratian.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Virgil *G.* 3.364–365 (on the Scythians): *caeduntque securibus umida vina, / et totae solidam in glaciem vertere lacunae*.

which your early acquaintance watches over. A prince who knows every part of the empire is like god who perceives the whole world at the same time.<sup>6</sup>

2 "If," said Cicero, "you had learnt Greek literature at Athens, not at Lilybaeum, and Latin at Rome, not in Sicily,"<sup>7</sup> he was demonstrating, obviously, from the natures of the localities that Caecilius did not know the things which he says he studied where they were not inborn; for the only teacher of knowledge is the nature of places. Gaetulan<sup>8</sup> heat taught you to become accustomed to summer, Illyrian frosts to endure wintry chill; born in a cold climate, raised in a hot one, you acquired examples of the whole world before you acquired the favors of fortune. Consequently, whether you carry your fortunate standards against the Ethiopians and Indians protected against foreign soldiery by heat alone, they will take refuge in their burning retreats to no purpose or in their torrid constellations – for you will quickly master such lands, since you will not fear the power of the climate – ; or if you decide to extend the borders of Pontus into the frigid kingdom of Scythia or to the icy Don (Tanais), there as well, as you meet again the character of your native land, you will pursue the fleeing inhabitants over the rivers' backs.<sup>9</sup> You have surpassed the experience of individual men, since all men's is yours. You owe this to your diligence as a private citizen, that it made you worthy of the principate: when you accepted a task so great that nothing could be added to you, you displayed so much merit that no reward ought to be charged to you.

3 Once you were worthy, renowned Gratian,<sup>10</sup> you were worthy of having sacred seeds sprout from you, of being the seedbed<sup>11</sup> of the principate, of becoming a vein of royal blood: you

---

<sup>6</sup> The sentiment expressed here is a commonplace in the genre; cf. *P.L.* 11.13.5, 11.14.3–4, 10.3.3; Ausonius *Gr.Act.* 1 fin; Rees 2002: 16–17.

<sup>7</sup> Cicero *Div. in Caecil.* 39; Cicero's criticism of his opponent's rhetorical ability is not really to Symmachus' point.

<sup>8</sup> The Gaetuli inhabited the Sahara region south of the Mauretanian and Numidian provinces. The reference may fix the approximate area of his father's command, or, being rhetorical, may not.

<sup>9</sup> This entire sentence is studded with topographical commonplaces which have no relation either to Valentinian's actual operations or even to his official sphere of influence. Cf. Pacatus *P.L.* 2.22.2–3; also *P.L.* 8.5.2.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Or.* 3.8 *inclutus Gratianus* (the son). Symmachus prepares a transition from the parent's deeds to the son's, although most of the praise which properly belongs to the ancestors (only one, in this case), and fatherland, relates to Valentinian. Symmachus has omitted Gratian's command in Britain, and, understandably, Constantius' confiscation of his property (as punishment for his having entertained Magnentius): see Ammianus 30.7.2–3. On reference to the elder Gratian as founder of the dynasty cf. Ammianus 27.6.14: after Valentinian had finished addressing the soldiers on the appointment of Gratian as Augustus, Eupraxius cried, "Familia Gratiani hoc meretur", whereupon he was immediately promoted. Sabbah 1978: 340–341 argues both from logic and from the parallel with Symmachus that Eupraxius in Ammianus indicates the elder Gratian at 27.6.14, not the newly created emperor. Raimondi 161–162 believes that Eupraxius in Ammianus' version appears to refer to the emperor's son rather than his father, while allowing for an allusion to the elder Gratian in the interest of affirming his rehabilitation and status as founder of a dynasty. Pabst 200–202 discusses the difficulties of reconciling the principles of selection of the best man to be emperor and the choice of an eight-year-old child; heredity plays a role, and

raised children who would soon be the parents of all men, to whom their private training imparted such great value that today's brighter station lacks nothing. As a result, the army's decision chose your youthful descendant:<sup>12</sup> when the quality of your family allowed the father's precaution to fear nothing in the case of his son, why would age impede him, whom so many familial examples affirmed? To call prejudged goods for examination . . . 1 folium<sup>13</sup>

4 . . . [n]or would I employ poetic license to say that some goddess turned the drawn sword points away from your vitals,<sup>14</sup> and I shall not pretend that you were carried away from destruction in a chariot driven by a goddess,<sup>15</sup> nor relate that a veil of hollow cloud<sup>16</sup> was poured about you: let these be the fictions of poets, we have the examples of deeds.<sup>17</sup> The unhappy rebellious impulse hesitated before you, and if you believe me, Augustus, the madmen feared

---

Valentinian also ensured that nurture (military experience as well as a good education from Ausonius) would add to nature.

<sup>11</sup> Cicero is the earliest author extant to have used *seminarium* figuratively: *Cat.* 2.23, *Pis.* 97, *Phil.* 13.3, *Leg.* 1.1, *Off.* 1.54. Also a few times in Livy, twice in SHA, *P.L.* 7.2.4, 4.10.2.

<sup>12</sup> The younger Gratian, emperor from 367–383; he was eight years old when Valentinian, after a severe illness, made him an Augustus. See Ammianus 27.6.4ff.

<sup>13</sup> Judging from the point at which the text begins again, Symmachus has left the topic of ancestry (and succession) to describe Valentinian's early career, although it is uncertain to what extent he may have given a detailed account. There is much speculation about Valentinian's status under Julian; see, e.g., Lenski 2002b for discussion with bibliography.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Iuno saving Turnus at *Aen.* 9.745–746; also Statius *Theb.* 7.736–737. The narrative resumes at the conclusion of an episode just prior to Valentinian's election as emperor.

Ammianus 25.8.8–11 relates that while still in Mesopotamia in 363 Jovian sent Procopius and Memoridus to Illyricum and Gaul to announce Julian's death and his own accession. They were to meet with Jovian's father-in-law Lucillianus, who was at Sirmium, and to whom Jovian sent a letter instructing him to choose suitably able and loyal companions and accompany the envoys. At Tyana in Cappadocia Procopius and Memoridus reported (Ammianus 25.10.6–8) that although all was well in Gaul, an unnamed former actuary had raised an insurrection (to cover up his faulty accounts) by claiming that Julian was alive and Jovian an usurper. In the ensuing tumult Lucillianus was killed and with him Seniauchus, one of the tribunes whom he had brought with him. The other tribune, Valentinian, escaped with the help of his friend Primitivus. Zosimus 3.35.2 says that Lucillianus was killed as the messenger of such sad news, and confuses the Procopius of this episode with Julian's relative, the later usurper. Fanny del Chicca *Laudatio* 63 denies that Symmachus offers help reconstructing this episode but Raimondi 51–60 disagrees, precisely because it is a panegyric, and thus Symmachus focuses on Valentinian's actions during the situation, whereas Zosimus says he fled and Ammianus that an *hospes* saved him. Raimondi argues that the initial taking of refuge with Primitivus must have been followed by action on Valentinian's part to calm the sedition and ensure the loyalty of the Gallic forces to Jovian, as only thus can one understand the subsequent report of this loyalty (Ammianus 25.10.8) and Valentinian's promotion (Ammianus 25.10.9).

<sup>15</sup> As Iuturna carried off Turnus for a time (*Aen.* 12.468–470).

<sup>16</sup> Thus Aphrodite concealed Paris (*Il.* 3.380–382), Venus disguised Aeneas (*Aen.* 1.516), and Neptune took him away from Achilles (*Aen.* 5.809–810; cf. *Il.* 20.321–339). Virgil has *nube cava* at both *Aen.* 1.516 and 5.810.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *P.L.* 10.1.3, 7.8.2, 2.4.4 and 2.44.5.

more for you than for themselves, neither unaware that their crime could be augmented by the very fact that they had believed only the prince's father-in-law<sup>18</sup> worthy of slaughter, nor any longer to be excused in the name and defense of madness, since they prudently refrained from killing another.

5 Let us believe histories which boast of lesser things,<sup>19</sup> which tell that Gaius Marius, overwhelmed by the stroke of fortune, escaped by some intervention of reverence belonging to an earlier time. When, they say, his good fortune had changed to bad and a Minturnian prison shut in the man who had been victorious throughout the world, he stayed the blow of the executioner who had burst in on command by his majesty, which alone remained to him.<sup>20</sup> His ancient glory stood before the old man, and the executioner could not bring himself to strike with irreverent hand a man whom he was forced to acknowledge. Which, I ask, is the greater miracle, to restrain the agent of a violent man or to enfeeble the very men who are violently angry? A single man forgives him whom he spares; many men fear him whom they protect; terror shelters the young man, compassion the old; in him authority was recollected, in you it was expected. The weight of each example is not equal: there lingered still in Marius the gleam<sup>21</sup> of a star which had set, in you the flames of a rising one already shone.<sup>22</sup>

6 Is there any mental process<sup>23</sup> or condition of life which is not shaken at some time by varying jolts according to changing circumstances and causes? Suppose someone<sup>24</sup> is happy in peace time, but the same man is unlucky enough in a time of anxiety; suppose men who are hungry for power fear this man, but men living in harmony despise him; no one believed that this man was to be injured, yet no one judged that he was even to be raised on high; to that one the army decreed kingly honor, but the same man was formerly obscure as a private citizen: you

---

<sup>18</sup> Lucillianus; Symmachus does not notice the death of Seniauchus.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Nazarius *P.L.* 4.15.1 and 6.

<sup>20</sup> For the story of Marius' arrest at Minturnae and escape, see Plutarch *Marius* 37–39; there are much shorter versions, minus the attempted execution, in Cicero *Sest.* 50, *Pis.* 43, *Planc.* 26. Valerius Maximus 2.10.6 and Livy *Per.* 77 both use the word *maiestas* to explain what deterred the executioner.

<sup>21</sup> Plutarch relates that Marius' eyes appeared to gleam with fire, while Valerius Maximus dilates upon the topic of blindness (the would-be killer of Marius was a Cimbrian: *claritate viri obcaecatus . . . cimbrica nimirum calamitas oculos hominis perstrinxit*).

<sup>22</sup> Pompey is said to have reminded Sulla that more men revered the rising than the setting sun (Plutarch *Pomp.* 14.4). For parallels with *flamma nascentis [sideris]* cf. *P.L.* 7.1.1 (Constantine the "rising emperor"), and the references to Julian as a star (*P.L.* 3.2.3 and 3.6.4; Ammianus 21.10.2, 22.9.14). The image of a rising constellation is a variant on the theme of imperial, and Roman, light. See §7 below: *aliquod lumen astrorum . . . divinae lucis adflatum . . . sideri novo similis*. Symmachus uses *lumen* and comparisons of sun and moon elsewhere in his orations: see *Or.* 2.5 (*in sellis curulibus nouum lumen*) with note, 6.1 (*solis radii omne lumen obtunditur, stellarum ignes rutilare non sinit candor diei*) with note.

<sup>23</sup> Cicero uses the expression *motus animi/animorum* in *Off.* 1.131 & 132, where he discusses inter alia correctness in thought. Also *Arch.* 17 *animorum incredibilis motus*, *Sest.* 143 *animi motus*, and frequently in the rhetorical and philosophical works.

<sup>24</sup> Symmachus' analogy and comparison of a general *aliquis* echoes that of Pliny *Pan.* 4.5–6 (see Kelly 2013: 272).

alone the rebels fear, the judges select, you whom no bold madman has despised, and no man of experience has passed over in honor. What is the difference whether the soldiery is mad or moderate?<sup>25</sup> Where there is rage, you alone escape; where there is counsel, you alone are elected.

7 I feel compelled, venerable Augustus, to have you be born clad in purple now for me in my oration like some light from a star after your private vestments are stripped off.<sup>26</sup> I feel the glow of divine light, as usually happens when the dawning sun<sup>27</sup> breaks forth and the splendor of the world is revealed,<sup>28</sup> or when dawn turns ruddy with the rising purple of the sun. Proposed<sup>29</sup> at last you arose like a new star, which the ocean steeped in sacred billows raises up in renewed duties of the new day! Let the candidate for empire come forth distinguished by his arms before he was distinguished by the state's, for he who alone prompted everyone's choice has always shone out. Let helmet be exchanged for diadem, spear for sceptre:<sup>30</sup> you earned the reward of gold by the work of iron; only these attributes could be changed in you, for as far as character is concerned, fortune gave you this one thing more, to have more cares.<sup>31</sup>

8 The divine Jovian departed from earth, having removed himself by an unforeseen end.<sup>32</sup> Suddenly everyone was in sorrowful mourning,<sup>33</sup> but there was none of the usual murmuring of factions. Ambitious campaigning<sup>34</sup> gave way because a worthy man stood forth. Is there anyone who wonders that the votes were not directed at you on the spot?<sup>35</sup> There is no cause for haste

---

<sup>25</sup> Arguments can always be turned in more than one way: see *P.L.* 6.16.4, where that orator says that only Constantine has obtained a "wise army" (i.e. one unmoved by bribery to sedition).

<sup>26</sup> Symmachus prepares a transition to the election of Valentinian, marked by the themes of unanimous consent and *recusatio*, and illuminated by the *lux imperialis*. Heim 169 with n. 58 notes the accord of Ammianus with Symmachus' account.

<sup>27</sup> While the word *iubar*, poetic in the classical period, can be used of any source of light, it originally meant the rays emanating from the sun (or other celestial body), like a mane of hair.

<sup>28</sup> Symmachus again speaks at length upon the theme of imperial light: Valentinian shines like a star in his imperial persona, his divine light bursts forth like daybreak: he is likened to the sun as well. Note the sun's purple hue, and the rising of a new star (apparently the sun) just below.

<sup>29</sup> The verb *rogare* was used from Republican times in a technical sense with *magistratum* (or the specific title of a magistrate) in the same sense, of proposing a person or persons for office.

<sup>30</sup> A transformation the opposite to Maximian's at *P.L.* 10.6.4.

<sup>31</sup> Claudius Mamertinus had made the same claims for Julian's sudden change in status: *P.L.* 3.27.1 and passim. The broader theme of imperial burdens is lacking from almost no example of the genre. C. Sogno p. 12 and n. 86 (p. 99) observes that the topic of anxiety accompanying power is a theme in Symmachus, citing *Ep.* 1.23, 24, 42, 92; 2.27; 3.70; 6.38; 7.117; 8.13.

<sup>32</sup> See Ammianus 25.10.12–13, who compares the death to that of Scipio Aemilianus, whose sudden demise aroused suspicions but led to no inquiry. Jovian received the appellation *divus* after his death, an honor still accorded to emperors early in the Christian period.

<sup>33</sup> *Iustitium* is a cessation of public business after a declaration of public mourning; at *P.L.* 3.9.3 Claudius Mamertinus uses *iustitium* to describe the neglect of traditional cults prior to the reign of Julian; at *P.L.* 2.24.2 Pacatus says that the five years of Magnus Maximus' reign in the west was a *lustrale iustitium*. Symmachus' employment of the word is less loaded.

<sup>34</sup> *Ambitus*, literally meaning "going round", was the term employed in the Republic for excessive behavior, especially bribery, in running for office.

<sup>35</sup> Symmachus addresses the anomaly of there being no emperor for a time after the death of

where no delay is suspected, and whoever supposes that slowness is prejudicial to him has often diminished the praise of a good deed. Therefore you were protected by the judgment of the multitude, so that no one could whisper that you had snatched at a decision made in advance by a few men.<sup>36</sup> The outcome makes no assumptions about your office: you were elected emperor by men who deliberated. We give thanks for the longer deliberation: the discussion about you was carried on so long that it is openly agreed that no worthier man was found.

9 And then the day<sup>37</sup> fixed for the assembly was at hand: the army chosen from the flower of Roman youth<sup>38</sup> was present. The electoral assembly<sup>39</sup> was entirely worthy of the principate of so great an empire! Free men decided to whom they ought to be subject. Keep for yourself,

---

Jovian (ten days in total: Ammianus 26.1.5). Hall 42–43 well describes Symmachus' strategy in his account of this embarrassing delay. According to Ammianus 26.1.3ff, the army first advanced to Nicaea in Bithynia, where other names besides Valentinian's were discussed, viz. Aequitius and Ianuarius. The first was rejected on the grounds that he was *asper et subagrestis*, the latter, a relative of Jovian, because he was too far from the army. The choice of Valentinian came *nulla discordante sententia, numinis adspiratione caelestis*. Zosimus 3.36.1–2 and Zonaras 13.14 say that the army's first choice was Salu(s)tius, who refused the office both for himself and for his son. Ammianus 25.5.3 makes Salutius the choice after Julian's death, not Jovian's. Paschoud II.239 (n.105) concurs with scholarly opinion (which he cites) that Salutius was offered the post twice. I do not understand how neither anyone else nor Ammianus would have failed to note such a singular happening, or failed to compare him with Verginius Rufus. Close scrutiny of the question in Raimondi 71–79. For the distinguished and remarkably honest career of Salutius, see *PLRE* I Saturninius Secundus Salutius 3. The account in Philostorgius 8.8 names Datianus as the one who nominated Valentinian; those who participated in this decision (συνεψαμένον δὲ τῆ πράξει) were Salutius (called Secundus), Arinthaëus and Dagalaifus (called Glaiaphos), and that Valentinian became emperor after twelve days.

Modern discussions of the choice of Valentinian as emperor focus upon various factions within the court and/or army. For recent discussions, see Woods 1998, who believes that it was actually Valens, on the spot, who canvassed for the selection of his brother as a compromise candidate acceptable to pagans and Christians, and Olariu 2005, who argues that Valentinian was a compromise candidate acceptable to the "Constantians", "Pannonians", and "Julians". Raimondi 63–71 presents a detailed history of suppositions and arguments, especially that of Neri 1985, who had observed that the same group of people who chose Jovian selected Valentinian.

<sup>36</sup> Symmachus and Ammianus both present the story of unanimity of large numbers, although Ammianus adds that after the election, before Valentinian could be present, his adherents Aequitius and Leo did their best to make sure that this unanimous decision (*exercitus universi iudicium*) would not be overturned (26.1.6).

<sup>37</sup> The day after February 24 (Ammianus 26.1.7, 2.1–2). The choice already made was not confirmed.

<sup>38</sup> A standard term for the best part of one's forces; cf. Catullus *C.* 64.4 (*lecti iuvenes, Argivae robora pubis*), Virgil *Aen.* 8.518–9 (*robora pubis lecta*); also with *iuventus*, e.g., Livy 3.23.1, 7.29.7, 7.37.4.

<sup>39</sup> As if the *comitia centuriata* of an earlier time.

antiquity, the centuries often bought and obliging classes of Quirites and tribes usually for sale:<sup>40</sup> idle men do not know how to mandate affairs; a senate of the camps<sup>41</sup> received a man well worn by wars. Known men are promoted by evidence, unknown men by votes. To the latter category belongs this equine neigh once the elector for the Persian empire when the way to a kingdom was paved by the lust of a beast longing for copulation!<sup>42</sup> What sort of master was he, on whom an unthinking animal passed judgment! No more here of ancient miracles and contrivances worthy of theatrical illusions. Let armed men decide to whom above all to entrust arms which must be commanded; it is an art to know how to select a leader of good soldiers. They now obey happily too, emulously obedient in all things: with good reason, for they bear arms not only for your rule but also for their judgment.

10 I should like at this point to find fault with you,<sup>43</sup> with a citizen's respect, to ask why you came forth unwillingly into the presence of all, why you remained opposed for a long time, why you were tardily appeased.<sup>44</sup> Or was this too owed to your majesty, that having been ever invincible you were overcome solely in the acceptance of empire? We were in danger that excuses would make you the stronger.<sup>45</sup> You gave your assent under compulsion with a greater favor than that by which you obtained command when you were approved of; and this was an incitement to everyone for the state takes great delight in the unwilling.<sup>46</sup> No one gave more

---

<sup>40</sup> A favored theme in Symmachus, expanded in *Orations* 3 and 4. See also Claudius Mamertinus *P.L.* 3.16.1–4 & 19.1–2 and Ausonius *Gr.Act.* 3.13 and 9.44.

<sup>41</sup> It was important for Symmachus to validate the election in a way acceptable to his own understanding. See the interesting discussion in Neri 1985, especially 180–181, as well as Straub 1986: 211–212, Pabst 183–185. Mause 111–112 observes that this is the only Latin panegyric that treats so openly of the role of the army in the selection of emperors.

<sup>42</sup> See Herodotus 3.84 for the story of Darius' election. Valerius Maximus 7.3 ext. 2 is a Latin version. The story also appears in Ammianus 23.6.36 in his ethnography of the Persians. Portmann 48 and 236 n. 3 to *Or.* 1 notes that Symmachus is not alone in his choice of comparison and cites Libanius *Or.* 59.234.15ff (§52 of *Oration* 59, addressed to Constantius II and Constans) and Themistius *Or.* 2.50.1f. (*Oration* 2.36b, addressed to Constantius II) for use of this *exemplum*.

<sup>43</sup> To disguise flattery as free speech is a commonplace of imperial panegyric; cf. *P.L.* 7.8.9, 12.2.2, 2.23.1.

<sup>44</sup> *Recusatio* is another commonplace, and almost expected; Béranger 183 calls *recusatio* "un geste quasi rituel" and begins his discussion with a citation of this passage. Cf. *P.L.* 7.11.1–6, 6.8.3–6, Pacatus (at some length) *P.L.* 2.11.1–12.2. Symmachus may also wish to explain the story that Ammianus relates of Valentinian's superstitious avoidance of the bisextile day (26.1.7, 26.2.1–2); cf. Hall 52. On the theme of imperial reluctance to rule, see Timonen (comparing the act in Suetonius and the SHA), Dovere (fourth- through sixth-century emperors who lacked dynastic legitimacy, Huttner, and Hoffer (Pliny on Trajan and, especially, tyrannicide). At *Or.* 3.5 Symmachus extols Valentinian's hesitation on behalf of Gratian.

<sup>45</sup> I.e. win his point by remaining firm in his refusal.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Symmachus *Rel.* 17.2. He complains, as prefect of the City, of his subordinates' incompetence, and advises the emperors that they would take better care for the city if they appointed men who did not wish to hold office.



support to your dignity than he who did not obey your will. The bereaved court<sup>47</sup> stood before the noble candidate. It belonged, in truth, to your modesty that you protested, but not less to your fealty that you gave in. Sometimes the soldiers' impudence is beneficial: today . . . 1 folium<sup>48</sup>

11 . . . embraced both with unbelievable forethought, that the hope of the empire not rest on one or that there would be reason for contention in two.<sup>49</sup> Add to this the fact that although there are two grades in the supreme command,<sup>50</sup> you conferred an equal rank on your brother immediately, because you knew that you could be overcome twice. You are so far from courting favor that you always begin with perfect benefits. Petty spirits share out successions of gifts; your generosity has left nothing to desire and especially in making an emperor you believed the

---

<sup>47</sup> Literally "widowed": *aula viduata*. Cf. Pacatus *P.L.* 2.12.1 on factors contributing to the election of some rulers prior to Theodosius: *alios empta legionum suffragia, alios vacans aula, alios adfinitas regia imposuere rei publicae*.

<sup>48</sup> A whole page is a long time for Symmachus to talk about the soldiers if what he has commenced at the end of §10 is their demand (*obmurmuratio gravis*: Ammianus 26.2.3) that he appoint a colleague. It is more likely that he extends the theme of *recusatio* to include the insistence of all the armies, then raises the second demand that arose after Valentinian had accepted the first.

<sup>49</sup> The topic is now Valentinian's adoption of his brother Valens as co-ruler. Valentinian is probably the subject, and "both" must refer to two problems, or concerns, which he resolved through his choice. Symmachus may or may not have mentioned that it was the soldiers' agitation which led to the selection of a second ruler (according to Raimondi 86 he did not, and Symmachus' attribution of the choice to forethought tends to support her view). According to Ammianus, Valentinian withstood their demands firmly by declaring that he required time to make an intelligent selection. He named Valens about a month later. See Ammianus 26.2.2–11 and 4.1–3 (28 March). Philostorgius 8.8 relates the same information: Valentinian's firm response and traveling to Constantinople before the appointment of his brother.

<sup>50</sup> I.e. Augustus and Caesar, the title conferred upon an heir (as in the case of Constantine's sons) or subordinate (e.g. Constantius I and Galerius under the Tetrarchy, and their successors as Caesars, Severus and Maximinus Daia; also Constantine himself at first; Gallus and Julian under Constantius II). Cf. Ammianus 27.6.16 (*in hoc tamen negotio, Valentinianus morem institutum antiquitatus supergressus, non Caesares sed Augustos germanum nuncupavit et filium, benevole satis. nec quisquam antehac adscivit sibi pari potestate collegam, praeter principem Marcum, qui Verum, adoptivum fratrem, absque diminutione aliqua maiestatis imperatoriae, socium fecit*) and Ausonius *Versus paschales* 24–28 (*tale et terrenis specimen spectatur in oris / Augustus genitor, geminum sator Augustorum, / qui fratrem natumque pio complexus utrumque / numine partitur regnum neque dividit unum, / omnia solus habens atque omnia dilargitus*), and Themistius *Or.* 6.76b p. 113 (ὁ δὲ τέλεια μὲν λαβών, τέλεια δὲ νείμας, ἀδελφὸς καὶ πατήρ, τὸ μὲν ἐκ τῆς φύσεως, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸν ποιήσας, ἴσα μὲν ἐδωρήσατο, σύμπαντα δὲ ἔχει δι' εὐπείθειαν τοῦ κοινωνήσαντος, καὶ τοῦ τεθρίππου τοῦ παρ' Ὀμήρω, ὃ τῶ παῖδε τοῦ Ἄκτορος ἠνιόχουν, σύμπνους μᾶλλον καὶ ὁμοπαθῆς ἢ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆ. οὐ γὰρ ὁ μὲν κεντεῖ, ὁ δὲ ἄγει, ἀλλ' ἄγουσιν ἄμφω ταῖς αὐταῖς ἠνίαις.). See Lenski 2002a: 29–32 on fraternal imagery in imperial propaganda, and specifically on these passages.

magnitude of kingly bounty was diminished if when you granted what was unexpected you postponed what was still to be hoped for.<sup>51</sup> Thus you took care in confirming an Augustus with equal rights that he would never be suspect to you, since you had not left him anything else to wish for.<sup>52</sup>

12 Hence most princes soon fear as rivals those whom they have made subordinates, for the expectation of what comes next stimulates the most prominent men, and he for whom there remains something that he lacks is always like an envious man. And you did this without any excessive haste to gain favor or popularity, as you had long since made trial in your brother's case of everything which requires lengthy examination in a Caesar.<sup>53</sup> There would have been doubt about your judgment unless you had begun with extravagance. We perceived at once what sort of prince you chose after we recognized that you kept back nothing for yourself as an anxious man would.<sup>54</sup>

13 If there were any equality of this sort among kindred heavenly powers, his sister's orb would blaze with light equal to the sun's, and the moon would not take her precarious glow beholden to her brother's rays;<sup>55</sup> each star would rise in the same course, the sister would renew the day with an equal rising, would glide through the same regions of heaven, and would neither, slow in her monthly decline, change her varied appearance in rebirth nor endure small lifetimes in growing old. Behold, the stars do not know how to emulate the appearance of your favor; there is nothing like them in the light of the world, but everything in the world is common to you.<sup>56</sup>

14 I have not yet disclosed the mature monuments of your accomplishments and already I give preference to your earliest actions. I shall do what we must usually do on an extended journey, when people who are hurrying to their destinations do not greet everyone whom they encounter. Thus you divide the watch of the world into two commands: leaving your invincible<sup>57</sup> brother to the East,<sup>58</sup> you yourself speedily set your standards over the semibarbarous banks of

---

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Pacatus *P.L.* 2.18.3–19.3: Theodosius is said to make up for whatever postponement may be inevitable by announcing honors long in advance.

<sup>52</sup> Ammianus 26.4.3 says that Valens was *participem quidem legitimum potestatis, sed in modum apparitoris morigerum*.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Valentinian's speech to the army at Ammianus 26.2.9: *alienum ad amicitiam, cum iudicaverit quisquam prudens, adiungere sibi debet, non cum adiunxerit, iudicare*.

<sup>54</sup> As, for example, Constantius II had done when he appointed Caesars.

<sup>55</sup> The comparison between the condition of the lights of heaven and the emperors' superior state recalls the celestial allusions from the beginning of the oration (§§5 and 7 above). See also *P.L.* 11.8.3 and 11.13.2 for a different aspect of the idea that the emperors enjoy greater felicity than the sun and moon; discussion in Rees 2002: 81–83.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *P.L.* 11.6.6.

<sup>57</sup> The adjective *invictus* is proleptic with respect to the historical time of the narrative and probably refers to Valens' successful suppression of Procopius (see below) rather than to his campaigns against the Goths.

<sup>58</sup> Ammianus preserves some of the details of the division of the empire, which, he avers, went in accordance with Valentinian's wishes (26.5.2&4). He includes the names of *magistri militum* and praetorian prefects as well as some of the other officials whom the new emperors acquired in

the unquiet Rhine,<sup>59</sup> and defend out of shame for ancient cowardice provinces given over by the extravagance of your predecessors.<sup>60</sup> When you were made prince you returned to hard military duty. At once there were marches, at once there were battles and he who wore the purple was first in the line; and the royal court was in the camp, sleep was beneath heaven, drink was taken from a river, the tribunal was in the field. These things may be new to the supreme command but they are well known to you. You rather taught the royal estate what a man ought to do, than learnt from it what emperors had done before.<sup>61</sup>

---

accordance with the partition of forces, which took place at Naissus. The brothers parted company at Sirmium. Valentinian went to Milan and Valens to Constantinople; they remained in those locations until the beginning of 365 (26.5.2–6).

<sup>59</sup> According to Zosimus 4.3.4–5 the barbarians crossed the Rhine on the attack as soon as they learnt of Julian's death, but Valentinian immediately countered by sending reinforcements to that frontier to garrison the towns. Ammianus reveals that 365 was almost over (it was ca. 1 November) before Valentinian, on his way to Paris, heard of the Alamannic invasion, occasioned not by Julian's death but by the Romans' failure to send the usual gifts according to their agreement (26.5.7); Valentinian sent Dagalaifus, his magister peditum (probably: see *PLRE I*), to go after the Alamanni (26.5.8–9). Ammianus had already stated that at the time when Valentinian and Valens were still at Constantinople in 364 wars broke out throughout the Roman world, viz., the Alamanni in Gaul and Raetia, Sarmatians and Quadi in Pannonia, a variety of peoples in Britain, Moors in Africa, Goths in Thrace and Pannonia, and Persians in Armenia (26.4.5). On the other hand, Ammianus subsequently places the Alamannic rebellion in the following year, that of the double imperial consulships, which was marked by severe afflictions: not only the Alamanni in Germany, but the revolt of Procopius in the east (for which, see below §§17ff) (26.5.6–8). The historian's earlier passage must be due to a rhetorical telescope that includes the brothers' reign down to the death of Valens: see Tomlin 1979. He makes Ursatius, the magister officiorum, responsible for the disaffection of the Alamanni. This must have occurred in 365, for in 364 Ursatius was at Constantinople in charge of investigating the emperors' recent illnesses (Ammianus 26.4.4). Symmachus' narrative leaves out almost two years' worth of activity, most of it spent in travel or administrative affairs; he has, however, apologized just above for omitting some details. The emperors' indisposition and the subsequent inquiries, directed according to the sources against Julian's friends and adherents, are less suitable topics for a panegyric than military affairs. See Ammianus 26.4.4, Zosimus 4.1.1 & 2.1–2. Officially, Valentinian did set his standards over the banks of the Rhine, but not in person.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Sallust *B.C.* 57: *luxu atque desidia corrupta civitas; B.I. 2 per luxum et ignaviam aetatem agere*. Although *luxu* is a possible spelling for the dative of *luxus*, and one expects to see a dative with the participle *deditas*, the passage makes a great deal more sense if *luxu* is rendered as an ablative. The Gauls and other western provinces may not have been as desirable as parts of the empire in the east, but were essential and not actually under attack when Valentinian made his choice: see Drinkwater 1997: 9. Callu believes that predecessors is a rhetorical plural indicating Constantius II.

<sup>61</sup> Valentinian is often remembered as a soldier-emperor (Ammianus 30.9.4; cf. Sogno 15–16; Drinkwater 1997: 9–13 has a different interpretation). Cf. Claudius Mamertinus on Julian, *P.L.* 3.11&13. Yet he did not himself campaign against the Alamanni in 365–366, but sent his generals; see Drinkwater 1996: 25–26 and 1999: 448 on Valentinian's preference for building over fighting. Whittaker 169–170 notes that Valentinian built fortifications on both banks of the

15 Or do you think it a small token of your valor and endurance that when you had attained the most exalted rank of affairs and the summit of the Roman name while you were in the midst of so many provinces,<sup>62</sup> some of them pleasantly located, some of them pleasurably at peace or wonderful for the greatness of their cities or overflowing with numbers of peoples,<sup>63</sup> that you somehow established your seat in that part where the whole state was poised to topple? Those who are chosen to give aid choose such lands for themselves. When you have not yet tasted the fruits of empire you select only the difficulties of the office. The Gauls would not hold you so long if they gave you pleasure.<sup>64</sup>

16 Let Africanus pride himself on his African spoils, but for a long while he wandered about Sicily dressed like a Greek;<sup>65</sup> let Lucullus exult in the spoils of Mithradates, but he languished in Pontic luxury on the brink of victory;<sup>66</sup> let Antonius show off his Oriental trophies, but he was abandoned to royal love in an Egyptian marriage.<sup>67</sup> These are the men who celebrated triumphs, frequently engrossed in the business of delights, pursuing charming shores and rich lands. Would you have me seek examples from the following age? Behold, Augustus appropriates Baiae for himself from the sea to which it was joined and with dikes for Lake Lucrinus cultivates the empire's expenses;<sup>68</sup> Tiberius is adored swimming and sailing in his island lodging;<sup>69</sup> Pius

---

Rhine (and beyond) to control the Alamanni, and expended much energy building near the Danube as a means to control the Quadi (178–179 and 204). The Alamanni had invaded Gaul early in 365 and defeated a Roman army commanded by Charietto and Severianus, who were both killed (Ammianus 27.1.1–6). It was at the news of this setback that Vespasian sent Dagalaifus from Paris (above note 59), but soon replaced him with Jovinus, who led the Romans to a number of victories over the three divisions of invaders in 366 (Ammianus 27.2.1–9). The emperor remained at Paris. See below §§17ff. Later campaigns took Valentinian closer to the front, once perilously and foolishly close (Ammianus 27.10.10–11). See Seager 1996 on the emperor's near fatal sortie, and 1999: 594–596 on some of the activities alluded to in this oration.

<sup>62</sup> Symmachus refers to the superior (and luxurious) standard of living commonly associated with the eastern provinces. Gaul, in particular, could not compete in offering a pleasant life-style, although Julian's residence had had a beneficial impact on the area's stability and prosperity.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *P.L.* 11.4.1 *vos a continuo cursu rerum gerendarum non modo amoenitas locorum aut nobilitas urbium sed ne ipsa quidem victoriarum vestrarum laetitia remoratur*, and Ciceronian passages which both the panegyrist of 291 and Symmachus echo: *Leg. Man.* 40 (of Pompey): *non avaritia ab instituto cursu ad praedam aliquam devocavit, non libido ad voluptatem, non amoenitas ad delectationem, non nobilitas urbis ad cognitionem, non denique labor ipse ad quietem*; and *Prov. cons.* 29 (of Caesar in Gaul): *Amoenitas eum, credo, locorum, urbium pulchritudo, hominum nationumque illarum humanitas et lepos, victoriae cupiditas, finium imperi propagatio retinet*.

<sup>64</sup> Drinkwater 1997: 9–10 believes that Valentinian's choice was guided by concern over the loyalty of the western provinces.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Livy 29.19 fin.

<sup>66</sup> This is not fair to Lucullus, but probably faithfully records the tradition. Cf. Plutarch *Lucullus* 34–35 and Cicero *Leg. Man.* 20–26.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Plutarch *Antonius* 50, 53.

<sup>68</sup> Suetonius *Augustus* 16 init.: he undertook the construction to make a harbor, where he trained a fleet for the Sicilian war.

pursues leisure in Latium;<sup>70</sup> indulgent Marcus is heard in the Lyceum and the Academy.<sup>71</sup> For you there are no holidays from combat and you chose this above all in Gaul, that here one may not be at rest: necessity grants you no truce.<sup>72</sup> Now you bring the lustrum of your regnal years to a close<sup>73</sup> where an equal chill envelops earth and sky, under dense clouds, perpetual cold, fierce enemies, devastation far and wide. You deny yourself the repose which you furnish to the rest of men;<sup>74</sup> among so many thousands of victories you have not yet made your way to a triumphal procession, and although you are the senior Augustus you chose for yourself a province which Caesars used to complain about.<sup>75</sup>

17 And you, intent upon martial endeavors, were putting the fierce Alamanni to flight for some time already,<sup>76</sup> but in another region an insurgent exile<sup>77</sup> broke in upon the unrestricted

---

<sup>69</sup> Del Chicca *Laudatio* 172 has a good discussion of what island Symmachus has in mind: not Capri but Rhodes. She is followed by Pabst 136 n. 87 and Callu 48 n. 6. Some editors, beginning with Seeck, find *adoratur* unsatisfactory and some have suggested another verb, e.g., *demoratur* (Seeck), *moratur* (RosbachO), *deornatur* (Naber). Callu justifies the manuscript reading by citing the respect with which Tiberius was treated by his visitors (Vell. 2.99.4).

<sup>70</sup> SHA *Antoninus Pius* 5.4 *per legatos suos plurima bella gessit; 7.11 nec ulla expeditiones obiit, nisi quod ad agros suos profectus est et ad Campaniam.*

<sup>71</sup> This statement, which reflects Marcus' reputation as a philosopher while it associates him with the wrong schools, is unfair and untrue. Marcus Aurelius not only did not spend his reign hanging about in Athens, but he personally directed the Marcomannic wars, and died on the front.

<sup>72</sup> Callu transfers the clause *tibi nullas necessitas remittit indutias* from the end of the sentence to immediately after *tibi nullae sunt feriae proeliorum*. This does create a smoother reading, and the anaphora of repeated *tibi nullas/ae*.

<sup>73</sup> Pabst 137 n. 92 observes that this is the one exact (yet inexact) indication of date in the oration.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Claudius Mamertinus, *P.L.* 3.12.3: *suo negotio omnibus otium praestat.*

<sup>75</sup> E.g. Julian, also Constantine II, who invaded Italy in 340 (although he was at that time an Augustus). See discussion in Raimondi 96–98, who argues against del Chicca's identification with Julius Caesar in a double entendre (176–178 and see also 155–6 on Constantius II); she notes that neither del Chicca nor Pabst 138 cited Ammianus 15.8.20 re Julian's *querelae*, and finds that an allusion to Julian seems transparent and by far the best guess. This is actually what del Chicca says (bottom of p. 177: "il bersaglio della polemica è Giuliano") but believes that Symmachus adds Julius Caesar as well. Raimondi argues further (98–100) that Julian was very popular in Gaul and was remembered with favor years after his death (citing Ambrose *de ob. Valent.* 21), and praise of Valentinian's choice of the western provinces and his establishment of his court at Trier is meant to demonstrate his superiority to his predecessor. She follows (101–107) with a review of Gallic history esp. 350–360 and a conclusion that it really was necessary to have an emperor resident in Gaul.

<sup>76</sup> See note 61; Valentinian was not personally engaged in military activity. The words *terga vertebas* would normally mean "you were turning your back," i.e. fleeing, but joined with the genitive *ferocis Alamanniae* it must mean that Valentinian was turning theirs instead.

<sup>77</sup> Procopius, not named in accordance with the usual practice. Ammianus 26.5.8 says that Valentinian learnt of the rebellion at the same time that news came of the Alamannic invasion, in

peace of your brother's part of the empire. As soon as swift messengers and trustworthy reports carried the news to you, who did not think it right that you direct your weapons away from the slaughter of savages and toward the source of civil disobedience?<sup>78</sup>

18 But you feared more for the state and when caught between two causes, internal on the one side, external on the other, you preferred that the neighboring rival<sup>79</sup> experience your power

---

early November 365. Procopius, a cousin of Julian, was rumored to have been named by that ruler as his successor. Accordingly, to escape possible persecution under Jovian, he went into hiding, whence he emerged, according to Ammianus, after he observed that the activities of Valens' father-in-law Petronius were creating ill will against the new emperors. Valens was in Bithynia at the time of Procopius' usurpation, which took place at Constantinople. The usurper was supported by two legions (Divitenses and Tungricani Iuniores) which Valens had sent to support the army in Thrace against the Goths. Soon Procopius controlled Thrace as well, after arresting the Comes Julius who commanded the forces there. Aequitius blocked the passes into Illyricum and prevented Procopius from advancing westward. Next Procopius won over two more legions (Iovii and Victores) which Valens had sent against him, in Bithynia, and after an unsuccessful siege of Nicaea by Valens' forces, and the flight of the emperor from Chalcedon, the rebels controlled Bithynia too. Valens' fortunes were restored in the spring of 366. Both sides exploited the dynastic loyalties still attached to the house of Constantine. Procopius was related to Julian and had with him Faustina, the posthumous daughter of Constantius II, but Valens summoned the support of the retired general Arbitio, whose property Procopius had treated as an enemy's when Arbitio did not join his cause as an ally. At the final battle in Phrygia, Procopius was deserted first by Agilo, then by the rest of his army. Eventually he was captured and executed along with Florentius and Barchalba, who had arrested him. For full details see Ammianus 26.6.1–9.11 and, less coherently, Zosimus 4.4.2–8.3. See Austin for analysis of contemporary propaganda, and Lenski 2002a: 68–115 for a detailed modern account of Procopius' activities with analysis of the evidence. Lenski observes (p. 76) that Valentinian's decision to stay in Gaul "did little more than secure his own position" against a likely usurpation if he had left. Drinkwater 1997: 11–12 examines Valentinian's options and shows that he had little choice besides staying in Gaul, and that bringing the army to the east might have encouraged more desertions to a representative of the house of Constantine. Raimondi 128–129 concludes that Valentinian, working in accord with Dagalaifus and Jovinus, stayed both to protect Gaul and to keep the area stable by his presence.

<sup>78</sup> Ammianus 26.5.11–12 says that Valentinian initially intended to occupy Illyricum against the rebel, but was dissuaded because of the serious situation in Gaul. Yet the historian, unlike the panegyrist and Zosimus 4.7.3, emphasizes the poor quality and unofficial nature of the information from the east; see Lepore 2000: 589. Raimondi 115–119 analyses the differences between Symmachus' and Ammianus' information on Valentinian's decision making; much of one's interpretation depends upon the chronology of the counterattack against the Alamanni. She concludes that Valentinian's decision is consistent with his choice of Gaul in the first place, and cites a number of earlier scholars who agreed (121 with n. 142). Drinkwater 1997: 11 notes, "It is likely that the emperor's mind was made up by his appreciation of the preponderance of internal over external dangers. Above all, he must keep the western armies on his side." He warns on the same page of the necessity of remembering how the usurpation would have appeared in its beginning as opposed to after it was over.

<sup>79</sup> I.e. the Alamanni, unpunished for their incursions.

for a time rather than long-standing impunity, and you did not consider it as shameful to have more men rule with you as to have the empire's territories diminished. Then the Alamanni wished a revolution on you in vain, since combat with you brought as much distress to them as was owed to both conflicts. You proved that the spirit of a steadfast leader was less of a concern for you than for the rest, and your enemy was safer in your view than in ours. Consequently, you have put the Gauls under obligation for not only one service, since at the same time you gave them both concern for their peril and neglect of your own.<sup>80</sup>

19 Why should I not repeat your address and its words themselves, loftier than human thoughts? "Most faithful fellow-soldiers," he said, "carry your standards in this direction against savage nations and the fierce natives of the Rhine! Here is a public enemy, there a private one; the first cause is the state's victory, my vengeance the second; in the other war our dignity is assailed; in this one, your property."<sup>81</sup> Need I say more? In arguing against yourself you won, and your authority had so much force that the injury was disguised. You would have thought your orders were considered of little worth if someone had avenged you against your will. Would anyone demand neglect of himself and consider it allegiance if no one defended him? Behold a spirit greater than the empire,<sup>82</sup> in whose time majesty is ignored and an insurrection is punished!

20 What about the fact that the very force of nature makes those things which are one's own the first to impart a feeling of sorrow to everyone, and that no one is wronged with impunity when he himself is the judge?<sup>83</sup> You are indulgent where your misfortunes are concerned but harsh when it is a case of public misfortune, and you consider that it is shameful for a prince to have the emotions of private hatred. It is with good reason, then, that we love you the more, since you feel less anger on your own behalf. You do not know how to use your royal hand against domestic strife.<sup>84</sup> If you are ashamed to avenge your injuries, hear, emperor, what should spur you on: those who rebel are our enemies.

---

<sup>80</sup> Ammianus 26.5.13 supports Symmachus' claim, but it is likely to be little more than the official explanation of Valentinian's decision; see Drinkwater 1997: 11, Lepore 2000: 595. Valentinian moved to secure Africa by sending four trusted men to watch over the province.

<sup>81</sup> See Lepore 2000: 596–597 for discussion of this passage and the qualitative difference between the two sorts of enemy, and that Valentinian's decision was predicated upon a need to defend his dynasty.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *P.L.* 11.6.5 *vester vero immortalis animus omnibus opibus omnique fortuna atque ipso est maior imperio.*

<sup>83</sup> Callu notes the echo of Seneca *Clem.* 1.20.3 *nec quicquam esse gloriosius principe impune laeso.*

<sup>84</sup> A claim which panegyrists were happy to make for their emperors whenever possible. Cf. *P.L.* 12.20.3–4.1, 4.30.5–32.1. Pacatus was later to praise Theodosius' leniency (*P.L.* 2.45.5–7) while he lamented Rome's history of bloody civil strife (*P.L.* 2.46.1–3). Emperors are also commended for putting down usurpers not in retribution for their injured majesty but to free the people and vindicate the Roman name. In extant Latin panegyric, Valentinian is the first to be praised for ignoring a rebellion.

21 But let the telling of the just downfall of that brigand<sup>85</sup> be reserved for the praises of your venerable brother with the rest of the East's honors;<sup>86</sup> it will suffice to have this one foretaste, that although the war was long undecided, he was as temperate in victory as if no one had fought against him.<sup>87</sup>

22 How wonderfully like is the piety in you both!<sup>88</sup> You do not know how to engage in civil strife, he cannot avenge it. Although your dissimulation was not uncomplimentary to your brother: he to whom you did not bring aid seemed to you capable enough to conquer.<sup>89</sup> In great confidence there is less concern. Quite rightly the rebel captive was surrendered to him, and rightly the usurper of so great a title<sup>90</sup> was brought to punishment: in fact it was effected by your deity's<sup>91</sup> counsel that he be judged most unworthy of rule, since he deserved not even to have you appear hostile to him.

---

<sup>85</sup> *Latro*; cf. Pacatus *P.L.* 2.26.2–3; an insurrection, whether of Romans or of foreigners who had made peace, is often described as *latrocinium* (*P.L.* 8.12.1 & 16.4, 12.3.5).

<sup>86</sup> Even the emperor's brother receives the courteous dismissal which is the usual lot of an imperial colleague.

<sup>87</sup> Ammianus 26.10.6 mentions punishments (*saevitum est in multos*) but names (26.10.7) only those who got off with banishment; he then (26.10.12–13) writes of accusations to which the emperor gave only too willing an ear, and expressed horror at the idea of torture as opposed to, or preceding, simple execution. The historian appends an account of the inquisition (with executions and tortures) which followed (26.10.11–14); the names of no specific victims enlighten the reader, who learns that the violence ended when Valens' and his associates' greed for money and slaughter had been sated. Zosimus 4.8.4–5 makes accusations equally grave and equally vague. Also Prosper Tiro (*Chron.Min.* I.458.1131: *Procopius . . . apud Frygiam salutarem extinctus est, multis partium eius caesis atque proscriptis*) and Orosius (7.32.4: *Procopium tyrannum pluresque postea satellites eius occidit*) tell the same story. Contemporary orators naturally agree on Valens' clemency: see Themistius *Or.* 7.87, Libanius *Or.* 1.171. There is not much to choose between such conflicting reports, except a position somewhere in the middle.

<sup>88</sup> Sabbah 1978: 340 believes that Ammianus wrote in direct contradiction of this sentence; see Ammianus 26.10.13 *haec implacabilitas causae quidem piissimae, sed victoriae foedioris*.

<sup>89</sup> Zosimus 4.7.4 reports that Valentinian believed that if Valens genuinely required help he did not deserve it. Ammianus' evaluation of the western emperor's sentiments is different, and includes a suggestion that Valentinian did not know, when he first heard of the revolt, whether Valens was still alive.

<sup>90</sup> Del Chicca 1984: 208–209 observes that the phrase *usurpator tanti nominis* is the earliest use of the noun *usurpator* in this sense, and that Ammianus' reference to Procopius as *usurpator indebitae potestatis* (26.7.12) is an echo of Symmachus.

<sup>91</sup> Note the singular instance of the once common epithet *tuum numen*. Orators usually avoided the public expression of such terminology when addressing Christian emperors. The sentiments in this section are evocative of Tetrarchic propaganda, especially as seen in *P.L.* 10 and 11, in the use of the otherwise avoided epithet, in the praise of *pietas*, and in the attribution of some aspect of one ruler's successes to the efficacy of another. See also Symmachus' use of *numen* at *Or.* 2.32, with note.



23 Among these arts of war and foreign engagements and fresh laurels continually won from our foes, there has been no cessation of civil duties.<sup>92</sup> I can say that with ambition put to flight dignities (offices?) have been restored to virtue<sup>93</sup> and the road to the insignia of office no longer lies open to wealth but to character,<sup>94</sup> that the condition of the camps and the councils is now the same, since you see praetorian cohorts under the command of noblemen and lictors carrying urban standards before veteran generals.<sup>95</sup> We often exchange our togas for soldiers' cloaks, we frequently put robes of state on armed men . . . desunt folia sex

Copyright © 2009, 2015 Barbara Saylor Rodgers

---

<sup>92</sup> A transition to a rehearsal of the emperor's civil accomplishments, the bulk of which has been lost. It is curious that Symmachus does not offer more space to Valentinian's military activities in the west.

<sup>93</sup> See Lenski 2002a: 273 on this policy, with references to Themistius, Ammianus – harsh punishments were meted out to bad actors in the administration.

<sup>94</sup> Mamertinus made a similar claim for Julian (*P.L.* 3.20–21). The theme is neither Tetrarchic nor Constantinian, so far as one can tell from extant panegyrics, but was popular in the late fourth century. See also Symmachus *Or.* 4.6&8, Ausonius *Gr.Act.* 3.14–15, and Pacatus *P.L.* 2.15.1, 17.4–5.

<sup>95</sup> Valentinian's relations with the Senate were not good, and as a rule he promoted military men or lower officials in preference to men of good family. See Jones *LRE* 1.141–142. Symmachus does the best he can to create an impression of imperial impartiality, and in this sentence he states an exact truth. By the date of this oration, all consuls appointed under Valentinian and Valens were either members of the imperial family or military men (Dagalaifus in 366, Lupicinus and Jovinus in 367, Victor in 369). On the other hand, in 367 Valentinian replaced Claudius Mamertinus as PPO of Italy, Africa and Illyricum with Vulcatius Rufinus (Ammianus 27.7.2), and when Rufinus died the next year, he appointed C. Anicius Petronius Probus to the post (Ammianus 27.11.1). Strictly speaking, praetorian cohorts were under the command of noblemen. Symmachus has two genuine examples which permit him to avoid the necessity of leaving the senate's role to uncomfortable silence, and although Valentinian was not disposed to fill the upper ranks of the military with senators, Symmachus himself as *comes* (note the "we" of the next sentence) accompanied him on campaign (see *Oration 2*). Yet at this same time, Maximinus was already at work in Rome as praefectus annonae (368–370; see *PLRE* 1 s.v. Maximinus 7) and may or may not have been investigating charges of sorcery as early as February 369. Symmachus' remarks may be conventional platitudes or may fall under the category of praising the prince for what one wishes he were rather than for what he was. See discussion in del Chicca 210–212 and for a good and recent analysis of Ammianus' account of the prosecutions, Coşkun 2000.

## Bibliography

- Arnaldi, A. "I cognomina devictarum gentium di Valentiniano I, Valente e Graziano," *RIL* 114 (1980) 41-51.
- Austin, N.J.E. "A Usurper's Claim to Legitimacy. Procopius in A.D. 365/366," *RSA* 2 (1972) 187-194.
- Barnes, Timothy D. "Valentinian, Auxentius and Ambrose," *Historia* 51 (2002) 227-237.
- Barnes, Timothy D. "An Urban Prefect and His Wife," *CQ* 56 (2006) 249-256.
- Béranger, Jean. "Le refus du pouvoir (Recherches sur l'aspect idéologique du principat)," *MH* 5 (1948) 178-196.
- Blockley, R. C. "The Date of the 'Barbarian Conspiracy'," *Britannia* 11 (1980) 223-225.
- Bruggisser Philippe. "Gloria novi saeculi. Symmaque et le siècle de Gratien (Epist. I, 13)," *MH* 44 (1987) 134-139.
- Burns, T. S. "The Germans and Roman Frontier Policy (ca. A.D. 350-378)," *AArchSlov* 32 (1981) 390-404.
- Callu, Jean-Pierre, ed. *Symmaque Tome V. Discours – Rapports*. Paris 2009.
- Chastagnol, André. "L'évolution de l'ordre sénatorial aux IIIe et IVe siècles de notre ère," *RH* 94 (244) (1970) 305-314.
- Chastagnol, A. "Les Quinquennalia de Valentinien I et Valens," in *Mélanges de numismatique offerts à Pierre Bastien à l'occasion de son 75 anniversaire*, ed. Huvelin, Hélène, Christol, Michel, and Gautier, Georges (Wetteren: Éd. Numismatique romaine, 1987) 255-266.
- Coşkun, Altay. "Ammianus Marcellinus und die Prozesse in Rom," *Tyche* 15 (2000) 63-92.
- Coşkun, Altay. "Ein geheimnisvoller gallischer Beamter in Rom, ein Sommeffeldzug Valentinians und weitere Probleme in Ausonius' 'Mosella'," *REA* 104 (2002) 401-431.
- Del Chicca, Fanny. *Q. Aurelii Symmachi V.C. Laudatio in Valentinianum seniore Augustum prior*. Rome 1984.
- Del Chicca, Fanny. "La struttura retorica del panegirico latino tardoimperiale in prosa. Teoria e prassi," *AFLC* 6 (1985) 79-113
- Del Chicca, Fanny. "Simmaco, Oratio 2,17 e il tema polemico del pattuire pretio coi barbari," *RCCM* 28 (1986) 131-138.
- Del Chicca, Fanny. "Per la datazione dell'Oratio 3 di Simmaco," *Athenaeum* 65 (1987) 534-541.
- Dovere, Elio. "'Oblatum imperium deprecatus es': etica e 'recusatio imperii' in età tardoantica," *SDHI* 62 (1996) 551-562
- Drinkwater, John F. "The 'Germanic Threat on the Rhine Frontier': A Romano-Gallic Artefact?" in *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, edd. Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan (Aldershot 1996) 20-30.
- Drinkwater, John F. "Julian and the Franks and Valentinian I and the Alamanni: Ammianus on Romano-German Relations," *Francia* 24 (1997) 1-15.
- Drinkwater, John F. "Re-Dating Ausonius' War Poetry," *AJPh* 120 (1999) 443-452.
- Frend, William H. C. "Pagans, Christians and the 'Barbarian Conspiracy' of A. D. 367 in Roman Britain," *Britannia* 23 (1992) 121-131.
- Green, Roger P. H. "On a Recent Redating of Ausonius' 'Moselle'," *Historia* 46 (1997) 214-226.

- Hall, Ralph G., Jr. *Two Panegyrics in Honor of Valentinian I by Q. Aurelius Symmachus: A Translation and Commentary*. Diss. Chapel Hill 1977.
- Hoffer, Stanley E. "Divine Comedy? Accession Propaganda in Pliny, 'Epistles' 10.1–2 and the 'Panegyric'," *JRS* 96 (2006) 73-87.
- Huttner, Ulrich. *"Recusatio imperii": ein politisches Ritual zwischen Ethik und Taktik*. Hildesheim 2004.
- Kelly, Gavin. "Pliny and Symmachus," *Arethusa* 46 (2013) 261-287.
- Lenski, Noel. *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* Berkeley 2002. 2002a
- Lenski, Noel Emmanuel. "Were Valentinian and Jovian confessors before Julian the Apostate?" *ZAC* 6 (2002) 253-276. 2002b
- Lepore, Paolo. "In margine ad Ammiano Marcellino 26.5.8–14," *Athenaeum* 88 (2000) 585-597.
- Matthews, John. *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364–425*. Oxford 1975.
- Mause, Michael. *Die Darstellung des Kaisers in der lateinischen Panegyrik*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994.
- Nagl, A. *RE* II 7.2 (1948) s.v. Valentinianus 1 2158–2204.
- Naudé, C. P. T. "The Date of the Later Books of Ammianus Marcellinus," *AJAH* 9 (1984) 70-94.
- Neri, V. "Ammiano Marcellino e l'elezione di Valentiniano," *RSA* 15 (1985) 153-182.
- Olariu, Cristian. "Datianus, Valentinian and the Rise of the Pannonian Faction," *Historia* 54 (2005) 351-354.
- Pabst, Angela. *Quintus Aurelius Symmachus. Reden*. Darmstadt 1989.
- Portmann, W. *Geschichte in der spätantiken Panegyrik*. Frankfurt am Main 1988.
- Raimondi, Milena. *Valentiniano I e la scelta dell'Occidente*. Alessandria: Ed. dell'Orso, 2001.
- Rees, Roger. *Layers of Loyalty in Latin Panegyric AD 289–307*. Oxford 2002.
- Rosen, Klaus. *Ammianus Marcellinus*. Darmstadt 1982.
- Ruge, W. *RE* II 7.2 (1948) s.v. Flavius Valentinianus Galates 2204–2205.
- Sabbah, Guy. *La Méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae*. Paris 1978.
- Salzman, Michele Renee. "Symmachus and the 'Barbarian' Generals," *Historia* 55 (2006) 352–367.
- Šašel Kos, Marjeta. "The Defensive Policy of Valentinian I in Pannonia: a Reminiscence of Marcus Aurelius?," in *Westillyricum und Nordostitalien in der spätrömischen Zeit (Zahodni Ilirik in severovzhodna Italija v poznorimski dobi)*, ed. Rajko Bratoz (Ljubljana: Narodni muzej 1996) 145-175.
- Seager, Robin. "Roman Policy on the Rhine and the Danube in Ammianus," *CQ* 49 (1999) 579-605.
- Seager, Robin. "Ut dux cunctator et tutus: the caution of Valentinian (Ammianus 27.10)," *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 9 (1996) 191-196.
- Shanzer, Danuta. "The Date and Literary Context of Ausonius's Mosella: Valentinian I's Alamannic Campaigns and an Unnamed Office-Holder," *Historia* 47 (1998) 204-233. 1998a
- Shanzer, Danuta. "The Date and Literary Context of Ausonius' Mosella: Ausonius, Symmachus, and the Mosella," in *Style and Tradition: Studies in Honor of Wendell Clausen*, edd. Peter E. Knox and Clive Foss (Stuttgart: Teubner 1998) 284-305. 1998b

- Sivan, Hagith S. "Redating Ausonius' Moselle," *AJPh* 111 (1990) 383-394.
- Sogno, Cristiana. *Q. Aurelius Symmachus. A Political Biography*. Ann Arbor 2006.
- Straub, J. "Germania provincia. Reichsidee und Vertragspolitik im Urteil des Symmachus und der Historia Augusta," in *Colloque genevois sur Symmaque à l'occasion du mille six centième anniversaire du conflit de l'autel de la Victoire*, edd. F. Paschoud, G. Fry, Y. Rüttsche (Paris 1986) 209–230.
- Timonen, Asko. "Emperor's ars recusandi in biographical narrative," *Arctos* 27 (1993) 133–148.
- Tomlin, Roger. "The Date of the 'Barbarian Conspiracy'," *Britannia* 5 (1974) 303-309.
- Tomlin, Roger. "Ammianus Marcellinus 26.4.5–6," *CQ* 29 (1979) 470–478.
- Whittaker, Charles Richard. *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: a social and economic study*. Baltimore 1994.
- Wirth, Gerhard. "Symmachus und einige Germanen," in *Colloque genevois sur Symmaque à l'occasion du mille six centième anniversaire du conflit de l'autel de la Victoire*, edd. F. Paschoud, G. Fry, Y. Rüttsche (Paris 1986) 277–297.
- Woods, David. "Valens, Valentinian I, and the 'Iouiani Cornuti'," *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 9 (1998) 462-486.
- Woods, David. "Ammianus Marcellinus and the 'Rex Alamannorum' Vadamarius," *Mnemosyne* 53 (2000) 690-710.