

HIST 40403 Late Antiquity
Paper 1 (1600-1800 words)
Due February 21 by 5pm

A common issue with which ancient historians have to deal is evaluating multiple sources of the same event and the relationship between them. Comparing two accounts also serves to emphasize the different viewpoints and purposes of the authors involved, and how that can change how we understand a given event.

Once such instance where we have two accounts is the elevation of Julian, who had been named Caesar by his cousin the Emperor Constantius, to the rank of Augustus (Emperor) by his Gallic troops in 360. The first account was written by Julian himself in a letter to the Athenians not long after his ascension and the death of Constantius. The second was written by the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, probably some years after the event. Ammianus, a pagan, wrote in Latin but was Greek and may have had access to Julian's account. For this paper you will compare and contrast the two accounts to better understand the purposes and motivations the two authors had. Some questions you might wish to consider:

- Does the basic factual narrative differ between the two accounts?
- What details are present in one account, but not the other? What does the inclusion/exclusion of this information show about what the authors are trying to emphasize?
- Do the two accounts contradict in any places? What might this reveal?
- How is Julian's unwillingness to become Augustus shown differently by the two authors? Does Julian come across as protesting too much?
- What role do the gods have to play in the two authors, and what does this show about their own beliefs?
- Does Ammianus seem to have used Julian's own account? If so, how has he reinterpreted it?

From this you should develop arguments about the two authors and what purposes they have in the way they shape their accounts and present their material. You should not worry about historical accuracy. Do not be judgmental, and remember, ancient historians have different standards than modern historians. Feel free to bring in examples from the selection of Ammianus that we read for class if you think it will help support your arguments. You are to limit your analysis to the ancient texts themselves – do not look at modern scholarship. I want to read what you have to say, not what someone else has to say. Looking at outside sources will result in an automatic F on the assignment.

Use direct quotes sparingly and when they will specifically illustrate the point you are trying to make. Paraphrase, but try to avoid excessive summary. Whenever you quote or paraphrase, be sure to cite the ancient author. Cite the text by the sentence numbers, either in your sentence or parenthetically; e.g. "As Ammianus says at 12..." or "as explained by Julian (3)" Papers should be double-spaced, with 1" margins all around. Use Times New Roman or a similar font. Don't forget to put a page number at the bottom of each page.

Papers are due on February 21 by 5pm. Submit them on BlackBoard. Late papers will not be accepted except in cases of documented emergencies.

Ammianus Marcellinus

XX.4.12-22

1 And when the soldiers arrived Julian met them in the suburbs, and, in his usual manner praising those whom he personally knew, and reminding each one of his valiant deeds, with mild words he encouraged them to go with cheerful step to Augustus, where there was great and extensive power, and they would get worthy rewards for their toil. **2** And in order to treat with greater honour those who were going far away, he invited their officers to dinner and bade them make any request that was in their minds. And since they were so liberally entertained, they departed anxious and filled with twofold sorrow: because an unkindly fortune was depriving them both of a mild ruler and of the lands of their birth. But though possessed by this sorrow, they were apparently consoled and remained quiet in their quarters. **3** But no sooner had night come on than they broke out in open revolt, and, with their minds excited to the extent that each was distressed by the unexpected occurrence, they turned to arms and action; with mighty tumult they all made for the palace, and wholly surrounding it, so that no one could possibly get out, with terrifying outcries they hailed Julian as Augustus, urgently demanding that he should show himself to them. They were compelled to wait for the appearance of daylight, but finally forced him to come out; and as soon as they saw him, they redoubled their shouts and with determined unanimity hailed him as Augustus.

4 He, however, with unyielding resolution, opposed them one and all, now showing evident displeasure, again begging and entreating them with outstretched hands that after many happy victories nothing unseemly should be done, and that ill timed rashness and folly should not stir up material for discord. And when he had at last quieted them, with mild words he addressed them as follows:

5 "Let your anger, I pray you, cease for a time. Without dissension or attempts at revolution what you demand shall easily be obtained. And since it is the charm of your native land that holds you back and you dread strange places with which you are unacquainted, return at once to your homes; you shall see nothing beyond the Alps, since that is displeasing to you, and this I will justify to Augustus to his entire satisfaction, since he is willing to listen to reason and is most discreet."

6 After this the shouts continued none the less on every side, and since all insisted with one and the same ardour and with loud and urgent outcries mingled with abuse and insults, Caesar was compelled to consent. Then, being placed upon an infantryman's shield and raised on high, he was hailed by all as Augustus and bidden to bring out a diadem. And when he declared that he had never had one, they called for an ornament from his wife's neck or head. **7** But since he insisted that at the time of his first auspices it was not fitting for him to wear a woman's adornment, they looked about for a horse's trapping, so that being crowned with it he might display at least some obscure token of a loftier station. But when he declared that this also was shameful, a man called Maurus, afterwards a count and defeated at the pass of Succi, but then a standard-bearer of the Petulantes, took off the neck-chain which he wore as carrier of the dragon and boldly placed it on Julian's head. He, driven to the extremity of compulsion, and perceiving that he could not avoid imminent danger if he persisted in his resistance, promised each man five gold pieces and a pound of silver. **8** When this was done, troubled with no less anxiety than before and with quick intuition foreseeing the future, he neither wore a diadem, nor dared to appear anywhere or attend to any of the serious matters that were most pressing. **9** But when he had withdrawn to seclusion and retirement, alarmed by the change in his fortunes, one of the

decurions of the palace, which is a position of dignity, hastened at rapid pace to the camp of the Petulantes and Celts, and wildly cried that a shameful crime had been committed, in that the man whom the day before their choice had proclaimed Augustus had been secretly done to death.

10 Upon hearing this the soldiers, who were equally excited by all news, known to be true or not, some brandishing darts, others with naked swords and uttering threats, rushing forth from different sides and in disorder (as is usual in a sudden commotion) quickly filled the palace. The fearful uproar alarmed the guards, the tribunes, and the count in command of the household troops, Excubitor by name, and in fear of treachery from the fickle soldiers they scattered in dread of sudden death and vanished from sight. **11** The armed men, however, seeing the perfect quiet, stood motionless for a time, and on being asked what was the cause of the ill-advised and sudden commotion, they kept silence for a long time, being in doubt as to the new emperor's safety; and they would not leave until they were admitted to the council chamber and had seen him resplendent in the imperial garb.

Julian the Apostate
Letter to the Athenians 284A-285D

1 The legions arrived, and I, as was customary, went to meet them and exhorted them to continue their march. For one day they halted, and till that time I knew nothing whatever of what they had determined; I call to witness Zeus, Helios, Ares, Athene, and all the other gods that no such suspicion even entered my mind until that very evening. **2** It was already late, when about sunset the news was brought to me, and suddenly the palace was surrounded and they all began to shout aloud, while I was still considering what I ought to do and feeling by no means confident. My wife was still alive and it happened, that in order to rest alone, I had gone to the upper room near hers. **3** Then from there through an opening in the wall I prayed to Zeus. And when the shouting grew still louder and all was in a tumult in the palace I entreated the god to give me a sign ; and thereupon he showed me a sign and bade me yield and not oppose myself to the will of the army. **4** Nevertheless even after these tokens had been vouchsafed to me I did not yield without reluctance, but resisted as long as I could, and would not accept either the salutation or the diadem. **5** But since I could not singlehanded control so many, and moreover the gods, who willed that this should happen, spurred on the soldiers and gradually softened my resolution, somewhere about the third hour some soldier or other gave me the collar and I put it on my head and returned to the palace, as the gods know groaning in my heart;

6 And yet surely it was my duty to feel confidence and to trust in the god after he had shown me the sign; but I was terribly ashamed and ready to sink into the earth at the thought of not seeming to obey Constantius faithfully to the last.

7 Now since there was the greatest consternation in the palace, the friends of Constantius thought they would seize the occasion to contrive a plot against me without delay, and they distributed money to the soldiers, expecting one of two things, either that they would cause dissension between me and the troops, or no doubt that the latter would attack me openly. **8** But when a certain officer belonging to those who commanded my wife's escort perceived that this was being secretly contrived, he first reported it to me and then, when he saw that I paid no attention to him, he became frantic, and like one possessed he began to cry aloud before the people in the market-place, "Fellow soldiers, strangers, and citizens, do not abandon the Emperor!" **9** Then the soldiers were inspired by a frenzy of rage and they all rushed to the palace under arms. And when they found me alive, in their delight, like men who meet friends whom they had not hoped to see again, they pressed round me on this side and on that, and embraced me and carried me on their shoulders. **10** And it was a sight worth seeing, for they were like men seized with a divine frenzy. Then after they had surrounded me on all sides they demanded that I give up to them for punishment the friends of Constantius. What fierce opposition I had to fight down in my desire to save those persons is known to all the gods.