

A Court of Fear and Paranoia:

The Impact of Emotional Communities on the Court of
Constantius II in Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae*

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Thesis Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work.

This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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Abstract

The third-century crisis brought about fundamental change in Roman imperial governing, a shift that recognised the emperor's inability to control the entire empire on his own. Ammianus Marcellinus provides key insights into the flaws of this new heavily bureaucratised system of imperial government through his study of the career of Constantius II. Whilst literature surrounding Ammianus often focuses on his reliability as a source, this thesis will examine how he frames his historical narrative around the central theme of the corrupting and corrosive influence of the imperial court. Constantius attempts to cling to the power of sole rulership, whilst his imperial court becomes an amalgamation of his own fears, desires, and paranoias. By using Barbara Rosenwein's theories on emotional communities, I will attempt to identify the affective spread of emotion from the emperor across the imperial court. In doing so, I intend to prove that emotional communities provide a new way of analysing texts in Late Antiquity to further understand competition, conflict, and motivation within different parts of society. Emotional communities form across every part of society, separating and bringing together individuals to form a collective that act and react through affective bonds. My thesis will focus primarily on the court of Constantius II and the communities that emerge from the 'emotional arena' of his court. Rather than utilising Ammianus' text as a historical account, his narrative provides an allegorical perspective that reveals the flaws of the governing structures of Constantius' rule.

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Introduction

In November of the year 355 CE, Julian the Apostate was summoned to Mediolanum in Northern Italy by the emperor Constantius II to be declared Caesar. As Ammianus Marcellinus describes it:

“Constantius driven by the weight of impending calamities, admitted his purpose to his intimates, openly declaring (what he had never done before) that in his lone state he was giving way before so many and such frequent crises...”¹

Though Constantius had never openly declared his fear, his rule is characterised by actions and reactions that not only demonstrate a paranoia within the role of the emperor but also throughout the society around him. Just as emperors before him had begun to realise, a

¹ “*Id ubi, urgente malorum impendentium mole, confessus est proximis, succumbere tot necessitatibus tamque crebris unum se (quod numquam fecerat) aperte demonstrans, illi in assentationem nimiam*”, Amm. Marc. 15.8.2.; I have chosen to use the Loeb translation of Ammianus’s text (referenced below) as it was the most accessible edition for my studies. However, there are considerable difficulties with our current translations, aided by the use of P De Jonge’s, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus*. Gavin Kelly has recently summarised the challenges of current translations in: Gavin Kelly, “Why We Need a New Edition of Ammianus Marcellinus”, in *Ammianus Marcellinus from Soldier to Author*, ed. Michael Hanaghan & David Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2023): 19-58; Translations of texts and the loss of meaning and changes in subjectivity is further problematised in William Reddy’s work on emotion studies: William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 63-111.; Translation reference: Ammianus Marcellinus, *History, Volume I: Books 14-19*, Trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library 300 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950).; Ammianus Marcellinus, *History, Volume II: Books 20-26*, Trans. by J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library 315 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940).; Ammianus Marcellinus, *History, Volume III: Books 27-31. Excerpta Valesiana* Trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library 331 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939).; Commentaries on Ammianus: P. De Jonge, Jan den Boeft, Jan Willem Drijvers, Daniël den Hengst & Hans Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus*, 18 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1935-2018).

single person controlling the vastness of the empire was near impossible.² Julian's elevation to Caesar at Mediolanum represents Constantius acting on these fears. Constantius, with little choice of relatives that could be nominated as successors, needed Julian close as an ally, and in doing so established the trajectory of Julian's successful military and imperial career. In this moment, Ammianus establishes the vulnerabilities of Constantius' reign whilst founding the strengths of Julian's. Ironically, Constantius was not 'alone' in his rule with the proximity of the imperial court a constant shadow that encompassed him. Constantius was struggling to maintain "the fiction that the imperial government was a pyramid with one man, the emperor, at its peak".³ To establish his hold on imperial power, Constantius had formed a court that was a manifestation of his own desires and fears. Constantius admits that the systems of support within the imperial court and the bureaucracy it contained were not enough to control and sustain the empire, leading to his appointment of Julian.

The primary aim of this thesis is to use Ammianus Marcellinus to understand the emotional communities during the rule of Constantius II and his impact on imperial court structures. Ammianus crafts a version of Constantius' rule that emphasises the descent of the empire into the hands of a power-hungry imperial court. Rather than "reflecting events outside itself" Ammianus' works are like "the speech of an actor in a play—in the permanent quasi-liturgical drama by which late antique men sought to articulate the modes of contact between the emperor [and] his subjects".⁴ Ammianus uses Constantius as a transition point in fourth-century rule, in which the emperor's power has shifted, and the activity of the court becomes a

² Diocletian's Tetrarchy forms the clearest example of expanding the imperial office and will be discussed in more detail further on in the introduction.

³ Malcom R. Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 3.

⁴ Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, (California: University of California Press, 1981): 8.

pivotal and often, overwhelming process of imperial rule. Ammianus builds a world within his histories that reflects the ways in which emotion dictates imperial rule, using Constantius to set the stage for the emperors that follow.

In this thesis I will use Ammianus' account of Constantius II, Gallus and Julian the Apostate, to demonstrate a dramatic contrast between impressions of corrupt and virtuous rule, emphasising their separation as emotional communities. Ammianus' perceptions of the new centralised government and the changes that had occurred over the previous century drive the emotional construction of his narrative. The crisis of the third-century had altered the political landscape of the empire transferring power from the city of Rome to the frontier districts, placing the military at Rome's centre.⁵ Even after Diocletian's attempt to restore stability with the Tetrarchy, Rome's "internal political map of the empire had changed out of all recognition".⁶ Constantius stands at the centre of a corrupt system that is driven by bureaucracy and suspicion. Ammianus creates a caricature of Constantius and Gallus to prove the corruption of the imperial court, with Julian as its antithesis. Each of these men are presented as isolated in their positions, though their actions and emotions continue to affect the wider community regardless of their separation.⁷ Constantius II provides the basis of my argument, as his

⁵ For an overview of the Crisis of the Third-century see: Lukas de Blois, *Image and Reality of Imperial Power in the Third-century AD: The Impact of War*, (London: Routledge, 2018).; J. Drinkwater, 'Maximinus to Diocletian and the "Crisis"', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. Alan Bowman, Averil Cameron & Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).; Mark Hebblewhite, *The Emperor and the Army in the Later Roman Empire, AD 235-395*, (New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁶ Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 2.

⁷ Martijn Icks examines the growing isolation of emperors in Late Antiquity whilst not specifically linked to Constantius or Julian, his theory still applies: Martijn Icks, "Splendid Isolation: Secluded Emperors and the Spectre of Oriental Despotism", in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, ed. Caillan Davenport and Meghan McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 262-277.; Martijn Icks, "Kept in the Dark: Narratives of Imperial Seclusion in Late Antiquity", in

involvement in multiple emotional communities allows Ammianus to draw direct comparisons to Gallus and Julian. It is the uncertainty of navigating multiple emotional communities that drives the paranoia that Ammianus' version of Constantius displays. The emperor's actions are taken out of concern for his life and position, taking others' lives, and increasing their terror of him, forming an unpredictable cycle of paranoia.

By using Barbara Rosenwein's theories on emotions in history as a structural basis for my research, I intend to demonstrate how Ammianus' work creates the "emotional communities" and "emotional inheritances" that Rosenwein discusses.⁸ Rosenwein's theory further emphasises her suggestion that words and rhetoric are at the centre of emotional transmission and expression throughout history.

Rosenwein's book, *Generations of Feeling*, provides a framework to study emotions in relation to historical perspectives. Many other attempts to study emotion in history have focused on the effects and applicability of modern trauma studies on historical settings and events.⁹ However, Rosenwein moves towards discussions of affect theory, the importance of

Gaining and Losing Imperial Favour in Late Antiquity: Representation and Reality, Impact of Empire 36, eds. Kamil Cyprian Choda, Maurits Sterk de Leeuw & Fabian Shulz (Leiden: Brill, 2020):371-394.

⁸ B. H. Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600- 1700*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 3-10.

⁹ Rosenwein and Reddy summarise the development of emotion studies in history in: B. H. Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 821-845.; Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 63-111.; William Reddy, "L'incontournable intentionnalité des affects: l'histoire des émotions et les neurosciences actuelles", *Sensibilités* 2, no. 5 (2018): 84-97.; The study of trauma in ancient Roman soldiers is quite different to our own understanding of trauma and modern warfare. For further detail on trauma and the ancient world see: Lee L. Brice, Susan Heidenreich & Jonathan P. Roth, "The Neurophysiology of Panic on the Ancient Battlefield" in *New Approaches to Greek and Roman Warfare*, ed. Lee L. Brice, (United States: John Wiley & Sons, 2020).; Cathy Caruth, "Introduction", *American Imago* 48, no. 1 (1991): 417-424.; Jeroen Lauwers, Hedwig Schall & Jan Opsomer, eds., *Psychology and the Classics: A Dialogue of Disciplines*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2018).; Robert Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford

written sources and analysis, and crafting an understanding of collective emotion and its effects on the individual and society.¹⁰ Rosenwein identifies affect within emotional communities which are spaces in which an individual's expression and feeling of emotion determine the values and morals of the community they belong to and are expressed and recreated across that community.¹¹ Distinctly, Rosenwein positions her comments on affect and emotion to emphasise how words and content create affective language within emotional communities.¹² Rosenwein describes emotional communities as revealing the “systems of feeling” within a society in which people observe the “nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize” as well as “modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate and deplore”.¹³

University Press, 2005).; George Kazantzidis & Dimos Spatharas, eds., *Medical Understandings of Emotions in Antiquity: Theory, Practice, Suffering, Ancient Emotions III*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2022).; Marion Meyer, “The Acropolis Burning: Reactions to Collective Trauma in the Years after 480/79 BCE.” In *Emotional Trauma in Greece and Rome*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2020).; Aislinn Melchior, “Caesar in Vietnam: Did Soldiers suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?” *Greece & Rome* 58, no. 2 (2011): 209-223.; Reddy, “L’incontournable intentionnalité des affects”, 88-90.

¹⁰ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 8-9.

¹¹ Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’, 842.

¹² Definitions of affect vary across different fields and is often difficult to define or understand due its abstract nature. Shouse defines affect as “a non-conscious experience of intensity... prior to and/or outside consciousness.”; Eric Shouse “Feeling, Emotion, Affect.” *M/C Journal* 8, no. 6 (2005) <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.2443>.; For further definitions see: Claire Armon-Jones, *Varieties of Affect* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).; Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness* (London: Vintage, 2000); Melissa Gregg & Gregory J. Seigworth (eds.), *The Affect Theory Reader*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).; Alan Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Origins of the Self*, (Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994).; Silvan Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness 4 vols*, (New York: Springer, 1962-92).

¹³ Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’, 842.

In order to better understand Rosenwein's 'emotional communities' and 'emotional inheritances', I will also refer to Ahmed's work on affective contagion in her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.¹⁴ Whilst Ahmed does not refer specifically to historical perspectives, her work introduces the relationships between individuals in a collective as well as acknowledging the transference of emotion across generations. Ahmed describes an individual's perceptions within their psychic and social worlds as "an effect rather than a cause".¹⁵ The emotional community that exists within a particular social setting is the result of "contact" with other individuals and their perceived emotion, crafting that effect.¹⁶ However, Ahmed makes sure to emphasise that "emotions in their very intensity involve miscommunication, such that even when we feel we have the same feeling, we don't necessarily have the same relationship to the feeling".¹⁷ Rather, it is our relationship and perceptions of the object that produced said emotions.¹⁸ What Ahmed describes is essentially what Rosenwein locates as the separation of different emotional communities. Though the communities may exist in the same space as each other, their emotional inheritances and their emotional sequences are different. Ahmed suggests that these differences are shaped by "cultural histories and memories" that "through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others" the social presence of a community is formed.¹⁹ In her chapter on the 'Affective Politics of Fear' Ahmed states that relationships with emotion (in this case with fear) are "shaped by

¹⁴ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 10.

¹⁶ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 4.

¹⁷ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 10.

¹⁸ Objects produce an emotion as a reaction to their existence: for example, as Ahmed discusses, a bear could be an object of fear. See Ahmed's discussion of 'Inside out and Outside in'; Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 7-12.

¹⁹ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 7.

histories that ‘stick’” altering how individuals and collectives perceive the object of their fear. In this way, emotional inheritances dictate an individual or collectives’ reaction to particular objects, even if an individual has never had contact with that object before, their “histories remain alive in the present” influencing how they react.²⁰ Ahmed’s work is able to continue to integrate affect theory into my research.

In this thesis ‘emotional communities’ will be defined as groups of people whose contact with each other spreads and perpetuates values, feelings, and emotions throughout a wider community. These communities form from differing perspectives and reactions to past histories and can diverge from each other to create separate communities within the same spaces. In turn, these communities expand, and change based on the affective contagion of emotion through collective experiences. Affect forms the centre of these communities. This thesis will explore the interaction of ‘emotional communities’ to understand their formation, the circulation of affect between their spaces, and their impact on our perceptions and experiences of historical norms and values. The contours that these emotional communities create across history can be identified in the works of the historians present, not only within the content of their writing, but also around how they decide to tell their story.

Though debate around affect and emotion has been semantically argued for many years, historical understandings of affect often align with how ancient sources define emotion and feeling.²¹ Historical analysis of affect needs to be approached using a different lens, one that

²⁰ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 75-76.

²¹ See the debate between Ruth Leys and numerous other scholars in the field (presented chronologically): Ruth Leys, “A Turn to Affect: A Critique”, *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 3 (2011): 434-472.; William E. Connolly, “Critical Response I: The Complexity of Intention”, *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (2011): 791-798.; Ruth Leys, “Critical Response II: Affect and Intention: A Reply to William E. Connolly”, *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (2011): 799-805.; Adam Frank & Elizabeth A. Wilson, “Critical Response I: Like Minded”, *Critical Inquiry* 38, no. 4 (2012): 870-877.; Ruth Leys “III Facts and Moods: Reply to My Critics”, *Critical Inquiry* 38, no. 4 (2012): 882-891.

Rosenwein sets up. Rosenwein disregards the difference between emotion, affect, and feeling to approach emotion through sequences of events to understand the value and context of emotion within writings and historical settings.²² Ahmed equally approaches her analysis using the words emotion and feeling interchangeably as she approaches theories on affective contagion. Though Rosenwein's work focuses mainly upon medieval and modern periods, her analysis provides a distinct framework through the identification of emotional communities and emotional inheritances.

In turn, an understanding of the sequences of emotions and how people react to successive emotional events reveal "how emotion is valued" in those communities.²³ Robert Kaster proposes a similar theory that describes these sequences as "emotional scripts", a narrative of thought, action and emotion that an individual follows which reveals the structures of shared experience.²⁴ Changing any part of these scripts fundamentally changes the experience, and as such writers had dramatic power over how they represented these moments. Emotional sequences, or scripts, are most easily identified within words and often within "consciously shaped written sources" like Ammianus' work, varying with the emotional community they come from.²⁵ Importantly, it is not a reality that authors like Ammianus present, rather they are expert "story-tellers" who are able to portray an emotive reaction to their present by exploring their own "values and yearnings" through their works.²⁶ Though these stories may not be reality, they provide narratives of emotional structures of the

²² Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 9.

²³ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 8.

²⁴ Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community*, 10.; Kaster's discussions on emotions focuses on the detailed literary analysis of texts. Whilst Ammianus' text would also benefit from such an exploration it is not within the bounds or aims of this thesis.

²⁵ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 8.

²⁶ Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community*, 4.

communities they inhabit. As Kapust states, “The examples provided by history had an explicit persuasive moral function, providing models of behaviour and character that might be imitated or followed”.²⁷ Ammianus’ own words and experiences emphasise the importance of rhetoric and history in the perpetuation of emotional communities, as well as performing his own reactions to the emotional community and inheritances that he is caught within.

Ammianus’ work not only exists within these emotional communities, but also allows us to trace the change and values within emotional inheritances in one of the most turbulent periods of Late Antiquity. By focusing on the emotional communities that Ammianus creates within his text, a greater understanding of his world may also be reached. Within Ammianus’ text, we witness the interaction and clash of numerous emotional communities within a short period of time.²⁸ Rosenwein’s emotional communities and emotional inheritances categorise a spectrum of cultural traditions and changes that occur within society, created through sequences of events and distinct reactions that offer historians context of meaningless or unexplainable affective actions of individuals and collectives within society. As we are removed from their culture by time, we must understand that “the Roman’s language of emotion is not our own”.²⁹ Instead we can seek to understand their emotional reactions within their narratives and histories to map their experience across communities.

Hence, it is important to understand how fear was defined in ancient times, to gain insight into the creation of its societal values. Agri suggests that ancient conceptions of fear had a “dependence on fear as a governing principle”.³⁰ Kapust further supports this claim with

²⁷ Daniel Kapust, “On the Ancient Uses of Political Fear and It’s Modern Implications”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 69, no. 3 (2008): 361.

²⁸ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 3-4.

²⁹ Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community*, 6.

³⁰ Dalida Agri, “Introduction”, in *Reading Fear in Flavian Epic Emotion, Power and Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2022).

Cicero's speech *On the Agrarian Law*, demonstrating how fear is used in rhetoric to manipulate an audience.³¹ Contrastingly, the Stoics believed that it was an emotion that had to be "managed rationally, lest it run out of control".³² In such a way, we see that "cowardice was stigmatised, while courage was praised and cultivated".³³ With the emotion of fear directly contradicting Roman values of courage (*virtus*), fear in the Roman world was defined by its power to influence peoples' decisions. It was used to manipulate and control communities, whilst also being stigmatised to such an extent that it was synonymous with feelings of shame. There are also some similarities with our modern descriptions of fear that align with ancient definitions, even within theories of affect. In Seneca's *De ira* we can see a description of affect as he describes fear as reacting to an "involuntary" feeling that prepares the body for some kind of shock.³⁴ Affect can also be seen in the ways in which fear was used in rhetoric "to encourage groups to pursue morally desirable ends....[or] to prevent individuals from acting at all".³⁵ Both individual and collective affect is present in the ways that ancient historians and philosophers discussed fear, emphasising its importance to the operation of Roman society.

An examination of Constantius II with comparisons to Gallus and Julian will reveal how their leadership and behaviours change and are manipulated in Ammianus' narrative by fear and paranoia. The third-century crisis resulted in an ever-present anxiety of usurpation leading the emperors of the fourth century to become more detached and isolated from the

³¹ Cic. *Leg. Agr.* 1.23.; Kapust, "On the Ancient Uses of Political Fear", 357-358.

³² Kapust, "On the Ancient Uses of Political Fear", 357.

³³ Kapust, "On the Ancient Uses of Political Fear", 356.

³⁴ "*Et ut scias quemadmodum incipiant adfectus aut crescant aut efferantur, est primus motus non voluntarius, quasi praeparatio adfectus et quaedam comminatio; alter cum voluntate non contumaci, tamquam oporteat me vindicari, cum laesus sim, aut oporteat hunc poenas dare, cum scelus fecerit; tertius motus est iam impotens, qui non si oportet ulcisci vult, sed utique, qui rationem evicit.*" Sen. *De Ira*. 2.4.1-2.

³⁵ Kapust, "On the Ancient Uses of Political Fear", 373.

people around them. The emperor's insecurity dictated his anxiety, forming the main impact on his rule. The army were no longer just soldiers used in war, rather their power had transformed them into key political actors that within their emotional community, could dictate the position of emperor.

Historical Context

From 235 CE, the army became arbiters of imperial rule, permanently altering ideas of imperial succession and the role and military expectations of the emperor.³⁶ Rome entered centuries of uncertainty, characterised by continuous imperial usurpation, military challenges across the frontiers of the Danube and the Rhine, as well as a resurgence of Persian rebellion.³⁷ During the third-century crisis, from 235-260 CE, there were fifty-one emperors whose reigns lasted from a few months to years. The representation of legitimacy was essential in constructing and maintaining stable rule. Emperors struggled to legitimise their rule, using titles, coins, inscriptions, and other propaganda to emphasise their authority to rule, whether by military, religious or dynastic right.³⁸ Lukas De Blois emphasises the insecurity of the transition of power at the time, stating: "when an emperor had been murdered or removed through a usurpation of imperial power, statues representing him were destroyed".³⁹ The eradication of these images was by no means universal in its implementation but rather

³⁶ See: Anthony R. Birley, "Making Emperors: Imperial Instrument or Independent Force?", in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007): 379-394.; Hebblewhite, *The Emperor and the Army in the Later Roman Empire, AD 235-395.*; Ramsay MacMullan, *Solider and Civilian in The Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).; Karl Strobel, "Strategy and Army Structure Between Septimius Severus and Constantine the Great", in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007): 267-285.

³⁷ De Blois, *Image and Reality.*; Drinkwater, "Maximinus to Diocletian and the 'Crisis'".

³⁸ De Blois, *Image and Reality*, 226-227.

³⁹ De Blois, *Image and Reality*, 227.

provides us with a “lens through which the priorities of an age can be examined”.⁴⁰ At one stage, statues had symbolised “the eternal rulership and lasting glory of the ruling dynasty” reminding the people of previous emperors and officials who had contributed to the state.⁴¹ However, now symbols and proof of legitimacy had become essential to imperial stability yet were quickly erased by proceeding emperors. There was little time to appoint imperial heirs, and association with the previous emperor undermined the current emperor’s legitimacy. By 260 CE even the depiction of an emperor on a coin made citizens devalue the imperial coinage if “the position of the emperor who had issued them had become too unstable”.⁴²

The military’s power dictated who could govern, generating a constantly unstable political environment. The expectation of *praemia militia* (military benefits) defined the relationship between the army and the emperor, the former often dictating succession plans and disrupting the dynastic ambitions of numerous emperors.⁴³ As a result, emperors were drawn from the ranks of the military rather than the senatorial class. An individual’s success on the battlefield became essential for ambitions to imperial ascension.⁴⁴ Yet, emperors were often forced into conflicts on two fronts, with civil conflicts disrupting territorial defence. These

⁴⁰ Rebecca Usherwood, *Political Memory and the Constantian Dynasty: Fashioning Disgrace* (Dublin: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022): 3.; For a history of imperial images and its creators see: Benjamin Kelly, “Court Politics and Imperial Imagery in the Roman Principate”, in *The Social Dynamics of Roman Imperial Imagery*, eds. Amy Russel & Monica Hellström (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 128-158.

⁴¹ John Weisweiler, “Unreliable Witness: Failings of the Narrative in Ammianus Marcellinus”, in *Literature and Society in the Fourth-century AD: Performing Paideia, Constructing the Present, Presenting the Self*, eds. Lieve Van Hoof & Peter Van Nuffelen, 103– 133 (Brill: Leiden, 2014): 132.

⁴² De Blois, *Image and Reality*, 228.

⁴³ See Hebblewhite’s chapter discussing *praemia militiae*: Mark Hebblewhite, “*Praemia militia*”, in *The Emperor and the Army in the Later Roman Empire, AD 235-395* (New York: Routledge, 2017):71-120.

⁴⁴ Hebblewhite, *The Emperor and the Army*, 2, 11.

“military diversions” as Roger Rees describes them, created poly-crises across the empire in which invaders were often bribed allowing the army to relocate.⁴⁵ Due to rising taxes and an increasingly unstable economy, the bribes continued to debase the coinage adding to the cycle of a broken system.

The third-century crisis had exacerbated the “main structural weaknesses of the empire”.⁴⁶ As Drinkwater asserts “the reunification of the empire under a strong ruler was not of itself sufficient to repair imperial confidence”.⁴⁷ The emotional communities within the empire were gripped by constant change and the development of traumatic emotional inheritances. These inheritances included distrust of leadership, the military, and fear around economic stability. Diocletian attempted to settle the crisis, redefining the empires military, economy, and governing systems. However, Diocletian’s reforms equally changed the function of the empire itself. The city of Rome was no longer the centre of the empire, the imperial residence, or the central administration.⁴⁸ This geographical division, and the sharing of administrative duties across the empire was the basis of the Tetrarchy – a rule of four.⁴⁹ Rule was shared across a vast geographical space in which the emperors could split the administrative duties, military concerns, and political control across vast distances of the

⁴⁵ Roger Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004): 19.

⁴⁶ Drinkwater, “Maximinus to Diocletian”, 61.

⁴⁷ Drinkwater, “Maximinus to Diocletian”, 61.

⁴⁸ Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 17.

⁴⁹ For an overview of the tetrarchy, see: Timothy D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).; Simon Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government, AD 284-324*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).; Michael Kulikowski, *The Triumph of Empire: The Roman World from Hadrian to Constantine* (London: Harvard University Press, 2016): 194-219.; Meghan A. McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West, AD 367-45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 38.; William Lewis Leadbetter, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian*, (New York: Routledge, 2009).; Roger Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*.

empire, with the city of Rome itself quickly losing its significance to imperial power.⁵⁰ With two co-ruling Augustus' and two junior Caesars, the centrality of the emperor's position had greatly depreciated, foreshadowing the struggles that sole rule would now always present.⁵¹

From the Tetrarchy onwards, the military styling of the emperor had become central to legitimacy, with depictions of the emperor charging into battle crafting an “exaggerated portrayal of the emperor as an epic-style warrior-hero”.⁵² Extending Malone's analysis with emphasis on the wider collection of *Panegyrici Latini*, Meghan McEvoy draws attention to the exaggerated displays of military prowess presented in depictions of fourth-century emperors.⁵³ Ammianus continuously defines the ‘good and bad’ qualities of the emperors he examines, and McEvoy uses similar virtues as a structure to discuss the disruption of virtues when periods of instability force a departure from traditional values.⁵⁴ Hence, the importance of the emperor's role as a military leader was now “a major function of the imperial ruler; perhaps more so than ever in the era of fourth-century invasions and usurpations”.⁵⁵ Hebblewhite further suggests that though “all emperors undertook similar efforts in order to fulfil their responsibilities and meet the expectations of the troops, no two emperors sought to maintain the army's loyalty in

⁵⁰ Verena Jaeschke & Caillan Davenport, “Cities, Palaces, and the Tetrarchic Imperial Courts”, in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, ed. Caillan Davenport & Meghan McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 75-104.

⁵¹ Christopher Kelly, “Emperors, Government and Bureaucracy”, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, eds. Averil Cameron & Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997): 138.

⁵² Christopher Malone, “The Virtue of Rage in the Fourth-century”, in *Studies in Emotions and Power in the Late Roman World: Papers in Honour of Ron Newbold*, ed. Danijel Dzino and Barbara Sidwell (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010): 64.

⁵³ McEvoy, *Child Emperor*, 30.

⁵⁴ For further discussion on the virtues of the emperor see: Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “The Emperor and His Virtues”, *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 30, no.3 (1981): 298-323.; Martin Percival Charlesworth, *The Virtues of A Roman Emperor: Propaganda and the Creation of Belief* (Iowa: Humphrey Milford, 1937).

⁵⁵ McEvoy, *Child Emperor*, 30.

exactly the same manner”.⁵⁶ Even Diocletian’s stabilisation of the empire with the formation of the Tetrarchy faced numerous challenges in resolving issues across the empire and was not a universal solution.

Diocletian’s military reforms included a larger, more active army, and delaying initial conquests beyond the established borders. Economically the military reforms were damaging to the abysmal state of the treasury, however, Diocletian’s economic policy was stringent and “characterised by indiction and census”.⁵⁷ Diocletian’s most radical reforms were seen in the government systems he installed. The creation of the Tetrarchy impacted the administration of the empire, not only in its apparatus for the function of the government, but equally in its legacy. Diocletian established a permanent and sizeable civil service whilst altering the requirements needed to advance within the senate, military, and imperial court.⁵⁸ The changes made to the imperial court and senate founded, what John Noel Dillon describes as an “inflation” of rank, and later allowed Constantine to blur the boundaries between the senatorial and equestrian classes.⁵⁹ Over time the required promotions outpaced the positions available in the empire’s new administrative base, creating a power imbalance that Constantine and his

⁵⁶ Hebblewhite, *The Emperor and the Army*, 6.

⁵⁷ Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 38.

⁵⁸ See: Rees, *Diocletian, and the Tetrarchy*.; Rowland Smith, “Measures of Difference: The Fourth-Century Transformation of the Roman Imperial Court”, *The American Journal of Philology* 132, no. 1 (2011): 137.;

⁵⁹ John Noel Dillon, “The Inflation of Rank and Privilege: Regulating Precedence in the Fourth-century AD”, in *Contested Monarchy: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth-century AD*, Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity, ed. Johannes Wienand (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2014): 46.; For more on the transitions within the court systems throughout the imperial period see: Peter Fibiger Bang, “Court and State in the Roman Empire: Domestication and Tradition in Comparative Perspective”, in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, eds. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan & Mertin Kunt (Leiden: Brill, 2011): 103-128.; B. Kelly, “Court Politics and Imperial Imagery”, 128-158.

successors had to adapt with their own reforms.⁶⁰ Constantine created new senatorial positions as well as expanding senatorial posts to administrative duties across the empire, making some titles and ranks obsolete in the process.⁶¹ All of these reforms forced high-ranking officials to be present at court, and “openly emphasised their dependence upon imperial favour for appointment and promotion...”.⁶² The imperial court eventually evolved into the central governing body, providing close access to the emperor and the most powerful governmental positions. The court became its own emotional community, with the emperor at its centre. As Wallace-Hadrill describes the key to the imperial court’s survival was its “constant flexibility” and ability to “exist outside institutions [and] outside the constitution”.⁶³ The emotional community that encompassed court life constantly changed and shifted, however, its central value remained the same: survival. Its position outside of regulations meant that it relied solely on the emperor and could only remain relevant whilst under his protection. Hence, emotions

⁶⁰ Constantine’s reforms have been discussed at length in scholarship and changed the administration of the empire drastically particularly in relation to the number and type of officials, their hierarchy, and their role in the administration of the empire. See: Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2014).; Daniëlle Slootjes, “Governing the Empire: The Effects of the Diocletianic and Constantinian Provincial Reforms Under the Sons of Constantine”, in *The Sons of Constantine, AD 337-361: In the Shadows of Constantine and Julian* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 255-274.; Raymond Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁶¹ Dillon, “The Inflation of Rank”, 47.; Kevin Feeney, “Court Construction and Regime Change in the Mid-Fourth-century”, in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, ed. Caillan Davenport & Meaghan McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 156-171.

⁶² Christopher Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004): 193.

⁶³ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “The Roman Imperial Court: Seen and Unseen in the Performance of Power”, in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, eds. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan and Metin Kunt (Leiden: Brill, 2011): 102.

or feelings of paranoia, fear and suspicion were highly valued within this emotional community and defined how the community reacted and behaved within society.

Diocletian's retirement sent Rome into wars of succession before the Tetrarchy was essentially dismantled by Constantine, though the new centralised governing systems remained.⁶⁴ Regardless of the strength of Diocletian's reforms, both the emperor and citizens were still afraid of the societal, economic, and martial consequences of that period of unrest. The memory of the third-century's constant usurpation would have created paranoia within the imperial court. By keeping both political and military officials close, the emperor had "a better chance of policing or punishing the powerful who claimed to rule the empire in his name".⁶⁵ Ultimately, the centralisation of power was able to protect the emperor's position and reinforce his control within the emotional communities around him.⁶⁶ The successors of Constantine were constantly challenged by the new arenas of government as they struggled to control and regulate corruption within the bureaucracy of volatile and changing systems.

Ammianus as a Source

Ammianus' perspective on the imperial unrest of fourth-century Late Antiquity is unique due to his exposure to a wide range of emotional communities of his time, including the court and the military. Though other historians of the time were also experiencing a climate of great

⁶⁴ The importance of the emperor at the centre of the system was tantamount even under Diocletian's Tetrarchy but became essential when Constantine transitioned the empire back to sole rule. See the discussion of administration from the fourth to the fifth century in: Gerard Friell & Stephen Williams, "Centralised Power", in *The Rome That Did Not Fall: The Survival of the East in the Fifth Century*, (New York: Routledge, 1999): 137-150.; Michael Kulikowski, "Diocletian, Constantine, and the Creation of the Later Roman Empire", in *The Triumph of Empire: The Roman World from Hadrian to Constantine*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2016): 194-219.

⁶⁵ C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, 193.

⁶⁶ C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, 193.

unrest, Ammianus' language, and perspective produce an emotionally directed story based in his personal experience. As a historian and soldier contemporary to the fourth century, Ammianus lived through an era of brutality and fear, affording him firsthand experience of the unfolding paranoia and panic that defined the Roman Empire. There is some consensus that Ammianus was born in the city of Antioch around 325-335 CE.⁶⁷ Though there are many other reasons for Ammianus' decision to write in Latin rather than in Greek, his birthplace likely also influenced that decision. Antioch was the base of Constantius II for many of his wars against the Persian empire, meaning "the city was filled with Latin-speaking soldiers and bureaucrats".⁶⁸ It is also likely that Ammianus was raised within a Latin-speaking environment, with familial connections that allowed him to progress through military service faster.⁶⁹ As Matthews explains, Ammianus would have been in his early twenties when he became *protector domesticus*. He was too young to possess any military experience prior, and it is probable that he was commissioned "without serving in the ranks at all".⁷⁰ Furthermore, Ammianus' detailed understanding of "literary culture", seen throughout his work, suggests a

⁶⁷There has been much debate over his origins in Antioch which can be seen in Matthews' paper, though much of the evidence is circumstantial, it is highly suggestive that Ammianus was from Antioch. For the debate on Ammianus' origins, (in order of publication) see: Timothy D. Barnes, "Ammianus Marcellinus and His World", *Classical Philology* 88 (1993): 57-70.; Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998): 60-64.; G. W. Bowersock, Review of *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, by John Matthews, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 244-250.; C. W. Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus I: The Letter of Libanius and Ammianus' Connection with Antioch", *Historia* 41 (1992) 420-38.; Michael Hanaghan & David Woods, "Introduction", in *Ammianus Marcellinus: From Soldier to Author*, *Historiography of Roma and Its Empire* 6, eds. Michael Hanaghan & David Woods (Leiden: Brill, 2022): 1-16.; John Matthews, "The Origin of Ammianus", *The Classical Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1994): 252-269.; David Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity*, (London: Routledge, 2002):15-16.

⁶⁸ Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity*, 14.

⁶⁹ John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London: Gerald Duckworth & CO, 1989): 74-78.

⁷⁰ Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 77.

higher level of education from a more elite sector of society.⁷¹ Attached to the military command of Ursicinus around 353 CE, it would have been advantageous for Ursicinus to become a patron of an intelligent and active young soldier of good Antiochene birth like Ammianus.⁷² During his service with Ursicinus, Ammianus witnessed the early successes of Julian, the fall of Gallus and the many trials and conspiracies that he perceived as threats to his mentor, Ursicinus. In around 359 CE Ammianus was involved in campaigns against the Persians, which he recounts in detail within his books. The fall of Amida leads to the end of Ursicinus' career and it is unclear whether Ammianus left the army with Ursicinus, as Ammianus removes his persona from his history for many years after Ursicinus' dismissal.⁷³ Ammianus' personal, albeit rhetorically constructed, perspective, only returns during Julian's campaigns, as we can assume he joins Julian's army. On the army's return to Antioch with Jovian after Julian's death, Ammianus presents his final use of first person "we came by long marches to Antioch".⁷⁴

Most historians assume that Ammianus remains in Antioch when Jovian leaves, and for the next twenty years he travels across Rome to record his history. Ammianus eventually retires to Rome to write his history, with particular inspiration drawn from work of Tacitus as well as

⁷¹ Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 78.; C. W. Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II: Ammianus' Knowledge and Use of Greek and Latin Literature", *Historia* 41, no. 4 (1992): 420-438.

⁷² Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 78.

⁷³ R.C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus: A study of his Historiography and Political Thought*, (Bruxelles: Latomus Volume 141, 1975): 9-10.; E. A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis N.V. Publishers, 1947): 1-2.; Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity*, 19.; Michael Hanaghan, "The Metaliterary Approach to Ursicinus' Outburst (Amm. Marc. 20.2.4)", *Philologus* 162, no. 1 (2018): 115-136.

⁷⁴ "His hoc modo peractis, discursisque itineribus, Antiochiam venimus, ubi per continuos dies", Amm. Marc. 25. 10. 1.; Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 13.

other historical predecessors.⁷⁵ Ammianus’ positioning within the emotional community of the army but with an understanding of the court structures, allows his perspective to highlight the evolving structure of Constantius’ influence on the world around him. Gibbons’ description of Ammianus as “an accurate and faithful guide” who seemingly avoids the “prejudices and passions” of his time, isn’t necessarily true, as Ammianus’ crafting of emotional communities within his work are moreover expressions of his own emotional perceptions.⁷⁶ Though his work may superficially align with the historical events of the time, his perspective pursues a particular representation that aligns with his beliefs of the world. Ammianus may reflect contemporary set ideas and biases in his attempt to present us with “the living product of time, place and memory”, yet its emotional relevance to that history remains his own.⁷⁷

With Ammianus’ autobiographical style and attempts at objectivity, his *Res Gestae* reveals an empire that is sustained by the emperor’s idolisation and isolation. Ammianus is

⁷⁵ For a wide range of his influences see: Neil W. Bernstein, “The Siege of Amida and the Epic Tradition: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 19.1-9” *Mnemosyne* 72, (2019): 994-1012.; Fornara, “Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II”. ; G. Sabbah, *La Méthode d’Ammien Marcellin: Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978).; For more specific discussion on the influence of Tacitus, see: Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 88.; Agnese Bargagna, “The Depiction of the Common Soldier (miles) in Ammianus and Tacitus and the Intertextual Background of the *Res Gestae*”, in *Ammianus Marcellinus from Soldier to Author*, ed. Michael Hanaghan & David Woods (Leiden: Brill, 2022): 357-376.; G. Kelly, “Ammianus Marcellinus: Tacitus’ Heir and Gibbon’s Guide.” In *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians*, Cambridge, ed. Andrew Feldherr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 348-361.; G. Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 19-24.; Mathews, *The Roman Empire*, 77-78.; D. A. Pauw, “Methods of Character Portrayal in the ‘Res Gestae’ of Ammianus Marcellinus”, *Acta Classica* 20 (1977): 181-198.; Thompson, *Historical Work*, 1-19.

⁷⁶ E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, D. Womersley ed. (London: Hardmondsworth, 1995): 1.1073.; This will be discussed further in Chapter 1, The Image of an Emperor.

⁷⁷ Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 7.

able to “find a suitable language to describe this volatile political world”.⁷⁸ He is able to identify and foreground the isolation of the emperor, whether it is within the corruption of the aristocratic courts or amongst the unpredictability of the army, and then demonstrate how the emotion the emperor projects can be seen across his society. Even within Ammianus’ decision to write his history in Latin, Roman historians have vastly debated Ammianus’ purpose. Though it was once thought he was catering to the political elite of Roman society by writing in Latin, more recent examination of his purpose suggests he sought to provide an “outsiders view of the city from a resident alien” to the bureaucrats and administrators of the empire.⁷⁹ Ammianus does not use his work to cater to a particular class but explores a vast range of experience to provide his own perspective on the time. Ammianus uses his language and rhetoric to distinguish different collective experiences, whilst also defining those experiences within the ‘emotional inheritance’ of fear, paranoia and mistrust that spread across imperial rule.

⁷⁸ Weisweiler, “Unreliable Witness”, 132.

⁷⁹ D. Rohrbacher, “Ammianus’ Roman Digressions and the Audience of the *Res Gestae*”, in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. J. Marincola (London: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007): 468–73.; Initial discussion of Ammianus’ purpose for writing in Latin can be seen in these works: Sabbah, *La Méthode d’Ammien Marcellin*, 507-539.; W. Seyfarth, “Vom Geschichtsschreiber und seinem Publikum im spätantike Rom”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock* 18 (1969): 449-455.; Thompson, *Historical Work*, 15-16. ; More recent scholarship moves towards a rejection of an entirely Roman audience is developed here: Alan Cameron, “The Roman Friends of Ammianus”, *JRS* 54 (1964): 15-28.; R. M. Frakes, “Ammianus Marcellinus and His Intended Audience”, in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History X*, ed. Carl Deroux (Brussels: Latomus, 2000): 392-442.; Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 8-9.; Alan J. Ross, *Ammianus’ Julian: Narrative and Genre in the Res Gestae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016): 1-51.

Throughout the text Constantius appears as “a man happy to be so manipulated, driven by his petty and paranoid jealousies”.⁸⁰ Gallus takes on a very similar role, with Julian departing from the example set by his cousin and his brother. Both Constantius and Gallus are tied to the emotional community that is established in the courts of the fourth century. A court that values individual gain over anything else, driven by fear and a lust for power constantly catering to the emperor’s whims.

Ammianus’ unreliable yet observational narrative has often been the focus of close studies of objectivity. Critiques on Ammianus’ reliability and objectivity has exposed instances where his self-proclaimed impartiality is lacking.⁸¹ Ammianus does present some awareness of his own writing style and biases, though for many historians Ammianus’ inability to “transcend personal bias” dictates his value.⁸²

Ammianus’ autobiographical style further problematises his objectivity but also adds to the work’s value, shaping the world he presents to us. Gavin Kelly has identified the main autobiographical instances in the text to discuss the autopsy style of the work as a way for Ammianus to “assert... authority”.⁸³ Describing Ammianus as a “self-revealing historian”, Gavin Kelly draws attention to Ammianus’ physical absences in the narrative. Discussions surrounding Ammianus’ intent, bias, and autopic style have, in turn, led to doubts of his reliability. Ammianus’ fondness for Ursicinus provides one of the clearest and most debated

⁸⁰ Adrastus Omissi, “Usurper, Propaganda, History: The Emperor Julian”, in *Emperors and Usurpers in the Later Roman Empire: Civil War, Panegyric, and the Construction of Legitimacy* (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2018):198.

⁸¹ For an overview of discussions surrounding his impartial nature see: Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 1-10.

⁸² Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, viii.

⁸³ G. Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 38-40.

examples of bias even outside of his autobiographical sections.⁸⁴ It is likely that Ammianus owes this “impersonality” to the traumatic instances that defined his world and these are present in his personal accounts.

However, the importance of Ammianus’ context provides another perspective on the value of his narrative. Weisweiler emphasises the “the difficult cognitive challenges” that the continuous change of leaders presented, with Ammianus’ text demonstrating “a work in progress, a construction site whose appearance might suddenly (and radically) change”.⁸⁵ Rather than a completely accurate account of the facts, Ammianus presents an emotive perspective on the anxieties that defined the fourth century: paranoia within an unpredictable court; restless military threatening usurpation; and insecure succession within the imperial family. Ammianus’ text is a representation of the emotional communities he inhabited, it is in words and the vocabulary of these communities that we can understand what they valued and, with comparison, that we can recognise what has changed.⁸⁶

The autobiographical passages of Ammianus shape his perspectives and the world presented to us. The horrific recounts of his own experiences, Barnes suggests, helps us to understand that “The fourth-century was a brutal age, and the historian was capable of brutality...”.⁸⁷ The distinct desensitisation that is observed in his writings, occurs when

⁸⁴ Thompson credits that it would have been impossible “if he had succeeded in giving a completely objective account of [Ursicinus]”: Thompson, *Historical Work*, 42-55.; For accounts about his reliability and intent see: Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*; Diederik P. W. Burgersdijk & Alan J Ross (eds.), *Imagining Emperors in the Late Roman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).; Thompson, *Historical Work*, 23.; G. Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*.; Alan J. Ross, “Constantius and the Sieges of Amida and Nisbis: Ammianus’ Relationship with Julian’s “Panegyrics””, *Acta Classica* 57 (2014): 127-154.; Weiswiler, “Unreliable Witness”.

⁸⁵ Weisweiler, “Unreliable Witness”, 132.

⁸⁶ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 5-6.

⁸⁷ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 101.

Ammianus is devoid of feeling appearing truly alone in his recount.⁸⁸ Ammianus appears to be “insensitive to human suffering”.⁸⁹ However, his expression and use of “vivid and unforgettable language” distinguishes his work and provides the audience with an understanding of his emotional response.⁹⁰ Although his desensitisation could be an attempt to appear objective, the first-person perspective of Ammianus is demonstrably influenced by the violence of the world he inhabits. The “vivid” writings communicate his own experiences, as well as the experiences of others. Barnes asserts that to look at the fourth century, we are often asking “how Ammianus depicts a period that is usually seen through his eyes”.⁹¹ In understanding Ammianus’ perspective, a greater narrative concerning the impact of the changing systems of government across the empire and its effect on different parts of society can be understood.

Rebecca Usherwood contends that it is in the “spectrum of local response to political change” that the reactions to images and writings of imperial power can be uncovered.⁹² Her rethinking of *damnatio memoriae* creates new structures to understand Ammianus’ account as a political accomplice in the creation and reimagining of imperial imagery. Though Usherwood’s analysis only briefly touches on Ammianus, her arguments surrounding the role of social and collective memory in the portrayal of usurpers and emperors, allow an examination of Ammianus’ own binaries and links to emotional inheritance. Ammianus, as well as many other historical authors, reinforce a paradox concerning the “dichotomy between

⁸⁸ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 101.

⁸⁹ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 101, 107.

⁹⁰ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 101, 107.

⁹¹ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 2.

⁹² Usherwood, *Political Memory*, 4.

memory and forgetfulness”.⁹³ Their record of events, in which they witness history being manipulated, informs us of altered imagery and history. Ammianus becomes a clear example of, as Hedrick describes, a struggle concerning “the relationship between elite political control and collective cultural tradition”.⁹⁴ Both of these parts of society form distinct emotional communities in which their emotional inheritances may be the same but their relationship with the past has completely altered.

Ammianus and Emotion Studies

Previous research into Ammianus and his relationships with emotion can be seen in Barbara Sidwell’s thesis, ‘The Role of Anger in the Res Gestae of Ammianus Marcellinus’. Unlike Rosenwein’s theories, Sidwell focuses on the analysis of emotions specific to Ammianus. Her thesis addresses the episodes of rage that are present throughout the books, comparing it with Tacitus, and other key emotions.⁹⁵ Sidwell discusses the characterisation of individuals, Ammianus’ propaganda as well as his biases, whilst directly linking these portrayals to Ammianus’ use of anger in his text. By compiling a keyword database, she discusses Latin words of anger developing a framework for viewing Ammianus’ value and subjectivity by using “emotions as historical agents”.⁹⁶ My focus departs from a more specific analysis of Ammianus’ Latin to explore the affect of emotion within Ammianus’ work. By using Rosenwein’s framework, I will explore the collective impact that particular emperors had

⁹³ Charles W. Hedrick, *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000): 94.

⁹⁴ Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 91.

⁹⁵ Barbara Sidwell, “The Portrayal and Role of Anger in the Res Gestae of Ammianus Marcellinus” (PhD, University of Adelaide, 2008): 48,
<https://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/2440/49424/8/02whole.pdf>.

⁹⁶ Sidwell, “The Portrayal and Role of Anger”, vi.

on their communities and the ways in which Ammianus is able to express those ‘emotional inheritances’ through his work.

Whilst writing this thesis, new work has emerged surrounding court structures and emotional communities in a book called *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, edited by Caillan Davenport and Meaghan McEvoy.⁹⁷ Of particular relevance to this thesis is Benjamin Kelly’s chapter: ‘Was the Roman Imperial Court an Emotional Community?’.⁹⁸ Benjamin Kelly also adopts Rosenwein’s theory as a way of navigating the expression of emotion in Roman courts in the first, second and fourth centuries. He uses various contemporary texts that reflect the court’s attitudes to draw his comparison and emphasise how emotional expression drastically changes across these centuries. Benjamin Kelly’s approach unpacks the emotional communities that formed in the late first and second century, though he does not touch on affect. Rosenwein mentions affect throughout her study and Benjamin Kelly provides one mention of Holloway and Worsley’s analysis of ‘affective space’ in relation to early Georgian England.⁹⁹ Many of Benjamin Kelly’s arguments mirror and touch on the concepts Ahmed defines in her work on affect, including his references to *invidia*, and his decision to focus specifically on the spread of emotions such as love, rage and fear. His work on the fourth century covers a variety of sources, returning to his discussion on *invidia* when

⁹⁷ Caillan Davenport & Meghan McEvoy (eds.), *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

⁹⁸ Benjamin Kelly, “Was the Roman Imperial Court an ‘Emotional Community’?”, in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, ed. Caillan Davenport and Meghan McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 121-141.

⁹⁹ Sally Holloway & Lucy Worsley, “‘Everybody Took Notice of the Scene of the Drawing Room’: Performing Emotions at the Early Georgian Court, 1714-60”, *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40, no. 3 (2017): 443-463.; B. Kelly, “Was the Roman Imperial Court an ‘Emotional Community’?”, 122.

referring to Constantius II and Julian.¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Kelly suggests that much of the fourth-century court is based around ‘feigned emotion’ and argues that there is a theatricality to many of the experiences of rage and fear by the emperor.¹⁰¹

My approach expands upon Benjamin Kelly’s work in a few distinct ways. Firstly, though Benjamin Kelly finds the study of “isolated texts” cannot “reflect... court culture”, a concentrated study of a text like Ammianus can depict the way a society experiences the emotional communities often created at court.¹⁰² The unique voice that Ammianus presents to historians furthers the contagion of emotional expression and allows us to understand the rapid transformation of courts in the fourth century. Secondly, by bringing a more detailed focus onto the development of the court in the fourth century and focusing on Constantius in comparison to Gallus and Julian, I further elaborate on the idea of the “fault lines” that Benjamin Kelly observes in the emotional communities of the fourth century.¹⁰³ The development of the fourth century entirely alters the composition of court society, and in my second chapter, I note that the creation of smaller groups within larger emotional communities changes the emperor’s relationship with each of those groups. Finally, by combining Ahmed’s work on affective economies with Rosenwein, I expand on the different relationships that different emotional communities have with emotional expression. From Ammianus’ creation of emotional communities, I link the emperor’s affective behaviours to his subjects as well as addressing the “affective spaces” of physical spaces like the imperial court.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ B. Kelly, “Was the Roman Imperial Court an ‘Emotional Community’?”, 134.

¹⁰¹ B. Kelly, “Was the Roman Imperial Court an ‘Emotional Community’?”, 135.

¹⁰² B. Kelly, “Was the Roman Imperial Court an ‘Emotional Community’?”, 122.

¹⁰³ B. Kelly, “Was the Roman Imperial Court an ‘Emotional Community’?”, 139.

¹⁰⁴ Affective spaces form in places that affect is continuously transmitted. Affect inhabits these places, attached through events, speeches, or inferred meanings often creating emotional inheritances. These spaces can be affective for a moment in time or retain their affect through the emotional inheritances created. For example, the trauma experienced at the Siege of Amida is transferred onto that community

Language and vocabulary are also an important aspect of Ammianus' ability to transmit the affect of his community onto the audience as well as craft emotional communities. Specifically in relation to Latin, the language of fear has been explored by Mackay in a study on "The Vocabulary of Fear in Latin Epic Poetry". Works from later Roman society are signified by a "obsessive dominance of fear" throughout, with verbs being used more frequently than adjectives.¹⁰⁵ As a contemporary of the later Roman period, Ammianus' work invokes language that emphasises the same "obsessive dominance". Mackay reflects that the language used is an indication of the "temper of the time", a sense that fear was acted or enacted on groups or individuals rather than simply describing the situation.¹⁰⁶ Mackay's theory echoes what Rosenwein later establishes, that the numerous emotional communities define the emotion, norms and values of the time, reflecting collective experiences of their contexts.

To further the analysis of language, Seager provides a discussion of Ammianus's language in his book, *Ammianus Marcellinus: Seven Studies in His Language and Thought*. Seager discusses the different aspects of Ammianus' rhetoric, such as virtue, excess, sedition,

that must live with the affect of that siege even after it has ended. That physical place now has an emotional inheritance of fear and trauma for the soldiers, citizens and even Ammianus' audience who experience the siege in his writing.; Amm. Marc. 19. 1-10.; For further discussion on Affective Space see: Susan Broomhall, *Spaces for Feeling*, (London: Routledge, 2015).; Ammianus' structural and rhetorically formulaic account utilises narrative tradition to draw further on his own emotional inheritances from other works (Tacitus, Ovid, Lucan, Vergil etc.) in recounting the Siege of Amida see: Bernstein, "The Siege of Amida", 994-1012.; J. E. Lendon, "The Face of Convention: Battle and Siege Description in Ammianus Marcellinus", in *Ammianus Marcellinus: From Soldier to Author*, ed. Michael Hanaghan & David Woods (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2022):231-261; Ross, *Ammianus' Julian*, 38-45.; G. Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 19-20.

¹⁰⁵ L. A. Mackay, "The Vocabulary of Fear in Latin Epic Poetry", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 92 (1961): 315.

¹⁰⁶ Mackay, "The Vocabulary of Fear", 316.

imperial power, and caution, among others.¹⁰⁷ Apart from his specific analysis of the Latin and the way Ammianus uses language to create connections throughout the text, Seager reveals a defining notion on “the antithesis between civilization and barbarism”.¹⁰⁸ Ammianus’ perspective seeks to guide his audience through the dichotomy of the ‘civilised’ and ‘barbarous’; similarly he directly refers to the ‘barbarians’ behaviour’ or utilises it in his comparisons between emperors. Seager concludes with an understanding of the relationship that Ammianus sought to create between a civilised standard and the awareness of the barbarism around him. Seager’s analysis creates a linguistic continuity and connection within the text, but also reveals the creation of a narrative of struggle with Ammianus attempting to come to terms with his own definitions of civilization and barbarism.

Furthermore, discussions of Ammianus’ work have consistently been concerned with his reliability and value to the historical record, often discounting the importance of his narrative to provide a comment on the structures of the fourth century at large. Though some research has begun to touch on the value of his emotive language and psychology, a deeper comparison between the emperors Ammianus portrays will allow an understanding of his perspectives on the systems that dominate his time. By understanding the emotional communities that he creates and identifies under Constantius and Julian, we can better understand his own position in these communities and the role that his text plays in ensuring the emotional inheritance of that community. Constantius is portrayed as easily corruptible within the court he inhabits, providing an allegory for the dangers of flattery, deceit, and isolation. At the centre of Ammianus’ representation is the balance of fear and paranoia as a protective agent in a period defined by insecurity. Ammianus crafts numerous emotional

¹⁰⁷ Robin Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus: Seven Studies in His Language and Thought*, (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1986).

¹⁰⁸ Seager, *Seven Studies*, 131.

communities within his text defining not only the role of the emperor in the fourth century, but also individual emperors influence over the collective emotional communities of the time.

1. The Image of an Emperor: Ammianus and His Images

Our perceptions of Constantius at court can be said to evolve from two extremes, those actively hostile towards his portrayal and those actively desiring his attention. Constantius II ruled the empire from approximately 337 CE to 361 CE. Ammianus' accounts are centred on Constantius' court with the first recovered text, Book 14, beginning midway through his reign. The first impressions of Constantius are confined to the latter part of his reign only providing a partial image of Ammianus' perspective.¹⁰⁹ Other contemporary authors expand this perspective reinforcing Ammianus' claims and providing a broader image of the effect that the people around Constantius had on him. Specifically, I note the works of Julian, Sextus Aurelius Victor, Libanius and Themistius. These authors provide ideas that are both similar and contradictory to Ammianus' perspectives, allowing us to build an understanding of how Ammianus crafted his narrative.

In this chapter, I discuss how the image of Constantius II was crafted through different perspectives from across the community. The affective spaces from which these communities emerge further exemplify the influence emotional communities have on the creation of an emperor's image. Whether the author was part of the court or writing separated from that space, the various contemporary depictions of Constantius reveal divisions within the emotional communities of the court. In such a way, Constantius' narrative forms the basis of the new influences and changing relationships between the emperor and his court, and as Benjamin Kelly noted, where the "fault lines" appear within emotional communities of the fourth century, creating its volatility.¹¹⁰ Crawford details the system that Constantius had founded within the

¹⁰⁹ We can assume that Constantius was introduced earlier in the text however the first introduction of him occurs in the surviving text at: Amm. Marc. 14.5.

¹¹⁰ B. Kelly, "Was the Roman Imperial Court an "Emotional Community"?", 123.

court: “at the very least the emperor was blind to the atmosphere that he had allowed to permeate the imperial court and the upper echelons of the civilian and military hierarchies ... at worst, he fostered such poisonous competition amongst his closest subordinates out of sheer paranoia”.¹¹¹ Ammianus’ text reinforces the atmosphere of paranoia, a situation that modern historians now acknowledge as being central to how the ancient world viewed Constantius. Constantius’ anxiety surrounding his court signifies his primary failure as an emperor and was the root cause of the faults Ammianus describes.

It is important to contrast Ammianus’ perspective against his contemporaries to understand completely how Constantius wanted to be portrayed, as well as how those who did not approve of him wanted him to be portrayed. For example, Julian’s panegyrics transition between appeasing Constantius, to propaganda for Julian’s own ascension. The interpretations from other historians or panegyrists also reveal the importance of certain affective spaces, in the court or senate, with speeches generating affect in that place.

Understanding Constantius’ upbringing and history before his rule, allows us to understand the affective spaces and emotional inheritances that Constantius was crafted by, as well as the perspectives that later shaped his image. Julian, around the time of his ascension to Caesar in 355 CE, credits Constantius with surpassing the achievements of Constantine, stating that “At any rate, your father still seems to be on the throne”.¹¹² Crawford further exemplifies that Julian’s comments may denote the powerful influence of Constantine upon Constantius II. Both were men “who would go to great lengths to safeguard the future of his family, to the extent of pathological paranoia”.¹¹³ An instance that may have impacted the build-up of Constantius’ distrust and suspicion was the unexpected execution of his eldest brother Crispus

¹¹¹ Peter Crawford, *Constantius II: Usurpers, Eunuchs and the Antichrist* (Havertown: Pen & Sword Books Limited, 2016): 247.

¹¹² Jul. Or.1.9

¹¹³ Crawford, *Constantius II*, 21.

and Constantius' mother Fausta in 326 CE. Very little is known as to why they were suddenly executed as Constantine attempted to remove them entirely from the historical record.¹¹⁴ Not only does this event provide an instance of possible treachery that his father experienced, Constantius also lost his mother to the scandal at the age of nine. A quick trial and execution was exceedingly common during Constantius' reign, his distrust founded very early on in his life. This instance is a clear marker of an emotional inheritance that continued to impact Constantius throughout his life, dictating the affect he later displays in violent behaviours and distrust of the truth.

After the death of Constantine, the empire fell into further chaos as the three sons of Constantine massacred a large portion of their family to provide themselves with better security around succession and ascension. It is widely acknowledged that Constantius planned the slaughter, leaving only the women and children alive.¹¹⁵

Constantius' history of uncertainty further impacted the way he ruled the empire. De Kleijn, in her chapter on leadership suggests that Constantius is portrayed as never undertaking a "transformation and transactional" form of leadership but rather he embraces "the warrior

¹¹⁴ Crawford, *Constantius II*, 21-22.

¹¹⁵ For a detailed overview of the transition of power from Constantine to Constantius II see: Audrey Becker, "The Court in Constantinople Facing the Death of the Emperor", in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, ed. Caillan Davenport & Meaghan McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 107-111.; Bruno Bleckmann, "Der Bürgerkrieg zwischen Constantin II. Und Constans (340n Chr.)" *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 52, no. 2 (2003): 225-250.; R. W. Burgess, "The Summer of Blood: The 'Great Massacre' of 337 and the Promotion of the Sons of Constantine", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 62 (2008): 5-51.; Pietro Cara, "La Successione Di Costantino", *Aevum* 67, no. 1 (1993): 173-180.; Crawford, *Constantius II*, 31-33.; Xavier Lucien-Brun, "Constance II et le massacre des princes", *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 32 (1973): 585-602.; Michael Di Mario Jr., Duane W. H. Arnold, & Fr. Arnold, "Per Vim, Per Caedem, Per Bellum: A Study of Murder and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Year 337 A.D." *Byzantion* 62 (1992): 158-211.; Alberto Olivetti, "Sulle stragi di Constantinopoli succedute alla morte di Costantino il Grande", *Rivista di Filologia e did Istruzione Classica* 43, (1915): 67-79.

model of autocratic leadership”.¹¹⁶ Interestingly, Constantius was educated in the administration of the empire, on law and particularly on the differences between tyranny and clemency.¹¹⁷ Constantius was well-trained in how to be an emperor, yet is unable to control the people around him in order to maintain stability within his imperial court and the wider empire. De Kleijn describes Constantius as having an “obsessive way of handling even the slightest suspicion”.¹¹⁸ His experiences as a child, and after his father’s death within the court and spaces of leadership aligned those affective spaces with feelings of paranoia and danger. Throughout numerous ancient sources, De Kleijn reveals that Constantius fails in the classical sense of leadership, falling into a deep mistrust of everyone around him, spiralling into what numerous historians elicit as a lack of control.¹¹⁹

Ammianus’ perspective is clearest at the end of Constantius’ reign. Ammianus provides us with an understanding of Constantius’ fear throughout one of the most turbulent parts of his reign. Constantius maintained the “angry suspicions” that his court perpetuated leading to his own self-destructive behaviours as well as the courts’ throughout Ammianus’ narrative.¹²⁰ Using Constantius, Ammianus attempts to solidify the idea that “both the emperor and his ‘courtiers’ were engaged in a constant process of trying to control each other”.¹²¹ At the centre of each emotional community was a collective relationship with the emperor.

¹¹⁶ Gerda De Keljin, “Imperial Leadership: Constantius II”, in *Leadership, Ideology and Crowds in the Roman Empire of the Fourth century*, ed. Erika Manders & Daniëlle Sloomjes (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020): 101.

¹¹⁷ Crawford, *Constantius II*, 26.

¹¹⁸ De Kleijn, “Imperial Leadership”, 107.

¹¹⁹ De Kleijn, “Imperial Leadership”, 110.; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 42.33, 42.24.; Eutr. 10.15; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 42.18.

¹²⁰ Amm. Marc. 21.16.8.

¹²¹ B. Kelly, “Court Politics and Imperial Imagery”, 129.

Ammianus' exaggeration of Constantius cannot be denied, however, his purpose within his characterisation reveals distinct flaws in the systems of Imperial rule in late Antiquity.¹²² Ammianus himself inhabited the turbulent affective spaces of the empire of Constantius' time and he is just as affected by those spaces as the emperors he represents. By understanding the perspectives of other authors, Ammianus' perspective may be better understood as he struggles with the control of the court system over the emperor.

Contemporary Perspectives Outside of Ammianus

Outside of Ammianus' account, numerous ancient authors and panegyrists produced distinct images of Constantius' character. Many of these authors created their texts for very particular reasons, whether as speeches at court, eulogies of emperors or their own perspective of the history of that period. Like Ammianus, each had their own perspective and "distorting mirror" through which they presented their version of Constantius.¹²³ Through the resonances across their work and Ammianus', the image of Constantius becomes clearer and his position at the centre of the court's corruption solidifies.

Unlike many of the other accounts from this period, which often centre around orations and panegyrics, the work of Aurelius Victor, though quite brief, provides another contemporary account. Victor's writing is even more contemporary to the reigns of Constantius II and Julian as he "only treats of events right up to the time of writing" with his work suggested to be composed around 359-360 CE.¹²⁴ Bird suggests that his first edition likely ended with a eulogy

¹²² Blockley, *Ammianus*, 39.

¹²³ MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 2.

¹²⁴ H. W. Bird, "Julian and Aurelius Victor", *Latomus* 55. No. 4 (1996): 870.; Malcom A. R. Colledge, "Review: Aurelius Victor: *Livre des Césars*. Edited and translated by Pierre Dufraigne. Pp. lxxiii + 216. Paris: Société d'édition 'Les belles lettres' (Collection Budé), 1975. Paper.", *The Classical Review* 27, no. 2 (1977): 287-288.; Pierre Dufraigne, *Aurelius Victor, Livre de Césars* (Paris: Société d'édition 'Les

to Constantius, which outside of his comments on Constantius' court, was mainly in praise of the emperor.¹²⁵ Aurelius Victor, who initially praises Constantius' military achievements, describes how Constantius "was addicted to the love of eunuchs, courtiers and wives, by whom- satisfied by no deviant or unlawful pleasure – he used to be polluted".¹²⁶ As another contemporary writer of the fourth century with allegiances to Julian, Aurelius Victor's inclusion of such a specific recount in this short history places great emphasis on the influence of the court on Constantius.¹²⁷ In their orations, Libanius and Themistius define Constantius' qualities as distinctly opposite to that of Ammianus and Aurelius Victor. Some crossover may exist in relation to Ammianus' recognition of Constantius' only desirable quality – a modest lifestyle, though Libanius and Themistius consistently profess their worship and adoration of Constantius.¹²⁸ Libanius' oration LIX is one of his earliest, delivered c. 344 CE, around ten years prior to the beginning of Ammianus' surviving narrative.¹²⁹ When it comes to

belles lettres', 1975): xi-xii.; C. E. V. Nixon, 'Aurelius Victor and Julian', *Classical Philology* 86, no. 2 (1991): 114-119.

¹²⁵ Bird, "Julian and Aurelius Victor", 870-871.

¹²⁶ Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 42.17-21; "*Spadonum aulicorumque amori deditus et uxorum; quibus contentus nulla libidine transversa aut iniusta polluebatur.*" Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 42.19.

¹²⁷ Chester G. Starr, "Aurelius Victor: Historian of Empire", *The American Historical Review* 61, no. 3 (1956): 574-586.; Michael Whitby, "Images of Constantius", in *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, eds. Jan Willem Drijvers & David Hunt (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1999): 68-78.

¹²⁸ Amm. Marc. 21.16.5

¹²⁹ For dating Libanius' orations see: Samuel Lieu & Dominic Montserrat, "The Sons of Constantine: Libanius, *Oratio* LIX (Royal Discourse upon Constantius and Constans)", in *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views: A Source History*, eds. Samuel Lieu & Dominic Montserrat (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1995): 161.; For dating Ammianus' book 14 see: T. D. Barnes, "Structure and Chronology in Ammianus, Book 14", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 92 (1989): 413-422.

Constantius' relationship to the court, Libanius describes Constantius in very welcoming and humbling terms:

“He brings into the open whatever counsel he himself discovers, and the advice of his close followers he does not belittle with surliness...”.¹³⁰

Libanius further expands on this statement by suggesting that Constantius “increases his love through familiarity”.¹³¹ Libanius' constant stress on Constantius' controlled temperament, directly contradicts Ammianus' depictions. Equally, this passage could be read as an example of imperial *civilitas* “the ideal that the *princeps* remained in principle an ordinary citizen (and a senator among senators)”.¹³² However, the realities of the court of the fourth century meant that the growing trend of imperial isolation that was emerging under Constantius meant that “lineage, social rank and political accomplishments did not matter as much as proximity to the monarch”.¹³³ Imperial seclusion added to the emperors security as well as solidifying the “social distance” between an emperor and the upper classes. It is likely that Libanius was attempting to encourage Constantius to continue with a behaviour like *civilitas* to return to

¹³⁰ Lib. 59.122.; The Latin of these translations is not provided as I could not access the original text and only had access to translations: Libanius, “Oration LIX” in *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views: A Source History*, trans. M. H. Dodgeon, Mark Vermes and Sam Lieu, (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1995): 164-205.

¹³¹ Lib. 59.122.

¹³² Christoph Michels, “Great King or *Civilis Princeps*?: Monarchical Ideals and Daily Interaction in the Reign of Antoninus Pius”, in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, ed. Caillan Davenport & Meaghan McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 42.; For further discussion of *civilitas* in Late Antiquity see: Steffen Diefenbach, “Zwischen Liturgie und *civilitas*. Konstantinopel. Im 5. Jahrhundert und die Etablierung eines städtischen Kaisertums”, in *Blidlichkeit und Bildorte von Liturgie*, ed. Rainer Warland, (Weisbaden: Reichart, 2002): 21-49.; Christopher Kelly, “Stooping to Conquer: The Power of Imperial Humility”, in *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in late Antiquity*, ed. Christopher Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 224-227.

¹³³ Icks, “Kept in the Dark”, 188.

traditional norms within the imperial court.¹³⁴ However, as Ammianus suggests, the individuals that surrounded Constantius did not allow such an idea to be possible. Libanius' emphasis on the familial-like bonds between Constantius and his court can also be read as reinforcing the unnatural closeness of the court to the emperor. The same theme is expanded upon by Themistius, in which he further develops the love that Constantius has for those around him:

“And so knowing this behaves towards each of his friends as to his own body and to his own soul and friendship with this man is the only thing that is both exalted at the same time totally secure.... But those who take hold of the King's right hand know that they are held by a safe cable and will be held to the end”.¹³⁵

Themistius' commendations of Constantius extend even from the title of this panegyric: *On Love of Mankind or Constantius*. This small excerpt exemplifies the continuous compliments and tributes paid to Constantius during this oration, suggesting security within the emperor's confidence and inner circle. Themistius gave this speech when he first met Constantius, having had no direct experiences with Constantius. His speech was clearly aimed at self-advancement. Both Libanius and Themistius provide stark contrasts to the perspectives of Julian, Aurelius Victor, and Ammianus. It is not surprising, as Whitby points out, that Libanius most likely “received instructions” and “a direct imperial commission or strong hint”.¹³⁶ Themistius, on the other hand, was quickly rewarded for his praise and not only was “elevated to leadership of the senate” but part of his oration was inscribed on a statue in Constantinople.¹³⁷ As Heather

¹³⁴ Icks, “Kept in the Dark”, 188.

¹³⁵ Them. *Or.* 1.; The Latin text of this translation is not provided as it was not accessible and I only had access to translations: Themistius, “Oration I: On Love of Mankind or Constantius” in *Politics, Philosophy and Empire in the Fourth-century: Select Orations of Themistius*, Vol 36, Translated by Peter Heather and David Moncur (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001): 69-97.

¹³⁶ Whitby, “Images of Constantius”, 74.

¹³⁷ Whitby, “Images of Constantius”, 74.

and Moncur claim, it was “a carefully crafted and sustained play for imperial favour”.¹³⁸ Ammianus’ narrative provides an image of a controlling court in which misinformation and rumour spread quickly and maliciously. In one of Themistius’s speeches there are hints of rumour mongering throughout the court, though he frames it in a much more positive light:

“But if he is rich in friends, he will both see afar and will hear things that are not close to him and he will know what is far off, like the seers, and he will be present to many at the same time like God”.¹³⁹

Themistius’ oration supports many of Ammianus’ claims surrounding Constantius’ god-like omniscience of both events and private conversations.¹⁴⁰ Themistius’ perspective is framed with admiration but provides a disturbing image of the reach of the emperor at the time, and in many ways promotes an understanding of the frightening omniscience amongst the people.

Even in the case of Gallus, Ammianus relates numerous times in which rumours are taken back to Constantius. The fear of being falsely accused dictated how the people around him behaved. Zonaras briefly notes that “he had ears attentive to slander”.¹⁴¹ Although this is only a short reference in his descriptions of Constantius, it is repeated across numerous texts.

In the case of Julian’s own panegyrics, the context of Julian’s position becomes critical to Constantius’ representation. Julian’s panegyrics begin by lauding Constantius, and in doing so aligns Julian with the role of the imperial court. Contextually, his decision to do so makes sense as Julian must continually prove his loyalty to Constantius to survive. As we have seen with Libanius and Themistius, the goal of a panegyric was to praise, often with a “careful and

¹³⁸ Peter Heather & David Moncur, “Oration 1: On the Love of Mankind or Constantius: Introduction”, in *Politics, Philosophy and Empire in the Fourth-century: Select Orations of Themistius*. Vol 36. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001): 75.

¹³⁹ Them. Or. 17c.

¹⁴⁰ Amm. Marc. 14.1.7.

¹⁴¹ Zonar. 13.9.

deliberate choice of particular means of expression...to communicate a precise message at a precise time”.¹⁴² Julian’s panegyrics evidence the anxieties generated by the imperial court and the flattery necessary to keep Constantius’ suspicion and insecurities at bay.

Julian’s first Panegyric, the *Panegyric in Honour of Constantius*, was sent to Milan with Eutherius to convince Constantius of Julian’s loyalty, particularly after the events of 356-357 CE, where word spread of Julian’s ambitions were rumoured to reach for the title of Augustus. Shaun Tougher describes the panegyric as “diplomatic in character”.¹⁴³ Julian promotes Constantius’ “noble disposition” emphasising his “harmony and virtue” in the promotion of imperial values.¹⁴⁴ In contrast, Ammianus grants Julian these characteristics but never Constantius. Julian flatters Constantius’ unassailable power when he asks, “But could anything be more heroic than your line of action?”¹⁴⁵ Notably, Julian directly contradicts this belief throughout *The Letter to the Senate and People of Athens*. In the context of the time that the panegyric was written Julian had little alternative but to reinforce his belief in Constantius.

Julian’s second panegyric, *The Heroic Deeds of Constantius*, may have never been seen by Constantius and is believed to have been written between 357-360 CE. Ross suggests that this panegyric begins to reveal growing tensions between the Caesar and Augustus.¹⁴⁶ In a larger discussion on Julian’s second panegyric, Hal Drake notes the structural “cleverness with

¹⁴² MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 3.

¹⁴³ A discussion on dating the panegyric can be found in: Shaun Tougher, “Reading Between the Lines”, in *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian ‘The Apostate’*, ed. Nicholas Baker-Brian & Shaun Tougher (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2012): 20-22.

¹⁴⁴ “Σκοπεῖν δὲ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἄξιον ἦδη τῶν ρηθέντων, εἰ μετὰ ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς βελτίστης ἔξωθεν ἅπαντα γέγονε· τούτῳ γὰρ ἦδη καὶ τῶν λόγων ἀρχόμενος μάλιστα προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν ἡξίου.” Julian. Or.1.41B.

¹⁴⁵ “τῶν ἀδικημάτων δὲ τῶν ἐκείνου καὶ ὧν ἔδρασεν εἰς οἰκίαν τὴν σὴν οὐχ ἡδύ μοι πολλάκις μεμνησθαι. ἀνδρειοτέραν δὲ τῆσδε τῆς πράξεως τίς ἂν εἰπεῖν ἔχοι;”, Julian. Or. 1. 42 A.

¹⁴⁶ Ross, “Constantius and the Sieges”, 130.

which Julian undermines his own efforts” to praise Constantius.¹⁴⁷ Throughout the panegyric, Julian heaps praise upon Constantius only to diminish that same praise in a later reference. Julian describes Constantius as “nobler than the king of the Greeks” and that Constantius “grant forgiveness to many even of the undeserving...”.¹⁴⁸ The context of this *Oration* (perhaps after the battle of Strasbourg) makes Julian’s reference to Constantius’ mercy a risk, as amongst the flattery and praise it seems to be a taunt at Constantius’ temper. Drake goes as far as suggesting the true purpose of this panegyric was to parody the achievements of Constantius, though this reading may only be achieved from a retrospective perspective.¹⁴⁹ A parodic text could allow Ammianus to expand and exaggerate Constantius’ caricature even further. The subtle undermining that Julian pursues is also mirrored in Ammianus’ account.

The third Panegyric reveals a direct relationship between Ammianus and Julian as he borrows directly from the *Panegyric in Honour of the Empress Eusebia*. Dated to around 355/356 CE, when Julian was still adjusting to military command in Gaul, the panegyric emphasises Eusebia’s critical role in uniting Constantius and Julian.¹⁵⁰ Julian relates a short passage of praise that he overhears from Eusebia herself: “Certain favours you have already received from us and yet others you shall receive, if God will, if only you prove to be loyal and

¹⁴⁷ Hal Drake, “‘But I Digress...’: Rhetoric and Propaganda in Julian’s Second Oration to Constantius”, in *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian ‘The Apostate’*, ed. Nicholas Baker-Brian & Shaun Tougher (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2012): 37.

¹⁴⁸ “Ταῦτα κατ’ ἐμαυτὸν ἐννοῶν, ὃ φίλε βασιλεῦ, καὶ σὲ μὲν ὁρῶν ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν παιδείαν ἐπιδεικνύμενον καὶ ἐθέλοντα πάντως κοινῇ μὲν² ἅπαντας ἀγαθόν τι δρᾶν, ἡμῖν δὲ ἰδίᾳ τιμὰς καὶ γέρα ἄλλα ἐπ’ ἄλλοις παρασκευάζοντα, τοσούτῳ δὲ οἶμαι κρείττονα τοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων βασιλέως εἶναι ἐθέλοντα, ὥστε ὁ μὲν ἡτίμαζε τοὺς ἀρίστους, σὺ δὲ οἶμαι καὶ τῶν φαύλων πολλοῖς τὴν συγγνώμην νέμεις”, Julian. *Or.* 2. 50 C.

¹⁴⁹ Drake, “‘But I Digress...’”, 41.

¹⁵⁰ Liz James, “Is there an Empress in the Text? Julian’s Speech of Thanks to Eusebia”, in *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian ‘The Apostate’*, ed. Nicholas Baker-Brian & Shaun Tougher (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2012): 47.

honest towards us”.¹⁵¹ In Ammianus’ work we see the repetition of a similar phrase during the speech at Julian’s elevation to Caesar: “provided only God grants our prayers, with equal moderation and conscientiousness”.¹⁵² Ammianus attempts to criticise Constantius, by taking Eusebia’s inferred description of Julian and placing into Constantius’ speech, relating Constantius’ praise as unoriginal and manipulative.

What may be the most famous of Julian’s correspondence, the *Letter to the Senate and People of Athens* is fuelled by the events of 361 CE when Julian is elevated by his army to Augustus. The associated propaganda permits a better understanding of the goal of the letter and its impact on the narrative Julian constructed around Constantius. Significantly, the contrast between the letter and Julian’s earlier panegyrics serves as a basis for understanding Julian’s true opinions of Constantius. Julian frames Constantius as “a man happy to be so manipulated, driven by his petty and paranoid jealousies”.¹⁵³ Ammianus’ point of view parallels Julian’s letter as he describes his appointment as Caesar with Constantius “impose[ing] on me the most galling and irksome slavery...”.¹⁵⁴ Julian’s agency in this appointment was non-existent, however, his previous panegyrics and the advantages granted by his elevation are overlooked. He “systematically” states his claims of innocence to the Athenians to ensure that only Constantius can be blamed for the civil conflict.¹⁵⁵ Yet, Julian maintains a reverent tone towards Constantius, emphasising his own loyalty and allowing the

¹⁵¹ “καὶ τὰ μὲν, ἔφη, ἤδη παρ’ ἡμῶν ἔχεις, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἔξεις σὺν θεῷ, μόνον εἰ πιστὸς καὶ δίκαιος εἰς ἡμᾶς γένοιο.”, Julian. *Or.* 3. 123 B.

¹⁵² “*Aderimus nobis vicissim amoris robusta constantia, militabimus simul, una orbem pacatum, deus modo velit quod oramus, pari moderatione pietateque recturi.*” Amm. Marc. 15.8.14.

¹⁵³ Omissi, “Usurper, Propaganda, History”, 198.

¹⁵⁴ “ἔργῳ δὲ εἰς πικροτάτην καὶ χαλεπωτάτην ἐμβαλεῖν δουλείαν”, Julian. *Ep.* 273 C.

¹⁵⁵ Mark Humphries, “The Tyrant’s Mask? Images of Good and Bad Rule in Julian’s Letter to the Senate and People of Athens”, in *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian ‘The Apostate’*, ed. Nicholas Baker-Brian & Shaun Tougher (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2012): 75.

seemingly cruel actions of Constantius, in return, to make his case.¹⁵⁶ Ammianus' account seeks to support Julian's narrative in *The Letter to the Senate and People of Athens*. Ultimately, *The Letter to the senate and People of Athens* represents the freedom Julian had now found after his ascension to Augustus, granting him the ability to express his own ideas and demonstrate his ability to craft propaganda amidst a volatile political landscape.

It is uncertain whether Ammianus directly drew on Julian's works, though he adopts many aspects of Julian's narrative.¹⁵⁷ In *The Letter to the Senate and People of Athens* Julian crafts a narrative of contrast. Similar to Ammianus, Julian comments on the governing systems that Constantius falls victim to, and uses the letter to promote his own virtues that align with the humble and loyal Augustan emperors. Constantius' paranoia is highlighted by the reverence and anxiety that the first two panegyrics embody, and Julian's later comments on Constantius' actions frame a strategic narrative of caution against Constantius' whims and temper.

The problem that Constantius faced was the dominance of the court culture that he perpetuated. Even within sympathetic representations, the presence of the court is always felt. Ammianus' narrative on Constantius, though likely exaggerated, revealed a pressing structural imbalance at the centre of the empire. Julian is seen as the exception during Late Antiquity, with the court's influence spreading across the reigns of proceeding emperors. With his dramatic retelling, Ammianus sought to craft a narrative of warning against the perpetuation of dangerous emotional communities that corrupted the divine right of imperial power.

¹⁵⁶ Julian. *Ep.* 280-281.

¹⁵⁷ See Alan J Ross' book on the relationship between Ammianus and Julian from a narratological perspective: Ross, *Ammianus' Julian*.

Ammianus' Perspective

Ammianus highlights the key causes and consequences of Constantius' anxieties in a eulogy to the emperor, providing us with a direct understanding of Ammianus' perspective on Constantius as well as points of disparity to challenge across other texts. Constantius is established as symbolic of the imperial court system by closely aligning his influence with the court's bureaucracy. Ammianus' focus on Constantius' positive qualities is brief as he describes Constantius' moderation in life and luxury, and Constantius' seemingly conservative approach to promotions within his government. The imbalance of Ammianus' analysis of Constantius emphasises one of many moments in which Ammianus allows his "prejudice against Constantius to affect his objectivity".¹⁵⁸ Rather than portraying an objective view on Constantius, Ammianus shapes him into a representation of corruption at the centre of the empire. In the negative and positive attributes assigned to Constantius by Ammianus at the closing of his life, paranoia defines the narrative.

Ammianus' "posthumous sketches" are not uncommon in history narratives, such as those by Tacitus, Thucydides, Sallust, Livy and many others.¹⁵⁹ A eulogy-type chapter is included for each of the emperors' lives Ammianus explores, with an emphasis on the virtues and failings of their reign. Ammianus' representation of Constantius is often viewed as overly critical and biased. There is a broad consensus on one detail: the corrupt nature of the court that surrounded Constantius. Constantius' anxiety surrounding his court signifies his primary failure as an emperor and was the root cause of the faults Ammianus describes.

The first section of Ammianus' chapter is framed by Constantius' virtues, however, it often contradicts previous claims by Ammianus. Ammianus' initial description of Constantius

¹⁵⁸ Blockley, *Ammianus*, 41.

¹⁵⁹ See Blockley's discussion of the numerous instances of "posthumous sketches" throughout the cannon: Blockley, *Ammianus*, 36.

is favourable: “He always maintained the dignity of imperial majesty and his great and lofty spirit disdained the favour of the populous”.¹⁶⁰ It is one of the few times that Ammianus directly praises Constantius and his use of imperial power. Further on Ammianus suggests that it would have been better “if he had renounced his power without bloodshed, rather than defended it so mercilessly”, demonstrating how removed the emperor was from the rest of society.¹⁶¹ The growing isolation of the emperor allows his paranoia to dominate his thoughts, creating the conditions for others to manipulate him. Gallus and, later, Julian’s ascension provides a clear example of the loss of Constantius’ control over his subordinates and his army.

Initially, Ammianus expands on Constantius’ moderation within his private life, seemingly one of the few of Constantius’ virtues that does not present a contradiction. Ammianus praises Constantius’ life choices, stating:

“By prudent and temperate manner of life and by moderation in eating and drinking he maintained such sound health that he rarely suffered from illnesses, but such as he had were of a dangerous character”.¹⁶²

The limited attempt to consider the virtues of Constantius may be an attempt to balance the faults which outweigh his virtues. In addition to moderation within his everyday life, Ammianus suggests that Constantius was “extraordinarily chaste”. If anyone tried to discover anything untoward Constantius had “the unrestrained liberty of supreme power” that would

¹⁶⁰ “*Imperatoriae auctoritatis cothurnum ubique custodiens, popularitatem elato animo contemnebat et magno*”, Amm. Marc. 21.16.1

¹⁶¹ “*Utque recte sentientes quidam arbitrabantur, virtutis erat potius indicium magnum, imperio eundem Constantium sine cruore cessisse, quam vindicasse tam inclementer.*” Amm. Marc. 21.16.12.

¹⁶² “*In vita parca et sobria, edendi potandique moderatione, valetudinem ita retinuit firmam, ut raros colligeret morbos, sed eos nonl procul a vitae periculis...*” Amm. Marc. 21.16.5.

trump such a rumour.¹⁶³ The influence of the eunuchs suggests otherwise, presented as a corrupting force that equally corrupts his chastity. Ammianus implies that the eunuchs spread their “false accusations” whilst “performing duties of an intimate nature...”.¹⁶⁴ The corruptive power of the eunuchs and their separation from society most likely precluded them from affecting the emperor’s image of chastity, yet they were the key force in creating the rage-fuelled images Ammianus portrays of Constantius.

Finally, Ammianus explores Constantius’ education, adding to the portrayal of his merits. The sons of Constantine were the first heirs of the empire to be given a Christian education.¹⁶⁵ However, Ammianus portrays Constantius as uneducated, and other scholars and historians have equally suggested that there is no evidence for his education. Whitby states: “Themistius was keen to present Constantius as a fellow philosopher...Constantius’ enthusiasm for education and philosophy (Or. 3.46c) does not demonstrate that he had received a good education”.¹⁶⁶ Aurelius Victor continues this discussion arguing that Constantius was “a lover of eloquence, which, since, through slowness of mind, he was unable to attain, he used to envy in others”.¹⁶⁷ Debate as to whether his education was ‘lacking’ clouds perceptions of Constantius as Ammianus relates:

¹⁶³ “*perque spatia vitae longissima impendio castus, ut nec malivolo citerioris vitae ministro saltem suspicione tenus posset redargui, quod crimen etiam si non invenit, malignitas fingit, in summarum licentia potestatum.*” Amm. Marc. 21.16.6.

¹⁶⁴ “*Eisdemque residui regii accessere spadones, quorum ea tempestate plus habendi cupiditas ultra mortalem modum adolescebat, inter ministeria vitae secretioris per arcanos susurros nutrimenta fictis criminibus subserentes;*” Amm. Marc. 14.11.3.

¹⁶⁵ Crawford, *Constantius II*, 25.

¹⁶⁶ Whitby, “Images of Constantius”, 72.

¹⁶⁷ “*Placidus clemensque pro negotio, litterarum ad elegantiam prudens atque orandi genere leni iocundoque; laboris patiens ac destinandi sagittas mire promptus ; cibi omnis libidinis atque omnium cupidinum victor ; cultu genitoris satis pius suique nimis custos; gnarus vita bonorum principum reipublicae quietem regi.*” Aur. Vict. Caes. 42.12.18.

“He made great pretensions to learning, but after failing in rhetoric because of dullness of mind, he turned to making verses, but accomplished nothing worthwhile”.¹⁶⁸

Ammianus presents some of Constantius’ supposed rhetoric in the lead up to Julian’s accession to Caesar and in victory speeches after battle. Ammianus’ inference of Constantius’ lack of rhetorical training positions his abilities in contrast with Julian’s incredible education and rhetoric. Undoubtedly embellished or entirely written by Ammianus, the speeches are persuasive and clear. It seems odd that within the speeches by Constantius, Ammianus would allow the charisma and control of Constantius’ language to be so prominent yet state that Constantius presented no talent within rhetoric and oratory. Even Julian grants Constantius great praise for his oratory, charisma, and control in his *Panegyric in Honour of Constantius*. Julian states that the people gave Constantius the titles “Orator general, virtuous emperor, distinguished soldier” as well as suggesting that his “overwhelming eloquence” was able to “‘leave a sting’ in the souls of that motley crowd of men...”.¹⁶⁹ The quotation “leave a sting” references a description by Eupolis of Pericles’ oratory style, aligning Constantius’ oratorical ability with one of the most notable orators in Greek history.¹⁷⁰ Julian’s description reinforces the control that Constantius maintained over his words and his soldiers as they were eagerly “carried away by enthusiasm and burst into applause, then eager to miss no word they became

¹⁶⁸ “*Doctrinarum diligens affectator, sed cum a rhetorice per ingenium desereretur obtunsum, ad versificandum transgressus, nihil operae pretium fecit.*” Amm. Marc. 21.16.4.

¹⁶⁹ “καίτοι πῶς2 ἄξιον ἐπαινεῖν ἐστὶ σε δημηγόρον ἅμα καὶ στρατηγὸν ἢ βασιλέα χρηστὸν καὶ γενναῖον ὀπλίτην προσαγορεύοντα;”, Julian. *Or.* 1. 32 C-D. “τίς οὖν ἡ ῥώμη γέγονε τῶν λόγων; τίς δὲ ἡ πειθὼ τοῖς χεῖλεσιν ἐπικαθημένη, ἥ1 παντοδαπῶν ἀνθρώπων συνειλεγμένων τὸ κέντρον ἐγκαταλιπεῖν2 ἰσχύσασα ταῖς ψυχαῖς, καὶ νίκην παρασχεῖν τῷ μεγέθει μὲν ἐνάμιλλον ταῖς ἐκ τῶν ὅπλων περιγινόμεναις, B εὐαγὴ δὲ καὶ καθαρὰν, ὥσπερ ἱερέως ἐς θεοῦ φοιτῶντος, ἀλλ’ οὐ βασιλέως ἐς πόλεμον, ἔργον γενομένην;”, Julian. *Or.* 1. 33 a-b.

¹⁷⁰ Eup. *fr.* 102.

quiet again”.¹⁷¹ O’Brien leads the discussion on the representation of Constantius’ rhetoric in Ammianus and suggests that “Ammianus both makes Constantius a mouthpiece of the imperial ideal, and trumps Constantius’ rhetorical success by enfolding it in his own overarching rhetoric”.¹⁷² However, Constantius’ moments of rhetorical success under Ammianus’ pen often work to enhance Julian as the “imperial ideal” rather than himself. Upon analysing Constantius’ speeches, it is clear to see “indications of a rhetorical strategy” that go to proving that “he is capable of effective oratory”.¹⁷³ Constantius’ intention within each of his speeches is clear to the audience and are importantly adjusted to the context of each situation.

Constantius creates speeches that rouse the entire assembly and cements his position as the leader. Throughout his addresses, the developed language of the speech and the manipulation of the army’s ego suggest it is unlikely that Constantius was as unaccomplished as Ammianus claims. Ammianus needed to maintain some positive attributes about Constantius to solidify the legitimacy of Julian’s dynastic line. To destroy Constantius would have affected Julian’s dynastic security as a leader.

To serve his narrative, Ammianus crafts an image of anxiety that preoccupies the emperor as he comes to symbolise the flaws of the current regime. Constantius’ fear of treachery drove his paranoia. In the cases of Paulus and Eusebius, paranoia leads to acts of cruelty, whether they were by decree, the machinations of the court, or by a power-hungry

¹⁷¹ “ἀκμαζούσης δὲ τῆς δημηγορίας συνενθουσιῶντες τῷ λόγῳ πάντες ἐπεκρότουν, εἶτα αὖθις ἀκούειν ἐπιθυμοῦντες ἡσύχαζον.”. Julian. *Or.*1.31 D.

¹⁷² Peter O’Brien, “Vetranio’s Revenge? The Rhetorical Prowess of Ammianus’ Constantius”, *Dialogues d’histoire ancienne* 8 (2013): 231.

¹⁷³ O’Brien, “Vetranio’s Revenge?”, 235.

subordinate. Ammianus notes that in all cases, Constantius' "bitterness and angry suspicions were stretched to the uttermost".¹⁷⁴

Ammianus' subsequent descriptions of Constantius are framed by this paranoia and eagerness to cause pain. The main characteristics of how Constantius' fear are expressed across these "endless investigations" are highlighted by Ammianus, stating that "he made no distinction between right and wrong and easily surpassed the savagery of Caligula, Domitian and Commodus".¹⁷⁵ Constantius is described as initiating these inquisitions "with more eagerness than humanity" whilst he appointed "merciless judges".¹⁷⁶ Particularly gruesome was his wish to create punishments that made "their death lingering, if nature allowed" and "excessively violent tortures".¹⁷⁷ Though not necessarily unique to the reign of Constantius, Ammianus' emphasis on these behaviours add to the cruelty and horror of his reign, that likely stemmed from his emotional inheritances of fear and distrust. Ammianus compared Constantius to three previous emperors who were considered some of the worst historical figures, building on his exaggeration and emphasis on Constantius' cruelty.

¹⁷⁴ "Addebatur miserorum aerumnis, qui rei maiestatis imminutae vel laesae deferebantur, acerbitas eius et iracundia suspicionesque in huius modi cuncta distentae." Amm. Marc. 21.16.9.

¹⁷⁵ "fasque eodem loco ducens et nefas, Caligulae et Domitiani et Commodi immanitatem facile superabat", Amm. Marc. 21.16.8.; Whitby, "Images of Constantius", 79; Hanaghan also notes Ammianus furthers his parallels to unfavourable emperors and their anxiety in other parts of his text with a direct allusion to Suetonius' *Tiberius*, see: Michael Hanaghan, "Ammianus' Rainbows and Constantius' Fate", *Hermes* 145, no. 4 (2017): 450.

¹⁷⁶ "Addebatur miserorum aerumnis, qui rei maiestatis imminutae vel laesae deferebantur, acerbitas eius et iracundia suspicionesque in huius modi cuncta distentae. Et siquid tale increpuisset, in quaestiones acrius exurgens quam civiliter, spectatores apponebat his litibus truces, mortemque longius in puniendis quibusdam, si natura permetteret, conabatur extendi, in eius modi controversiarum partibus etiam Gallieno ferocior." Amm. Marc. 21.16.9.

¹⁷⁷ Amm. Marc. 21.16.9., "vi nimia tormentorum." 21.16.10.

Ammianus' final note on Constantius' character reveals a contradiction, further suggesting that Ammianus struggled to rationalise the divine role of the emperor with Constantius' behaviours. Ammianus states: "And in such affairs he showed deadly enmity to justice, although he made a special effort to be considered just and merciful".¹⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly Ammianus' closing eulogy on Constantius' life provides no examples of his merciful nature. Crawford asserts that Constantius inherited "the same fiery temper that had seen Constantine order the execution of Crispus", and that his "brand of justice" may have had a clear justification in his fear and anxiety.¹⁷⁹ With the trauma and pressures of the imperial title, the threat of usurpation was always present. In Constantius' early life, he witnessed the constant threats to his father, the death of his mother and older brother. His reactions to his father's death and the execution of his extended family would have had long-lasting impacts.

Ammianus concludes his list of Constantius' faults by referring to the "excessive" influence of the court.¹⁸⁰ Anxiety and paranoia were fuelled by Constantius' reactions to the ensuing chaos. As Smith states "as rulers saw things...a measure of fear in one's subjects - or more politely, awed obedience in the face of godlike power - was part of the court's whole point".¹⁸¹ Yet, that "measure of fear" is uncontrolled and as observed under Constantius, engendered further systemic issues throughout the empire.

¹⁷⁸ "*iustumque in eius modi titulis capitali odio oderat, cum maxime id ageret ut iustus aestimaretur et clemens.*" Amm. Marc. 21.16.11

¹⁷⁹ Crawford, *Constantius II*, 23.

¹⁸⁰ "*Uxoribus et spadonum gracilentis vocibus et palatinis quibusdam nimium quantum addictus, ad singular eius verba plaudentibus, et quid ille aiat aut neget (ut assentiri possint) observantibus.*" Amm. Marc. 21.16.16.

¹⁸¹ Smith, "Measures of Difference", 148.

Conclusion: Picturing An Emperor.

A historian's aim is often to create an objective portrait of a time, however, Ammianus fails to do so. Yet this does not change the value of his work, as his own experience of that time can provide a perspective of what the world looked like to Ammianus and likely to many others. The value of emotional communities is that many people are experiencing the same thing and reacting in similar ways through similar behaviours. Ammianus' sense of the world around him and his depiction, in this case, of Constantius II provides insight into his own emotional community. By analysing other authors of the period, focused on the subject of Constantius II, we can also determine the connections across these emotional communities and identify how each community was affected.

Ammianus himself was fiercely loyal to Julian dictating how he wrote his history. Other authors used their words for self-advancement or to try and create a connection with the imperial office. In a period where the emperor seemed further and further away from his empire, these authors attempted to describe, flatter, and connect to that secluded figure. Even those authors recognise the changing shape of the empire and the barrier the court and its' corruption presented. Their work supports Ammianus' attempts to identify a structural imbalance that was transforming the empire.

Ammianus' bias is clear throughout this eulogy and across his work, and as Blockley asserts "Ammianus, in the narrative on Constantius, makes rhetorical assertions without adequate supporting facts".¹⁸² However, he does expose the anxiety and fear that surrounded the emperor, a fear that was established in Constantius and continued in many other emperors in Late Antiquity. Whilst he did not provide an entirely accurate account, Ammianus' work does create a narrative that reveals the build-up of emotional communities around the emperor.

¹⁸² Blockley, *Ammianus*, 40.

Ammianus' crafts these communities within his work to reflect on the dramatic changes that were occurring within the governing roles of the empire. Constantius forms the base and the joining point for the different emotional communities of the court, as Ammianus warns his world of the dangers that lurk behind the imperial curtain.

2. The Eunuchs and the Court: The Division of Emotional Communities

Ammianus frames Constantius' section of his narrative to encapsulate Constantius' control of the imperial court. Constantius becomes caught up in a new system in which he "struggled to prevent [his] own gradual entrapment in a highly structured and convention-bound court society".¹⁸³ Constantius' court and its gradual evolution is not presented by Ammianus as a unified community. Constantius is positioned in a transitory space between the court's emotional community and the eunuchs' emotional community, with each party reacting and affecting their communities in noticeably different ways. Defining the imperial court is difficult due to its constant transformations, I will adopt the definition of the court "not only [as] a social circle, but *also* a physical place *and* a form of behaviour".¹⁸⁴ Within the court, 'courtiers' are those closest to the emperor with close and regular interaction, that form both an 'inner' and 'outer' court depending on their hierarchical status and proximity to the emperor.¹⁸⁵ The court exists wherever the emperor is, regardless of location.¹⁸⁶ The emotional community of the court refers to the 'inner' part of the court that was made up of aristocratic individuals who were

¹⁸³ C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, 192.

¹⁸⁴ Notably Benjamin Kelly disagrees with this definition, however I think in relation of the fourth century and the expansion into regional courts it is a more accurate representation of the imperial courts: Benjamin Kelly, "Introduction", in *The Roman Emperor and His Court: c. 30 BC- c. AD 300*, eds. Benjamin Kelly & Angela Hug, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 7.; For the basis of this definition see: A. C. Michel, *La cour sous l'empereur Claude: Les enjeux d'un lieu de pouvoir* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015): 18.; Aloys Winterling, "'Hof': Versuch einer idealtypischen Bestimmung anhand der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Geschichte", *Historische Zeitschrift. Beihefte* 23 (1997): 13-14.

¹⁸⁵ B. Kelly, "Introduction", 8.

¹⁸⁶ Caillan Davenport & Meaghan McEvoy, "Introduction: Connecting Courts", in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, ed. Caillan Davenport and Meghan McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 4.

usually officials within the bureaucratic systems of the empire.¹⁸⁷ Eunuchs were also part of this ‘inner’ section of the court but due to their ostracisation from the officials of the Imperial court they became separated into another emotional community.

As Benjamin Kelly notes, there is something unpredictable about the ways in which the members of the court of the fourth century react to each other.¹⁸⁸ There are more divisions present within the communities of the court in the fourth century as the emperors’ affect is further divided across more and more spaces due to the dispersal of centralised power structures away from Rome itself.¹⁸⁹ Hanaghan splits Constantius’ court into “close friends (*proximi*), flatterers (*adulators*) and eunuchs (*spandones*)”.¹⁹⁰ The divisions of these groups are further confused by their varying influence and ability to make the emperor listen to them. Their power rests in “the words and/or gestures [they] choose to use [that] have an immediate effect on the deployment of attentional resources”.¹⁹¹ Constantius’ behaviours and emotional outbursts become a performance of the expectations of those around him, as his attention is forced from community to community. His own performance of emotion must control a wide range of emotional communities, not limited to the court but also upon the battlefield and at times in far-off locations, like Gallus’ court in Antioch. Hence, his expression of emotion is extreme and must stir emotion in others as they attempt to control him at the same time.¹⁹²

The struggle present in the clashing communities of the eunuchs, and the aristocratic elites and other imperial officials further emphasises a changing system in which the emperor can be overcome and influenced by those around him, as the physical court, the space that Constantius

¹⁸⁷ Feeney, “Court Construction and Regime Change”, 156-157.

¹⁸⁸ B. Kelly, “Was the Roman imperial Court and ‘Emotional Community’?”, 139.

¹⁸⁹ Jaeschke et al, “Cities, Palaces, and the Tetrarchic Imperial Courts”, 75-104.

¹⁹⁰ Hanaghan, “Ursicinius’ Outbursts”, 117.

¹⁹¹ Reddy, “L’incontournable intentionnalité des affects”, 97.

¹⁹² Reddy, “L’incontournable intentionnalité des affects”, 97.

inhabits, becomes an affective space. The core values of both the eunuchs and the aristocrats of the imperial court often align due to their shared affective space around the emperor. However, the points in which their values clash and change disrupt the once unified emotional community and craft a volatile emotional arena.¹⁹³ In many cases, studying the courts of the Roman empire begins to blur the boundaries between our “conventional categories of ‘senate’, ‘emperor’ and ‘inner circle’”.¹⁹⁴ There was a growing unchecked expectation of appeasing the emperor throughout the court, with the eunuchs beginning to gain a considerable amount of prestige within the system by allying themselves directly with the emperor.¹⁹⁵ It is the court’s various strategies, failures and successes in gaining the emperor’s favour that define the court’s actions, and it is their collective motivations in these spaces that allow us to define their emotional communities.

It is unlikely that Ammianus had access to the court of Constantius at such a level that he could supply accurate information. His relationship to Ursicinus likely provided him with contacts around the court but his account was fundamentally second hand. Ammianus’ perspective is from the outside of the court and is an attempt at identifying a flaw in the systems of government that fostered further isolation of power and access to the emperor himself. However, the tone of his work as well as his creation of two distinct emotional communities at

¹⁹³ B. Kelly, “Court Politics and Imperial Imagery”, 139.

¹⁹⁴ B. Kelly, “Court Politics and Imperial Imagery”, 131.

¹⁹⁵ For a detailed discussion of particular positions within the court and the structural features of the court see: Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power: 1300-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 156-226.; Christian Gizewski, “‘Informelle Gruppenbildungen’ in unmittelbarer Umgebung des Kaisers an spätantiken Höfen”, *Historische Zeitschrift. Beihefte* 23 (1997): 113-149.; Isabelle Künzer, “‘The Greatest Glory Is Always Habitually Subject to Envy’—Competition and Conflict over Closeness to the Emperor at the Roman Court in the 4th Century”, in *Gaining and Losing Imperial Favour in Late Antiquity: Representation and Reality*, Impact of Empire 36, eds. Kamil Cyprian Choda, Maurits Sterk de Leeuw & Fabian Schulz (Leiden: Brill, 2020): 17-35.; Winterling, “‘Hof’”, 11-25.

court vying for power and influencing the emperor, suggests that his representation of the court comes from a more personal motive.¹⁹⁶ Ammianus exploits the characterisation of eunuchs as only an “element of his political criticism”.¹⁹⁷ His commentary on the court is historical as far as understanding his perspective and adds to the characterisation of Constantius as an uncertain and corruptible emperor. Ammianus’ perspective does not reveal what the court was truly like, rather he crafts his perceptions of that affective space, using the reactions and actions of the court to understand the emotional world of fourth-century Roman Empire under Constantius.

Access to the court was highly desired yet supremely dangerous. Secrecy around the emperor was symptomatic of dynastic rule as it “carried within itself a permanent invitation to violence”.¹⁹⁸ Here Duindam is referring to the politics of succession which did not only apply to the direct line of emperors but, as we have established, equally related to the composition of the court. By concealing the actions and actors of the court and the emperor himself, power remained within the court arena. The emperor could control as well as watch who could be a threat to his power. Furthermore, the court was so reliant on the current emperor that other courtiers “are reported as having been killed because they were perceived as capable of toppling the incumbent emperor”.¹⁹⁹ The reliance on the emperor’s position for legitimacy was a feature that both the aristocrats of the court and the eunuchs shared. Proximity to the emperor and his influence was essential to retain their position.

¹⁹⁶ Shaun Tougher, “Ammianus and the Eunuchs”, in *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, eds. Jan Willem Drijvers & David Hunt (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1999): 60.

¹⁹⁷ Tougher, “Ammianus and the Eunuchs”, 61.

¹⁹⁸ Duindam, *Dynasties*, 88.

¹⁹⁹ Benjamin Kelly, “Violence and Security at Court”, in *The Roman Emperor and His Court: c. 30 BC- c. AD 300*, eds. Benjamin Kelly & Angela Hug (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 374.

Constantius' court lies at the centre of Ammianus' depiction and embodies the 'lack of control' within an emotional community. Ammianus frames Constantius' rule amongst the plotting and manipulation of the imperial court rather than on the battlefields like Julian. His accounts of the court are framed by manipulation and constant concerns of self-preservation. As Rowland Smith describes "reflection on the Roman imperial court can illuminate systemic features of the empire's governmental and social structures and guiding ideology...".²⁰⁰ The social fabric of Constantius' court was distinct from that of previous ages, having become, under Diocletian and Constantine, a more diverse and professionalised breed of civil administration, traditional aristocracy and military elite.²⁰¹ Smith suggests that it is likely that Ammianus had noted the distinctive change within the court to "pre-Tetrachic times".²⁰² Ammianus construes that it was Constantine and then Constantius II who once again began to transform the court in which he "fostered among his court-elite an appetite for riches which would...surge to corruptive levels of criminal greed".²⁰³ The history of the imperial courts of the Roman empire has been widely debated, with uncertainty often surrounding when they came into existence and the specific features that define it as a court.²⁰⁴ Most historians accept

²⁰⁰ Smith, "Measures of Difference", 128.

²⁰¹ For changes in the composition of the court see; Feeney, "Court Construction and Regime Change in the Mid-Fourth-century"; Caillan Davenport & Meghan McEvoy, "The Evolution of the Roman Imperial Court in Historical Context" in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, eds. Caillan Davenport & Meaghan McEvoy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 338.; Gizewski, "'Informelle Gruppenbildungen' in unmittelbarer Umgebung des Kaisers an spätantiken Höfen", 113-149.; Jill Harries. "Jurists as Courtiers from Augustus to Justinian", in *The Roman Imperial Court in the Principate and Late Antiquity*, eds. Caillan Davenport & Meaghan McEvoy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023): 142.; Smith, "Measures of Difference", 140.; Aloys Winterling (ed.), *Comitatus: Beiträge zur Erforschung des spätantiken Kaiserhofes* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998).

²⁰² Smith, "Measures of Difference", 146.

²⁰³ Smith, "Measures of Difference", 147.

²⁰⁴ Some historians deny the Roman Courts existence based on the definitions of the majority of court studies created around Versailles, see: Jean Gagé, *Les classes sociales dans l'Empire romain*, (Paris:

the existence of the court and its critical influence on the functioning of the empire particularly from the first century onwards. However, the courts of Late Antiquity underwent such a high “degree of change” that their function is often described separately to the courts of the previous centuries.²⁰⁵ Feeney discusses how the courts of Late Antiquity were not only used as a form of “imperial patronage” that allowed the advancement of the emperors’ supporters, but it was also used “to promote a coherent political message”.²⁰⁶ The value of high offices within the emperors court further allowed the emperor to influence the behaviours of his officials.²⁰⁷ What Feeney describes aligns with how Ammianus presents the court of Constantius and the image he crafts of the court system. Officials and governing leaders were now a major part of the imperial court. Dillon suggests that “By conferring titles and rank, a Roman emperor, like a golden goose, creates a kind of currency, the distribution of which he controls. A mint cannot wish gold into existence, but an emperor could confer ranks on an almost unlimited number of people”.²⁰⁸ Constantius confers these rewards onto the people he must control, whether politically motivated or in protection of his own position crafting a competitive emotional community.²⁰⁹ Imperial legitimacy was key. In the fourth century there was a “new vocabulary

Payot, 1962).; Yves Perrin, Review of *La Corte deri Cesari fra Augusto e Nerone*, *Latomus* 66, no.1 (2007): 221-223.; Paul Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique*, (Paris: Seuil, 1976): 619-620.; Other historians have sought to understand the different features that compose Roman court structures, whilst having some similarities to already defined courts, structures need to be understood within their contexts, see: Benjamin Kelly & Angela Hug (eds.), *The Roman Emperor and His Court: c. 30 BC- c. AD 300*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).; Aloys Winterling, *Aula Caesaris: Studien zur Institutionalisierung des römischen Kaiserhofes in der Zeit von Augustus bis Commodus*, (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1999):39-46.

²⁰⁵ B. Kelly, “Introduction”, 4.; Wallace-Hadrill, “Seen and Unseen”, 91-102.

²⁰⁶ Feeney, “Court Construction and Regime Change”, 156.

²⁰⁷ Feeney, “Court Construction and Regime Change”, 156.

²⁰⁸ Dillon, “The Inflation of Rank”, 45.

²⁰⁹ Georg Simmel’s work identified this competition to establish common norms between a party attempting to gain favour and the person they wish to impress; in many ways his work identified the

of imperial legitimation” that categorised both emperor and court as it embodied “the ways by which the emperor legitimated his position, and the ways that imperial power could authorise or bestow legitimacy on aristocratic groups that had no great claim to antiquity or status of their own”.²¹⁰ Ambition became a key value within the court emotional community, often characterised by fierce competition. Surviving records show a considerable number of recommendation letters with the purpose of attesting to personal character.²¹¹ Court life was also more enclosed than many of the histories make it out to be. Letters and orations often grant us greater insight into the world of the emperor’s court than the histories written alongside them as access to the inner workings of the imperial court were limited. Cassius Dio describes this transition noting that for the emperor to remain secure, privacy and concealment was required.²¹²

When the Principate began, the court grew around the emperor, constantly changing with the societal shifts that occurred with transitions of power and values, and the evolution of new emotional communities.²¹³ During the first few centuries of the court’s development, particular

way in which affect spreads amongst an emotional community. See: Horst J Helle, “Review: Soziologie der Konkurrenz- Sociology of Competition by Georg Simmel”, *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 4 (2008): 945-956.; Georg Simmel, “Soziologie der Konkurrenz (Sociology of Competition)”, *Neue Deutsche Rundschau* 14 (1903): 1009-10023.

²¹⁰ Michael Kulikowski, “Regional Dynasties and Imperial Court”, in *Contested Monarch: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth-century AD*, Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity, ed. Johannes Wienand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 147.

²¹¹ Feeney uses the example of over 500 letters of recommendation from Libanius that have survived: Feeney, “Court Construction and Regime Change”, 158.

²¹² Cass. Dio. 53.19.

²¹³ Discussions on the development and evolution of the Roman court can be seen in: B. Kelly et al. eds., *The Roman Emperor and His Court*.; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “The Imperial Court”, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, The Cambridge Ancient History, eds. Alan K Bowman, Edward Champlin & Andrew Lintott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 283-308.

places became synonymous with it, such as the Palatine complex.²¹⁴ The Palatine hill physically positioned the court at the centre of Roman power and is an early example of an affective space. However, this place does not contain or create the court, rather the court's affect is placed on this space, making the space mean something more than it physically suggests. As emperors started to remove themselves from Rome in the third-century CE, other spaces took on these affective abilities, as the idea of a "fixed imperial household" became less common.²¹⁵ Many spaces lost their ceremonial importance as it was transferred onto the emperor himself.²¹⁶ The places that the emperor inhabited were instilled with his affect, with new imperial residences and even the frontier taking on an affective ability.²¹⁷ As Hekster suggests, "By leaving the institutionalized context of the Palatine, emperors could shape court

²¹⁴ Oliver Hekster, "Epilogue: Continuity and Change at the Roman Imperial Court", in *The Roman Emperor and His Court: c. 30 BC- c. AD 300*, eds. Benjamin Kelly & Angela Hug, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 481-482.; For a more in depth discussion on the development of the Palatine Hill and its' Imperial Palaces see: Jens Pflug & Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt, "The Imperial Palaces on the Palatine Hill: Architecture as a Reflection of Social Practices and Imperial Authority", Ute Striker, Stephan Zink, & Benjamin Kelly (trans.), in *The Roman Emperor and His Court: c. 30 BC- c. AD 300*, Benjamin Kelly & Angela Hug (eds.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 204-238.

²¹⁵ Hekster, "Epilogue: Continuity and Change", 482.

²¹⁶ For background on the importance of the ceremonial aspects of court and its development prior to the fourth century see: Caillan Davenport, "The Court and Ceremonial", in *The Roman Emperor and His Court: c. 30 BC- c. AD 300*, eds. Benjamin Kelly & Angela Hug, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 288-317.; For Late Antiquity see: Sabine MacCormack, "Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of 'Adventus'", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 21, no. 4 (1972): 721-752.; Martijin Icks, "Of Lizards and Peacocks: Criticism of the *princeps clausus* in Fourth-and-Fifth-Century Sources", *Mediterraneo Antico* 20 (2017): 457-484.; Christian Rollinger, "The Importance of Being Splendid: Competition, Ceremonial, and the Semiotics of Status at the Court of the Late Roman Emperors (4th-6th Centuries)", in *Gaining and Losing Imperial Favour in Late Antiquity: Representation and Reality*, Impact of Empire 36, eds. Kamil Cyprian Choda, Maurits Sterk de Leeuw & Fabian Shulz (Leiden: Brill, 2020): 36-72.

²¹⁷ Davenport et al, "The Evolution of the Roman Imperial Court", 312.

life to their liking”.²¹⁸ The emperors control reached into more regional areas as well, meaning that the emperors court could find security and affective space in numerous locations throughout the empire. The emperor’s power, even amongst the regional court lay in the knowledge that “their careers were entirely dependent upon [the emperor] alone”.²¹⁹ The affective space of the court was linked to wherever the emperor was, in this case, wherever Constantius was. The spaces in which Constantius now inhabited took on new meanings, lending their emotional inheritances to his own court, the military and Rome’s society.²²⁰

Ammianus’ representation of Constantius’ court also crafts a distinct perception of the specific role of eunuchs. During the third and fourth centuries, the political power of the eunuchs at court began to rapidly shift and change.²²¹ Eunuchs were once found in the background of aristocratic houses, often equal to slaves and used for pleasure and entertainment. The eunuchs of Late Antiquity wielded socio-political power that was unmatched by most of the aristocracy that surrounded them.²²² Though many of our sources frame eunuchs as manipulative and scheming, such a description is limited and insufficient in describing their influence and behaviour. In this chapter I will discuss how Ammianus and his

²¹⁸ Hekster, “Epilogue: Continuity and Change”, 482.

²¹⁹ Feeney, “Court Construction and Regime Change”, 158-159.

²²⁰ Icks, “Of Lizards and Peacocks”, 459.

²²¹ For the history of eunuchs at court and its’ development in Late Antiquity see: A. Chastagnol, “Autour du theme du princeps clausus”, in *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium, 1982/1983*, ed. J Straub (Bonn: Habelt, 1985):149-161.; Peter Guyot, *Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassene in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980): 130–76.; Keith Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics in the Later Roman Empire”, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, no. 9 (1963):62-80.; Icks, “Kept in the Dark”, 371-394.; Helga Scholten, “Der oberste Hofeunuch. Die Politische Effizienz eines gesellschaftlich Diskriminierten”, in *Comitatus: Beiträge zur Erforschung des spätantiken Kaiserhofes*, ed. Aloys Winterling (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998): 51-73.; Shaun Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2008): 48-65.

²²² Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 63-64.

contemporaries approached the issue of the imperial eunuch, followed by a closer study of larger court society.

Ammianus ultimately presents a narrative that crafts an unpredictable environment within the court of the fourth century. Ammianus positions Constantius at its centre, using both the aggressive and demanding aristocratic court and the protectiveness and greediness of the eunuchs to emphasise the power of the emotional communities closest to the emperor. As both collective and individual forces, the imperial court of fourth-century Rome is presented as a dominating force that changes the shape of imperial structures and systems.

Isolation? The life of the Eunuchs and their Emperor

The eunuchs of the court of Constantius present as separate from the imperial court in many instances. Eunuchs became one of the emperors' best defences against the rest of the imperial court. Runciman initially proposes that the eunuchs were one of the ways to control the power from being "concentrated in the hands of an hereditary nobility...".²²³ Instead the eunuchs were able to form "their own self-perpetuating orders" within the bureaucracy of the court systems, separate from the aristocratic power struggles and, in many ways, closer to the emperor himself.²²⁴ Numerous theorists suggest that the purpose of the eunuch in political positions was that he was able to become a symbol of imperial corruption as well as act as a "political

²²³ Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Civilisation* (London: E. Arnold, 1933): 204.; Recent research also suggests that the issues with the concentration of power did not come about till much later, see: S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (London: Routledge, 1993):133-147.; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982): 319.; Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1957): 357.

²²⁴ Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, *Sociological Studies in Roman History* 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978):190.; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 320.

scapegoat”.²²⁵ Ammianus’ representation of the eunuchs and the community they form, positions them as a barrier to accessing the emperor. Though separated from the aristocratic structures of the court, by class, appearance and ostracisation, the community that they form within their own ranks is not necessarily isolated.²²⁶ Rather they played a greater hand in isolating the emperor from the aristocratic senatorial elite who were vying for imperial power. Ammianus’ creation of a separate emotional community of the eunuchs relates to “genuine concerns” surrounding imperial seclusion during the fourth century.²²⁷ The emperors styled themselves as “splendid, superhuman figures at the centre of highly ceremonious courts”.²²⁸ As much as the emperor crafted his own new image, the eunuchs of the court aided him in maintaining it, even separating him from the aristocratic court.²²⁹

These actions only furthered the violence and frenetic competition of the imperial court as access to the emperor became even more limited. The eunuchs were the point of contact for many who wished to interact with the emperor with several authors noting the eunuch’s gate-keeping behaviour.²³⁰ Ammianus, amongst other historians of Late Antiquity, provides a

²²⁵ Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 187.; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 329.; Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, 49.

²²⁶ For relationships Eunuchs had beyond the court see: Guyot, *Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassene in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, 144-147.; Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 190.

²²⁷ Icks, “Kept in the Dark”, 177.

²²⁸ Icks, “Kept in the Dark”, 177.; Davenport et al, “The Evolution of the Roman Imperial Court in Historical Context”, 326-334.; For discussion on ceremonial tradition and the image of the emperor: Davenport, “The Court and Ceremonial”, 288-317.; Icks, “Of Lizards and Peacocks”, 457-584.; MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*.; Rollinger, “The Importance of Being Splendid”, 36-72.

²²⁹ Icks, “Kept in Dark”, 184.;

²³⁰ Lib. *Or.* 18.149.; Amm. *Marc.* 18.4.3.; Sozom. 4.12.16.; Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry*, 26-27.; Soc. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.2.; For Modern analysis of this behaviour see: Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 177-178.; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 301.; Rowland Smith, “The Imperial Court of the Late Roman Empire, c. AD 300–c. AD 450”, in *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies*, ed. A.

significant contribution to the understanding of eunuch's power and position during this period.²³¹ Though Ammianus' bias may be even more prevalent in the case of the eunuchs, the way in which he crafts their existence as a separate emotional community to the aristocratic courts, whilst demonstrating an even greater influence over Constantius, further draws out their dramatic influence and entanglement with the bureaucratic systems of Roman leadership in Late Antiquity.

Following the reforms of Diocletian, inspiration was taken from eastern styles of monarchy.²³² Part of this mimicking allowed the use of eunuchs to become a prominent feature of the reformed Roman imperial system, consistently examined in numerous ancient texts including Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, and mentioned in the *Historia Augusta*.²³³ Notably, the perceived corruptive nature of eunuchs arises from Constantius' court with Timothy Barnes observing "not even the most hostile sources alleged that eunuchs wielded undue power at the courts of Diocletian and Constantine...".²³⁴ Blockley describes the manipulation of information in order to protect themselves and the emperor was a result of the fear that the court eunuchs experienced: "But the court eunuchs, isolated and universally disliked, were regularly the victims of uninformed and malicious criticism" often used to "deflect censure

J. S. Spawforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 162.; Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, 41.

²³¹ Tougher, "Ammianus and the Eunuchs", 57.

²³² Smith, "Measures of Difference", 146-147.; Shaun Tougher, *The Roman Castrati: Eunuchs in the Roman Empire*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021): 80-81.; Shaun Tougher, "Eunuch's in the East, Men in the West? Dis/Unity, Gender and Orientalism in the Fourth-century", in *East and West in the Roman Empire of the Fourth century: An End to Unity?*, eds. Roald Dijkstra, Sanne van Poppel & Daniëlle Sloopjes (Brill, 2015): 147-163.

²³³ Walter Stevenson, "The Rise of Eunuchs in Greco-Roman Antiquity", *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 4 (1995): 495-511.; Tougher, "Eunuch's in the East, Men in the West?", 147-163.

²³⁴ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 127.

from the emperor onto a ready target”.²³⁵ It was not uncommon for eunuchs to use the intimidating image of the emperor to save themselves and secure the emperor’s position. Barnes also observes that it was “in the reign of Constantius that eunuchs begin to appear in our sources as wielders of significant power at the imperial court”.²³⁶ Ammianus’ writings played a role in the growing understanding of eunuchs’ power as his antagonism towards them is a key point of his writings in a period where his voice is one of our only sources.

At the heart of the eunuchs’ power was their complex relationship with the emperor, placing them in one of the most precarious but lucrative positions in all the empire. Eunuchs had become an administrative power that had no issue with succession, as they were unable to transfer inheritance. As Keith Hopkins describes: “They were completely dependent upon the emperor and had no natural allies in society, no other retreat than his protection”.²³⁷ Their lack of familial connection positioned eunuchs as the perfect expendable scapegoat within many situations. It is often difficult to tell whether a eunuch was acting on his own personal accord or whether he was being used to do the emperors bidding and hence being blamed for problems the emperor himself had created.²³⁸ The boundary between the eunuch as a servant or as an “extension of his master” is very rarely clear and is part of the reason many historians and, as an extension, the Roman elites, viewed eunuchs as a threat to traditional imperial structures.²³⁹

There are a multitude of cases in which the wealth of a particular eunuch is viewed as exuberant. Accounts of these eunuchs often appear in ecclesiastical history, illuminating as

²³⁵ R. Blockley, “Constantius, Gallus and Julian as Caesar’s of Constantius II”, *Latomus* 31, no. 2 (1972): 441.

²³⁶ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 127.

²³⁷ Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 75.

²³⁸ Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 64.

²³⁹ Kathryn M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004): 129.

Hopkins reflects “what an impious eunuch could have acquired”, when the pious had such substantial wealth.²⁴⁰ Contemporary historians had little to say on the matter of castration, there is a sense that Ammianus, and undoubtedly others perceived it as one of the most unnatural states of man. Indeed, eunuchs contradicted many distinct Roman values surrounding male fertility and *familia*, whilst also producing a nervousness around individual motive. As eunuchs had no ability to procreate they had no clear motives disrupting the patriarchal belief of paternity “as a criterion for power”.²⁴¹ Dio’s writings express this fear clearly when Caracalla leaves a eunuch in charge of the senate, with what Stevenson terms as “the expected Roman reaction: How could someone without procreative capability rule over the senate?”²⁴² Ammianus follows on from Dio to express a similar opinion in which his history “documents for us both the enduring Greco-Roman distaste for eunuchs and the surprising rise to power this class achieved”.²⁴³ In spite of all the negative contemporary commentary surrounding eunuchs, particularly into the fourth century, they continued to amass power and often found themselves closer to the emperor than other courtiers. Within the eunuchs’ emotional community succession still took place, even without direct genetic descendants. Paradoxically, as Hopkins notes, the consistency in the transmission of power between eunuchs and their repetitive individual rise and fall in power was remarkable and a manifestation of their alienation and isolation, as a group, from the rest of society.²⁴⁴ Within their separateness they were able to find solidarity and in their positions of power, they were able to offer training and pathways for other eunuchs below them. Hopkins notes that below the position of Grand Chamberlain were two other positions, “the Superintendent of the Sacred Bedchamber

²⁴⁰ Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 67.

²⁴¹ Stevenson, “The Rise of Eunuchs”, 507.

²⁴² Stevenson, “The Rise of Eunuchs”, 506.

²⁴³ Stevenson, “The Rise of Eunuchs”, 507.

²⁴⁴ Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 69.

(*primicerius sacri cubiculi*) and the Chief Steward of the Sacred Palace (*castrensis sacri palatii*)” who were recruited from within “the corps of eunuchs and held their offices for a statutory two years”.²⁴⁵ From the fourth century onwards there was a dramatic increase in the number of offices that eunuchs were able to attain, with the ranking of those positions often equating to positions held by high aristocratic courtiers.²⁴⁶

Ammianus’ attempts to remove eunuchs from any association of higher society in his introduction to Constantius aligning them with the destruction of true philosophical thought, where “in place of the philosopher the singer is called in”.²⁴⁷ Here, Ammianus describes eunuchs in relation to their naturally higher voices due to their castration, making them useful as singers within the court. Ammianus implies that the rise of the eunuch equated to the loss of philosophical thought and influence during this time. Ammianus’ aim within his work is to further emphasise the complete otherness of the eunuchs. Though their behaviours often align with the imperial court, he actively crafts a separate space for them and a separate emotional community. As Tougher identifies, Ammianus’ emphasis on “slander, greed, flattery, suspicion and despotism appear as the hallmarks of Constantius’ court, characteristics not unconnected with the eunuchs”.²⁴⁸ However, with the eunuchs he takes it further, separating them by physiological aspects as well as crafting an unnatural image around their rise to power.

Ammianus describes the eunuchs bringing up the rear of an escort in Rome, not only describing them last, but also drawing further attention to the physical deformity he believes defines them:

²⁴⁵ Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 175.

²⁴⁶ Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 176.

²⁴⁷ “*Senatus populi que Romani vitia*” Amm. Marc. 14.6, “*Denique pro philosopho cantor...*” Amm. Marc. 14.6.18

²⁴⁸ Tougher, “Ammianus and the Eunuchs”, 61.

“Finally, the throng of eunuchs, beginning with the old men and ending with the boys, sallow and disfigured by the distorted form of their members; so that wherever anyone goes, beholding the troops of mutilated men, he would curse the memory of that Queen Samiramis of old, who was the first to castrate young males, thus doing violence...to Nature...”²⁴⁹

Ammianus conveys the horror and disgust that many within the aristocratic community felt about the physical difference that the eunuch embodied. Ammianus represents the eunuchs of his time exactly how his contemporaries perceived them, in the “deeply antipathetic language of a male ‘aristocratic’ elite”.²⁵⁰ Numerous studies have shown that the use of castration, particularly in young men, creates a multitude of physical effects that alter their appearance and leave them predisposed to particular medical conditions that create deformities.²⁵¹ Additionally, Patterson notes that the myths that surrounded Eunuchs, almost universally across various cultures and periods, held eunuchs in “low-esteem” and associated them with “obscenity and dirt”.²⁵² These myths contributed to the idea of the eunuch as a symbol of pollution placing them as a binary to the pure and divine symbolism of the emperor.²⁵³ With

²⁴⁹ “*Postrema multitudo spandonum a senibus in pueros desinens, obluridi distortaue lineamentorum compage deformes, ut quaquā incesserit quisquam, cernens multiorum hominum agmina, detestetur memoriam Samiramidis reginae illius veteris, quae teneros mares castravit omnium prima, velut vim iniectans naturae eandemque ab instituto cursu retorquens, quae inter ipsa oriundi crepundia, per primigenios seminis fontes, tacita quodam modo lege vias propagandae posteritatis ostendit.*” Amm. Marc. 14.6.17.

²⁵⁰ Tougher, “Ammianus and the Eunuchs”, 59.

²⁵¹ For the medical effects of castration see: Jean D. Wilson & Claus Roehrborn, “Long-Term Consequences of Castration in Men: Lessons from the Skoptzy and the Eunuchs of the Chinese and Ottoman Courts”, *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* 84, no. 12 (1999): 4324-4331.; Hopkins provides a detailed review of medical literature on Eunuchs: Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 193.

²⁵² Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 320.

²⁵³ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 320-329.

their physical difference producing disgust in the court around them, the eunuchs' courts equally joined together in their difference, seeking understanding in their own community. Broomhall notes that even within emotional communities whose proximity and shared values may link them, "socialites had specific frameworks and expressive forms that related to individuals' identities, including their gender, age, faith, and class. These factors shaped who could articulate or practise particular affective forms and thus participate in certain social associations".²⁵⁴ The eunuchs physiological difference produce an insurmountable societal breach that disrupted the emotional communities of the court.

Ammianus' perspective has been considered a "somewhat provincial and prejudicial view" due to his recurring bias surrounding Ursicinus and the various wrongs perpetrated against him by individuals like Eusebius.²⁵⁵ The idealised head of state, constantly portrayed as godlike, was now surrounded by some of the most despised and seemingly 'unnatural' figures in society. Constantius is corrupted or polluted by their proximity.

Ammianus' reasons for presenting the eunuchs of the court in such a negative way is difficult to pinpoint. Even though it is likely he wanted to document "the developing phenomenon of the powerful court eunuchs" his work presents a very personal perspective on their existence.²⁵⁶ Some of Ammianus' distaste seems to arise from "the lowness of their origins".²⁵⁷ But, undoubtably, his interactions with Constantius' Grand Chamberlin Eusebius and the impact that the eunuchs had on the career of Ursicinus, launched his intensely negative depiction of their power. Ammianus transitions from positioning the eunuchs as below slaves in symbolism of the parade to describing them as: the "royal eunuchs, whose love of gain at

²⁵⁴ Susan Broomhall, *Spaces for Feeling*, 4.

²⁵⁵ Hopkins, "Eunuchs in Politics", 64.

²⁵⁶ Tougher, "Ammianus and the Eunuchs", 60.

²⁵⁷ Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 195.; Amm. Marc. 22.3.12.

that time was growing beyond mortal limits”.²⁵⁸ The paradoxes that Ammianus’ creates within his work emphasises his struggle to understand their position of power in relation to his physical perceptions of them. Ammianus’ own confusion adds to their depiction as an unnatural aspect of the new power structures of Late Antiquity.

Sequestered, the eunuchs act as a discreet, disconnected emotional community. Though attached securely to the emperor, their physical appearance and inability to procreate separated them further from those around them. The eunuch’s position also differed from that of the court “given the domestic context of their duties” that allowed them more regular contact with the emperor himself.²⁵⁹ The eunuchs undertook their tasks on behalf of the emperor, a fact that Ammianus attempts to avoid, using his perspective to vilify and separate them further.²⁶⁰ Ammianus’ does not completely separate the emperor from his role in influencing the eunuchs but he does position the eunuchs as having greater control over the emperor than the emperor does over them.

In the case of Constantius, the distance between Constantius and the rest of the empire had significantly expanded compared with previous eras.²⁶¹ Critics often argue that emperors who align with traits of “isolation in the palace, dominance by eunuchs and ‘Oriental’ pomp” were stereotyped as ‘bad emperors’.²⁶² Constantius is rarely seen on the battlefield or amongst

²⁵⁸ Amm. Marc. 14.6.17.; “*Edisemque residui regii accessere spandones, quorum ea tempestate plus habendi cupiditas ultra mortalem modum adolescebat*” Amm. Marc. 14.11.3.

²⁵⁹ Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, 41.

²⁶⁰ Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 64.

²⁶¹ Icks suggests that it was “from the time of Constantius II onwards, at least, a curtain withdrew the enthroned emperor from the sight of his subjects, making him literally invisible until he was revealed in all his majesty.”; Icks, “Of Lizards and Peacocks”, 459.

²⁶² Chastagnol, “Autour du theme du princeps clausus”, 149-161.; Davenport, “The Court and Ceremonial”, 290.; Icks, “Of Lizards and Peacocks”, 458-459.; McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule*, 28.; J. Paterson, “Friends in High Places: The Creation of the Court of the Roman Emperor”, in *The Court and*

the citizenry; rather, his place is separate and amongst his court, with court favourites serving as “a barrier between the monarch and the court at large”.²⁶³ The eunuchs are able then to fill “a distinct need, the need of a divine emperor for human information and contact”.²⁶⁴ The highest position that a eunuch could fill was as grand chamberlain (*praepositus sacri cubiculi*) which was a senatorial rank, its tenure controlled by the emperor, with numerous other positions that were filled exclusively from the ranks of the eunuchs.²⁶⁵ These positions were further supported by Roman laws that in some cases ranking eunuchs just after praetorian prefects.²⁶⁶

We also see a consistent distortion of the representation of eunuchs at the court. In many ways this coincides with their expendability, but equally can be seen as a reaction of the aristocracy to a kind of untouchable power and threat. There was no counter to offset the power of the eunuchs, and most of the threat to the emperor’s imperial power came from the aristocracy. The eunuchs’ represented a much more controllable alternative to the aristocracy, due to their lack of familial ties, originally leaving the emperor with the power to redistribute their wealth upon their death. However, Constantius brought in a law that allowed eunuchs to execute wills and distribute their property.²⁶⁷ Granting eunuchs the power of succession did not alter their community as it merely ensured their continuation in power, as they trained and distributed the wealth to other eunuchs. It did not prevent the emperor from removing that wealth in other ways, as was seen with Julian’s treatment of the Eusebius after Constantius’

Court Society in Ancient Monarchies, ed. A. J. S. Spawforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 123, 148.

²⁶³ Davenport et al, “The Evolution of the Roman Imperial Court in Historical Context”, 335.

²⁶⁴ Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 74.

²⁶⁵ Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics”, 64-65; *Cod. Theod.* 6.8.1

²⁶⁶ Shaun Tougher, *The Roman Castrati: Eunuchs in the Roman Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021): 82.

²⁶⁷ *Cod. Just.* 6.22.5.

death. For Ammianus, Constantius' reign encapsulated the growing power of the eunuchs in the imperial court further isolating the emperor.

According to Ammianus, Constantius was receptive to slander and the constant flattery of those directly around him, though he often encapsulates these flatterers as 'the court', he also singles out the eunuchs in particular situations. In Ammianus' final account of Constantius, he draws attention to specifically to these influences:

“to an excessive degree under the influence of his wives, and the shrill-voice eunuchs, and certain of the court officials, who applauded his every word, and listened for his “yes” or “no”, in order to be able to agree with him”.²⁶⁸

Ammianus reinforces the overwhelming nature of those surrounding the emperor and the drastic influence the court had on Constantius. Ammianus' suggestion that the court had “overwhelmed that most gallant man” is further exemplified from our understanding of the court system and the eunuchs.²⁶⁹ It is difficult to tell if Constantius transformed during his reign as we do not have access to Ammianus' first 13 books, which may have provided a foil to his character in the later books. Although Ammianus clearly disapproves of Constantius, Ammianus suggests that it was the court and the individual groups within the court that truly corrupted Constantius' character.²⁷⁰

Julian suggests that Eusebius kept himself and Constantius separated, noting the control that Eusebius had over the emperor during this period and portraying the distinct isolation of

²⁶⁸ “*Uxoribus et spadonum gracilentis vocibus et palatinis quibusdam nimium quantum addictus, ad singular eius verba plaudentibus, et quid ille aiat aut neget (ut assentiri possint) observantibus.*” Amm. Marc. 21.16.16.

²⁶⁹ “*virum fortissimum*” Amm. Marc. 14.11.3.

²⁷⁰ Shaun Tougher, “Eusebia and Eusebius: The Roles and Significance of Constantinian Imperial Women and Court Eunuchs”, in *The Sons of Constantine, AD 337-361: In the Shadows of Constantine and Julian*, ed. Nicholas Baker-Brian & Shaun Tougher (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2020): 190.

the emperor. In Julian's *Letter to the Senate and People of Athens*, he describes a reason for the emperor's isolation and why Eusebius worked so hard to disconnect the emperor from the world:

“But that execrable eunuch, his trusty chamberlain, unconsciously and involuntarily proved himself my benefactor. For he did not allow me to meet the Emperor often, nor perhaps did the latter desire it; still the eunuch was the chief reason. For what he dreaded was that if we had any intercourse with one another, I might be taken into favour, and when my loyalty became evident, I might be given some place of trust”.²⁷¹

Though Julian's account is propaganda from the years of civil war with Constantius, he emphasises the isolation that Eusebius enforced. Eusebius acts as a gatekeeper for Constantius, positioning himself in such a way that the favour and interactions of Constantius are manipulated and controlled solely by him. As suggested previously, he creates a separation between the emperor and his people, isolating him to create a closed system of controls. Ironically, Julian later also forms a connection with a different eunuch, whom Ammianus favours due to Julian's patronage of the man.

Ammianus uses Eusebius' enmity towards Ursicinus and his complete control of the court to further characterise the rule of Constantius as corruptive.²⁷² Ammianus asserts the difficulties that a decorated general has interacting with and influencing the emperor due to the eunuchs that surround him. The total control that Eusebius has over the court introduces further uncertainty into the system and is a demonstration of how those closest to Constantius exploit his anxiety for power. Benjamin Kelly links the eunuchs' behaviours with Constantius as being “driven by *invidia* [to] try to turn the emperor against Ursicinus”.²⁷³ Constantius is described

²⁷¹ Julian. *Ep.* 274. A-B.

²⁷² Amm. Marc. 18. 4. 6.; 20.2.

²⁷³ B. Kelly, “Was the Roman Imperial Court an “Emotional Community”?”, 134.

as “greatly depend[ent]” upon Eusebius, making Constantius even more susceptible to the “hammering day and night” by “the forge of courtiers ...at the instigation of the eunuchs”.²⁷⁴ In this particular case, Ursicinus was framed as Ammianus puts it, “as a grim-visaged gorgon”, so that Eusebius may add further to his wealth since Ursicinus purportedly refused to “purchase favour” with the head-Chamberlin.²⁷⁵ Ammianus provides multiple descriptions of the eunuchs during these events. As a collective he describes that they:

“at last found an opportunity for injuring the most valiant of men, aided and abetted by the corps of eunuchs, who are always cruel and sour, and since they lack offspring, embrace riches alone as their most dearly beloved daughters”.²⁷⁶

Eunuchs are presented as inhuman, as their love of wealth overtakes the natural urges of procreation. As outcasts of society, their power remains in the emperor’s court as their only way to stay alive and influential. By creating fear in those that threaten their position they can manipulate the court and the emperor, so they retain a position of safety and power. Ammianus refers to the “anxious thoughts” that were collectively spreading within the empire, using his first-person account to add more detail to the narrative and credit his own experience of the situation.²⁷⁷

Ammianus’ adoration for Ursicinus frames his narrative of his Eusebius’ plot, yet outside evidence also portrays Eusebius in a similar light, with no surviving sources supporting Eusebius. Athanasius (c.298-373), a bishop, around 358 CE composed a book entitled ‘*Historia*

²⁷⁴ “*Et cum haec primo rumores, dein nuntii certi preferrent, omnesque suspensos adventantium calamitatum complicaret magna formido, comitatensis fabica eandem incudem (ut dictur) diu noctuque tuendo...*” Amm.18.4.2.

²⁷⁵ “*velut veultus Gorgonei torvitatem*” Amm. Marc. 18.4.2.

²⁷⁶ “*invenit tandem amplam nocendi fortissimo viro, auctore et incitatore coetu spadonum qui feri et acidi semper carentesque necessitudinibus ceteris divitias solas ut filiolas incundissimas amplectuntur.*” Amm. Marc. 18.5.4.

²⁷⁷ “*Et ancipiti cogitatione districtis*” Amm. Marc. 18.4.7.

Arianorum ad Monachos’ or ‘History of Arians.’ Notably this text has been described as a “manifesto against Constantius”, with his depictions of Eusebius and Constantius very much aligning with Ammianus’ perspective.²⁷⁸ Athanasius equally portrays the growing number of eunuchs present at the court when describing “for many of those who were about Constantius, or rather the whole number of them, are eunuchs, who engross all the influence with him, and it is impossible to do anything there without them”.²⁷⁹ Athanasius blames much of his hardship during this period on the behaviour of eunuchs, particularly Eusebius. He accuses them of heresy and further emphasises their unnatural nature as a “pleasure-loving race” that is unable to reproduce.²⁸⁰ Supporting Ammianus’ perspective, Athanasius strongly proclaims “that Constantius in submission to [the eunuchs] will treacherously conspired against all”.²⁸¹ At the very least the vitriol that Athanasius produces in response to his interactions with Eusebius clearly define Eusebius and the eunuchs around him as hated.

Libanius in his *Funeral Oration over Julian* remarks on Eusebius’ power. As noted previously, he held great admiration for Constantius and avoids implicating him in Eusebius’ crimes. He describes the execution of Eusebius: “....despite the fact that he had Constantius under his thumb, was a slave and, worse still, a eunuch. He had been primarily responsible for the cruel death of Gallus”.²⁸² Finally Philostorgius provides a similar account, relating Eusebius’ cruelty directly back to his involvement in the execution of Gallus, where he persuades those with the stay-of-execution to wait.²⁸³ Eusebius’ characterisation seems to be

²⁷⁸ Archibald Robertson, *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series, ed. Philip Schaff & Rev. Henry Wallace (New York: Cosimo Inc., 1892): 521.

²⁷⁹ Ath. *Hist. Aria.* 37.

²⁸⁰ Ath. *Hist. Aria.* 38.

²⁸¹ Ath. *Hist. Aria.* 38.

²⁸² Lib. *Or.* 18.152.

²⁸³ Philost. *Hist. eccl.* 4.1.

based around a few key events that altered the way the historians of the time approached eunuchs, often aligning with Julian's perspective. Tougher provides an engaging response to these representations, that they are "stories... told about them by men with particular agendas..."²⁸⁴ Though this is unmistakeably true, the consistency of responses by these men offers us another insight, that there was a level of fear of the eunuch's power, and the power they held had become quite considerable.

Ammianus' depiction of Eusebius during his slander of Ursicinus further emphasises their otherness as well as the terrifying power of the Head-Chamberlin. Within the structures of the eunuch's emotional community, their influence on the emperor is more assertive than what was seen in the court. Where the courtiers react to opportunities for influence and power, the eunuchs assert their ideals, and the emperor reacts to them. In the example below the influence of the eunuchs across the court reveals their influence over the emperor's reactions. Eusebius' uncontrolled power contrasts with Ammianus' portrayal of Constantius, creating an even more violent depiction of the power of eunuchs during this time:

"Eusebius then, like a viper swelling with abundant poison and arousing its multitudinous brood to mischief when they were still barely able to crawl, sent out his chamberlains, already well grown, with direction that, amid the duties of their more private attendance, with the soft utterances of voices always childish and persuasive they should with bitter hatred batter the reputation of that brave man in the too receptive ears of the prince. And they promptly did what they were ordered."²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Tougher, "Eusebia and Eusebius", 190.

²⁸⁵ "*Qui ut coluber copia virus exuberans, natorum multitudinem etiam tum aegre serpentium, excitans ad nocendum, emittebat cubicularios iam adultos, ut inter ministeria vitae secretioris, gracilitate vocis semper puerilis et blandae, apud principis aures nimium patulas, existimationem viri fortis invidia gravi pulsarent. Et brevi iussa fecerunt.*" Amm. Marc. 18.4.4.

Ammianus reveals the control the eunuch had over such large groups of people. Ammianus uses his descriptions to portray his perspective on the power of Eusebius and his clear disdain and dislike of the eunuchs' actions. Ammianus' "consciously shaped" text crafts his perspective of that community's power. In this description, we see a juxtaposition between monstrous language and a softer tone inferring sexual innuendo and involvement crafting the determination of the eunuchs' community to maintain their influence and control. Here we can understand how the court of the fourth century could be termed an "emotional arena".²⁸⁶ The eunuch's constant manipulation, of both the court itself and the emperor, disrupted the norms and values of other emotional communities to push their own agenda. Such an environment would not only create confusion across the imperial court but would add to a volatility and unpredictableness that existed in the anxious and suspicious courtiers.

Ammianus later describes Eusebius' downfall after the death of Constantius. Julian's perspective of Eusebius can also be conceived from the way that he disposes of the eunuch:

"Eusebius ... a man full of pride and cruelty, was condemned to death by the judges.

This man, who had been raised from the lowest station to a position which enabled him almost to give orders like those of the emperor himself, and in consequence had become intolerable...".²⁸⁷

Ammianus' emphasis again on the station of eunuchs further imbues the story with an allegorical structure in which the eunuchs and Constantius are justly punished for their behaviour. Additionally, Ammianus directly emphasises the control that Eusebius had over

²⁸⁶ B. Kelly, "Court Politics and Imperial Imagery", 139.

²⁸⁷ "*Eusebium super bis, cui erat Constantiani thalami cura commissa, alte spirantem et dirum, addixere iudices poenae letali, quem ab ima sorte ad usque iubendum imperatoria paene elatum, ideoque intolerabilem, humanorum spectatrix Adrastia aurem (quod dicitur) vellens, monensque ut castigatius viveret, reluctantem, praecipitem tamquam e rupe quadam egit excelsa*". Amm. Marc. 22.3.12

Constantius that “enabled him... to give orders like those the emperor”. Ammianus continues, after the destruction of Eusebius, to describe the destruction of the rest of the community of court eunuchs again emphasising their faults in even further detail. He names them as “creatures [who] maintained a vast nursery of all the vices”. He uses emotive language like “infected”, “evil passions”, “fattened”, “seeds of a dissolute life”, “shameful gains”, and “mad pride” to instil a final sense of the totality of their corruptive nature.²⁸⁸ The intensity of this language surrounding the fall of Constantius’ eunuchs further confirms the perspective Ammianus wished to create in crafting them as an emotional community. Each of the traits he identifies are the values of the eunuchs’ community, as their collective motivation, in Ammianus’ eyes, was to accumulate their own wealth at the expense of the entire empire. To Ammianus, the eunuchs exceeded the corruption of the court, and since he was unable to understand their motivations beyond the confines of wealth and power, he had trouble understanding them as human beings. Ammianus saw the eunuchs as entirely other and often the source of flattery and manipulation behind the emperor. Their role in isolating Constantius was also indicative of a growing trend towards secluded leaders, a trait that many modern historians note are connected to depictions of ‘bad emperors’.²⁸⁹ Ammianus uses the eunuchs as a form of “political criticism of the condition of the Roman empire”.²⁹⁰ The perceptions of eunuchs that were held by the majority of the ancient sources, particularly around this period,

²⁸⁸ “*Namque fatendum est, pleramque eorum partem vitiorum omnium seminarium effusius aluisse, ita ut rem publicam infecerint cupiditatibus pravis, plusque exemplis, quam peccandi licentia, laederent multos. Pasti enim ex his quidam templorum spoliis et lucra ex omni odorantes occasione, ab egestate infima ad saltum sublati divitiarum ingentium nec largiendi nec rapiendi nec absumendi tenuere aliquem modum, aliena invadere semper assuefacti. Unde fluxioris vitae initia pullularunt, et periuria, et nullus existimationis respectus, demensque superbia fidem suam probrosis quaestibus polluebat.*” Amm. Marc. 22. 4. 2-4.

²⁸⁹ Icks, “Kept in the Dark”, 173-174.

²⁹⁰ Tougher, “Ammianus and the Eunuchs”, 63.

were based on a changing system that allowed eunuchs to ambitiously vie for power. Eusebius became essential to the tropes that these authors created.

Ammianus provides only one account where he praises a eunuch for his actions and life, unsurprisingly it is Julian's Head-Chamberlain Eutherius. Ammianus even provides a description of Eutherius' life and achievements as he does for the emperors he describes, taking great pains to separate Eutherius from others of 'his kind'. Tougher proposes that Ammianus uses Julian and Eutherius as a contrast for Constantius and Eusebius to further the "positive/negative mirror image", yet the criticism continues directly after Julian's death in Jovian's reign.²⁹¹

Ammianus describes Eutherius' presence at court as: "among brambles roses spring up and among savage beasts some are tamed".²⁹² Much like descriptions of Julian, Eutherius is characterised as "guilty of no faults" with further implications that "he would sometimes criticise even Julian[s manners]...".²⁹³ Eutherius is separated from the depiction of eunuchs, seen as an exception to the rule. Woods, Thompson, and Mathews all suggest that it was likely that Eutherius served as a source for Ammianus, hence the extensive digression and detail.²⁹⁴

Aside from Eutherius, Ammianus' hostility towards eunuchs continues throughout his books. At the heart of it, the eunuchs use this power for their own survival, and their tenuous relationship with the emperor is only strengthened by promoting fear in those around them in order to disguise their own fear of losing the emperors favour and position. The emperor,

²⁹¹ Tougher, "Ammianus and the Eunuchs", 62.; For the re-emergence of criticism on eunuchs after Julian see: Amm. Mar. 25.7.10,

²⁹² "*Sed inter vepres rosae nascuntur, et inter feras non nullae mitescunt*" Amm. Marc. 16.7.4.

²⁹³ "...*honesta suadentem et recta, nulla vel venia certe digna peccasset.*" Amm. Marc. 16.7.5.; "*Is praepostius cubiculi etiam Julianum aliquotiens corripbat*" Amm. Marc. 16.7.6.

²⁹⁴ Matthews, *The Roman Empire*, 23; Thompson, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 20; D. Woods, "Ammianus and Eutherius", *Acta Classica* 41, (1998): 106.

isolated from the rest of society and the court by the eunuchs and his own fears of usurpation, is manipulated by those directly surrounding him. The fear he projects into the community causes him to further isolate himself and leaves the empire seemingly controlled by the eunuchs. Ammianus' essentially accuses Constantius of building a system that leaves the empire exposed to corruption by the most unnatural of sources.

The Court of Constantius: 'Ripples' of Affect

The emotional community of Constantius' court can initially be observed in Ammianus' writings as a collective, however, by focusing on individuals within this system the values, morals and actions of the communities' expectations become clearer. I will briefly examine the relationship between Constantius and the collective emotional community before focusing on Paulus and Gallus as examples of individuals from that community. What we witness within the court of Constantius is what Ahmed describes as a "'rippling' effect of emotions".²⁹⁵ She describes that "affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity but is produced as an effect of its circulation".²⁹⁶ It is the communities' constant circulation and reinforcement of their emotions, values and morals that creates and maintains their emotional community. The main values and emotions that the court community centre on are greed, paranoia, jealousy, and hate.

Paulus displays the influence of Constantius' paranoia on the court as it builds and circulates culminating in violent behaviours. Paulus' behaviour provides us with an example of the influence of the court's emotional community on an individual. In addition, Gallus is a mirror for Constantius with his uncertain role in Antioch embodying an individual separated from their emotional community and, as Ammianus presents it, attempting to recreate that same

²⁹⁵ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 45.

²⁹⁶ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 45.

emotional space within his own court. Gallus' struggle to understand his role in Antioch ultimately leads to his downfall and the formation of a violent affective space in Antioch. Gallus' narrative demonstrates the struggle to remain connected to the imperial court once physically removed from its affective space. Gallus' attempts at recreating that environment poses a threat to Constantius' community's and thus, he is removed out of fear.

Much of Ammianus' work on Constantius can be understood as "court-centred", with Ammianus using his narrative to comment critically on the corruption of the system. Smith suggest that "[Ammianus] saw ...excess and crimes perpetrated within the court, but his criticisms did not touch the structures that sustained it, still less the sacralising ideology that glorified the monarchic power at its apex".²⁹⁷ However, in crafting his text, Ammianus directly criticises the court structures revealing the emotional inheritances that are transferred between generations. Ammianus is able to isolate the behaviours that form the dangerous and often violent norms and values of the court's emotional communities. Constantius and Gallus become symbols for the influence and manipulation of the imperial court. If the emperor changes, the eunuchs, aristocrats, and senators of the court lose their power and protection as much as the emperor does as Hekster describes "the absence of an emperor negated [the courts] very existence".²⁹⁸ It is not about the courtier's concern for the emperor's safety, but rather for their own safety, perpetuating systems of fear through the highest ranks of the empire. It is the space that the court and its emperor create that shapes imperial rule of Late Antiquity.

Ammianus initially conveys how the court is dictated so strongly by the emperors' own whims that Constantius is surrounded at all times by the "bloodthirsty flattery of courtiers".²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Smith, "Measures of Difference", 148.

²⁹⁸ Hekster, "Epilogue: Continuity and Change", 479.

²⁹⁹ "*Siquis enim militarium vel honoratorum aut nobilis inter suos, rumore tenus esset insimulatus fovisse partes hostiles, iniecto onere catenarum, in modum beluae trahebatur, et inimico urgente vel*

Ammianus' constant emphasis on flattery suggests that the court and the emperor's obsession with image.³⁰⁰ The emperor's anxiety surrounding how he was presented creates an urgency within the court's community to constantly reinforce and subdue that anxiety. In turn it creates an anxiety within the community to ensure the emperor's image remains pristine and uncriticised. Concerns surrounding criticism of the emperor's image didn't necessarily extend beyond the court. Maintaining the emperor's image within court circles was vital to maintaining control and, with the recent history of the third-century crisis and the endless usurpations of that period, it was crucial in retaining loyalty and power. Whitby goes as far as describing Constantius as being "sensitive about his imperial image".³⁰¹ It is, however, particularly hard to source who exactly controlled that imagery as our histories and panegyrics are reticent surrounding these processes.³⁰² Often official inscriptions will refer to dedications or sponsors, but rarely can we understand the role the court or officials played in shaping what is displayed, as imperial imagery was so strictly controlled.³⁰³ In our case, we are focusing on a very specific image of the emperor and his court that Ammianus has crafted.

Smith states that soon "the performance of the Adoration gave no cause for shame; it was an occasion, rather, that a Roman could contemplate with pride".³⁰⁴ Smith's description of the adoration of the emperor as an "occasion" infers a ceremonial aspect to their praises. Often, we can see the ways in which court officials close to the emperor praised him within their speeches and letters, where in, as even Julian notes: "held ...base flattery rather than a

nullo, quasi sufficiente hoc solo, quod nominatus esset aut delatus aut postulatus, ccapite vel multatione bonorum, aut insulari solitudine damnabatur." Amm. Marc. 21.16.16.

³⁰⁰ B. Kelly, "Court Politics and Imperial Imagery", 129.

³⁰¹ Whitby, "Images of Constantius", 73.

³⁰² B. Kelly, "Court Politics and Imperial Imagery", 130.

³⁰³ For a more thorough discussion on imperial imagery see: Amy Russel & Monica Hellström (eds.), *The Social Dynamics of Roman Imperial Imagery*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

³⁰⁴ Smith, "Measures of Difference", 147.

testimony to noble deeds”.³⁰⁵ As has been seen previously in our introduction to images of Constantius, the court’s performance of adoration was often used as a way to advance their own power.

Ammianus represents Constantius at the centre of the court and as a catalyst for the behaviours of the courtiers around him. Ammianus’ descriptions of Constantius cements the unpredictable cycle that the court creates:

“And this fatal fault of cruelty, which in others sometimes grew less with advancing age, in his case became more violent, since a group of flatterers intensified his stubborn resolution”.³⁰⁶

Ammianus exemplifies the growth of Constantius’ cruelty and hatred in the first book, aligning with the fear of usurpation as the mounting rumours around Gallus and others are introduced. Constantius’ fear is linked to violence, and here we see Ammianus directly inferring the rise of these behaviours in the court. The ambiguity and uncertainty that rumour mongering promotes, and cultivates, feeds the undercurrents of fear in the community of the court. Constantius’ fears become unanimous with the fears of the court as Constantius becomes a symbol of corruption in Ammianus’ narrative. Constantius forms the centre of the court’s affective space as their action form a manifestation of his fears.

By crafting an environment of paranoia, Ammianus then draws on the court’s motivations linking their behaviours back to the emperor. Ammianus is able to draw together

³⁰⁵ “Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄρα τί ποτε δράσομεν, εἰργόμενοι μὲν τῷ δοκεῖν ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς χάριν τὴν εὐφημίαν, τοῦ γένους δὲ ἤδη τῶν ἐπαίνων διὰ τοὺς οὐκ ὀρθῶς μετιόντας ὑπόπτου καθεστῶτος δεινῶς, καὶ κολακείας ἀγεννοῦς, ἀλλ’ οὐ μαρτυρίας ἀληθοῦς τῶν ἀρίστων ἔργων εἶναι νομισθέντος; ἢ δῆλον ὅτι τῇ περὶ τὸν ἐπαινούμενον ἀρετῇ πεπιστευκότες ἐπιδώσομεν ἑαυτοὺς θαρροῦντες τοῖς ἐγκωμίοις;” Jul. Or. 1.4c.

³⁰⁶ “*Et exitiale hoc vitium, quod in aliis non numquam intepescit, in illo aetatis progressu effervescebat, obstinatum eius propositum accendente adulatorum cohorte.*” Amm. Marc. 14.5.5.

individual actions to emphasise their collective corruption. In the following passage we see that Ammianus directly links between the emperor's behaviours and the court:

“These trumpet-blasts of internal revolt were likewise increased by powerful courtiers, to the end that they might lay claim to the property of condemned persons and incorporate it with their own, and thus have the means of encroaching widely on their neighbours. For as clear proofs bore witness, the first of all to open the jaws of those nearest to him was Constantine, but it was Constantius who fattened them with the marrow of the provinces. For under him the leading men of every rank were inflamed with a boundless eagerness for riches, without consideration for justice or right...”³⁰⁷

Ammianus draws the corrupting influence of “men of every rank” back to Constantine, however, as expected, the main corruptive influence remains Constantius.³⁰⁸ At the centre of this emotional community, the emperor is able to control how the court behaves. Greed amongst the court is the easiest way for the courtiers to gain more power. Immediately prior to this section, Ammianus describes Constantius' behaviours as “excessively timid and fearful for his life, always anticipated that a knife was at his throat”.³⁰⁹ The greed that Constantius then faces within the emotional community of the court builds out from this fear. Constantius' paranoia surrounding his own life and the possibility of usurpation means that addressing the

³⁰⁷ “*Inflabant itidem has malorum civilium bucinas potentes in regia, ea re ut damnatorum petita bona suis accorporarent, essetque materia per vicinitates eorum late grassandi. Namque ut documenta liquida prodiderunt, proximorum fauces aperuit primus omnium Constantinus, sed eos medullis provinciarum saginavit Constantius. Sub hoc enim ordinum singulorum auctores, infinita cupidine divitiarum arserunt, sine iustitiae distinctione vel recti...*” Amm. Mar. 16.8.11-13.

³⁰⁸ For a discussion on Ammianus' definitions of rank in this section see: P. D. Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XVI*, (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis n.v. Publishers, 1972): 102.

³⁰⁹ “*Haec taliaque ideo magis magisque crescebant, quod Constantius impendio timidus et de vita sollicitus, semper se ferro peti sperabat, ut Dionysius tyrannus ille Siciliae, qui ob hoc idem vitium*” Amm. Marc. 16.8.10.

whims of the court is essential for his survival, just as they address Constantius' whims. Yet, it was impossible to continually meet those demands. In such a way the court became an intimidating force not only for the emperor but for everyone around the court. The anxiety and paranoia that the court perpetuated, in turn, fuelled Constantius' reactions to the court's demands. Smith states, "as rulers saw things...a measure of fear in one's subjects - or more politely, awed obedience in the face of godlike power - was part of the court's whole point".³¹⁰ Yet, that "measure of fear" was difficult to control and, as observed under Constantius, engendered further systemic issues throughout the empire. Ammianus' depiction of Constantius' court attempts to direct its audience towards the flaws of the empire, an unstable emotional community that sits at its centre.

Ammianus then uses the imperial court's dislike of Julian to further the corrupted images of the court and Constantius in direct comparison with some of Julian's most celebrated feats. The threat of any kind of new emperor particularly in a period without a clear genetic line of succession meant that the court constantly felt threatened by the success of other possible imperial figures. Though Julian was the Caesar, Ammianus describes him as resistant to the courts that gathered around him: "disregarding the servile flattery with which his courtiers tried to turn him to pleasure and luxury...".³¹¹ He also remained separate from their influence as he was positioned so often on the battlefields. The court of Constantius rarely had access to Julian, unlike their influence on Gallus, meaning they could not trust his values to align with their emotional community creating troubling conflict. After Julian's success across

³¹⁰ Smith, "Measures of Difference", 148.

³¹¹ "*qua eum proximi ad amoenitatem flectebant et luxum*" Amm. Marc. 16.2.2; It is likely that this particular line relates to Ammianus proving Julian's character rather than the reality of the situation in Gaul as Julian's own account of the same event places him as a subordinate of other generals rather than the leader of the Gallic armies, see: P. De Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XVI*, 12-13.

Gaul, Constantius' court attempts to twist his achievements for their own gain, once again using flattery and manipulation for their aims:

“Presently, when all this became known at Constantius' court—for it was necessary that Caesar, like any subordinate, should render an account to Augustus of all his acts—all those who had the chief influence in the palace and were now past masters in flattery turned Julian's well-devised and successful achievements into mere mockery by endless silly jests of this sort: “This fellow, a nanny-goat and no man, is getting insufferable with his victories”, jibing at him for being hairy, and calling him a “chattering mole” and “an ape in purple”, and “a Greekish pedant”, and other names like these; and by ringing bells, so to speak, in the ears of an emperor eager to hear these and similar things, they tried to bury his merits with shameless speeches, railing at him as a lazy, timid, unpractical person, and one who embellished his ill success with fine words...”.³¹²

Much of the language present in this section is used to “deny the Caesar his unmistakably soldierly characteristics”.³¹³ Julian is scorned for presenting the virtues and abilities of what Ammianus views as a ‘true emperor’, marking him as a threat to Constantius who does not reflect those virtues. Ammianus reinforces the collective environment of hate that is transmitted

³¹² “*Haec cum in comitatu Constantii subinde noscerentur—erat enim necesse, tamquam apparitorem, Caesarem super omnibus gestis ad Augusti referre scientiam—omnes qui plus poterant in palatio, adulandi professores iam docti, recte consulta prospereque completa vertebant in deridiculum, talia sine modo strepentes insulse: “In odium venit cum victoriis suis capella, non homo”, ut hirsutum Iulianum carpentes, appellantesque “loquacem talpam” et “purpuratam simiam” et “litterionem Graecum”, et his congruentia plurima. Atque ut tintinnabula principi resonantes, audire haec taliaque gestienti, virtutes eius obruere verbis impudentibus conabantur ut segnem incessentes et timidum et umbratilem, gestaue secus verbis comptioribus exornantem; quod non tunc primitus accidit. Amm. Marc. 17.11.1.*

³¹³ P. De Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XVII*, (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis n.v. Publishers, 1977): 268.

between the individuals in the community to form these insults. Benjamin Kelly describes this reaction as *invidia*, a kind of jealousy.³¹⁴ The groups' fear of losing the emperor that grants their power is seen through their collective reaction to news of Julian's success. As Künzer puts it, "Julian's closeness to the emperor" as well as "the simple reason that Constantius needed him" likely implied a "loss of influence and status for individuals within the existing group".³¹⁵ Julian's successes should have also proved to Constantius that he had chosen a good successor, strengthening ties that were likely tenuous due to their fraught familial history. However, the court was determined to ensure those ties did not remain. Ammianus' depiction of the court's emotional community further emphasises the distance that had begun to grow between the court's desires and Julian's position as Caesar. The court cements their perspective as a direct reflection of Constantius' own desires and concerns.

Invidia is the beginning of an emotional sequence that then ripples through the court. As Rosenwein states "the sequence reveals how an emotion is valued".³¹⁶ The strong turn from jealousy to hate in Ammianus' crafting of the court's emotional community signifies to the audience how central these emotions were to that community. The court becomes affected by feelings of hate due to "a sense of threat and risk".³¹⁷ Kaster notes how emotions like *Invidia* often unify a community who self-isolate as "right-thinkers" or even "right-feelers" to degrade anyone who threatens them, reaffirming their own communities values through such collective

³¹⁴ "In Roman culture could refer to two things: either to the emotion that we would call jealousy..., or to something approaching the feeling one has when one feels righteous indignation or looks askance at a person's breach of social norms."; B. Kelly, "Was the Roman Imperial Court an 'Emotional Community?'", 124.; For a more expansive definition see: Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community*, 85-88.

³¹⁵ Künzer, "'The Greatest Glory is Always Habitually Subject to Envy'", 18.

³¹⁶ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 9.

³¹⁷ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 48.

actions.³¹⁸ Julian is a threat to the emotional community of the court due to “particular histories of association [that] are reopened in each encounter”.³¹⁹ The “histories of association” that Ahmed refers to equally align with the emotional inheritances that Rosenwein discusses as culmination of “words, emphases, sequences, [and] rhetoric...”.³²⁰ The court’s understanding of transitions of power had been affected by the history of the third-century where their security was just as tenuous as the emperor. If they are unable to form connections with the new Caesar, he becomes a threat to their positions. It is within these social spaces that Julian is transformed into an object of hate that then intensifies as they attempt to transmit that feeling onto Constantius.³²¹

As a collective, the court was able to affect the emperor just as he affected them. However, the individuals of his court also demonstrate the transmission and creation of emotional communities within Ammianus’ work. Ammianus’ focus on Constantius’ relationship and manipulation of Paulus and Gallus directly demonstrate the emotional inheritances of the communities and spaces that Constantius has affected. Paulus’ actions are a physical demonstration of the values and morals of his emotional community, in which aspects of hate, violence and anxiety are taken to an extreme to gain power and connection with the emperor. As will be seen in the following chapter, Paulus creates further connections with Ahmed’s theories around organised hate, demonstrating how the creation of a collective begins in how each individual perceives or feels about others, and it is in that alignment that the collective is created.³²² The court constantly attempts to align themselves or influence the

³¹⁸ Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community*, 103.

³¹⁹ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 54.

³²⁰ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 9.

³²¹ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 54.

³²² Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 54.

emperor's feelings in order to maintain their safety and even bring the emperor further into their emotional community.

Caesar Gallus exposes the influence of the corrupt imperial court system on the wider community, depicting Gallus as a corrupted mirror of Constantius' imperial systems. It is Gallus' relationship with his own court, and with the wider city of Antioch, that demonstrates Constantius' violent influence. Gallus' interactions with the city, its officials, and its people spreads panic, cowardice, and paranoia, resulting in numerous trials, deaths, and even more violence. Constantius perceives Gallus as a threat as the latter encapsulates the violence and corruption promoted in Constantius' own imperial court. Not only is Gallus an example of an individual separated from the court's emotional community, but he also becomes an "important case stud[y] for the interaction of Constantius with a rival imperial figure".³²³ In that interaction, Constantius' court demonstrates the same animosity it later shows to Julian. Gallus aligns with the court's emotional community; however, his separation has corrupted those links as he had been removed from their affective space and his status within the community had also been changed. Gallus, like Julian, was now a threat to their survival.

Paulus– 'The Chain'

As a senior public official, Paulus' rise to power and manipulation of the system granted him access to the influence of the emperor. Constantius approves the atrocities from enslaving freedmen to the death of Martinus by ratifying Paulus' behaviour. Ammianus uses the violence of these interactions to suggest a continuously growing disorder from the paranoia harboured at the centre of the empire, with the emperor and his court. Many of the rivalries within the court were based around closeness to the emperor. As the emotional community of the court

³²³ Ross, *Ammianus' Julian*, 56-57.

valued ambition, by remaining a collective they could equally observe any potential opponents within the court.³²⁴ Though the community shared values and morals, their competition for the emperor's approval was entirely individual.³²⁵ Paulus provides us with one example of how individuals within the court utilised their own ambition within the collective, in an attempt to meet the perceived needs of the emperor.

Paulus commits atrocities that Ammianus asserts 'create a stain' on the reign of Constantius.³²⁶ However, the paranoia and drastic action that Constantius often takes "were about immediate self-defence and ordered by emperors terrified for their own physical survival and that of their families".³²⁷ Paulus' actions are very quick reactions to threats against the emperor, and as we have already established, against the court. Paulus is initially described as "a kind of viper, whose countenance concealed his character, but who was extremely clever in scenting out hidden means of danger for others".³²⁸ Paulus does well in Constantius' court as his skill for finding danger is critical to his survival. Though Ammianus frames Paulus as a horrifying individual, he also further reveals why suspicion was rampant in Constantius' court. Paulus was able to find his place amongst the court as he was able to use the emotional inheritances of the court to craft his own skills that aided the emperor and in turn the court's position. Individuals like Paulus, who likely grew within the court and in an environment of suspicion and conspiracy, used that as a skill to further their ambition and cement their place within the emperor's graces.

Paulus was later sent to dispose of men who were involved in the Magnentius conspiracy as he had proved within the court's emotional community that he was loyal to the

³²⁴ Winterling, "Hof", 16.

³²⁵ Künzer, "The Greatest Glory is Always Habitually Subject to Envy", 22.

³²⁶ Amm. Marc. 14.5.6.

³²⁷ B. Kelly, "Violence and Security", 376

³²⁸ "*quidam sub vultu latens, odorandi vias periculorum occultas perquam sagax.*" Amm. Marc. 14.5.6.

emperor's aims. As Benjamin Kelly suggests, that during conspiracy's "an emperor confronted with such a story had limited tools – and, potentially, limited time – to verify it".³²⁹ Paulus was sent to prevent another uprising and is described by Ammianus in very violent terms, often taking his commands to another level:

"Since they could make no resistance he autocratically exceeded his instructions and, like a flood, suddenly overwhelmed the fortunes of many, making his way amid manifold slaughter and destruction, imprisoning freeborn men and even degrading some with handcuffs; as a matter of fact, he patched together many accusations with utter disregard of the truth, and to him was due an impious crime, which fixed an eternal stain upon the time of Constantius".³³⁰

Constantius does not define the parameters of Paulus' task when dealing with the 'conspirators'. Paulus' patching together of accusations continues to grant Paulus more control and power over a group of people, adding to his ambition and reinforcing behaviours that his emotional community finds acceptable. Paulus, in fear of his own safety, and with the prospect of being called a conspirator himself, returns with whomever he could find.

Paulus had established his reputation and behaviour from previous actions, according to Ammianus, affording him the nickname "the Chain". Ammianus describes the reason for Paulus' nickname by saying that it was "because he was invincible in weaving coils of calumny, exerting himself in a wonderful variety of schemes, just as some expert wrestlers are in the

³²⁹ "The sources often lament that emperors killed people on the mere suspicion that they might conspire against them, or having been duped by informers or courtiers into believing a plot existed....Thus, murder is an entirely comprehensible strategy of defence." B. Kelly, "Violence and Security", 376

³³⁰ "*cum reniti non possent, iussa licentious supergressus, fluminis modo fortunis complurium sese repentinus infudit, et ferebatur per strages multiplices ac ruinas, vinculis membra ingenuorum affligens, et quosdam obterens manicis, criminal scilicet multa consarcinando, a veritate longe discrete.*" Amm. Marc. 14.5.6.

habit of showing excessive skill in their contests”.³³¹ Ammianus’ tone during this passage elicits admiration for the skill and history of Paulus’ achievements. As we are missing the first 13 books of Ammianus’ history, historians remain unsure as to whether Paulus was described in such a way previously, and the corruption only emerged during Constantius’ reign. But what we can gather from Ammianus’ account is that success within the court relied on the manipulation of a culture of fear and distrust.

The rampant rumourmongering of the courts provided a way for those around Constantius to maintain some form of control and also served as an expression of their own fear. Ammianus names Paulus and one other man directly when he describes the downfall of Caesar Gallus and his companions. Paulus and Mercurius are described thus: “numerous gossip-hunters suddenly arose, snapping with jaws of wild beasts at even the highest officials, and afterwards at poor and rich indifferently...”.³³² The pair’s disregard for status within this section further emphasises the ways in which *invidia* corrupts the court with a blind ambition for power.

In Book 16, Ammianus introduces Paulus in terms that directly juxtapose the decidedly reverent tone taken in Book 15. Part of Ammianus’ change in tone can be comes from where Paulus, and Constantius, are directing their attention and the control that Paulus displays over his emotion. Though Paulus’ work may have previously been violent and corruptive, there was a part of Ammianus’ narrative that approved of his distinctly strong and decisive actions, and control. Ammianus had described Paulus as “extremely clever” as he worked to survive within the court, in many ways Paulus had been following the ‘emotional script’ or the ‘emotional

³³¹ “*Et Paulo quiden, ut relatum est supra, Catenae inditum est cognomentum eo quod in complicandis calumniarum nexibus erat indissolubilis, mira inventorum sese varetate dispendedns, ut in colluctationibus callere nimis quidam solent artifices palaestritae.*” Amm. Mar. 15.3.4.

³³² “*Unde rumorum aucupes subito exitere complures, honorum vertices ipsos ferinis morsibus appentes, posteaque pauperes et divites indicrete*” Amm. Marc. 15.3.3.

sequences' that the court and broader Roman Society expected.³³³ However, the court and the emperor's demands push Paulus beyond the societal expectation for "controlled behaviour" as Ammianus' perspective shifts to a more hostile depiction.³³⁴ Paulus is introduced as "that diabolical informer".³³⁵ Paulus continues to appear in situations where fear is rampant: after the death of Gallus as informers are being discovered throughout the courts and then at the trials of Silvanus and others.

In the trial of Silvanus, Ammianus provides another example as to why Paulus may be seen as an "eternal stain on the reign of Constantius".³³⁶ He further develops the corruption and paranoia that Constantius utilised in the imperial court system as a form of control.³³⁷ Paulus' role in the torture and execution of so many men is seen as an extension of the emperor's own paranoia. In a time when anyone could be accused of treason, Paulus manipulated the system to his advantage, undertaking the tasks that Constantius required with a disturbing enthusiasm. Paulus is described with viper-like imagery to emphasise the spread of fear created by him: "bubbling over with joy, to begin practising his venomous arts more freely...".³³⁸ The 'joy' that Paulus finds in his acts of torture are noted throughout, whether it is the act of torture itself or, in this case, just the dissemination of rumours. In this way Ammianus creates an inhuman

³³³ Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community*, 8.

³³⁴ Paul Schulten describes the Roman expectation for controlled behaviour and self-restraint particularly in relation to emperors and officials. To conform to Roman Society was to act within their ritualized and formal systems of public decorum and restraint. See: Paul Schulten, "To Cry or Not to Cry: Public Emotions in Antiquity", *Cultural and Social History* 2, no. 1 (2005): 17.

³³⁵ "*tartareus ille delator*", Amm. Marc. 15.6.1.

³³⁶ Amm. Marc. 14.5.6.

³³⁷ Amm. Marc. 14.5.6.

³³⁸ "*Exsurgebat enim effervens laetitia Paulus, tartareus ille delator, ad venenatas artes suas licentius exercendas...*" Amm. Marc. 15.6.1.

image of the emotional community of Constantius' court, lending to the unnatural aspects of Constantius' characterisation.

The largest section of written evidence we have on Paulus, is found in Book 19. It is here that we gain a better understanding of his torturous behaviours and the fear that he provoked in others, on behalf of Constantius. Ammianus claims that the “notorious state secretary,... [was] often called Tartareus”.³³⁹ Ammianus specifically uses the word “*tartareus*”, meaning belonging to the underworld, linking Paulus directly to death. Ammianus continues to carefully craft the narrative to emphasise Constantius' control of the situation by stating that Constantius “confer[ed] on him... the power of conducting trials according to his good pleasure”.³⁴⁰ In a clear mirroring to the introduction to Constantius, Paulus is granted the power to proceed based on his own paranoia, ambition and will.

Ammianus uses extremely violent and desperate language to describe Paulus. Paulus seeks out the trials “in panting haste” as he was “teeming with deadly fury”. The trials “supplying as if from a storehouse many kinds of deception and cruelty”.³⁴¹ Ammianus further encapsulates the fear that Paulus generated through his actions: “and on his nod (I might almost say) depended on the life of all who walk the earth”.³⁴² Ammianus' personal tone through these asides highlights the meticulous crafting of his perspective of Paulus. Notably, across Book 19 Ammianus consistently links Constantius and his oversight back to the actions of Paulus. It is here that Ammianus consciously links the behaviours of the courtiers to the emperor.

³³⁹ “*quorum exsecutor et administer, saepe dictus Tartareus*” Amm. Marc. 19.12.1.

³⁴⁰ “*statimque ad Orientem ocius ire monuit Paulum, potestate delata, ut instar ducis rerum experientia clari, ad arbitrium suum audiri efficeret causas.*” Amm. Marc. 19.12.5.

³⁴¹ “*Paulo succentore fabularum crudelium, quasi e¹ promptuaria cella, fallaciarum et nocendi species suggerente complures*”, Amm. Marc. 19.12.13. ; “*Perrexit (ut praeceptum est) Paulus funesti furoris et anhelitus plenus*” Amm. Marc. 19.12.7.

³⁴² “*cuius ex nutu (prope dixerim) pendebat incedentium² omnium salus.*” Amm. Marc. 19.12.13.

Ammianus believes that it is Constantius who has transferred this corruption onto the court. Constantius expresses the responsibility for the fear Paulus creates as a vessel for Constantius' own fear. Ammianus proclaims that all of these acts Paulus so eagerly performs are "(as he was ordered)".³⁴³ Identifying connections between Constantius' choices and Paulus' actions, allows Ammianus to lay the blame at Constantius' feet. Ammianus finishes Book 19 by further elaborating on these connections, revealing the broader court system as similar perpetrators to Paulus. Ammianus outlines the attitude of Constantius and his reactions to the activities and persuasions of his court:

"Therefore the palace band of courtiers, ingeniously fabricating shameful devices of flattery, declared that he would be immune to ordinary ills, loudly exclaiming that his destiny had appeared at all times powerful and effective in destroying those who made attempts against him. But it is not seemly for a prince to rejoice beyond measure in such sorrowful events, lest his subjects should seem to be ruled by despotism rather than by lawful power".³⁴⁴

Once again, the court deploys their "shameful devices of flattery" to maintain their own positions.³⁴⁵ Paulus was caught up within this system, only able to maintain his position through the continuation of his violence and suppression on behalf of Constantius. The circulation of hate within the emotional community made it impossible for Paulus to seek an alternative to violence.³⁴⁶ Furthermore, Ammianus also reflects on the expectations of the

³⁴³ "*Perrexit (ut praeceptum est) Paulus funesti furoris et anhelitus plenus*" Amm. Marc. 19.12.7.

³⁴⁴ "*Et inquisitum in haec negotia fortius, nemo qui quidem recte sapiat reprehendet. Nec enim abnuimus salutem legitimi principis, propugnatoris bonorum et defensoris, unde salus quaeritur aliis, consociato studio muniri debere cunctorum; cuius retinendae causa validius, ubi maiestas pulsata defenditur, a quaestionibus vel cruentis, nullam Corneliae leges exemere fortunam. Sed exsultare maestis casibus effrenate non decet, ne videantur licentia regi subiecti, non potestate.*" Amm. Marc. 19.12. 17-18.

³⁴⁵ Amm. Marc. 19.12.17.

³⁴⁶ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 60.

emperor, who was finding “rejoice beyond measure in such sorrowful events” even if he could not admit it to the public.³⁴⁷ Here Ammianus reveals part of his crafting of a particular narrative rather than an accurate history. The phrasing implies that it was a suggestion rather than the true actions or intentions of the emperor. Ammianus once again attempts to undermine Constantius’ imperial image by suggesting his disregard for “self-restraint” contrasted with the “unchanging, always sober expression” that Constantius provides publicly.³⁴⁸ De Jonge describes Ammianus “indirectly hold[ing] up a mirror of royalty” whilst also crafting a “criticism of Constantius and his environment”.³⁴⁹ Ammianus does not allow Constantius to hide behind, or be disconnected from, the actions of his officials and court, rather he links the two together, using his own assumptions to manipulate Constantius’ portrayal. Within the cycle of fear and paranoia, Constantius is unable to control where his fear spreads, whilst Ammianus holds him accountable to the actions produced by his fears.

Caesar Gallus

As the emotional community of the court adapts and changes with the emperor, the Caesars below him are caught up within a similar cycle in which they cannot completely control their courts without being seen as attempting to overthrow the emperor. Gallus’ court at Antioch reveals a structural problem with the imperial court, as the Caesar must create a space that does not threaten the emperor, but allows his city to run as required by those same systems. Gallus’ struggles for power and belonging within the emotional community of the court “arose mainly from his failure to understand the role of Caesar as conceived by Constantius”.³⁵⁰ Constantius’

³⁴⁷ Amm. Marc. 19.12.8.

³⁴⁸ Schulten, “To Cry or Not to Cry”, 19.; Amm. Marc. 16.10.9-12.

³⁴⁹ P. De Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XIX* (Groningen: Bouma’s Boekhuis b.v. Publishers, 1982): 268.

³⁵⁰ Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 19.

power and influence over Gallus comes from the same perceived expectations and possibilities of power that the court experience. Gallus behaves like a courtier rather than an imperial prince as to not be perceived as a rival to Constantius. Blockley sees Ammianus' stance on Gallus' past as a "pro-Julian view", wherein Ammianus acknowledges the hardships of the brother's upbringing. Gallus' early life likely had a great influence on the Caesar's adaptability to new emotional communities, due to the trauma he suffered. Gallus grew up separated from the imperial court.³⁵¹ When his family was murdered in the purge of 337, Gallus was spared as he was said to be a sickly child, whom they did not think would survive.³⁵² Historians have assumed that Gallus was sent with Julian to Constantinople and later to Macellum.³⁵³ At Macellum, Julian suggests that Gallus' temper grew more violent due to the isolation.³⁵⁴ When Gallus was elevated to the title of Caesar, he was sent "straight from the country to the court" and placed under the jealous eye of Constantius, transferring Gallus into an emotional community that was full of danger and ambiguity.³⁵⁵ Julian describes how his brother was "imprisoned at court" and after the period of long isolation at Macellum would have adapted to his surroundings in order to survive.³⁵⁶ There is little evidence that Gallus was involved in any military action, even whilst he was Caesar, aligning his behaviours even closer to Constantius as they both remained commanders distant from the front lines.³⁵⁷

³⁵¹ Crawford, *Constantius II*, 86.

³⁵² Lib. Or. 18.10; Soc. Hist. eccl. 3.1; Sozom. 5.2.9; Ath. Hist. Ar. 69.1

³⁵³ Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 4.21-25; Sozom. 5.2; Julian, *Ep.* 271C–D.

³⁵⁴ "And indeed whatever cruelty or harshness was revealed in his disposition was increased by his having been brought up among those mountains." Julian. *Ep.* 271D.

³⁵⁵ Julian. *Ep.* 272.

³⁵⁶ Julian. *Ep.* 271. D.

³⁵⁷ Crawford argues that it is unlikely that Gallus had any military experience, the sources that suggest otherwise are not necessarily trusted evidence for this period (Philostorgius. 3.28; *Passio Artemii* 12; Zos. 3.1.). Crawford also suggests that Ammianus may have addressed Gallus' previous expeditions in his missing thirteen books, however Ammianus never refers to it again "except for the suggestion that

Ammianus' opening image of Gallus describes how "fortune brought new storms upon the commonwealth through the misdeeds, many and notorious, of Gallus Caesar".³⁵⁸ Exemplars of Gallus' cruelty are repeated throughout Book 14, with Ammianus using a range of descriptions to portray the Caesar from being "offensive to all goodmen" to his "savage nature" and delight in "cruel sports".³⁵⁹ In each of these phrases there is a clear feeling of fury and fear that drives Gallus.³⁶⁰ The extremity of Ammianus' descriptions and the extreme emotion that Gallus was displaying did not align with the "formalized and ritualized behaviours of culture" that were expected as part of the conformity of Roman society.³⁶¹ In many ways, these behaviours conflicted with the values and norms of the emotional community that surrounded Gallus, who expected "controlled behaviour" and "self-restraint" particularly from imperial figures.³⁶²

the only reason he had not marched against Constantius was due to a 'lack of strength'; Crawford, *Constantius II: Usurpers, Eunuchs and the Antichrist*, 88.

³⁵⁸ "*Post emensos insuperabilis expeditionis eventus, languentibus partium animis, quas periculorum varietas fregerat et laborum, nondum tubarum cessante clangore, vel milite locato per stationes hibernas, fortunae saevientis procellae tempestates alias rebus infudere2 communibus, per multa illa et dira facinora Caesaris Galli, qui ex squalore imo miseriarum, in aetatis adultae primitiis, ad principale culmen insperato saltu3 provectus, ultra terminos potestatis delatae procurrens, asperitate nimia cuncta foedabat.*" Amm. Marc. 14.1.1

³⁵⁹ "*onerusus bonis omnibus Caesar*" Amm. Marc. 14.7.1; "*diritatis*" Amm. Mar. 14.7.3' "*quod ludicris cruentis delectabatur*" Amm. Marc. 14.7.3.; Amm. Marc. 14.7. 4.

³⁶⁰ For a focused discussion on how fury and the concept and use of *ira* can be seen in Ammianus' portrayals of people see; Malone, "The Virtue of Rage in the Fourth-century", 59-85.; Sidwell, "Portrayal and Role of Anger"; Barbara Sidwell, "Insult and Outrage and the Roman Military: Ammianus Marcellinus *Res Gestae* 20.8.8; 25.3.10; 28.6.23", in *Studies in Emotions and Power in the Late Roman World: papers in honour of Ron Newbold*, eds. Barbara Sidwell & Danijel Dzino (Piscataway: Georgia Press, 2010): 87-110.;

³⁶¹ Schulten, "To Cry or Not to Cry", 18.

³⁶² Schulten, "To Cry or Not to Cry", 17, 19.

The emotions Gallus displays and Ammianus describes form an emotional vocabulary for individuals separated from their emotional community. Ammianus reuses this language to link the behaviours of particular groups across his text. Rosenwein describes how we struggle to understand our emotions until “they are given names”.³⁶³ However, often our identification of that emotion is only seen through how it is expressed. Gallus expresses his fear and paranoia through violence. These expressions can become named emotions which then enter the ‘emotional vocabulary’ of a community so that they may define how they behave. In this case, fear, fury, and anxiety is seen to be expressed in an almost identical way to the court of Constantius even though it is a physically separate space.

As has been established, the court of the fourth century was no longer centred around a specific place and with the emperor’s constant travelling, smaller regional courts could be found across the empire.³⁶⁴ Antioch becomes one of these places, however, the constant presence of a Caesar means it becomes a similar environment to the court that constantly surrounds Constantius. Although the corruption of Constantius’ court consistently outweighs that of the Caesars, it proves a dangerous influence on the proliferation of fear in a smaller political arena. Through Ammianus’ characterisation of Gallus, he is transformed from a cruel

³⁶³ Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 4.; Many researchers around affect would suggest naming the emotion removes them from then being defined as affect, however their existences and their presence before they are named offers us insight into how those emotions were created.; For discussion around affect and naming emotion: Armon-Jones, *Varieties of Affect*, 16-47.; Ruth Leys, “How Did Fear Become a Scientific Object and What Kind of Object Is It?”, *Representations* 110, no. 1 (2010): 66-104.; Zizi Papacharissi, “Affective Publics and Structures of Storytelling: Sentiment, Events and Mediality”, *Information, Communication & Society* 19, no. 3 (2016): 311.; Gregory J. Seigworth & Melissa Gregg, “An Inventory of Shimmers”, in *The Affect Theory Reader*, eds. Melissa Gregg & Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010): 1-26.

³⁶⁴ Kulikowski, “Regional Dynasties and Imperial Court”, 135-150.

tyrant into a victim of the imperial court, driven to violence by the paranoia Constantius instilled in him. Antioch becomes a mirror image of the dysfunction of Constantius' court.

Gallus' wife, Constantina, also creates a greater connection between Constantius' court and the court of Antioch. Constantina was Constantius' sister and was raised in the same court environment as Constantius but with substantially less power over its emotional community. Constantina likely brought with her the same values and emotional inheritance that Constantius' court thrived on.

Ammianus' depiction of her is perhaps even more aggressive and tyrannical than his descriptions of Gallus and, at times, she is positioned as the reason for Gallus' behaviour. Ammianus describes how she kindled her husband's temper: "She, a Megara in mortal guise, constantly aroused the savagery of Gallus, being as insatiable as he in her thirst for human blood".³⁶⁵ Constantina is portrayed as "a Megara", one of the Furies, and is used by Ammianus as an example of complete corruption by ambition.³⁶⁶ It is also a common misogynistic trope in imperial history, as Ammianus is able to demonise Constantina and her actions as well as questioning Gallus' gender role, placing him outside of the ideal masculine figures of Roman society. Our evidence for imperial women in the later Roman empire is sparse, with Ammianus providing one of the only accounts of Constantina.³⁶⁷ Later in Book 14, there is also a distinct allusion to Agrippina the Younger, when Constantina sits behind a curtain during a trial, just

³⁶⁵ Amm. Marc. 14.1.2.

³⁶⁶ Furies, also known as Erinyes or Eumenides, are goddesses of vengeance who pursue unpunished criminals: M. Mili, "Furies", In *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, eds R.S. Bagnall, K. Brodersen, C.B. Champion, A. Erskine and S.R. Huebner, (John Wiley & Sons: January 2013).; Amm. Marc. 14.1.2.

³⁶⁷ J.D. Hilner, "A Woman's Place: Imperial Women in Late Antique Rome", *Antiquite Tardive: Revue Internationale d'histoire et d'archeologie* 25, (2017): 71.

as Agrippina was said to do in the senate chambers.³⁶⁸ A common imperial trope and a Tacitean allusion; Ammianus positions Constantina as holding too much influence during this time. Ross marks this moment as intertextual, though the language does not completely align, the images and meaning does.³⁶⁹ Ammianus uses ‘emotional vocabulary’ in that image to convey the same kind of affect across different spaces evoking the demonisation and suspicion that Tacitus crafted around Agrippina. It equally allows Ammianus to align Gallus with the infamous image of Nero, which “at once vilifies and magnifies the Caesar”.³⁷⁰

Within Gallus’ narrative Ammianus adopts a theatricality that aids in distinguishing his narrative from historical reality, another feature with Neronian origins.³⁷¹ Though Julian himself admits there is a sense of tragedy that encapsulates Gallus’ fate, the theatre of Ammianus’ work is used to craft a narrative of warning from his own perspective.³⁷² The tragedian aspect of Gallus’ story is marked in his transition from tyranny to a sympathetic figure, a transition that is noted only to occur within Ammianus’ text. Most other texts present Gallus as either victim or tyrant, with no text marking a transition.³⁷³ Ross has emphasised that the shift between tyranny and sympathy occurs when Ammianus himself enters the narrative.³⁷⁴ Before Ammianus’ persona arrives to observe, Constantina and Gallus’ behaviour is almost identical to Paulus, as they create false accusations and suspicion amongst their court:

³⁶⁸ “who from time to time poked her face through a curtain” Amm. Marc. 14.9.3.; As in Tacitus where he describes a similar scene with Agrippina the Younger: Tac. *Ann.* 13.5.

³⁶⁹ Ross, *Ammianus’ Julian*, 65.

³⁷⁰ Ross, *Ammianus’ Julian*, 71.

³⁷¹ Ross, *Ammianus’ Julian*, 69.

³⁷² “But why should I “recount”, as though from some tragedy, “all these unspeakable horrors?” Julian. *Ep.* 270D; in which Julian quotes Eur. *Or.* 14.

³⁷³ Julian’s account in his *Letter to the People of Athens*, is highly sympathetic to his brother; Julian. *Ep.* 270.; Libanius presents two different versions in two different texts; Lib. *Or.* 1. 96.; Lib. *Or.* 18.152.; Zosimus also provides a more sympathetic approach; Zos. 2.55.

³⁷⁴ Ross, *Ammianus’ Julian*, 71-95.

“The pair in the process of time gradually became more expert in doing harm, and through underhand and crafty eavesdroppers, who had the evil habit of lightly adding to their information and wanting to learn only what was false and agreeable to them, they fastened upon innocent victims’ false charges of aspiring to royal power or of practising magic”.³⁷⁵

The “underhand and crafty eavesdroppers” mentioned, echo the flatterers of Constantius’ court. As Ammianus implies, the information these courtiers or spies provide to Gallus and Constantina may not necessarily be true, but just like Constantius’ court, their court uses it to advance their position by telling the Caesar what they believe he wants to hear. The people surrounding them only provide information designed to bring harm to others and protect the messengers.³⁷⁶ The emotional community that Gallus and Constantina have brought with them spreads fear and corruption throughout Antioch. In such a way Ammianus seeks to emphasise the influence of the court beyond the boundaries of Constantius’ immediate proximity, with Gallus and Constantina as the super spreaders of an insidious court culture.

The relationship between Gallus and Constantius is one of manipulation, inconsistency, and anger, all driven by a constant fear of usurpation. After the famine riots and the trial of Silvanus, Constantius notices what’s happening in Antioch. It is during the trial of Silvanus that Ammianus is present in Antioch and there starts to be a noticeable shift in Ammianus’ tone and perspective. Ammianus grants Gallus’ character a greater sense of agency allowing the perspective of the Caesar to come through.³⁷⁷ Ammianus’ framing of Gallus in this final section

³⁷⁵ *Qui paulatim eruditiores facti processu temporis ad nocendum, per clandestinos versutosque rumigerulos, compertis leviter addere quaedam male suetos, falsa et placentia sibi dicentes, affectati regni vel atrium nefandarum caluminas isnotibus affigebant.* Amm. Marc. 14.1.2.

³⁷⁶ Amm. Marc. 14.1.2.

³⁷⁷ Amm. Marc. 14.11.7-8, 16.

positions Gallus as a “victim of Constantius”.³⁷⁸ Gallus’ tragic ending allows Ammianus to further demonise Constantius and further align with Julian’s perspectives on these events. By 354 CE, Gallus understands the extent of his crimes and the probable consequences, and Ammianus provides us with more and more of Gallus’ direct perspective and feelings.³⁷⁹ Specifically, we see Gallus dwelling on his anxieties and cursing his own actions that made him “submit to the will of the lowest of mankind”.³⁸⁰

Ammianus still describes Gallus’ reign in Antioch as “enduring this long tyranny”, however, he begins to transfer blame of the events from Gallus to Constantius and the court.³⁸¹ Constantius’ physical presence now overtakes his influence in the narrative and clear links between court and emperor are even further established. Constantius is told about the crimes of Gallus and his wife by a man he seemingly trusts.³⁸² Ammianus describes how “the emperor, grieving over the past disasters and made anxious by fear of those to come, concealed the distress that he felt as long as he could”.³⁸³ The distinction between Constantius and Gallus is in the transition from tyrant to victim, as Gallus is no longer a mirror for Constantius, but rather a threat. Ammianus places the crimes of Gallus in Constantius’ hands. His eventual execution is brutal and denies Gallus any honour and once again highlights the violence and brutality of the imperial court’s emotional community.

³⁷⁸ Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 130.

³⁷⁹ Ross, *Ammianus’ Julian*, 71-80.

³⁸⁰ “For in the midst of his embarrassments and troubles his anxious mind dwelt on this one thought...” (*Inter res enim impeditas et turbidas, ad hoc unum mentem sollicitam dirigebat*), Amm. Marc. 14.11.7.; “...quae eum iam despectum et vilem arbitrio subdiderat infimorum” Amm. Marc. 14.11.16.

³⁸¹ Amm. Marc. 14.10.1.

³⁸² Amm. Marc. 14.10.2

³⁸³ “...super praeteritis maerens, et futurorum timore suspensus, angorem animi quam diu potuit amendabat.” Amm. Marc. 14.10.2.

Constantius' initial plan is to summon Gallus to court under the pretence of flattery, where he could be executed without too much hindrance or disagreement.³⁸⁴ Ammianus once again describes the "groups of fickle flatterers" that lay their claim of influence upon the emperor.³⁸⁵ Constantius' insecurities increase concerning Gallus' position and the imperial court reacts to Constantius' fear, reinforcing Constantius' anxieties that mirror their own. In this case, a man called Arbitio is named as the chief exacerbator of the emperor's paranoia. The factions within Constantius' court are seen to work in tandem to overwhelm the emperor with suspicion. Once again, they perceive Gallus as a threat to their position and so their suspicion becomes a reaction of *invidia* and hate. They produce multiple reports surrounding Ursicinus, suggesting that "Gallus, while naturally savage, had been incited to the deeds of cruelty by persons attached to his person...", adding to the emperor's natural anxiety.³⁸⁶

It is under these circumstances that Gallus is summoned to Rome. Unusually, Gallus undertook a "voluntary journey to what he knew would be his death..."³⁸⁷ The seemingly self-sacrificial aspect of Gallus' journey aids in crafting Gallus as a victim of the court as he accepts a noble option and obeys the emperor's command. Thompson asserts that Gallus willingly approached his own death with a kind of resignation, as Mooney states that it was "the terror and perplexity of a man who knew he was in danger but inevitably must accept the risk".³⁸⁸ Gallus demonstrates a hesitation that later authors have alluded to as being a fear of creating a new civil war.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ Amm. Marc. 14.11.1.

³⁸⁵ "*Huic sententiae versabilium adulatorum refragantibus globis*" Amm. Marc. 14.11.2.

³⁸⁶ Amm. Marc. 14.11.3.

³⁸⁷ Thompson, *Historical Work*, 67.

³⁸⁸ Robert N. Mooney, "Gallus Caesar's Last Journey", *Classical Philology* 53, no. 3 (1958): 176.

³⁸⁹ Philost. *Hist. eccl.* 4.1. Philostorgius' work cannot wholly be trusted as it survives as part of the work of Photius and we cannot be sure how much of the original detail remains unaltered. Crawford provides an analysis of its reliability in his book see ref. 358.

Constantina was also summoned to Rome. Accepting with the hope “to pacify” her brother’s “habitual cruelty”, Constantina leaves for Rome but on the journey is taken ill and dies.³⁹⁰ With little mention as to the effect this has upon Constantius, Ammianus instead marks the death as a further failure for Gallus, heightening anxiety in the unravelling situation. Constantina herself is described as having “failed him” as she is no longer a buffer between the two men.³⁹¹ As Ammianus has suggested before, the connection between Constantina and Gallus was one of Gallus’ main driving forces. Gallus’ reaction to the death of Constantina is one of “anxious deliberation” that creates the erratic shifts in his moods and the uncertainty that haunts his journey to Rome.³⁹²

Upon Gallus’ departure, Ammianus states that Gallus “anticipated the worst” and his fear of starting a civil war arose from a “fear of treachery on the part of those nearest to his person”.³⁹³ Gallus understands exactly why the court is afraid of his journey to Rome as he had experienced the affect that dictates their perceptions and decisions. Ammianus uses Gallus to emphasise the cruel nature of the court’s emotional communities in the destruction of an individual who seemingly followed their values, morals, and ideals. In Ammianus’ eyes, Gallus is transformed into a victim of the imperial court’s whims. Constantius is consistently characterised as a man who “was not one to accept any excuse or pardon”.³⁹⁴ He is unforgiving, and it is that unmerciful nature that Ammianus encapsulates within Gallus’ fear as well as the fear the imperial court has of Constantius’ reactions.

The turbulent nature of Gallus’ journey is dictated by his shifts between confidence and anxiety. As he arrives in Constantinople, he celebrates with games and races, very

³⁹⁰ Amm. Marc. 4.11.6.

³⁹¹ Amm. Marc. 14.11.6.

³⁹² “*anxia cogitatione*” Amm. Marc. 14.11.6.

³⁹³ Amm. Marc. 14.11.8.

³⁹⁴ Amm. Marc. 14.11.7.

uncharacteristic of a man submitting to his fated death, perhaps even the result of being part of the system that is trying to destroy him. Ammianus parallels Gallus' fear with Constantius' growing rage. Constantius' anger is driven by his own paranoia, and rather than calling it rage, it can easily be seen as fear that Gallus might be able to begin an uprising or civil war. Ammianus describes Constantius' immediate reaction to the games in Constantinople as he "was enraged beyond all human bounds".³⁹⁵ Constantius' late realisation of the consequence of his summons and the passage Gallus ends up taking past various army camps, forces Constantius to appear much more defensive than before. Constantius took great effort to encourage Gallus to journey to Rome, yet quickly realises it places him in a precarious position.³⁹⁶ Constantius is afraid of Gallus after these symbolic games, and Gallus is clearly caught up in the indecision and calculation making his actions seem more threatening than intended. Constantius decides to begin moving troops out of that area in response:

"...and lest by any chance Gallus should become uncertain as to the future and should try in the course of his journey to take measures for his own safety, all the soldiers in the towns through which he would pass were purposefully removed".³⁹⁷

By removing the troops, Constantius ensures his own security. Here we see the instability of the position of the emperor, and his own, likely well-placed, distrust of those around him and his own armies. In particular, the information that had been given to Constantius, often by his court, heightened the paranoia and may have purposefully disguised Gallus' true motives for returning to Rome.

³⁹⁵ "*ultra mortalem modum exarsit*" Amm. Marc. 14.11.13.

³⁹⁶ Amm. Marc. 14. 11.9-12

³⁹⁷ "*acc nequo casu idem Gallus de futuris incertus, agitare quaedam conducentia saluti suae per itinera conaretur, remote sunt omnes de industria milites agentes in civitatibus perviis.*" Amm. Marc. 14.11.13.

However, Constantius' fear may not be entirely misplaced; Ammianus suggests that it is not Gallus who seems to be pushing himself towards the title of Augustus, but rather his supporters. In the same way that Constantius' court relies on his survival for them to remain in power, Gallus' time in Antioch had produced a similar environment. Though Gallus' court may have also been loyal to Constantius, their proximity to the Caesar and their belief he would eventually succeed Constantius as emperor made them solely reliant on Gallus, creating a rival emotional community.

Most scholars concur that Constantius' fear in this situation was not directed toward Gallus but rather the anxiety that Constantius' own imperial court, which opposed Gallus' reign, would rebel against Constantius if he did not act.³⁹⁸ In this, Ammianus reinforces the power that Constantius allowed the court to wield. Constantius keeps a close eye on Gallus during this period sending visitors and messengers on the pretence of business to stop him from making any plans.³⁹⁹ Gallus is rushed from Hadrianopolis and in the great haste that Ammianus describes, he is unable to take care of his person and is driven into a temporary madness. Gallus is plagued by ghosts and nightmares throughout his journey.⁴⁰⁰ Ammianus uses the physical

³⁹⁸ E. A. Thompson, "Ammianus' Account of Gallus Caesar", *The American Journal of Philology* 64, no. 3 (1943): 312.

³⁹⁹ Amm. Marc. 14.11.14.

⁴⁰⁰ Amm. Marc. 14.11.16-17.; Famous Roman writers have used the image of ghosts to taunt, educate and provide a foil for central characters and heroes, appearing in reality and within the dreams of epic heroes, for further discussion on the appearance of ghosts in Latin Literature see: Basil Dufallo, *The Ghosts of the Past: Latin Literature, the Dead and Rome's Transition to a Principate*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007): 1-11.; Emma Hillard, "A Spectre Is Haunting Epic: A Close Reading Of The Apparition Topos In Lucan's *Bellum Civile*", (Masters, University of British Columbia, 2016): <https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/stream/pdf/24/1.0304568/4>.; Though warranting only a brief mention in Ammianus, the apparitions serve a greater purpose in defining the guilt of Gallus, it also creates further intertextual links with texts such as Cicero, Aeschylus, Euripides, Seneca and Statius.; Stat. *Theb.* 4.553-593.; Hom. *Od.*; Verg. *Aen.*; Luc. *De. Bel. Civi.* 6.507-623.; Dufallo, "Dead as the Living", 11.

effects that Gallus experiences to expand on the emotional vocabularies that present through his physical body in these nightmares and visions. As Matsuda has discussed, the effects of hate can be seen through the “experience of physiological symptoms and emotional distress...” for the victim.⁴⁰¹ The emotional sequence from *invidia* to hate, that we have already identified within the court, then affects the individual body that is targeted through, not only psychological effects, but also physical reactions.⁴⁰²

In the lead up to Gallus’ death, Ammianus parallels the image of Constantius’ “implacable anger and resentment” with all of Constantius’ “hopes of securing his safety on destroying Gallus”.⁴⁰³ Words of anger and hatred colour the descriptions, revealing the implied fear and panic that Constantius has developed. Constantius’ anger and fear hinge on the guarantee of Gallus’ destruction, reinforced by the court’s anxiety, revealing their shared distress over the possibility of usurpation. However, Gallus never attempts to act on any power within military or political spheres, rather de-escalating his opportunities in Antioch and on his journey to Rome.⁴⁰⁴ Gallus understood that the most dangerous position in the empire was as

⁴⁰¹ “... ranging from fear in the gut, to rapid pulse rate and difficulty in breathing, nightmares, post-traumatic stress disorder, hypertension, psychosis and suicide.” Matsuda applies her theory surrounding hate messages in racist speech, however her work on discrimination touches specifically on the affects of the spread of messages of hate and the individuals experience of them. Her focus on the victims symptoms and experience translates to Ammianus in the identification of physiological effect that collective groups targeting individuals can create.; Mari J. Matsuda, “Public Response to Racist Speech: Considering the Victim’s Story”, *Michigan Law Review* 87, no. 8 (1989): 2336.

⁴⁰² Though emotional sequences are a concept that Rosenwein establishes, Ahmed also describes them as “The ‘doing’ of hate is not simply ‘done’ in the moment of its articulation. A chain of effects (which are at once affects) are in circulation...The transformation of this body into the body of the hate, in other words, leads to the enclosure or sealing of the other’s body within a figure of hate.”; Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 57.

⁴⁰³ “*irrevocabili ira princeps percitus et dolore, fiduciam omnem fundandae securitatis in eodem posuit abolendo.*” Amm. Marc. 14.11.23.

⁴⁰⁴ Amm. Marc. 14.7.13.

Augustus, he understood this from his childhood, but also within the emotional community of the court. In many ways, the loyalty and reluctance to make a play for the title of Augustus cements him as an ideal candidate for a Caesar, particularly under Constantius' perspective.

Gallus' death was brutal and highlighted Constantius' isolation and inability to control his court. The mutilation and disfigurement of Gallus' image is complete in his death, taking away everything that he could use to overthrow Constantius. Ammianus describes it as follows:

“Accordingly, his hands were bound, after the fashion of some guilty robber, and he was beheaded. Then his face and head were mutilated, and the man who a little while before had been a terror to the cities and provinces was left a disfigured corpse. But the justice of the heavenly power was everywhere watchful; for not only did his cruel deeds prove the ruin of Gallus, but not long afterwards a painful death overtook both of those whose fatal blandishments and perjuries led him, guilty as he was, into the snares of destruction”.⁴⁰⁵

The end of Gallus marks a symbolic destruction of the creation of another Constantius. Ammianus' description is symbolic in the binding of his hands, the beheading and mutilation of his face, and the disfigurement of his corpse providing an allegorical end to the representation of Gallus. Similarly, Ammianus' portrayal of the deaths of the men who killed Gallus exhibits a kind of divine ordination against the court's behaviours. The importance of “justice” is juxtaposed to the brutality of Gallus' death. Ammianus presents all the men involved as corrupt, and so their acts are seen as just as depraved as the ones that Gallus

⁴⁰⁵“*et ita colligates manibus in modum noxii cuiusdam latronis, cervice abscisa, ereptaque vultus et capitis dignitate, cadaver est relictum informe, Paulo ante urbibus et provinciis formidatum. Sed vigilavit utrobique superni numinis aequitas. Nam et Gallum actus oppressere crudeles, et non diu postea ambo cruciabili morte absumpti sunt, qui eum licet nocentem, blandius palpantes periuriis, ad usque plagas perduxere letales.*” Amm. Marc. 14.11.23-24.

committed and require equal retribution.⁴⁰⁶ Ammianus ensures that it is the system that created and perpetuated Gallus' behaviour that is deemed immoral, including the process of Gallus' death.

Constantius' involvement in Gallus' death further highlights the corruption of the imperial court. Rumours, which Blockley suggested were widely accepted, reported that at the last moment Constantius sent a stay of execution.⁴⁰⁷ The stay of execution was intercepted by one of the court eunuchs, Eusebius, and the execution of Gallus continued. In this case, the aristocratic portion of the imperial court and the eunuchs are united in their decision. As they are seen to manipulate and trick the emperor to pursue their desires. The acceptance of this rumour was quite popular amongst the people as we can see across numerous ancient sources of the time.⁴⁰⁸ However, Ammianus chose not to include the rumour. In doing so he firmly places the blame for Gallus' death with both Constantius and the imperial court.

Gallus was not only a product of the court system but also a victim. Constantius had crafted the court into a direct projection of himself, an emotional community that reflected his fears and anxieties. As a product of the court, Gallus became a mirror of that emotional community. In moving to Antioch, Gallus was faced with his own structural problem, a court that formed around him. Gallus' court relied on the Caesar maintaining his position and became an extension of the uncertainty that Gallus felt surrounding his purpose. Whether Gallus intended to or not, the court at Antioch became a dangerous rival for imperial power, as their aims aligned solely with the Caesar's rather than the Augustus. In many ways, Constantius' court sowed the seeds of Gallus' destruction through their affective contagion of Constantius' failings. Their sense of *invidia* for any position outside of their immediate affective space, and

⁴⁰⁶ Amm. Marc. 14.11.24.

⁴⁰⁷ Thompson, "Account of Gallus", 312.; Zonar. 13.9.

⁴⁰⁸ Philost. *Hist. eccl.* 4.1; Sozom. 5.5; Zonar. 13.9; Lib. 18.152; Julian. *Ep.* 272.

outside of their immediate control, meant that a courtier outside of the imperial court could no longer connect with the emotional community. In trying to craft his own space Gallus was destroyed by the very people who made him.

Ammianus uses Gallus' narrative to emphasise the contradictions of the court system. The personalisation of the imperial officials and bureaucratic systems through an emotional community that reproduced the emperors' own failings entirely corrupted imperial power. Constantius is unable to see beyond his immediate surroundings as he is isolated from more and more parts of his imperial household and constantly confronted with his own reflected anxieties. Gallus represented a threat to the imperial court's emotional community, but more than that, he became a warning for the self-destructive nature of the court systems that now controlled the empire.

Conclusion: One Emperor and the Many Voices of His Court.

Ammianus crafts his narrative to demonstrate that even though agents of the court, whether they are eunuchs, courtiers or Caesars, often independently work for their own means, the emperors influence is always present. Ammianus presents Constantius and his court as intrinsically linked as an emotional community as they both struggle to maintain their power in the turbulent climate of the fourth century.

Ammianus uses Constantius' close association to the eunuchs to further an unnatural and corrupt impression of Imperial rule. Whether it is Constantius' relationship to a specific Eunuch and their actions or the larger court of eunuchs, Ammianus ensures' that Constantius' remains responsible for influencing and controlling their actions. Amongst the court, Paulus and Gallus provide further examples of Constantius' direct and indirect influence over individuals around him. Constantius casts a paranoid and violent shadow across the bureaucracy and systems of imperial rule. The emperor is solely responsible for influencing

the voices that he hears around him. Ammianus' narrative, whether fictitious or real, is a warning to his own society, and likely to emperors that follow Constantius, of how imperial seclusion and corruption becomes a cycle of destruction.

Conclusions: An Unsustainable Empire

Ammianus' accounts of Constantius II convey the corrosive impact of an overly bureaucratic and court-focused imperial political structure. Ammianus' narrative isolates the damaging emotional communities that formed within the imperial court, exhibiting the need to return to traditional imperial values to restore the empire to its former greatness. Despite his clear bias towards Julian, Ammianus focused on a vital dilemma that faced all emperors, good or bad, namely, how to delegate control without losing their grip on power. Contrary to the panegyrics written in their honour, no emperor could possibly rule over such a vast realm without the assistance of a host of potentially unreliable and treacherous subordinates.

Ammianus enforces damaging tropes to portray Constantius as a tyrannical and weak ruler. Ammianus repeatedly "undercuts [other authors'] favourable presentation of Constantius", however, he does so to prove a point.⁴⁰⁹ Ammianus is focused on showing his community the extent of corruption within their imperial systems that have changed the meaning of imperial power. He portrays Constantius as a tyrant at the centre of an imperial court which deliberately isolates the emperor from his subjects of all ranks, leaving him at the whim of often self-serving and deceitful underlings who control access to him. Eunuchs, officials, and aristocratic senators manipulated Constantius into a position isolated from the empire. Ammianus ensures that the actions of anyone within the system link back to Constantius' aims and the transmission of his paranoia throughout the court. Ammianus does not set out to produce an accurate, unbiased account, as he so adamantly claims. Rather Ammianus demonstrates the corruption of the governing structures of the empire that show how he perceived the imperial corruption that was continuing to grow throughout Late

⁴⁰⁹ Whitby, "Image of Constantius", 75.

Antiquity. Constantius acts a symbol for the detrimental effects of the imperial court's power and influence on that proceeding period, with Julian as the only exception.

The emotional communities that formed within Ammianus' narrative reveal realities of the courts of Late Antiquity. The drastic separation between the aristocratic imperial court and the eunuchs, crafts two destructive spaces in which individual greed is valued over the progress of the empire. Through these communities, we can see how affective spaces and emotional vocabularies were crafted that allowed them to perpetuate the seclusion of imperial spaces.

Amongst the dramatic retelling of Ammianus' narrative, his concerns over the disruption of imperial power demonstrate a drastic change in imperial rule. Ammianus attacks the personalisation of the imperial court's systems, in which the emperor projects his personal failings and fears onto those closest to him. Rather than protecting the structures of imperial power, the personalisation of this system further corrupts, interfering with succession, judicial rulings, and the general functioning of the empire. Though sole rulership is maintained by one emperor, the court around him becomes an amalgamation of his identity that is unstable and destructive. Constantius perpetuates and exacerbates imperial bureaucratic systems that go on to alter how the empire is ruled in the centuries to come.

The divisions present within the structures of the imperial court further the emperor's isolation, positioning him between two emotional communities that struggle for dominance. In creating his hostile account of the eunuchs, Ammianus identifies the expanding control of a small group that despite their social status within Roman culture, begins to dictate imperial decision making. Ammianus' account of the eunuchs provides us with a large body of evidence on eunuchs for that period.⁴¹⁰ Reading his account with an understanding of emotional communities that perpetuated a toxic court environment, allows us to further understand the impact Ammianus believed the eunuchs had upon imperial court systems. Regardless of

⁴¹⁰ Tougher, "Ammianus and The Eunuchs", 57.

Ammianus' bias, subsequent imperial households were clearly defined by the growth of the corps of eunuchs with close proximity to the emperor.

Throughout Ammianus' text, other versions of these emotional communities can also be identified: within the army, within cities and towns, and within traumatic moments of his writing. Exploring each of those communities would likely reveal understandings about the changes that were occurring in military and social aspects across the empire. Outside of Ammianus, applying Rosenwein and Ahmed to other Late Antique texts would aid in understanding the emotional communities that defined that period. Papacharissi says in her discussion on affective publics and storytelling: "Structures of feeling can be traced back to forms and conventions shared by those living through a particular era, but they should not be reduced to what is frequently idealised as the spirit of an age. They could be potentially understood as structures of experience...".⁴¹¹ Ammianus, as a major historical source for the fourth century, provides us with a text that informs many of the "structures of experience" of that period. Expanding the study of how emotional communities are presented within writings, whether panegyrics or histories, would allow a broader perspective on life and human interaction across Late Antiquity.

⁴¹¹ Papacharissi, "Affective Publics", 320.

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