THE ORIGIN OF AMMIANUS*

The only explicit indication in the text of Ammianus Marcellinus as to the historian's origin comes in the famous epilogue to the *Res Gestae*, that he had written 'as once a soldier, and a Greek' ('ut miles quondam et Graecus'; 31.16.9), supported by various passages in which he refers to the Greek language as his own.[1] The evidence that, through the length and breadth of the Greek-speaking world, we should look to Syrian Antioch for his place of origin, is provided by the orator of that city, Libanius, in a letter (*Ep.* 1063) written late in 392 'to Marcellinus'. The purpose of this article is to set out explicitly the arguments for the identification of Libanius' correspondent as Ammianus Marcellinus in the light of the recent challenges to the accepted view offered by G. W. Bowersock, C. W. Fornara, and T. D. Barnes.[2] Since the discussion requires that the letter be considered in detail, it is given here, in Foerster's Teubner text followed by a translation of Libanius' often very allusive language:[3]

Μαρκελλίνῳ.

1. *Καὶ σὲ ζηλῶ τοῦ 'Ρώμην ἔχειν κἀκείνην τοῦ σέ· σὺ μὲν γὰρ ἔχεις ᾧ τῶν ἐν γῇ παραπλήσιον οὐδέν, ἡ δὲ τὸν τῶν ἑαυτῆς πολιτῶν, οἷς πρόγονοι δαίμονες, οὐχ ὕστερον. 2. ἦν μὲν οὖν δή σοι μέγα καὶ τὸ μετὰ σιγῆς ἐν τῇ τοιαύτῃ διάγειν καὶ τὸ λόγους ὑπ' ἄλλων λεγομένους δέχεσθαι—πολλοὺς δὲ ἡ 'Ρώμη τρέφει ῥήτορας πατράσιν ἀκολουθοῦντας—νῦν δ', ὡς ἔστιν ἀκούειν τῶν ἐκεῖθεν ἀφικνουμένων, αὐτὸς ἡμῖν ἐν ἐπιδείξεσι ταῖς μὲν γέγονας, ταῖς δὲ ἔσῃ τῆς συγγραφῆς εἰς πολλὰ τετμημένης καὶ τοῦ φανέντος ἐπαινεθέντος μέρος ἕτερον εἰσκαλοῦντος. 3. ἀκούω δὲ τὴν 'Ρώμην αὐτὴν στεφανοῦν σοι τὸν πόνον καὶ κεῖσθαι ψῆφον αὐτῇ τῶν μέν σε κεκρατηκέναι, τῶν δὲ οὐχ ἡττῆσθαι. ταυτὶ δὲ οὐ τὸν συγγραφέα κοσμεῖ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμᾶς, ὧν ἐστὶν ὁ συγγραφεύς. 4. μὴ δὴ παύσῃ τοιαῦτα συντιθεὶς καὶ κομίζων οἴκοθεν* [so Foerster: MSS *ἐκεῖθεν*] *εἰς συλλόγους μηδὲ κάμῃς θαυμαζόμενος, ἀλλ' αὐτός τε γίγνου λαμπρότερος καὶ ἡμῖν τοῦτο δίδου. τοιοῦτον γὰρ πολίτης εὐδοκιμῶν· κοσμεῖ τοῖς αὑτοῦ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ. 5. σὺ μὲν οὖν ἐν ὁμοίοις εἶης· ἡμῖν δ' ἐν πένθει κειμένοις εἰ μή τις θεῶν ἀμύνειεν, οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οἴσομεν. ὃς γὰρ δὴ μόνος ἦν ἡμῖν οὐ κακὸς ἐκ μητρὸς ἀγαθῆς, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐλευθέρας, οἴχεται καὶ τέθαπται λύπῃ τελευτήσας, ἡ δ' ἔργον ἦν ὕβρεως. οἵτινες δὲ οἱ προπηλακίσαντες, παρ' ἑτέρων μάνθανε, ἡμεῖς δὲ αὐτοὺς καὶ παθόντες αἰδούμεθα. 6. ζέοντος δὲ ἔτι τοῦ κακοῦ Καλλιόπιος ἐκ μέσων ἡρπάσθη βιβλίων καὶ πόνων, καὶ γίγνεται ἕλκος ἐφ' ἕλκει καὶ χείρω τὰ τῶν νέων. καὶ τοῦτ' ἂν ἀκούσαις καὶ τῶν τἀκείνου νειμαμένων. ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ τὰ πρὸ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ μετ' αὐτὸν οἰμωγῶν τε ἀφορμαὶ καὶ δακρύων, ὧν ἐπὶ τὰ γραφόμενα ῥεῖ τὰ πλείω.*

To Marcellinus.

1. I do envy you that Rome is yours, and Rome that you are hers. What you have has nothing like it on earth, and she has a man the equal of her own citizens, whose ancestors are divinities. 2. It would have been a great thing indeed, for you to live in such a city even in silence, and to hear words [*or*, discourses] spoken by others, for Rome supports many orators who follow in

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[1] J. F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989), 462–4.

[2] G. W. Bowersock, reviewing *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, in *JRS* 80 (1990), 244–50; C. W. Fornara, 'Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus, I: The letter of Libanius and Ammianus' connections with Antioch', *Historia* 41 (1992), 328–44; T. D. Barnes, 'Ammianus Marcellinus and his world', *Classical Philology* 88 (1993), 55–70, at 57–61. Fornara's article is a revised version of the paper given at Oxford in February 1987, referred to at *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 478 n. 1.

[3] The text and a translation of Libanius' letter are also provided by Fornara, 331–2, and a translation by Barnes, 58; see also, assuming the letter to be written to Ammianus, A. F. Norman, *Libanius: Autobiography and Selected Letters* (ed. Loeb, 1992), No. 188 (Vol. II, pp. 423–33). No serious difference of interpretation revolves on a question of translation as such. Fornara's text is also that of Foerster, with the exception of two points of punctuation, which I take to be misprints.

the path of their ancestors: but now, as one can hear from those who arrive from there, you yourself have, to our pleasure,[4] taken part in public recitations and will do so in more; your composition being divided into many parts, the praise of the portion that has appeared invites another.[5] 3. I hear that Rome herself crowns your labour, and by her verdict declares you[6] the master of some, and bettered by no-one; and this honours not only the writer but us too, from whom the writer comes. 4. So, do not cease to compose such things, and to bring them forth from your home [*or, reading* ἐκεῖθεν: to bring selections from your writings?][7] to literary receptions. Do not grow weary of admiration, but add more to your own fame, and give us this benefit. For such is the part of a distinguished citizen; by his works he brings adornment to his own city. 5. May you then continue to prosper: as for me, I am prostrate with grief, and do not see how I shall bear it unless some god should come to help. For he who was my only son—not a bad man and from a good mother, even if she was unfree—is dead and buried, ending his life in misery, which was brought about by the insolence of others. Who they are that committed the offence, you must learn of others: I forgive them, even having suffered at their hands. 6. Then, with this pain still fresh, Calliopius was seized from the midst of his books and labours: wound falls upon wound, and the plight [*sc.* the education] of the young grows worse. This you might also hear from those who administer his affairs. For me, everything—his death, and what preceded and what came after it—brings forth groans and tears, most of which pour onto what I write.[8]

It is possible from this letter to set out certain points of reference. First, after the name of the recipient, the date of the letter, located by Seeck in late 392, is secure, unless one were to bring it down to early 393.[9] The letter refers to the death, which had occurred in 391, of Libanius' illegitimate son Cimon, and to the subsequent death of his colleague and former pupil Calliopius, and it belongs with other letters written at the same time.[10] Its predecessor, *Ep.* 1062, for instance, expects the arrival at Antioch of the *magister militum per Orientem* Addaeus, who is recorded in this office in January or June 393,[11] and *Epp.* 1052 and 1061 refer to the praetorian prefecture of Fl. Rufinus, which is first attested in a law of 10 September 392.[12]

Second, Libanius' correspondent is an Antiochene, who is currently winning acclaim for his literary efforts at Rome by giving presentations of his work

[4] This phrase is to express the Greek ἡμῖν (not translated by Fornara). Barnes has 'I gather'.

[5] Norman has a different nuance; 'each published portion wins approval and invites another'.

[6] Cf. Fornara, 'has rendered the verdict'. Barnes' translation, 'has formally recognized', seems too explicit.

[7] *Or* (Fornara 332, cf. 337), 'bringing your inventions into public recitations'. Barnes, reading οἴκοθεν, has 'from the study'.

[8] Libanius could mean this literally; the next letter in the published editions, *Ep.* 1064 to Aristaenetus, begins with references to the deaths of Cimon and Calliopius, and to a weakness of the eyes, which 'again cause tears to pour down upon my writing'.

[9] O. Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius* (Leipzig, 1906; repr. Hildesheim, 1966), pp. 202 (Marcellinus VII) and 463. The date 392 is accepted without query by Fornara and explicitly by Barnes. For early 393, see n. 11 below.

[10] Seeck, 463; cf., on the death of Cimon, G. R. Sievers, *Das Leben des Libanius* (Berlin, 1868), 201; A. F. Norman, *Libanius' Autobiography* (*Oration I*) (London, etc., 1965), 231; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), esp. 272; *PLRE* I, pp. 92f. (*s.* Cimon Arabius). The insult to Cimon referred to in Libanius' letter is apparently the last-minute withdrawal of the governorship of Cyprus, to which he had been nominated, cf. *Or.* I.283–4, again with the motifs of λύπη and ὕβρις; Norman, *Libanius' Autobiography*, 234, and in *Autobiography and Selected Letters*, Vol. I, pp. 334–7. The death of Calliopius is also referred to at *Ep.* 1051, 1064; *PLRE* I, p. 175 (Calliopius 4).

[11] Addaeus, *Ep.* 1062, cf. *Die Briefe des Libanius*, 463. At *Regesten* 100, cf. 282, Seeck gave reasons for amending the date of the law addressed to Addaeus (*CTh* 1.5.10+1.7.2) from 12 January to 12 June 393; he was still *comes domesticorum* on 31 December 392, cf. *CTh* 6.24.5 (where the MSS give 393); *Regesten*, 87, cf. *PLRE* I, p. 13.

[12] *PLRE* I, p. 779 (citing *CTh* 8.6.2+9.28.1), cf. p. 992 (*s.* Zeno 7). The exact references are to Libanius, *Ep.* 1052.3 and 1061.5.

(ἐπιδείξεις) to assemblies or meetings of listeners—that is, at literary receptions or colloquia (συλλόγοι) (§§1,4). Libanius declares that his correspondent 'is one of us' (§3), and if this is not taken to be indicative of Antiochene origin,[13] he adds in the following section that by his distinction Marcellinus is bringing fame to his own city, as a good citizen should (§4).

Third, the literary work in question invites comparison with the λόγοι of the orators of whom Rome has many, following their ancestors; the work itself being a 'συγγραφή' divided, or divisible, into many parts, of which the success of the portion already brought forward invites a further instalment (§2).

The case for identifying Libanius' correspondent as the historian Ammianus Marcellinus can be summarised by reviewing, with some expansion, the points just listed.

As to nomenclature, the name Marcellinus is that by which the historian would normally be known if only one name were used. The only direct later allusion to Ammianus' work, by the sixth-century Latin grammarian Priscian, so refers to him.[14] As to the date of Marcellinus' activity, Libanius' letter, written in late 392 or early 393, refers to the news of his correspondent's success as having been brought to Antioch 'by those who arrive from there [*sc.* Rome]' (§2). We must allow for the time taken for Libanius' informants to reach Antioch from Rome, and for whatever other preoccupations may have detained them on the way.[15] We can be sure that, however pleased they were with their news, Libanius' informants did not travel to Antioch simply to inform him about the recitations; it seems best to look for some other purpose for their journey, and a political one at once suggests itself. Perhaps the men who had heard or knew of the recitations were connected with the Theodosian court, which returned from Italy to the east in 391 after the conclusion of the campaign against the usurper Magnus Maximus, and the installation in the west of the Emperor's son Honorius at Milan and of Valentinian II in Gaul.[16] Whether this is so or not, the recitations mentioned by Libanius can be assumed to have taken place earlier in 392 or in 391, or possibly even before that.

This is exactly the period in which Ammianus Marcellinus was completing his history, if we may judge by the distribution of the latest allusions to events taking place outside the chronological framework of his text (which ended in 378): namely the urban prefectures of Julianus Rusticus (27.6.1; in 387/8) and Aurelius Victor (21.10.6; in 389/90?), the death of Petronius Probus (27.11.2; *c.* 390) and the consulship of Neoterius (26.5.14); in 390). All this is well known, and forms the standard evidence for the time of writing of the *Res Gestae*. It is also well known that Ammianus fails to mention the destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria in 391, in a passage which could hardly have been written as it stands, had Ammianus known of its destruction (22.16.12).[17]

[13] Fornara, 333f., takes this phrase to refer to Marcellinus' 'participation among the group of students taught by Libanius at Antioch'. This is a possible, but clearly not the only possible, reading of the text. It seems equally natural to take the first-person references throughout §§2, 3 & 4 of the letter (ἡμῖν... ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμᾶς, ὧν ἐστιν ὁ συγγραφεὺς... ἡμῖν τοῦτο δίδου) as all referring to Antiochene origin, which is made explicit in §4.

[14] Priscian XI.51 (Keil, *Grammatici Latini* II, p. 487), on a question of orthography; 'ut indulsi indulsum vel indultum. unde Marcellinus rerum gestarum XIIII: tamquam licentia crudelitati indulta'. The reference is to Amm. 14.1.4.

[15] This point of chronology is not taken up by Fornara; see below, p. 262 with n. 52.

[16] *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 8f.

[17] G. W. Bowersock, *JRS* 80 (1990), at 245–6, records a suggestion that the destruction of the Serapeum was in 392, referring to A. Bauer and J. Strzygowski, *Eine Alexandrische Weltchronik* (Denkschriften des kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenchaften in Wien 51; 1915), 66ff. (text at 74),

The Antiochene connections of Ammianus Marcellinus, it is true, fall short of explicit statement that he came from that city.[18] Various references do however support this conclusion. Some are indirect or rhetorical and can be set aside, as in Ammianus' remark that Antioch 'ennobled the east, a city known throughout the world'; 'hanc [*sc.* Syriam] nobilitat Antiochia, mundo cognita civitas, cui non certaverit alia', etc. (14.8.8). Occurring in a digression, this allusion may be formulaic, revealing nothing of the author's own loyalties. It is a little more but still not decisive when, describing the arrival there of the Emperor Julian in 362, Ammianus calls Antioch the 'beautiful crown of the east'; 'orientis apicem pulchrum' (22.9.14). Anyone might write this who had seen and admired the place. Ammianus was perhaps indicating personal interest when he wrote of Julian's *Misopogon* that it 'added some things to the truth' in its description of the city (22.14.1), but this too is a matter of impression rather than proof. At 23.2.3, Ammianus' description of the Antiochenes as 'avaricious and quarrelsome' is not a personal opinion but reproduces exactly the perspectives of the Emperor Julian, and his experiences at their hands, upper and lower classes respectively.[19] Nor is it especially significant that Ammianus had found his way back to Antioch by way of Melitene after the fall of Amida in 359 (19.8.12), given that Antioch was the strategic centre from which the defence of the eastern frontier was organised. More significant may be Ammianus' comment that, in making his escape from Amida, he was helped by familiarity with the desert landscape ('squalentum peritia locorum'; 19.8.5), but again, Ammianus may be referring to his general capacity to handle the terrain rather than to specific knowledge of the region between Amida and Antioch, with which his military service must in any case have made him familiar. It is more interesting that when in 363 the army of Jovian, having left Persia in retreat, passed through on its way to Asia Minor, Ammianus seems to have proceeded no further than Antioch. He came to Antioch in the first person ('Antiochiam venimus'; 25.10.1), a usage which does not continue beyond it, as Jovian left the city on his further journey towards Constantinople, in the course of which he died.

Other connections, while again not offering proof, enlarge this sense of Antioch as a focus of Ammianus' experience, for instance his friendship with Jovinianus the satrap of Corduene, which took Ammianus to the satrapy on a mission of espionage in 359 (18.6.20ff.). Jovinianus had lived as a hostage in Syria and had there become filled with a deep love of liberal studies, such that he wished above all (says

which seems to place the destruction of 'the temples of the Hellenes' in that year. The conventional date of 391 for the destruction of the Serapeum is based on the involvement of the *praefectus Augustalis* Evagrius and the *comes Aegypti* Romanus, who were then in office (they are addressed together in *CTh* 16.10.11, of 16 June). The fragmentary 'Alexandrian Chronicle' has Evagrius in office from 389 to 392, but this is not correct either for the beginning or the end of his tenure; cf. *PLRE* I, pp. 268 (Evagrius 7) and 769 (Romanus 5) and the Fasti at p. 1085. According to Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.16, other temples in Egypt were destroyed after the Serapeum. The most notable were at Canopus, cf. Eunapius, *Vit. Soph.* pp. 471/2 (ed. Loeb, pp. 418–27). Also under 392 the 'Alexandrian Chronicle' locates the death of the usurper Eugenius, which was actually in 394. It does not seem wise to use this text to resolve difficulties in the other evidence. 391 is accepted by Fornara, 336 n. 16, and firmly supported by Barnes, 61–2.

[18] Cf. Fornara, 338f.—a clear discussion, but not addressing all relevant passages, and (in my view, obviously) giving less than their full weight to some as indicative of an Antiochene background.

[19] *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 412f. By the same token, the passage cannot be said, as it is by Fornara, Bowersock and Barnes, to disprove Ammianus' Antiochene origin. The context is the setting in authority over them of the disagreeable Alexander of Heliopolis as *consularis* (not 'prefect', as Fornara, 338 n. 21).

Ammianus) to return to the Roman empire. Ammianus describes Jovinianus as 'adolescens', the same word that he applied to himself in the year 357 (16.10.21; 18.6.20). Surely it was in Syria (and at Antioch?) that he met Ammianus as a youth or young man and formed the friendship.[20] It is also worth noting the house at Antioch owned by Ammianus' patron the general Ursicinus, mentioned by Ammianus because it was coveted by Constantius' eunuch supporter Eusebius (18.4.3). Ammianus' close attendance on Ursicinus as a *protector domesticus* deputed to the general's service may betoken an early connection formed between them, with the help, perhaps, of a father's influence.[21]

After his retirement from active service in 363, Ammianus travelled, but he is usually believed to have been at Antioch in 370, when trials for magic arts and conspiracy against the Emperor Valens were conducted in the city. Ammianus wrote that he would set down what he could recall of the events from the confused shadows of memory (29.1.24),[22] and a little later, picking up the image of darkness, described how 'we crept around in Cimmerian gloom'; 'omnes ea tempestate velut in Cimmeriis tenebris reptabamus' (29.2.4). Personal concern with events which, although they extended more widely, originated in Antioch, is evident in both passages. It is true that neither actually proves Ammianus to have been at Antioch precisely, rather than in one of the many places in the east that were affected by the trials.[23] Reference to the 'oriental provinces' does, indeed, provide the explicit context of the second passage (29.2.4), in which it is said as a general comment how men 'per orientales provincias' were so terrified of the inquisitions that they burned their entire libraries in case their contents were misunderstood. We should however note that in the first passage, having alluded in the first person to the difficulties confronting the memory in recalling such traumatic events, Ammianus passes directly to the opening of the trials at Antioch (29.1.25); and that in the case of the second, it so happens that the one attested case of the destruction of personal libraries relates to Antioch.[24] It is as likely that Ammianus is generalising from what happened at Antioch, as that he is describing something he had seen somewhere else. A few paragraphs later, Ammianus describes the dangers which befell the noble brothers Eusebius and Hypatius, relatives of Constantius who had held the consulship together (29.2.9), and, a little further on, in a passage of measured eloquence, how 'our' Hypatius nearly

[20] The notion, criticised by Fornara, 328 n. 4, that Jovinianus was educated at Antioch, is speculative, but not arbitrary; it is based on the general experience of young hostages in such circumstances, cf. the excellent discussion (drawing material from an earlier period) in David Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: the Character of the Client Kingship* (London, etc., 1984), 12–17; and for the late empire A. D. Lee, 'The role of hostages in Roman diplomacy with Sasanian Persia', *Historia* 40 (1991), 366–74; see too my 'Hostages, philosophers, pilgrims and the diffusion of ideas in the late Roman Mediterranean and Near East', in F. M. Clover and R. S. Humphreys (edd.), *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity* (Madison, Wisconsin, & London, 1989), 29–49, at 38–41. I suspect that Jovinianus was sent to Antioch for 'acculturation' but returned to Corduene to succeed to the satrapy.

[21] *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 74–80; on Jovinianus, 44, 55–7. See also below, p. 268 with n. 76.

[22] 'ut in tenebrosis rebus confusione cuncta miscente, summatim quia nos penitissima gestorum memoria fugit, quae recolere possumus, expeditius absolvemus'.

[23] Cf. Fornara, at 339. My argument takes the passages in connection with the other references discussed above, especially the allusion to 'our Hypatius'. A particularly vivid moment in Ammianus' narrative is the unusual direct address of the defendant Hilarius to the judges at Antioch; '*construximus*', *inquit*, '*magnifici iudices*', etc. (29.1.29, with *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 221).

[24] This is the famous episode recorded by John Chrysostom, *PG* 9.273f., cf. *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 223.

came to grief—a man of serene wisdom and unwavering mildness, who brought fame to his ancestors and descendants by his conduct of two prefectures (29.2.16). Hypatius held the prefecture of Rome in 379 (*C.Th* 11.36.26; 5 April), and is generally understood to be the *praefectus urbi* whom Libanius describes as having been summoned from Antioch to hold the office after the disaster of Hadrianople (9 August 378).[25] It is true that by the time he recalls 'our' Hypatius, Ammianus has broadened his perspective from Antioch to the eastern provinces more generally (29.2.4), but the context of the episode involving Hypatius is clearly Antiochene. It is just possible that Ammianus is associating himself with the later western distinction of a man who was also (in 382/3) praetorian prefect of Italy. However, when, as he often does, Ammianus slips into the first person to place himself in a narrative sequence, a culture or an environment, the nature of his connection is usually clear from the context as it stands; it does not require research elsewhere in his text to discover what he means. In the context of this passage, 'our Hypatius' is most readily understood as sharing Ammianus' Antiochene background. Otherwise the reader is given no indication as to what Ammianus' phrase might refer to.[26]

Although in the surviving part of his text Ammianus makes no formal statement that he came from Antioch, there is enough to suggest it, and nothing obviously incompatible with this conclusion.[27] In fact, the historian's presence at Rome—the next point to be drawn from Libanius' letter to Marcellinus—is established in very similar fashion to the case for his Antiochene background. There is no direct or explicit assertion in the text of Ammianus that he ever came to Rome, but a number of convergent indications. He refers, in what most observers have thought a partisan spirit, to the experiences of a visitor to Rome (14.6.12), and to the expulsion of respectable 'peregrini' when dancing troupes were allowed to stay (14.6.19). His descriptions of senate and populace of Rome, in two famous digressions, show clear signs of the influence of satire, but are full also of circumstantial detail, vividly observed. In introducing the first digression, Ammianus writes as one with experience of the city, sharing his knowledge with puzzled 'peregrini' who cannot understand why nothing serious is done there (14.6.2).[28] There are also apparent personal reminiscences, such as his allusion to the recent urban prefecture of Julianus Rusticus under the usurper Maximus (27.6.1), and to that of Aurelius Victor the historian,

[25] Chastagnol, *Fastes*, 205; cf. Libanius, *Or.* 1.179, on which see Norman's commentary (above, n. 10), pp. 201f. The episode is not picked up by Fornara, though it provides a clear indication of Hypatius' connections with Antioch.

[26] *PLRE* I, p. 338 (cf. Fornara, 339) proposed the origin of Eusebius and Hypatius (they were the brothers of Constantius' wife Eusebia) as Thessalonica (cf. Julian, *Or.* III, 106B, 107D), but it is not clear what this would mean of a family connected with government circles from the earlier fourth century; such people might attach themselves to any of a number of court centres. Barnes, at 60, is against Fornara's suggestion of a Macedonian origin for Hypatius and Ammianus, and takes Ammianus' expression to indicate 'that both he and Hypatius resided in Antioch and faced the same perils there'. This is true, but I think that a reading of 29.2.16 will show that Ammianus meant much more than this.

[27] There is also an affinity with Antiochene sources (Libanius and Malalas) in the story told (at 23.5.3) of the third-century renegade Mareades, who led the Persians against his own city and was burned alive there by Sapor I; *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 170–1 and n. 84, and esp. D. S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Third Century; a Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford, 1990), esp. 269f.; 'The absence of allusion to the story [of the taking of Antioch by Sapor] outside of Antiochene authors suggests that it was not widely known elsewhere'.

[28] *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 12–13, drawing attention to the second person singular address of 14.6.12. On the digressions, ibid. 414–16.

perhaps in 389/90 (21.10.6); it was to Victor, it may be argued, that Ammianus owed certain details about Julian's advance against Constantius thirty years earlier.[29] And what of the admirable Eutherius, Julian's eunuch adviser, who retired to Rome and lived there in old age, courted by all classes of men and famed for his prodigious memory (16.7.5)? It would be strange if Ammianus were not telling us that Eutherius was an informant, and that he knew him at Rome.[30] To question Ammianus' personal presence at Rome would be a radical step indeed; where is he more likely to have found an audience for a massive Latin history in the tradition of Sallust, Livy and Tacitus? It is still worth repeating; the evidence that Ammianus visited Rome is of a similar nature, and hardly superior, to the evidence that he came from Antioch. In both cases, it is in my judgment good enough to permit the conclusion.

The nature of the literary work of Libanius' correspondent is a matter for later discussion. Delivered in select recitations (ἐπιδείξεις) to learned assemblies or gatherings (συλλόγοι), Marcellinus' efforts rivalled those of the famous Roman orators. His work was a συγγραφή, its author a συγγραφεύς; words which extend to prose work in general but which are often used for the writing of history.[31] Libanius implies that his Marcellinus' work was a single composition which might be 'cut up' into sections (συγγραφὴ εἰς πολλὰ τετμημένη), of which one (or each successive) part had appeared and another might be expected (καὶ τοῦ φανέντος ἐπαινεθέντος μέρος ἕτερον εἰσκαλοῦντος). How much in detail Libanius actually knew about his Marcellinus' work is an open question, but he must have been informed of its general character, unless his letter were to look absurd to its recipient. Applied to the surviving text of the historian, his words might allude to the epilogue, in which Ammianus calls upon the next generation of writers, 'aetate et doctrinis florentes', to take on the work where he had left it.[32] Why, Libanius might be saying, does not Marcellinus assume that role himself? In any event, Libanius seems to have in mind a work, or part of a work which, in its text or inherent character, invited continuation. It is less natural to see it as a collection of separate essays or occasional pieces.[33]

Even if it falls short of formal proof, there is clearly something to be said for the identification of Libanius' Marcellinus as the historian Ammianus Marcellinus. If it could be shown that Libanius' correspondent was, in terms of the content and expressions of his letter, a character incompatible in age or personal circumstance with Ammianus, the question would of course have to be reopened. This is indeed the basis of the reinterpretation offered by Fornara: 'the essential profile of the recipient is such as to exclude Ammianus from consideration, for the age and status of Marcellinus cannot be made to suit the historian, while, *per contra*, the few indications in the letter that suit Ammianus, if compatible with that assumption, by no means require it' (p. 332). In the end it is a question of how one reads the text, but I see nothing, for example, in Libanius' opening remarks to show that 'Marcellinus appears to be viewing Rome for the first time'; nothing more is implied than that this is Libanius' first news of him there. Still less can I see that Libanius' opening words, professing to envy Marcellinus his presence at Rome, are 'insincere and, therefore patronizing', and so can only have been addressed to a young man. As such, Libanius' words (argues Fornara) are 'understandable, even commendable

[29] ibid., 23f.

[30] ibid., 25; G. Sabbah, *La Méthode d'Ammien Marcellin; Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris, 1978), 228–30.

[31] Below, p. 263.

[32] I would argue that it is to the epilogue, if to any part of Ammianus' text, that Libanius would be referring, rather than to a new section perceived by some at the beginning of Book 26; cf. *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 204–5.

[33] Below, p. 262.

marks of courtesy, a warm heart and quasi-paternal affection', whereas, directed to Ammianus, 'the patent insincerity of this greeting could not but have been offensive' (p. 333). I have to say that in an article so insistent upon the need for an unprejudiced interpretation of Libanius' letter, I find the subjectivity of this reading of his text most disconcerting.[34] Even if Libanius did not like Rome, he was perfectly capable of conceding the distinction of the place in order to recognise the achievement of someone who had done well there; why should his wish to say the right thing be dismissed as insincere, patronising or feigned? It is the idiom, not only of late Roman, but of any polite culture. When Libanius wrote his letter he was himself an old man of 78. Almost anyone, it might be said—even a historian of 60—might seem young in Libanius' eyes. But as far as his correspondent's age and standing are concerned there is nothing in the letter even to suggest, much less to prove, that Libanius' correspondent was a young man, or a man of any particular age.

Fornara goes on to argue that 'it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Marcellinus in §2 has been congratulated for an unanticipated *tour de force*', and that he must therefore be a 'young man, who has earned the right to be proud of himself' and not 'an immensely learned old friend who has for years been engaged in the writing of a major historical work'. This is far too insistent an interpretation, and in my view presents false alternatives.[35] The *tour de force* may indeed have been unanticipated—by Libanius, who is doing no more than respond to news brought to him of the success being won in Rome by a fellow-Antiochene; this was reason enough for Libanius to write as he did. I can see no such 'unavoidable' reflection in Libanius' words as that perceived by Fornara on Marcellinus' age or achievement. Why should not Ammianus have earned the right to be proud of himself, and why should he not be encouraged 'to continue his ἐπιδείξεις because when a citizen acquires renown he adorns his city as well as himself'?[36]

Despite careless assumptions that can be made—for instance the assumption that Symmachus' *Ep.* 9.110, being addressed to a historian apparently active at Rome, must have been written to Ammianus[37]—it is not impossible that, on occasion, one known ancient writer may mention or address another. The case for the identification of Libanius' correspondent as Ammianus Marcellinus is a positive one, based on context, date and circumstance. Like any such argument, it can be debated, but its acceptance is not an expression of inertia or psychological weakness.[38]

If the identification is to be convincingly challenged, a stronger case needs to be made for an alternative identification, which need not, of course, be of any otherwise known individual. Such a case must show its candidate to be the author of a prose work, described as a συγγραφή but *not* a history, being delivered to a literary public at Rome in 391/2. It must also, with Fornara, discount the indications of Antiochene origin in the historian Ammianus. These restrictions are necessary, if the challenge is to avoid having to argue that Ammianus Marcellinus is not a historian called Marcellinus from Antioch, but another historian from Antioch, also called

[34] *contra* Barnes, 58, who finds it 'accurate and (*sic*) undeniable'.

[35] Fornara, 333. Nothing in the 'traditional' interpretation requires that Ammianus be an 'old friend' of Libanius; I myself think it unlikely that he was.

[36] 'Imagine Ammianus being told this!', exclaims Fornara (at 333). Why not?

[37] Famously dismissed by Alan Cameron, 'The Roman friends of Ammianus', *JRS* 54 (1964), 15–28, at 15–18.

[38] Fornara, 330; 'The inclination to place memorable contemporaries into mutual contact was not limited to the ancient scholars typified by Hermippus and the Alexandrians, and the psychology governing it need not be laboured'. I only wish that I knew what it was.

Marcellinus. Fornara rests his case on a young ex-pupil of Libanius winning success at Rome for his performances in oratory. A different, though in some ways overlapping suggestion has been offered by G. W. Bowersock.[39]

In a note published in the *Classical Quarterly* of 1982, Martin West presented (with brilliant emendation) a group of four Greek poems from the Hermetic compilation known as the *Cyranides*.[40] The poems are associated by the compiler with the Alexandrian medical writer Harpocration,[41] but were actually composed by one Magnus, whose name appears as a vertical acrostic in all four poems. In two of the poems, the name of Magnus is continued in the acrostic by an address 'to Marcellinus'. West tentatively identified the author of the poems as the physician Magnus of Nisibis, who is known from Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists* to have worked at Alexandria, where a public school was opened for him.[42] In letters of Libanius dated as far apart as 364 and 388 Magnus appears to have been in Egypt (*sc.* at Alexandria). From this hesitant identification, West indicated, still more tentatively, a possible connection with Ammianus Marcellinus.[43] The connection was based on three observations: that Ammianus and Magnus were contemporaries, that they both have connections with Nisibis, and that both 'appear as recipients of letters of Libanius'.

These observations are far from conclusive. That two men appear (or may appear, since this matter is still *sub iudice*) in the correspondence of Libanius can hardly be taken, in principle, to suggest a connection between them. It is striking what a very high proportion of the individuals listed in *PLRE* I (more than half on the basis of sample entries) consists of men mentioned in, or in many cases known exclusively from, the vast output of Libanius;[44] one can hardly say that any two of these individuals are likely to be connected. The names Magnus and Marcellinus were common both in east and west; there is no reason in principle to expect that a newly-discovered Marcellinus, without further reason to connect them, will be the same as one already known. Then, the connection with Nisibis is inconsequential. Ammianus was there on military duties in 354, when he was recalled to Antioch with his superior, the general Ursicinus.[45] To say that he 'passed through it again a few years later' is hardly an adequate description of the traumatic surrender of Nisibis to the Persians in 363 when the entire Roman population was amid scenes of great confusion and anger expelled from the city.[46]

The case for connecting the physician Magnus of Nisibis with the historian Ammianus Marcellinus lapses for lack of positive reasons to support it. In a further set of inferences from the poems presented by West, however, Glen Bowersock has disassociated Libanius, *Ep.* 1063 from Ammianus Marcellinus, while retaining the identity of Libanius' correspondent with the Marcellinus addressed in Magnus'

[39] *JRS* 80 (1990), at 247–8.

[40] M. L. West, 'Magnus and Marcellinus: unnoticed acrostics in the *Cyranides*', *CQ* n.s. 32 (1982), 480–1. For the *Cyranides*, see Dimitris Kaimakis, *Die Kyraniden* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 76; 1976); but the poems discussed here (pp. 50–1 and 96–7 Kaimakis) must be read with West's emendations and in his layout of the text.

[41] On whom see *RE* VII, cols. 2416–17 (Harpocration 10); for his connection with the *Cyranides*, Kaimakis, p. 14.

[42] *PLRE* I, p. 534 (Magnus 7); Eunapius, *Vitae Sophistarum*, pp. 497/8 (ed. Loeb, pp. 530–3).

[43] West, 481; 'Without a firm identification of Magnus it is hardly profitable to speculate about the identity of Marcellinus. It may, however, be worth pointing out', etc.

[44] I owe this observation to Peter Heather.

[45] 14.9.1; 'a Nisibi, quam tuebatur, accitus Ursicinus'.

[46] *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 3f., 186f.

acrostics. Bowersock suggests that the Marcellinus who received *Ep.* 1063 was not the historian but a medical or Hermetic writer connected with Magnus of Nisibis, and that it was to works on medicine, not history, that the συγγραφή of Libanius' letter refers. No less than the arguments of Fornara, Bowersock's observations reopen the whole question of Ammianus' origins, and thereby throw into doubt our understanding of Ammianus' cultural background and intellectual formation.[47]

It is necessary that the new identification of Libanius' correspondent be shown, not merely to be theoretically possible, but preferable to the accepted one (and, indeed, to that preferred by Fornara).[48] Bowersock supports this by pointing to what he sees as distinctive characteristics of the Marcellinus addressed by Libanius. In some respects these characteristics concur with those defined by Fornara, in some respects not.

The identification of Marcellinus as a medical writer is said 'to fit perfectly the context suggested by Libanius' letter—that is the context of a bright young man beginning his career at Rome. The συγγραφή might therefore be a medical treatise, or a Hermetic one, catering to tastes in the Roman aristocracy that had continued unabated from Galen's day' (p. 248). As far as his correspondent's age is concerned, we are on the same ground as that covered earlier, where I have already argued that there is nothing in Libanius' letter to suggest the context evoked by Bowersock: no phrase or hint that his correspondent was a 'bright young man beginning his career in Rome'.[49] Libanius has heard of the literary distinction being won by a fellow-Antiochene, and responds with congratulations and expressions of hopes of more: that is all. It might be inferred from Libanius' explanation of the well-known fact of his son's illegitimacy (his mother, Libanius' concubine, was not free) that he did not know Marcellinus well, but that tells us nothing about his correspondent's age or character.[50]

Bowersock also points to the apparent discrepancy between what he splendidly describes as Ammianus' 'blistering attack on Rome and the Roman aristocracy' and Libanius' 'admiring account of the Roman aristocracy's favourable treatment of his Marcellinus'. This is connected with the notion of Marcellinus as the author of a medical or Hermetic treatise, appealing to tastes in the Roman aristocracy surviving from the second century. To this it may be said that not all Roman aristocrats met Ammianus' descriptions of the worst of them—senators shutting up their libraries 'like tombs' while they favour charioteers, musicians and dancing-girls, and colluding in the expulsion of serious and erudite visitors when corn is short (14.6.19). The Roman nobility, like all aristocracies, ran the gamut from the distinguished through the respectable to the reprobate and the dissolute. Ammianus' 'blistering attack' was provoked by the behaviour of a few; 'levitate paucorum' (14.6.7).[51] It may be that

[47] See n. 39 above. Bowersock's arguments are referred to by Fornara, at 336 n. 16, and supported by Barnes, 59.

[48] I offer this reminder that Fornara, Bowersock and Barnes produce not one but two alternative identifications. If either is valid, it must be better than the other.

[49] Cf. also at 247; 'the man—the young man—opted to do some readings of his own'. I see no warrant in Libanius' letter for the words added in parenthesis.

[50] The troubles over Cimon's status only arose acutely in the last years of Libanius' life; cf. Norman (above, n. 10), 231. Marcellinus might have known Calliopius, whose death Libanius introduces with no explanation; but it is possible that Libanius carried over sentiments from one letter to another (cf. above, n. 8), or even that he used the news about Calliopius to establish intimacy with a correspondent whom he did not know well.

[51] Contrast the excellent Praetextatus at 22.7.6; 'praeclarae indolis gravitatisque senator'; cf. Sabbah, *La Méthode d'Ammien Marcellin* (above, n. 30), 230–1.

this phrase is simply a rhetorical disclaimer to enable Ammianus to make exceptions to his satire; but he does allow such exceptions to be made. In general, we are perhaps rather prone to assume that the patrons of a literary figure like Ammianus must be aristocratic, but this is to underestimate the range and variety of intellectual society. In quest of Ammianus' audience, we should look not only to senators (there might of course be some) but to broader literary circles, to all those 'classes of men', for instance, who attended and admired the eunuch Eutherius ('colatur a cunctis ordinibus et ametur'; 16.7.7). If we read Libanius' letter with an eye for what lay behind it, we might infer that the audience of his Marcellinus was, partly at least, composed of the men who brought the news of the recitations to Libanius at Antioch: not senators, but men connected, perhaps, with the imperial court as it returned to the east in 391.[52]

The suggestion that Ammianus Marcellinus, if he is neither Libanius' correspondent nor an Antiochene, may have come from Alexandria, is no more than an impression if it is based on 'the extensive and admiring treatment the historian accords to Egyptian Alexandria'. Not everything that Ammianus wrote about Alexandria is all that admiring (cf. 22.11.4f.), and conversely there seems to be nothing that could not have been written by an admirer of intellectual and scientific culture who had been there.[53]

It is worth pausing to remind ourselves what this identification of Libanius' correspondent involves. On the basis of a dedication to a previously unknown Marcellinus of two poems by an author who may be the Magnus of Nisibis who taught medicine at Alexandria, we are introduced to a young medical or Hermetic writer from Antioch (Libanius is at least explicit on his correspondent's origin) who, after study at Alexandria (to explain the connection with Magnus), visited Rome, where his efforts were heard with acclaim by a sympathetic senatorial audience. The result is something of a paradox. A hitherto unknown medical writer with connections in Alexandria turns out to come from Antioch, while a historian with Antiochene connections, writing in Rome at the very time of Libanius' letter to his namesake, is suggested to have come from Alexandria.

It would help in considering any of these suggestions if we could be sure of the textual character of the literary work to which Libanius refers. As we saw earlier, it could be described as challenging the best of Roman 'orators' and it contained ἐπιδείξεις, or demonstration pieces. At the same time, it was a composition (συγγραφή) divisible into 'many parts', of which the published portion (μέρος) invited another. Libanius must have been informed to this extent of the character of his correspondent's work before offering this comment, which would tell against a collection of separate pieces—of speeches, say, or of individual medical or other treatises—unless these could be conceived of as a whole.[54]

[52] For some implications of this, cf. *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 446. This point is neglected by Fornara, who writes (336 n. 16) as if I had argued that Ammianus was still at work in 392. In *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 27, I make my position explicit; the history was brought to completion in 390 or 391. Barnes, at 60, is sceptical about the men returning to the east in 391, but Libanius makes clear that his informants had travelled from Rome, and I still think that the date and context suggested suit the terms of his letter.

[53] At 26.10.19 Ammianus describes some effects of the earthquake and tidal wave of 365. It had planted ships on the tops of buildings, as at Alexandria; Ammianus may have seen this himself, as he had explicitly a second such phenomenon, the stranding of a vessel two miles inland at Mothone in Laconia. He had certainly been to Egypt; cf. 22.15.1, 'visa pleraque narrantes', said in introduction of an Egyptian digression.

[54] Fornara, 336f., questions this, partly on the basis of the similarity of vocabulary in Libanius, *Or.* 12.46, where Libanius promises one day to write a detailed account of Julian's

The word *συγγραφή* (and its cognate *συγγραφεύς*), deriving its range of meanings from the notion of the collection or compilation of material into something continuous, comes to refer to any work in prose: it can indeed refer to medical writing (Galen 15, p. 593 Kühn). Julian's *Misopogon*, in a passage cited by both Fornara and Barnes, uses it to mean a writer of prose as distinct from a poet, *εἰς δὲ τὸν ποιητὴν αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν ξυγγραφέα*—namely Julian himself, in a preface explaining why he wrote his own 'song' in prose (*Misop.* 338A/B). It also refers, in documentary contexts, to contracts, covenants and decrees, in one case to the work of commissioners appointed to draft proposals at a time of constitutional upheaval (Thuc. 8.67.1). Fornara makes clear the range of meanings that the word could possess in literary contexts, arguing that Libanius could only be taken to be writing to a historian if this were specifically what his correspondent could be shown to be.[55] To argue that the word must mean 'history' because we know that Ammianus was a historian, and then to use this meaning of the word to show that Libanius' letter was written to Ammianus is of course palpably circular. I have met this objection by appealing to the judgment of the reader as to Fornara's *other* grounds for supposing that Libanius' correspondent was a young rhetorician in Rome for the first time, thereby restoring Ammianus as, in the terms of Libanius' letter, at least a possible recipient. And it remains true that a common meaning of *συγγραφή* is that of history:[56] that is, historical writing seen from a technical point of view as a process of collection and composition, where *ἱστορία* is more the spirit of enquiry which gives rise to historical work, and the verb *ἱστορεῖν* the presentation in narrative of the results of enquiry. Not that this distinction is a rigorous one. Thucydides referred to the *Ἀττικὴ συγγραφή* of his predecessor Hellanicus of Lesbos, in order to criticise his chronology (1.97), but Lucian used both words in the title of his work, 'How one should write history'; *Πῶς δεῖ ἱστορίαν συγγραφεῖν*. Perhaps most telling, in introducing his epitome of the early fifth-century historian Olympiodorus, Photius referred to the author as a *συγγραφεύς*, saying at one point how Olympiodorus, apologising for the unfinished state of his work, called it the 'material of history' rather than history itself; *ὕλην συγγραφῆς ἐκπορισθῆναι διαβεβαιοῦται*. Within a few lines in his introduction, Photius had paraphrased Olympiodorus' disclaimer with a change of vocabulary; *ὕλην δὲ αὐτὸς ἱστορίας ταῦτα καλῶν*.[57]

These observations relate to *συγγραφή* and *συγγραφεύς* as they are found in the general usage of Greek writers of a variety of periods. Absent from the argument so far is a systematic examination of Libanius' own practice in using these words. A survey, conducted through Ibycus, of all Libanius' writings shows that when he used them to refer to specific genres of writing rather than to prose writing in general, they almost always mean history and historians, and sometimes positively distinguish history from other forms of writing. In no clear case where a question of genre is involved do they distinguish oratory and orators from other types of literature or

German war, *νῦν γὰρ δὴ πάντα συντέτμηται*; 'for now everything is compressed' (*sc.* into a few summary paragraphs). This compression does not seem to me to be equivalent to a *συγγραφή* divided, or divisible (*εἰς πολλὰ τετμημένη*), into parts—in fact, rather the opposite. Barnes (at 59) is against Libanius' correspondent having been an orator, citing the arguments put forward in *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 478 n. 1. For the slightly different reading offered by A. F. Norman, see above, n. 5.

[55] Fornara, 334–6.

[56] In Liddell & Scott's *Lexikon* (rev. 9th ed., 1968), s.v. (p. 1661), the primary meaning given for *συγγραφεύς* is 'historian'.

[57] Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 80, cf. Müller, *FHG* IV, p. 58; R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, II (Liverpool, 1983), p. 152.

writer; though the words are used of the sort of 'narrative oratory' that one might find in a panegyric—this being, in essence, a form of contemporary history.[58] Since it is fuller than any assembled so far, the evidence is worth setting out in detail.[59] In *Or.* 15.28, Libanius tells how Julian had read orators, historians and poets (and of course philosophers, who are mentioned in the next sentence of his text). Here, *συγγραφεῖς* are historians as distinct from orators and poets; *καὶ μὴν καὶ ῥήτορας ἅπαντας καὶ συγγραφέας, πολλῶν πραγμάτων διδασκάλους, ὧν ὁ πόνος οὐδὲν τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀφῆκεν ἀγνοηθῆναι, προσπεριείληφας τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν μέτρων χρησίμοις* ('besides the benefits of poetry, you have taken to yourself all the orators and historians, authorities upon so many subjects, whose work has left us in ignorance of nothing of classical times').[60] In the *Epitaphios*, his funeral oration in honour of Julian, Libanius reveals how Julian 'remembered the speeches of exhortation that he had heard given by the generals of old in history books'; *μεμνημένος τῶν παρακελεύσεων ὧν ἤκουσεν ἐν ταῖς συγγραφαῖς τῶν παλαιῶν ἐκείνων διεξιόντων στρατηγῶν* (*Or.* 18.53). Again, the reference is specifically to history. In *Oration* 1 (his *Autobiography*), Libanius so refers to the history of Thucydides (*ἡ Θουκυδίδου συγγραφή*; *Or.* 1.148),[61] and in two passages of *Oration* 11 (the *Antiochikos*), to the local histories of Antioch, in the first passage distinguishing them from oratory in respect of their greater exactness. All that the orator needs is enough details for his purpose; *τὴν μὲν οὖν ἀκρίβειαν αἱ συγγραφαὶ φυλαξούσιν, ἡμῖν δὲ ὅσα πρέπει πρὸς τὸ παρὸν ῥητέον* (*Or.* 11.43).[62] In *Oration* 13, addressed to Julian at Antioch, Libanius refers to the emperor's monograph on the battle of Strasbourg as a *συγγραφή* and its author as a *συγγραφεύς* as well as a general; *ἀλλ' ἀποχρήσει δοῦναι τὴν συγγραφὴν ἣν ὧν αὐτὸς ἔπραξας συνέθηκας, ὁ αὐτὸς γενόμενος καὶ στρατηγὸς καὶ συγγραφεύς* (*Or.* 13.25, trans. Norman; 'it will suffice to provide the history that you composed about your own campaigns, a general turned historian'). This is no doubt the pamphlet referred to in a fragment of Eunapius, here too referred to as a *συγγραφή*.[63]

Other references, as we should expect, connect the world of history with that of oratory. In *Ep.* 35.6, Libanius tells how Julian is writing a history of his victories in Gaul, *τὰς νίκας εἰς συγγραφὴν ἄγειν καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὄντως ῥητόρα εἶναι καὶ στρατηγόν*. His words are very close to those of *Or.* 13.25, but with *ῥητώρ* replacing *συγγραφεύς*. In both cases what is at issue is the commemoration of glorious deeds (which was, ever since Herodotus, one of the purposes of history). Other heroes—Achilles and Alexander the Great—had required others to write of their exploits, but Julian was able to erect his own trophies, submitting to the contest of sophists (i.e.

[58] I am especially grateful to Hans-Ulrich Wiemer for suggesting and conducting this search, and more generally owe a great deal to his knowledge of Libanius and his works, and to his sensitivity to Libanius' manner of writing.

[59] The Ibycus search covered all Libanius' writings, but in general only the letters and speeches provide relevant evidence (see however n. 60 & 67 below). It also covered cognates of *συγγραφή* and *συγγραφεύς* (e.g. *συγγράφειν*, *σύγγραμμα*), cf. n. 61 for an example.

[60] Transl. Norman, *Libanius, Selected Works I: The Julianic Orations*, ed. Loeb, I, p. 165. Compare *Progymnasmata* 4 ('Sententiae') 3.10 (ed. Foerster, Vol. VIII, p. 120) for a similarly categorical distinction; *ῥήτορας καὶ συγγραφέας καὶ ποιητὰς ταὐτὸν εὑρήσεις λέγοντας*—orators, historians and poets all agree that wealth is necessary for those who would accomplish their duty, citing Demosthenes, Pindar, Thucydides.

[61] At *Ep.* 1508.6 the verb *συγγράφειν* (in the imperative *σύγγραφε*) is again used in the immediate context of Thucydides. Libanius' correspondent, Seleucus, is encouraged to 'write the history of [Julian's Persian] war as you promised to do' (Norman, *Libanius: Autobiography and Selected Letters*, II, No. 142; pp. 289–93), like Thucydides making light of his exile.

[62] These local histories, again described as *συγγραφαί*, are also referred to at §107 of the same speech.

[63] Eunapius, frag. 9 Müller/17 Blockley.

panegyrists) not only his deeds but also his own discourse upon them.[64] A similar association of ideas between history and panegyric is expressed in the first paragraphs of Ammianus' Book 16 on the exploits of Julian, where the historian explains that his narrative, though based on the best evidence, will read like a panegyric; 'quicquam autem narrabitur, quod non falsitas arguta concinnat, sed fides integra rerum absolvit, documentis evidentibus fulta, ad laudativam paene materiem pertinebit' (16.1.3). In *Ep.* 1220, Libanius describes the reports available from soldiers who had served on the Persian campaign of Julian as 'a shapeless, shadowy tale, unsuited to the lips of a historian'; *ἀμυδρὰ καὶ σκιὰ καὶ συγγραφέως οὐχ ὑπηρετοῦντα στόματι*.[65] He means that the soldiers had provided information as to times, distances and the names of places, but nothing worthwhile on the emperor's deeds, interest in these having lapsed with the emperor's death. Libanius is no doubt here thinking of the preparation of his threnody on the dead emperor (instead of the speech of triumph which he had hoped to write), but his words anticipate Olympiodorus' distinction, mentioned above, between real history and the 'materials for history'. As it approaches the higher style (or the contemporary period), history draws closer to oratory.[66]

In most of the passages so far discussed—naturally excluding *Ep.* 1063 to Marcellinus, in which both words occur—Libanius' use of *συγγραφή* and *συγγραφεύς* to indicate history and historian is clear and categorical; in one passage (*Or.* 15.28) the *συγγραφεύς* is explicitly distinguished from other sorts of writer, namely orators and poets, and in another (*Or.* 11.43) he is so distinguished by implication. In *Ep.* 35.6 the word *ῥητώρ* is used in combination with *συγγραφή* for the sort of panegyrical oratory that has affinities with history; while in *Ep.* 1200 the *συγγραφεύς* (Libanius himself) is the prospective author of an obituary with long narrative passages of a historical character.

Of the passages from the letters and speeches produced by Ibycus, in which *συγγραφή* and *συγγραφεύς* might be taken to indicate some other form of writing than history, two can be set aside at once.[67] In these, *συγγραφή* conveys a more general sense as a sort of verbal noun—'writing down' or 'composition'—rather than as referring to any particular genre in which the writing was performed. So in *Or.* 17.19, the phrase *βιβλίων δὲ συγγραφαὶ βοηθούντων θεοῖς*—'the composition of books in support of the gods'—refers to the writing of theological treatises rather than to the formal character of these books in themselves.[68] In *Ep.* 406, addressed to the philosopher Themistocles, Libanius refers to 'colloquia and dialogues and

[64] Norman, *Libanius: Autobiography and Selected Letters*, I, No. 38 (pp. 477–83). At 3.8.2 Zosimus refers to an *ἰδία συγγραφή* of Julian, referring apparently to his panegyric (or panegyrics) on the wars of Constantius; F. Paschoud, *Zosime: Histoire Nouvelle*, ed. Budé, Vol. II.1 (1979), 82. In any case it is different from the *συγγραφή* mentioned by Eunapius (previous note).

[65] Norman, *Libanius: Autobiography and Selected Letters*, II, No. 120 (pp. 223–9). See below, p. 267 for the significance of this reference to the 'lips' of a historian.

[66] This principle is enunciated by Ammianus, in his programmatic preface to Book 26, referring to pedantic details 'praeceptis historiae dissonantia, discurrere per negotiorum celsitudines assuetae, non humilium minutias indagare causarum' (26.1.1).

[67] Ignoring also *Or.* 59.59, in which the word is used in the sense of 'contract' (Constantine had a sort of 'contract with Fortune' which granted him eternal victory)—a common forensic usage, frequent in the *Argumenta Orationum Demosthenicarum* (information which I also owe to the Ibycus search) and of no relevance to the matter under discussion.

[68] It is part of a list of Julian's tireless activities at Antioch in the period preceding the Persian campaign; cf. Norman's note on the passage (*Libanius, Selected Works*, I, p. 263), comparing *Or.* 18.164ff., where the same topics occur in a different order.

symposia worthy to be described in writing'; *πάλιν ἐκεῖνοι σύλλογοι καὶ διάλογοι καὶ συμπόσια συγγραφῆς ἄξια*. This passage is cited by Fornara and Barnes in favour of *συγγραφή* as oratory, but it does not carry this implication. The context of Libanius' remarks is the journey of the sophist Olympius to Constantinople, where he would inspire learned debates in which sophists would speak on behalf of rhetoric, grammarians for poetry, Themistocles and Themistius for philosophy, and Olympius on all learned subjects. Fornara (p. 336) speaks of the imagined outcome as a 'polished piece of rhetorical prose'. This it would no doubt be, but it does not define the genre. If any particular form of composition were implied by Libanius' words, it would be, neither oratory nor history, but literary dialogue in the manner, say, of Athenaeus.[69] However, all that Libanius really means to say is that the occasions referred to would be worthy of commemoration in writing; this, and no specific form of composition, is what is meant by *συγγραφή*. Lastly, in an elaborate word-play on the merits of poetry and oratory provoked by his reading of a poetic encomium of a 'skilful orator', Libanius affects to deny his own qualifications to be described as a truly *ἀγαθὸς συγγραφεύς*, claiming to be among those who bring forth only humble progeny; *εἰμὶ δὲ τῶν φαῦλα γεννώντων* (*Ep.* 826.1).[70] Libanius here writes as an orator, and uses the word *συγγραφή* to refer to this, but without any implication as to what it might mean in any other passage. Addressing a man with a reputation as a poet, Libanius means that as a writer of prose he falls short of the criteria laid down by his poetic friend. His letter is essentially a play upon the relative qualities of prose and poetry, deferentially yielding pride of place to the latter.

One final passage, not discussed by Fornara, does at first sight seem to support his point of view. In *Or.* 1.163 Libanius tells how he was suspected of having written a panegyric on the usurper Procopius. The speech, it was alleged, was still in the possession of its writer (*συγγραφεύς*); *τὸν δὲ λόγον, τοῦ τυράννου μὲν ἐγκώμιον, γεγράφθαι, κεῖσθαι δὲ παρ' ἐμοὶ τῷ συγγραφεῖ*. Here, it might seem, is a case in which *συγγραφεύς* is to be understood as 'orator'; but this meaning cannot be insisted upon. The allegation against Libanius concerned the existence of the text of a speech which Libanius was supposed to have written (*γεγράφθαι ... συγγραφεῖ*). It was the writing down of the speech that was at issue (Libanius was not alleged to have delivered it), and the passage has no bearing on any particular meaning of *συγγραφή* as oratory, history, or anything else. The affinity between panegyrical writing and history in late Antiquity was of course a very close one—it is suggested in the epilogues of the historian Eutropius and of Ammianus himself, as well as in Libanius' *Ep.* 1220, cited earlier. In fact, however, Libanius' words in *Oration* 1.163, though they refer to a speech, cannot be forced to yield the meaning 'orator'. They mean only that he had (allegedly) written down something that might, if the text were found, be used as evidence against him.

'History' is by no means the only possible meaning of *συγγραφή* to be found in general usage, but it is a common one and, as we have just seen, in so far as it refers to any specific genre of writing rather than to the activity of writing in itself, it is by far the most frequent meaning in the writings of Libanius himself. To assert, with Fornara (p. 336) that this usage has been 'eliminated' in considering *Ep.* 1063 does

[69] Libanius, *Ep.* 793 to Themistius, cited by Barnes as referring to the 'products and activity of orators', is similarly unspecific, the context implying philosophical prose but not actually designating any form.

[70] Cf. Fornara, 335f.; Barnes, 59. It is not clear whether Libanius' correspondent (Gaius) had addressed his encomium to Libanius personally, or whether it was about oratory in general.

not accurately reflect the evidence. On the basis of the material provided by Ibycus, a clear conclusion can be stated. Not only do *συγγραφή* and *συγγραφεύς* in Libanius normally refer to historians and historical writing; they never define oratory as opposed to other forms of writing, and are sometimes used to distinguish history from what Libanius concedes to be the less stringent form of prose composition.[71]

As to Libanius' implied comparison of his Marcellinus' work with that of orators, we need only, as in several of the passages just discussed, point to the universally accepted relationship of the two arts of oratory and history. In addition to the passage cited earlier (16.1.3), Ammianus once refers to his narrative, precisely, as 'oratio' (14.6.2), and in his very last sentence, in a richly suggestive metaphor, connects the 'tongue' of oratory with the 'pen' of history; 'quos id, si libuerit, adgressuros, procudere *linguas* ad maiores moneo *stilos*' (31.16.9); as we have just seen, he is indicating panegyric as the vehicle of contemporary history. The *ἐπιδείξεις* and *συλλόγοι* to which Libanius refers are literary recitations, to which any writer, historians included, would offer choice pieces of epideictic oratory; these words do not of themselves *exclude* the writing of history.[72] It does not seem likely, in any case, that Libanius' Marcellinus can have been a practising orator. Had that been so, Libanius could not have expressed the sentiment in §2 of his letter that Marcellinus could, if he had wished, have sat at Rome *silently* and listened to others; what kind of encouragement is that to offer to an orator? The logic of Libanius' remark is that Marcellinus is a writer who gave recitations, rather than an orator who consigned his speeches to writing. More than this, I suspect that the allusion to those Roman orators who 'followed in the path of their ancestors' is Libanius' way of acknowledging that Marcellinus' *συγγραφή* was written in Latin. There is of course nothing else in Libanius' letter to indicate that his Marcellinus may have delivered his *ἐπιδείξεις* in Latin;[73] but equally, Libanius would not have felt obliged to dwell upon that. A delicate allusion would be enough.

To summarise: Libanius, *Ep.* 1063 is addressed to an Antiochene called Marcellinus, the author of a prose work, or *συγγραφή*, active at Rome at the very time that Ammianus Marcellinus was completing his *Res Gestae* in that city. It is logically possible, no doubt, that the author of the *Res Gestae* is a different, non-Antiochene (or even Antiochene) Marcellinus, writing his *συγγραφή* at Rome at exactly the same time, while the recipient of Libanius' letter is an otherwise unknown writer from Antioch who went to Rome—an orator, possibly, or a medical writer engaging senators in a continuing interest in that subject. There is however nothing about *Ep.* 1063, neither as to the age, the standing or the profession, that fails to suit Ammianus Marcellinus, and much—not least Libanius' use of the words *συγγραφή* and *συγγραφεύς*—that is positively in his favour.

There is no evading the importance of the issue.[74] To vindicate for Ammianus his

[71] Fornara's statement (at 334), that 'The usage is invariable. The verb in question, with its nouns, is neutral in meaning and requires an immediate supplement or latent context in which to be properly understood', is actually much more true of oratory than of history.

[72] This is conceded, as a special case, by Fornara (337 n. 17).

[73] Cf. Fornara, 337f.

[74] Cf. Barnes, 60; 'The consequences of discarding the traditional identification are enormous', but then (having opposed Fornara's suggestion of a Macedonian origin), 'this is not the place to attempt to resolve the problem', allowing the possibility that 'indirect and inferential evidence from his text' may eventually reinstate Ammianus' Antiochene origin. In the meantime, 'what matters... is that the question of where precisely in the Greek half of the Roman Empire Ammianus came from should be reexamined without preconception'. This is rather an all-embracing choice of attitudes.

Antiochene background does more than rehabilitate the allusions to that city and its society mentioned earlier; it provides a way into understanding his career and cultural formation. Ammianus' journeys, his connections with Ursicinus and the satrap Jovinianus, his apparent presence at Antioch in 370 and the allusion to 'our' Hypatius—all these indications cohere with the 'miles et Graecus' who came from Antioch and derived from there the focus of his Greek culture and military career.[75] There are also broader possibilities. If, as some parallel cases suggest, Ammianus' early promotion as *protector domesticus*[76]—and his tutelage as a young soldier by Ursicinus—owe something to his father's prestige, then Ammianus' origin and upbringing can be located among the official classes which, from the third century and especially in the time of Constantius II, had congregated and settled in the city from which the Roman defence of the east was organised.[77] And, pertinently to the character of Ammianus' literary enterprise, his choice of Latin was not just a self-conscious expression of the 'Roman' ideology visible throughout the *Res Gestae*. The long development of the Roman empire and the shift of power to the east, and notably the expansion of government under Diocletian, had imported Latin to the east on an ever-expanding scale. This well-documented process had made of Latin the language of a much enlarged government, and had offered to the eastern upper classes a new bilingualism from which many took advantage: an administrative bilingualism, Latin superimposed on Greek, replacing the earlier, cultural bilingualism—Greek superimposed on Latin—familiar to us from the western upper classes of the early empire.[78] In this context Ammianus' choice of Latin would be a natural product of his Antiochene background and upbringing, Latin being in frequent use in an army and administration based on Antioch as the capital of the Oriental provinces of the Roman empire.[79]

Libanius' letter to Marcellinus places the student of Ammianus Marcellinus in an awkward position. If he is persuaded that, on the balance of likelihood, the letter is addressed to the historian, then he has little choice but to thank his good fortune and use the evidence which it provides. If however he becomes convinced, on the balance of likelihood, that it is addressed to someone else, he must dismiss it entirely from his thoughts. In either case he may be reproached by those who believe the opposite—the more intensely, perhaps, by those who think that he has neglected a priceless opportunity in rejecting the evidence, than by those who think him unduly bold (or,

[75] 'miles et Graecus', standing at the very end of the *Res Gestae*, is essentially a socio-cultural self-definition; *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 461f. The word 'Graecus' is not an 'ethnikon', and gives no grounds whatever for suspecting a Balkan origin, as Fornara, 339.

[76] Fornara, 328 n. 4, writes that I conceive of Ammianus as an exceptional type of *protector domesticus* who, at a comparatively late age, 'took the high road to officer's rank' perhaps 'without serving in the ranks at all', referring to *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 77 and 79. My text also says, between the two passages cited, 'entering a fashionable regiment almost from his teens'; I do not say or imply that this was 'at a comparatively late age', nor is there any contrast or contradiction between my pp. 77 and 79. In general, Fornara's statement at p. 328 gives a misleading impression of my view of Ammianus' background. I do not think it can fairly be said that in my treatment the military career 'recedes in importance'.

[77] *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 79–80.

[78] Cf. *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 71f., 80, 467f.

[79] *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 80, cf. Fornara, 330; 'he displays far greater familiarity with the Latin classics than with the Greek'. This is of course largely inherent in his choice of the Latin language in which to write; he attributes to Julian a largely Greek culture, cf. for example 25.4.2f. (Plato, Sophocles, Bacchylides). Ammianus' Latin culture is the subject of Fornara's further paper, 'Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus, II: Ammianus' knowledge and use of Greek and Latin Literature', *Historia* 41 (1992), 420–38.

indeed, unduly conservative) to accept it.[80] The one course that is not open to him is a sort of proportionate scepticism, expressing in practice exactly the degree of confidence he may feel. Either the letter is relevant or it is not; there is no half-way house. I have argued that the identification of Libanius' correspondent as Ammianus Marcellinus is intrinsically satisfactory, and still preferable to any other suggestion. If that is so, and until we know more, then we should continue to give it pride of place in our understanding of the historian.

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[80] Cf. Bowersock, 247; 'some boldness might have been productive' (*sc.* in the abandonment of the traditional identification). For one possibly over-bold interpretation, on the nature of Ammianus' audience, see above, pp. 254 and 262.