



## CHAPTER 4

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# Is There Hope for the Barbarian? Imagining Outgroup Futurities in Ammianus Marcellinus and Eunapius of Sardis

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores a set of Later Imperial historiographers who either deny or—more rarely—allow non-Roman groups a degree of agency in terms of hope and futurity. “Hope” in ancient texts is perhaps best understood as desiderative and/or motivational in nature; it is certainly more than just an expectation of a good outcome.<sup>1</sup> Cicero’s definition of hope as *expectatio boni* identifies an idea that by its very nature had an intense moralising potential, and where the naturally impulsive barbarian peoples

<sup>1</sup>Cairns, “Metaphors of Hope”, 32 observes the goal-directed, desiderative nature of ancient conceptions of hope. See also the introduction and Eidinow in the volume.

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could be expected to fall short.<sup>2</sup> Particularly in the Greek tradition, expectation of good outcomes—especially if unmodified by realistic policy assessments—was often considered a deceptive factor on both individual and collective levels.<sup>3</sup> In some ways it does not matter whether the ancient conception of hope saw it as an emotion or not; what matters is that hope was associated with pathway thinking, as George Kazantzidis and Dimos Spatharas have articulated, based on Charles R. Snyder’s theories.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, and for the purposes of studying Roman acts of “mind-reading” foreign societies—that is, imagining and then representing the thoughts, plans and emotions of outgroups—I consider hope to be associated with this type of pathway thinking. This means that hope can be seen as a motivational force in individuals’ and groups’ assessments of their resources, options and paths towards desired ends, while minimising risks. What interests me is the degree to which anything approaching this type of “mind-reading” was applied in the case of peoples’ thought to originate from outside the empire (*gentes externae*).

The broader idea of futurity, perhaps less wedded to the explicit language of hope, may offer another useful angle in those cases where the barbarians are largely denied *elpis* or *spes*, and thus their pathway thinking cannot be approached through a lexical approach to hope as a cultural construct. Reading closely the historiographical passages which describe non-Roman actors’ intentions, confident expectations of positive results, and future-oriented strategy-making, we may be able to detect Roman ways of imagining barbarian approaches to the future. This, in turn, would be evidence for the way in which ideas about futurity and hope were culturally apportioned between ingroups and outgroups. A less central but possibly useful theme that could indicate future-oriented decision-making is divination, which strongly implies a desire to secure more-than-human support in thinking how to achieve the desired outcomes.<sup>5</sup> Principally, however, I would suggest that the two concepts of “pathway thinking” and “futurity” help us see the ways in which Late Antique societies, groups

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 4.80.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Philo Alexandrinus, *De praem. poen.* 161; also Tacitus, *Ann.* 16.3 on Nero’s delusional hopes. See e.g. Kazantzidis and Spatharas, “Introductory: ‘Hope’, *elpis, spes*”, 1–2; also Lateiner, “*Elpis* as Emotion and Reason”. The inclusion of hope among the “positive emotions” in pre-Christian antiquity, as Caston and Kaster, “Introduction” do, can be questioned.

<sup>4</sup> Kazantzidis and Spatharas, “Introductory: ‘Hope’, *elpis, spes*”, 4; Snyder, “Hope Theory”; see also Cook and Cuervo, “Agency, Futurity and Representation”, 1105–1106.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Hanaghan, “Ammanianus’ Future Signs”.

and individuals thought about plotting their course towards favourable, desired outcomes in the future while skirting around danger and threats.

The Later Imperial era witnessed an uptake in the numbers of arguably successful careers and operations by both foreign-born individuals and entire groups of “barbarians”.<sup>6</sup> It seems that most of the time, barbarian and Roman successes were conceived of as ruling each other out; non-Roman groups’ futurities may have been seen as likely to clash with Roman futurity.<sup>7</sup> The era also saw examples of fear-mongering and panics about “the enemy within”, which are sadly far too common in our contemporary context too. Should we, then, expect to see evidence for the traditional triumphalist narratives of Roman providential victory coming under pressure? During the Late Republic and Early Empire, historiography and ethnography had tended to localise a period of intense hope among foreign groups for their liberty, vengeance or resurgence into narratives of the immediate horizon of conquest.<sup>8</sup> But as the Romans no longer obtained victories with the same regularity during the Late Antiquity, what effect did this have on the treatment of future-making among barbarian groups? Are we seeing more empathetic acts of mind-reading the hopes of the foreigners, either on the level of individuals or groups—that is, were Romans willing to imagine themselves in their place? How were the earlier patterns of triumphalism adapted in a context where the traditional Greek and Roman elites’ distrust of hope chafed against the more positive Christian evaluation of the role of hope<sup>9</sup>—and the almost instinctive tendency to deny fully formed future-making volition to outgroups? Can we find any admissions that Roman and “foreign” hopes might not have needed to be a zero-sum game?

The already better-researched case of conversion narratives allowing for “non-Romans” to become part of the Christian ingroup and participants in their shared hope are largely set aside from the main discussion of my

<sup>6</sup> Summed up, e.g., in Mathisen, “Becoming Roman, Becoming Barbarian”.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Heather, “Barbarian in Late Antiquity”, 235–242, on the importance of barbarian imagery for Roman policymaking and the changes it had to undergo from late fourth century onwards. On ancient triumphalism, see McCormick, *Eternal Victory*; also Stewart, “To Triumph Forever”. As Różycki, *Battlefield Emotions*, 76, notes, Roman military leaders, especially, had to factor in all the things that would cause emotional reactions—fear and despair in particular—in both the enemy and their own troops; see also 85–93 on the ethnographic stereotypes influencing warfare.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Tac. *Agr.* 30.4–6 with the *oratio Calgaci*.

<sup>9</sup> See the introduction of the present volume.

chapter. Concentrating on Ammianus Marcellinus and Eunapius of Sardis—two historians who did not subscribe to Christian conceptions of futurity—enables me to isolate the more traditionalist conceptions of hope and pathway thinking in our Late Imperial sources. A set of modern scholarly frameworks are brought to bear in the interpretation of the historiographical passages; this is particularly true with the historical study of emotions (despite the ambiguous position of ancient hope as an “emotion”), as well as comparative sociological and anthropological studies on the narrativisation of outgroup future-making. In our case, this means primarily the way in which non-Romans’ hopes and pathway thinking were woven into historical narratives.<sup>10</sup> A small sample of supplementary ancient texts, including speeches and ethnographically framed passages, will also be taken into account. In these, the display of rhetorical *pathos* and the formalistic tendencies of the ancient ethnographical register are all significant to the topic at hand, as these concerns can be seen to contextualise and modulate the literary expressions of Roman mind-reading of barbarian futurities.

#### FUTURITY AND HOPE: MIND-READING THE OUTGROUP IN ANCIENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

In the Hellenistic and Early Imperial eras, barbarian outgroups perceived as antagonistic were usually conceived of as being motivated by greed (either for loot or land) or revenge, as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> In the Roman era, there seems to have been a development largely under Stoic influence that saw *spes* becoming much closer to *cupiditas* than before: *spes/elpis* was merging into desire, at least to a degree.<sup>12</sup> Inasmuch as the perception of barbarian societies was concerned, this development only solidified the already-existing cultural assumptions, and in a way reified the use of a “materialistic hope” as a causative explanation for barbarian mobility and behaviour in general. Before concentrating on the Late Antique

<sup>10</sup> Especially Konstan, *Pity Transformed*; Marincola, “Beyond Pity and Fear”; Lateiner, “*Elpis* as Emotion and Reason”; Hanaghan, “Ammianus’ Future Signs”; Parker Tapias and *al.*, “Emotion and Prejudice”; Mackie and *al.*, “Intergroup emotions”; Różycki, *Battlefield Emotions*. On ancient concept of “hope” as not quite a straightforward emotion, see Kazantzidis and Spatharas, “Introductory: ‘Hope’, *elpis, spes*”, 2–3; also the introduction to this volume.

<sup>11</sup> Lampinen, “Against Hope?”. Anger (or more properly, *thymos*) was yet another emotion given an ethnicised angle: Ford, “Anger as Ethnographic Trope”.

<sup>12</sup> Kazantzidis and Spatharas, “Introductory: ‘Hope’, *elpis, spes*”, 12–13.

material, these layered narratives of strongly desiderative-motivational but ultimately wrongly timed and frustrated hopes of the barbarians are here explored through two examples: the Galatian attacks against Delphi and the Cimbric incursions into Italy. These two narratives wielded a strong influence on the later tradition about barbarian mobility and its motivations, and it can be surmised that even the authors of the fourth and fifth centuries knew at least the basic parameters of these episodes.<sup>13</sup>

Stories about the attacks of the Galatae against Delphi in the early 270s BCE had been told from very soon after the events, but the most influential versions are either Augustan or High-Imperial in date. These invading northerners' motivations and hopes—with *spes* and *cupido* intermingling—form a clear and perhaps rather typical set: a desire to occupy new lands and the greed for loot.<sup>14</sup> Due to the strong resistance at Delphi, where divine intervention was thought to have boosted the defenders, the Galatian hopes turned to despair, and many traditions report the wholesale destruction of the entire invading force.<sup>15</sup> The next significant barbarian scare of the (Late) Hellenistic era—the wanderings of the Cimbri and their associated groups Teutones, Ambrones and Tigurini—were similarly explained through barbarian conceptions of futurity. With the Cimbri, greed was thought to be such an easily contagious sentiment among the northerners that even previously peaceful and already wealthy groups were enticed to join the invaders by their hopes of looting even more riches.<sup>16</sup> Occasionally, a natural or survival-oriented causality is met with when explaining both Galatian and Cimbric wanderings. Ever since the Classical era, some peoples of the Atlantic seaboard were thought to have to struggle with oceanic inundations, which they would either meet head-on in a display of foolish barbarian courage, or cope with by emigrating.<sup>17</sup> In those instances where any kind of “mind-reading” of barbarian hopes or

<sup>13</sup> Pompeius Trogus' *Philippic Histories*, for example, was epitomised by an author named Justin sometime in the third or fourth centuries (see Cameron, *The Last Pagans*, 757–778), and Livy's *Ab urbe condita* was an important source for Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Festus, Florus and others (Cameron, *The Last Pagans*, 511–515, 756–58).

<sup>14</sup> Justinus 24.6.4, 7.1–7 preserves best the speculation on the motivations of the Galatae.

<sup>15</sup> Justinus 24.8.9–16; see also Diodorus Siculus 22.9.3.

<sup>16</sup> Posidonios, F 272 (Edelstein-Kidd) in Strabo 7.2.1–2.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1115b, *Eth. Eud.* 1229b; Ephorus *BNJ* 70 F 132 in Strabo 7.2.1; cf. Nicholas of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F 109 in Stob. *Flor.* 7.40; Aelian *VH* 12.23; Florus 1.38.1; Ammianus 15.9.4. Note that for the fragmentary authors, the “Printed Sources” section of the bibliography refers to the authors preserving the fragments: for Ephorus, look for Strabo, and for Nicholas, see Stobaeus.

future-oriented pathway thinking are included in these stories, their aims are very basic and simple—though also directly antagonistic to the settled societies of the Mediterranean sphere.

Investigating whether Late Antique Roman historians gave non-Roman “barbarian” peoples the full spectrum of emotional range is challenging due to the historiographical genre’s lack of interest in including outgroup perspectives and volition. In historical texts, as John Marincola has pointed out, the range of emotional language is narrowed down to basically only pity and fear.<sup>18</sup> The cultural stereotypes that were widely diffused among the Greeks and the Romans usually saw venality, greed and opportunism as “just the way the barbarians were”, and using this commonplace reasoning as the only—and often merely implicit—explanation for conflict and population movement is fairly common. Due to the increase in the way in which Late Imperial society absorbed and co-opted non-Roman groups, “mind-reading” outgroup hopes may well have been an increasing concern to the historiographers of the Later Roman Empire. Thus, it is worth examining whether they might offer evidence for either an entrenchment or a broadening of the received Roman modes of perceiving outgroup volition and futurity.

### THE ROLE OF EMPATHY IN IMAGINING BARBARIAN HOPE AND HOPELESSNESS

The Greek and Roman concept of pity (ἔλεος, ἐλεημοσύνη, *misericordia*) is most commonly defined as “pain on account of the misfortune of another”.<sup>19</sup> We know well that historiography as such was prone to evoke the readers’ pity, for instance in such classical cases as Thucydides’ description of the sack of Mycalessus and the tragic fate of its inhabitants at the hands of Thracian mercenaries, who in turn are motivated solely by greed. But this is pity aimed at the members of the ingroup—not barbarians whose pathway thinking has led them awry. Thucydides notes that the typical Thracian murderousness was in this instance given free rein since the mercenaries had nothing to fear.<sup>20</sup> Essentialising logic is never very far from the surface in these texts: the causation frequently sees barbarian

<sup>18</sup> Marincola, “Beyond Pity and Fear”, 286. On pity, see Konstan, *Pity Transformed*; on fear, see Różycki, *Battlefield Emotions*.

<sup>19</sup> Konstan, *Pity Transformed*, 65. See also Hagen, “Emotions in Roman Historiography”.

<sup>20</sup> Thucydides 7.29. See Quinn, “Thucydides and Massacre at Mycalessus”.

nature as not only driving their behaviour, but also indelible and unchanged. It is worth bearing in mind the option that due to a set of cultural assumptions and stereotypes, barbarians as a collective could not very easily appear as vulnerable to Greeks and Romans as the members of ingroup.

Outgroups are sometimes allowed the same range of despairing and disappointed emotions, and some descriptions of mass murder, sacking of cities and other atrocities sought to evoke the readers' pity even towards barbarian victims.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Libanius considers the ability to feel pity towards others as one of the defining Greek characteristics that the barbarians lacked.<sup>22</sup> On other occasions, and more connected with our theme of hope and futurity, evocations of pity towards a defeated outgroup can at least implicitly include the admission that barbarian expectations of a positive outcome have been upended. Often enough, this frustration of barbarian hopes seems to hinge on their mistaken indication of *kairos*, or the opportune moment.

As hope turns to despair, the evocation of pity for the despair of another becomes a historiographical option. This had been already routinely used in Hellenistic narratives of barbarian attacks, such as the retreat of the defeated Celts from Delphi.<sup>23</sup> Unsurprisingly, most of the time the principal group whom Late Antique writers perceived as vulnerable were the provincials, though they, too, could be sometimes suspected of having thrown their lot in with the barbarians.<sup>24</sup> Here, however, my interest is directed at the Greek and Roman "mind-reading" of the *externae gentes* thought to hail from beyond the empire's borders.

<sup>21</sup>In addition to the stories of Troy's destruction, other examples include Clearchus of Soli, *Vitae* F 46 (Dorandi and White) in Athenaeus 12.23 (522d–f) on the sacking of the Iapygian town of Carbina; Caesar, *BG* 7.28 on Avaricum; Appian, *Hisp.* 96 on Numantia. On "*urbs capta*" topos, see Paul, "*Urbs Capta*"; on destruction generally, see Lavan, "Devastation".

<sup>22</sup>Libanius, *Or.* 19.13 "οἱ μὲν γε ἐγγύς εἰσι τῶν θηρίων ἀτιμάζοντες ἔλεον, οἱ δὲ ὀξείς τε ἐλεεῖν καὶ ὀργῆς περιόντες." See also Konstan, *Pity Transformed*, 81.

<sup>23</sup>Justinus, 24.8.9–16; Pausanias 10.23.12 (cf. Str. 3.4.7 on Cantabrians).

<sup>24</sup>On the vulnerability of the provincials, e.g. Dexippus *BNJF* 26 in *Excerpta de Sententiis* 230.18–234.12; Eunapius, F 47.1 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Sententiis* 50. On the provincials putting their hopes on an alliance with non-Romans, e.g. Zosimus, *NH* 1.34–35.

## HOPES ATTRIBUTED TO “GOTHS” AND OTHER GROUPS IN AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS

In what follows, I will scour through Late Antique historiographers’ narratives of the population movements in the Danubian-Rhenish border zone to identify and discuss the sort of uses that hope was put into when explaining the mobility of these groups. As indicated in the introductory section, the slipperiness of the concept of hope will require us to consider the broader narrative contexts and the imagination of outgroup volition—the imagining of strangers’ hopes and desires, which I have above called “mindreading”.<sup>25</sup> Occasionally, hopes may need to be inferred from references to despair and disappointment, but considering the conventional Greco-Roman revelling in the defeat and despair of the barbarians, this seems like a fairly safe inference to make as long as the context is appropriately understood.<sup>26</sup>

The best understood and most widely narrated set of sample material pertains to the dealings between Goths and Romans in the period from 375 to 410, especially the crossing of the Danube in 376 and its aftermath. This particular episode, with the onslaught of the Huns pushing the Goths to leave their earlier homelands in the Pontic North and North-West and the displaced Goths then petitioning to be allowed to enter the empire together with their families, might be among the most promising Late Antique instances where barbarians could have attracted narratological admissions of hoping for safety and prosperity. The two case studies I have chosen are Ammianus Marcellinus and Eunapius of Sardis, who both wrote around the year 400, and in hindsight of the battle of Adrianople (378).<sup>27</sup>

In Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the 390s CE, authorial gestures indicating personal witnessing of the events described are mixed with deeply literary displays of moralising rhetoric. Ammianus is notable for his strong belief in the eternity of Roman power, which he sees as challenged by internal moral corruption and external attacks, but fundamentally

<sup>25</sup> Marincola, “Beyond Pity and Fear”, 289 warns about the difficulty of knowing exactly the semantic fields of ancient emotion-terminology, and even the word *pathos* itself.

<sup>26</sup> The importance of despair in studying ancient hope is also highlighted by Kazantzidis and Spatharas, “Introductory: ‘Hope’, *elpis, spes*”, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Generally, on the contemporaries’ reactions to Adrianople, see Lenski, “*Initium mali*”. On the broader context of Roman attitudes to refugees and immigrants in this era, see Barbero, *Barbari*, 76–110.

capable of renewal.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, Ammianus has been noted to be viscerally opposed to the northerners beyond the Danube and the Rhine in particular, and constantly informed by the hindsight of his post-Adrianople evaluation (by several decades) of the danger they pose. Thus, he seems like an intriguing candidate for us to try and find attributions of hope or futurity in non-Roman groups. Some of his barbarian groups, such as the Alans, are shown possessing what we could perhaps call “technologies of futurity” in the shape of their stick divination.<sup>29</sup> In terms of the Roman perceptions, it is not particularly significant that the idea of northern peoples divining by sticks was a topos that goes back to Herodotus’ Scythians.<sup>30</sup> Earlier in Ammianus’ text, the Burgundians are described as engaging in pathway thinking by deposing their king if crop failures or military defeats take place in their reign.<sup>31</sup> But in neither of these cases—clearly more dependent on the ethnographical register—is the emphasis on hope or future-oriented thinking as a catalyst for historical events.

When Ammianus writes in 31.3.2 about the decision of the Goths to depart from their homelands in face of the Hunnic advance, and their subsequent petitioning to Valens to cross the Danube, he mentions how Ermenrich, “the most warlike king” of the Greuthungi, lost his hope of being able to resist the Hunnic and Alanic onslaught. He is “struck” (*percussus*) by the force of the “sudden storm” (*vi subitae procellae*) of the attacks, and after having resisted for a long time in defence of his people, finally fell victim to the rumours that exaggerated the severity of the struggles to come (*impendentium tamen diritatem augente vulgatus fama*). Fear is here shown to overcome hope: Ermenrich takes his own life when his “fear of the great dangers” (*magnorum discriminum metum*) takes over. While *spes* is not explicitly mentioned, this causation offers a very good example of how the broader focus on futurity helps us to see the ways in which pathway thinking was used in Late Antique historical narratives. Here, the Greuthungian king behaves exactly in the way that a brave barbarian leader had for a long time been expected to react: when faced with a hopeless situation, he takes his life.<sup>32</sup> This conforms well with Stéphane Ratti’s suggestion that Ammianus has composed the passage of

<sup>28</sup> Ammianus, 14.6.3; 27.6.6. See Matthews, “Ammianus and Eternity of Rome”.

<sup>29</sup> Ammianus, 31.2.24 on the Alanic stick divination.

<sup>30</sup> Herodotus, 4.67; attributed to Germans in Caesar, *BG* 1.53.

<sup>31</sup> Ammianus, 28.5.14; see Rike, *Apex Omnium*, 92.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. Brennus in Justinus 24.8.11 and Pausanias 10.23.11; Decebalus the Dacian in Trajan’s Column’s Scene CXLV; Arbogast in Eunapius F 60.1 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de*

the Gothic crossing of the Danube to serve as an inversion of the *topos* of a hero crossing a river.<sup>33</sup>

Later in the same section, a rather similar kind of hopelessness and a dread of more severe suffering to come overtakes Athanaric, king of the Thervingians, after the Huns stage a surprise raid against him.<sup>34</sup> Hunnic plundering seems to infect the Gothic groups with a strong, negatively compelling dread. In trying to safeguard themselves against an even greater future catastrophe, these groups set themselves on a course that brings them into the Roman realm.

Yet when the report spread widely among the other Gothic peoples, that a race of men hitherto unknown had now arisen from a hidden nook of the earth, like a tempest of snows from the high mountains, and was seizing or destroying everything in its way, the greater part of the people, who, worn out by lack of the necessities of life, had deserted Athanaricus, looked for a home removed from all knowledge of the savages; and after long deliberation what abode to choose they thought that Thrace offered them a convenient refuge, for two reasons: both because it has a very fertile soil, and because it is separated by the mighty flood of the Hister from the fields that were already exposed to the thunderbolts of a foreign war; and the rest of the nation as if with one mind agreed to this plan.<sup>35</sup>

The initial onslaught of the until-then unknown Huns and the victual-starved retreat of the Goths from out of their way does contain several indications of vulnerability, but also of futurity. Firstly, the Huns are compared with natural catastrophes, which formed a typical source for insecurity and risk, and foiled the hopes of many individuals regularly. In addition, flood metaphors would have fitted the old imagery of northern groups

*Insidiis* 79. Here, the difference between upright members of the ingroup (such as Stoics) and the bravest barbarians is quite narrow.

<sup>33</sup>Ratti, "La Traversée du Danube", esp. 184–95.

<sup>34</sup>Ammianus, 31.3.7.

<sup>35</sup>Ammianus, 31.3.8: "Fama tamen late serpente per Gothorum reliquas gentes, quod invisitatum antehac hominum genus, modo nivium ut turbo montibus celsis, ex abdito sinu coortum apposita quaeque convellit et corrumpit: populi pars maior, quae Athanaricum attenuata necessariorum penuria deseruerat, quaeritabat domicilium remotum ab omni notitia barbarorum, diuque deliberans, quas eligeret sedes, cogitavit Thraeciae receptaculum gemina ratione sibi conveniens, quod et caespitis est feracissimi, et amplitudine fluentorum Histri distinguitur ab arvis patentibus iam peregrini fulminibus Martis: hoc quoque idem residui velut mente cogitare communi." Translations adapted from J. C. Rolfe 1950.

being pushed to migrate by inundations of the Oceanus.<sup>36</sup> What the Goths want is a future without knowing the Huns (*remotum ab omni notitia*): their hope is to return to the past where this “new race” had not yet emerged. The deliberation of where to settle, on the other hand, carries echoes of set-piece deliberative exercises of the rhetorical schools.<sup>37</sup> The verbs *quaetivavit* and *cogitavit* clearly mark out pathway thinking. The Roman province of Thrace offers the best hope for a safe and amenable new home due to its combination of fertility—promising future food security—and its geostrategic location on the south side of the Danube. Overall, when the Late Imperial writers looked at the world of non-Roman peoples beyond the borders, they found it easy to imagine the wholesale extirpation of entire population groups.<sup>38</sup>

In Ammianus’ generally rather retrospective work, conscious of the *exempla* of the past, Book 31 is perhaps more future-oriented than the rest of the post-Julianic books.<sup>39</sup> This is partly due to the narrative structure of the book, and the way this tied into Ammianus’ greater vision for the future of the Roman *res publica*. The initial promise of the Gothic envoys begging Valens to let them cross the Danube and settle in the imperial lands is certainly future-oriented: they vow to offer their yield in manpower to the Roman service in the shape of auxiliaries.<sup>40</sup> The Romans contemplate this argument rather with joy than fear (*negotium laetitiae fuit potius quam timori*)—a grave mistake in Ammianus’ view—and in his hubris, stoked further by flatterers, the emperor Valens is already envisioning his future super-army.<sup>41</sup> In retrospect, Ammianus implies, the very

<sup>36</sup> See above, with Cicero, *Prov. Cons.* 32; [Quintilian] *Decl. Maior.* 3.4.5; metaphors with which Ammianus, 31.8.5 stands in direct continuation.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Libanius, *Or.* 49.32 on the power of rhetoric to reveal the right course of action; 23.21 on the rhetoricians’ ability to foresee the future by reasoning. Eunapius F 27.1 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Sententiis* 20 presents Julian as foreseeing the future “Scythian” disturbances, either as a result of his (frequent) divination or through his own *logismo* (“reasoning”).

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Eunapius F 42 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Legationibus Gentium* 6; Frigeridus (10 *FLHLA*, Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen) F 1 in Gregorius of Tours, *Hist.* 2.9; cf. Themistius, *Or.* 10, 199–200 on a metaphorical plane. See Lavan, “Devastation”.

<sup>39</sup> In the books about Julian’s rise and accession, omens about future abound: Hanaghan, “Ammianus’ Future Signs”, 243, 247; and on p. 245 notes that Book 31 has many more future signs, especially at its outset.

<sup>40</sup> Ammianus, 31.4.1.

<sup>41</sup> 31.4.4: “ut collatis in unum suis et alienigenis viribus, invictum haberet exercitum.” This repeats the similar *spes* (explicitly mentioned) by Constantius when he took the Limigantes into the empire: 19.11. See den Boeft and al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 59 *ad loc*; for the juridical aspects, see Mathisen, “Becoming Roman, Becoming Barbarian”, esp. 204–5.

entrance of the Goths into the empire put the whole Roman state into near-fatal danger.<sup>42</sup> This risk is only (in his eyes) averted at the very end of Book 31, where the *magister militum* Julius attacks the Goths in the *Oriens* with genocidal zeal: the plan is called “prudent” and in Ammianus’ view saved the Eastern provinces “from great dangers” in the future.<sup>43</sup> As Noel Lenski has observed, contemporary Cappadocian sources at the time may have genuinely feared that a Gothic uprising was also imminent in Anatolia, which could mean that Julius responded to local emotions.<sup>44</sup>

The Tervingian Goths, now having been given an ostensible safe settlement within the Empire, are subjected to arbitrary and demeaning treatment by Roman officials. As Ville Vuolanto has argued, Ammianus emphasises the Goths’ utter lack of hope by using the well-recognised theme of parents having to sell their children to slavery.<sup>45</sup> Current suffering (*instantium malorum*) is singled out as the triggering factor for the Goths: when they enter Marcianopolis to seek victuals, they are trying to find a way out of their plight.<sup>46</sup> Yet in describing these events Ammianus engages less and less with “mind-reading” the outgroup: instead, the excited and incensed barbarians immediately revert to being dangerous and menacing, with an explicit promise of more danger for Romans to come.<sup>47</sup> What we generally see in Ammianus is a slight emphasis on futurity from the point of view of the Goths as long as they are outside the borders—their deliberations also fulfilling the causative function that explains their petition to enter the empire—but the mind-reading is discarded fairly soon after they have entered the empire. The plans and hopes of the barbarians are generally those of the most fundamental kind:

<sup>42</sup> Cf. 31.4.5.

<sup>43</sup> 31.16.9: “Quo consilio prudenti sine strepitu vel mora completo, orientales provinciae discriminibus ereptae sunt magnis.” I have argued elsewhere (Lampinen, “Physiognomy, *ekphrasis*”, 260) that Ammianus advocated for relying on the already-existing peoples of the empire—especially the Gauls—as the backbone of the Roman army instead of Goths.

<sup>44</sup> Lenski, “*Initium mali*”, 135; see also Speidel, “Slaughter of Gothic Hostages”. By 389 orators like Pacatus (*Pan. Lat.* 12[2].11.4) were representing the Goths as the backbone of the Roman army under Theodosius (cf. Lenski, “*Initium mali*”, 144): Ammianus could have also been responding to this.

<sup>45</sup> Vuolanto, “Selling a Freeborn Child”, 172–73. Children representing the future of the people.

<sup>46</sup> 31.5.2.

<sup>47</sup> 31.5.8: “et inter metuenda multa periculorumque praevia maximorum.” The crossing of the Goths over the Danube is also foretold by an inscription found buried in Constantinople: 31.1.5.

for security, peace and nourishment at first, and after the relations break down, for loot and revenge.

Something of the previous capabilities of barbarian leaders to sketch out future courses of events is still retained, however, as Michael Hanaghan has noted—especially when the culminating point of the battle of Adrianople is reached, and their Roman adversaries prove to be inferior in foreseeing the course of events.<sup>48</sup> Fritigern, leader of the Thervingians, is explicitly called “clever in foreseeing the future” (*callidus futuri coniector*).<sup>49</sup> He seems to be able to correctly identify the *kairos*, which previously was thought to almost naturally be beyond barbarian grasp. Among subsequent historians, Gothic pathway thinking was also projected in hindsight into their negotiations with the Romans about their crossing into the empire. By Sozomen’s time (second quarter of the fifth century), the story had arisen that the Goths chose to include bishop Ulphilas in their delegation in order to improve their chances of convincing the Romans, and Ulphilas, in turn, agreed to adopt the Arian creed so as to gain the support of Arian bishops within the empire.<sup>50</sup>

#### BARBARIAN HOPES IN EUNAPIUS OF SARDIS

Eunapius of Sardis, the Greek sophist and rhetorician and a contemporary of Ammianus, wrote a very influential and celebrated continuation of Dexippus’ history.<sup>51</sup> Though lost, Zosimus’ use of Eunapius (both being non-Christians) and the anthologisation of Eunapian material into the Porphyrogenetan *Excerpta* allow us to have a fairly good idea of Eunapius’ account of the Gothic population movements.<sup>52</sup> Whether the pagan sympathies of Eunapius had any effect on his deployment of the theme of hope as an explanatory factor in his narrative would be a question worth further investigation, but is outside the scope of the current study.

The first of the Eunapian fragments where the theme of futurity plays a large role deals with Julian’s war against the Germanic people of Chamavi.

<sup>48</sup> Hanaghan, “Ammianus’ Future Signs”, 246.

<sup>49</sup> Ammianus, 31.12.14.

<sup>50</sup> Sozomen, *HE* 6.37.6, 9. Ammianus, 31.12.8 also implies that Fritigern used priests to deceive the Romans; I am very thankful for Dr Cédrik Michel for pointing this out to me.

<sup>51</sup> Blockley, “Dexippus and Eunapius”, 712. On Dexippus, see Martin and Grusková, “*Scythica Vindobonensia*”; also Stoev, “Decius’ Gothic War”.

<sup>52</sup> I follow the delineation of Eunapius’ fragments by Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*. On Zosimus and Eunapius, see also Paschoud, “Zosime, Eunape et Olympiodore”.

Having captured their king's son, Julian entered negotiations with the Germans without giving any indication that he held the young noble as a prisoner—indeed, the Caesar demanded to receive him as a hostage in exchange for peace.<sup>53</sup> The Chamavi, concluding that the prince was dead, beseech Julian not to demand from them something they are unable to deliver. When the king of the Chamavi addresses Julian, the mind-reading of barbarian futurities enters the scene. He declares that he would give his son to the Caesar if only the son was alive, but that the Romans had already killed him. The German king tells that Julian's very demand for the hostage has now not only caused him to grieve for his son, but also for the chance for peace that the death of that son had robbed from the Chamavi.<sup>54</sup> It is a fairly sympathetic, though obviously very rhetorical and dramatised, exposure of the insecurities of dynastic continuation among Rome's neighbouring peoples; the dynamics were also infinitely complicated by the demands of imperial power and its meddling in the affairs of Germanic groups. What is remarkable is the degree to which Eunapius is ready to imagine these processes, and the Chamavian king's desperation in losing the obvious future hopes of both dynastic leadership and peace. Julian, it should be noted, is explicitly described as being moved to tears at the words of the anonymous barbarian king—before revealing that he has the youth already captive, and exhorting the Germans to keep the peace they had just before promised in the hypothetical sphere.

Chronologically more recent barbarian interactions are narrated in a much more hostile fashion. In Eunapius' description of how the Hunnic attacks pushed the "Scythians" to move, the atrocities committed by the Huns against the Goths evoke the typical rhetorical *pathos* descriptions.

The Scythians had been defeated and destroyed [by the Huns] and were being utterly extirpated. Those who were captured were massacred with their wives and children. There was no limit to the savagery employed in the killings.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup>The story is also told in Zosimos, *NH* 3.7.

<sup>54</sup>Eunapius F 18.6 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Legationibus Gentium* 1.20–30. Translation R. C. Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*.

<sup>55</sup>Eunapius F 42 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Legationibus Gentium* 6: "ὅτι τῶν Σκυθῶν ἠττηθέντων καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Οὐννων ἀναιρεθέντων καὶ ἄρδην ἀπολλυμένων τὸ πλῆθος, οἱ ἐγκαταλαμβάνόμενοι σὺν γυναίξει καὶ τέκνοις διεφθείροντο, καὶ οὐδεμία φειδὼ τῆς περὶ τοὺς φόνους ἦν ὠμότητος." Eunapius used "Scythians" as a classicising name for the different groups nowadays often lumped together as Goths.

Any emphasis on the vulnerability of the Gothic refugees is, however, undercut after a while by Eunapius' implication that the Roman generals who allowed the Goths to cross with their weapons were not simply bribed, but that their moral failings were abused by the Goths. Their "begging for pity" is soon replaced by "faithless breaking of agreements" that seems rather implausibly motivated by some greater prearranged scheme. Much more prominently than in Ammianus, the Goths are portrayed as acting according to their own plan even in the midst of external threats.

After a multitude, almost two hundred thousand in number, had gathered together and turned to flight, the males who were especially fit for war gathered at the Danube and, standing on the bank, stretched their hands from afar with cries and lamentations, begging for pity and asking to be allowed to cross, and, as they bewailed their misfortunes, they promised the Romans that they would provide reinforcements for their auxiliary forces.<sup>56</sup>

As in the narrative of Ammianus, after some vacillation on the part of the Romans, Valens decides to admit the Goths into the empire. Soon, the moral failings of Romans lead to incidents of corruption, where the barbarians are not exactly blameless, either. The topos of captivity is deployed by Eunapius to produce the juxtaposition of the Roman captors becoming captivated (αἰχμάλωτος) by the charms of their captives (αἰχμαλώτων). Goths made valuable gifts to the Romans, who all began to fill their households with as many herdsmen and young, sexually objectified retainers as possible. The Goths thus overpowered the Romans "disgracefully and criminally", but using the inherent vices of the imperial people for their own ends—and in so doing, turning their earlier misfortunes to their advantage and beginning their attempted takeover of the empire.<sup>57</sup>

Unless Eunapius has decided to misrepresent the status of the Goths simply for the sake of this dramatic simile, the terminology may in fact demonstrate how difficult it was for the Late Antique Romans to think about foreign groups entering the empire in other terms but those of *deditio in fidem* and captivity.<sup>58</sup> What seems to favour the latter interpretation is that Eunapius continues to speak of the Gothic civilians as captives—even though some of them were in fact hostages—and

<sup>56</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>58</sup> Cf. also Themistius, *Or.* 16.

criticising the way how the noblest Goths and their households lived far more splendidly than was appropriate for captives. Futurity is introduced into this context, as well, through Eunapius' fear-mongering about the Gothic fecundity being unleashed under the empire's "favourable climate", and the "enemy nation" within starting to grow fast.<sup>59</sup> In a later fragment Eunapius was also worrying about the possible false converts among the Goths: he seems to be accusing the emperor for taking the Gothic religiously formulated vows in good faith, even though to the barbarians taking such vows was a matter of dissimulation and ruse.<sup>60</sup>

Eunapius is in some fragments rather actively engaged in mind-reading the Gothic plans and hopes for the future, even as he keeps making it clear—as did Ammianus—that their presence within the empire posed a terrifying danger to the Romans. In the next phase, the anti-Roman faction within the Goths makes an "unholy pledge" among themselves, going even "beyond the normal savagery of the barbarians", that they would keep on plotting against the Romans despite any kindness they might receive from them, all for the greater aim of divesting them of territory.<sup>61</sup>

The old barbarian hope of occupying new lands is what Eunapius thinks motivated the Goths to continue conspiring against the Romans. Although settlement was no doubt also a very concrete and ongoing issue, the way Eunapius' account approaches conspiracy-theory comes shudderingly close to the sort of phobic imagery of "great replacement" that some nativists and white supremacists are peddling nowadays both in Europe and the US.<sup>62</sup> A very different image is given by some of the fragments from the sixth-century historian Malchus of Philadelphia, which show that while land distribution was a clear bone of contention between the Romans and Goths at this period, both sides used the argument that they were trying to protect the provincials from the presence of Goths becoming too burdensome to them.<sup>63</sup> Here, trying to factor in—and even to empathise with—the hardships endured by the provincial populations is paraded as a

<sup>59</sup> On the fecundity of northern barbarians, cf. Herodotus, 5.3.1; Euripides, *Bacch.* 1335; Justinus, 24.4.1; 25.2.8–9; Livy 38.16.13; Jordanes, *Get.* 4.25.

<sup>60</sup> Eunapius F 48.2 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Sententiis* 53.

<sup>61</sup> Eunapius F 59 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Legationibus Gentium* 7: "...αὐτὰ δὲ ἦσαν ἀσεβέστατα καὶ βαρβαρικὸν ἦθος εἰς ὁμότητα παρατρέχουσα..."

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Foner, "Is Islam in Europe like Race in US?"; Hammer, *Rome and America*, 219.

<sup>63</sup> Malchus F (Blockley) 18.4 in *Excerpta de Legationibus Romanorum* 9; F 20 in *Excerpta de Legationibus Romanorum* 1.

legitimizing factor by both sides. It is possible that if the Goths genuinely expressed this type of argument, they did so in response to the Roman accusations of despoliation. Presenting the Gothic hopes of land-grab was thus a narrative choice, and in Eunapius' account the Goths eventually split over this irreconcilable difference, with Fravitta leading the honourable party, while Eriulf, "a half-madman who raged more wildly than the rest", led the indelibly hostile group.

Depriving the barbarians of all hope can lead to an even more dangerous situation. This was no doubt a fairly common talking point in the aftermath of the "Gothic crisis" and the battle of Adrianople. Gesturing rather vaguely at the innumerable historical *exempla* about this truth, Eunapius notes that:

...one ought not, with forces either large or small, do battle with those who have come to despair of their lives and are ready to face danger. Rather one should destroy such armies by dragging out the war and by cutting off their sources of supplies, so that as a result of starvation their own numbers become their enemy, and they are unable to gamble on fortune, since to risk battle is not an option for them, that initiative lying with their opponents.<sup>64</sup>

Desperation of the northern barbarians is, for Eunapius, a sure guarantee of their dangerousness, and a wise Roman leader would resort to a combination of psychological warfare and Fabian tactics.<sup>65</sup> Such enemies are to be starved into submission, where not even their northern impetuosity can whip up enough energy in them to imagine other futures. The emphasis on lack of supplies, which many of our sources repeat about the barbarians, requires pitiless strategic calculation from the Romans. There is a strong assumption of essentialist animosity at play: the debate is again informed by the retrospect of what happened at Adrianople.

<sup>64</sup> Eunapius F 44 (Blockley) in *Excerpta de Sententiis* 45: "ὅτι οὔτε πολλοῖς οὔτε ὀλίγοις μάχεσθαι προσήκειν ἀπεγνωκόσιν ἑαυτῶν καὶ πρὸς κίνδυνον ἐτοιμῶς ἔχουσιν. ἀλλ' ὅτι τοιαῦτα στρατόπεδα καταλύειν συμφέρει χρόνῳ τρίβοντα τὸν πόλεμον καὶ περικόπτοντα τὰς ἀφορμὰς τῶν ἐπιτηδείων, ὅπως ὕφ' ἑαυτῶν πολεμῶνται δι' ἔνδειαν πολλοὶ τυγχάνοντες, καὶ μὴ πρὸς τύχην ἀποκινδυνεύουσιν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀπόρῳ καὶ τὸ κινδυνεύειν ἔχουσιν, ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐναντίοις οὐσῆς τῆς ἐπιχειρήσεως."

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Zosimus, *NH* 4.23. Even Ammianus 31.16.8, where Julius extirpates the Goths in Anatolia, seems to speak of a Roman fear of directly confronting the Goths in the aftermath of the Adrianople; cf. the more general but very relevant points made in Różycki, *Battlefield Emotions*, 77, 80–83, 85–93.

## CONCLUSIONS: WAS THERE HOPE FOR THE BARBARIANS IN LATE ANTIQUE HISTORIOGRAPHY?

A rather interesting difference may be detected in the attributions of futurity and hopes to barbarians as a commonality, and to their leaders. It seems that the barbarians as a whole—often a people on the run in the context of the late fourth and fifth centuries, especially in the episodes I have been concentrating on—envision their hopes for the future as being directed towards seeking safety from other, even fiercer barbarian peoples. This often elides into the older, by that stage wholly traditional, impression of northern population groups wishing to settle new lands. As a collective, these barbarian groups' motivations were conceptualised by the natural, “base” desires that not only reflect the very real precarity of such migrant and refugee groups' nutrition and safety, but also drew their imaginative force from the Greco-Roman cultural pool of stereotypes. In most cases the sources seem to refer to the “traditional” causative factor of greedy hope in explaining outgroup mobility: the barbarians' *expectatio boni* was a very concrete and materialist thing.

It may not come as a particularly great surprise that the vast majority of the mentions of hope for safety and deliverance in our historiographical sources apply to the Roman ingroup: the provincial or urban populations who had been affected by either barbarian activities, rebellions, or food shortages. In contrast, the narrative, literary and ideological impulses to imagine barbarian pathway thinking were much fewer. As a reflection of this, both quantitative and qualitative differences between ascribing hopes to barbarians and Romans remained strong, but the occasional dramatic successes of the barbarians required admitting every now and then that the barbarian *logismoi*—their pathway thinking—could be valid, and their desire to flee dangers such as Huns and settle new lands was a reasonable one. The Roman defeats, on the other hand, seemed to call for explanations, and the old theme of a mistakenly identified *kairos*, or opportune moment, was turned into criticism against emperors such as Valens. The earlier pattern of barbarians misidentifying *kairos* did not retain the same comfort and explanatory power as it once had done.

The leaders of northern groups, however, could be attributed with much more complex hopes and futurity-oriented motivations. The causative factor of barbarian leaders wanting to keep their peoples safe was an obvious one, but frequently their (probably very genuine) requests for lands to settle were accompanied by (likewise very genuine) hope of being

recognised, legitimated and safeguarded through a Roman office or a title. Beyond this, in trying to explain the very varied contacts and realities on the ground in terms of Romano-barbarian relations, some historiographers attributed to the Gothic leaders, in particular, nefarious and directly threatening motives. They could be portrayed as pursuing these through guile and deception, purposefully misleading Romans regarding the threat that their followers posed to the empire.

Being uprooted was not something that the northern barbarians were perceived as experiencing in a way similar to the sedentary Mediterranean populations. Traditionally their movement was seen as motivated by desire either to despoil the Greeks and Romans or to settle new lands. The stereotypical idea of a *gens vaga*, I would argue, was a very powerful cultural stereotype that influenced the Late Antique way of attributing hopes and pathway thinking to the “Gothic” groups. This does not mean that the reasons behind their movement could not have been perceived as external, too: the inundations of the sea in the case of the Late-Hellenistic accounts on Celts and Cimbri, the uncontrolled population growth of Gauls in Justin or Livy (and those of the Gothiscandza in Jordanes), and the attacks of the Huns in the Late Antique historians, could all be imagined as having first set the chain of movements into action.

Hope enters the mind-reading exercise occasionally in these cases. It is worth emphasising that both Ammianus and Eunapius were writing with the hindsight of the battle of Adrianople, the climactic defeat of Valens at the hands of the Goths in 378. This only emphasised the fact that Roman hopes, not barbarian ones, would have been colouring their treatment of the events—and it is this ingroup perspective that makes these imaginings useful as sources to the Late Roman concepts of hope and futurity. The cultural gap between the levels of pathway thinking ascribed to ingroups and outgroups was not only dependent on the polemics involved (such as in the case of Valens’ failures, contrasted with the better leadership demonstrated by a handful of Gothic leaders), but also on each different historical moment of narration. In the context we have studied, feelings of existential fear and the retroactive knowledge of Gothic victories against Romans were foregrounded, which reduced the Roman interest towards sympathetic mind-reading of the Gothic strategies and future-oriented thinking that had motivated their mobility. Instead, the tendency to see a malicious and threatening attempt to subvert the Roman empire by infiltrating it under the guise of refugees seems to have been common.

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