

## Ships and Sailors in Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae*

The proposed paper will analyze specific words related to ships and sailors within Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae* in order to provide insights into the uses of ships during the fourth century and the ways that fleets, sailors, and sailing were thought of in that century. The words to be examined range from obvious choices such as *navis*, *nauticus*, and *navigo* to less common words such as *naufragium* (shipwreck) as well as covering specific types of ships and boats such as the *onerarius* or *lenunculus*. The analysis of these words illumines both the practical uses of ships and boats as described in Ammianus' historical narrative and the literary usages of them as well including metaphor and the distinctions between ships or sailors being mentioned as part of a main narrative rather than for background information.

Ammianus' personal experiences must have included time on board and around ships and boats, especially during his time in the Roman army as he went on famous campaigns, such as the Emperor Julian's Persian expedition, about which he wrote. Thus, his work provides a good text for the study of ships and sailing, and his presentation of them can be insightful for his or his audiences' attitudes toward sailors and seafaring. The results of this study will be compared to secondary sources that have analyzed the negative attitudes towards sailors in late antiquity. The analysis of this paper matches the views found within these secondary sources, and this conclusion rests on an understanding of Ammianus' perspective on the topic in relation to his own context for creating the *Res gestae* and to his military background.

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