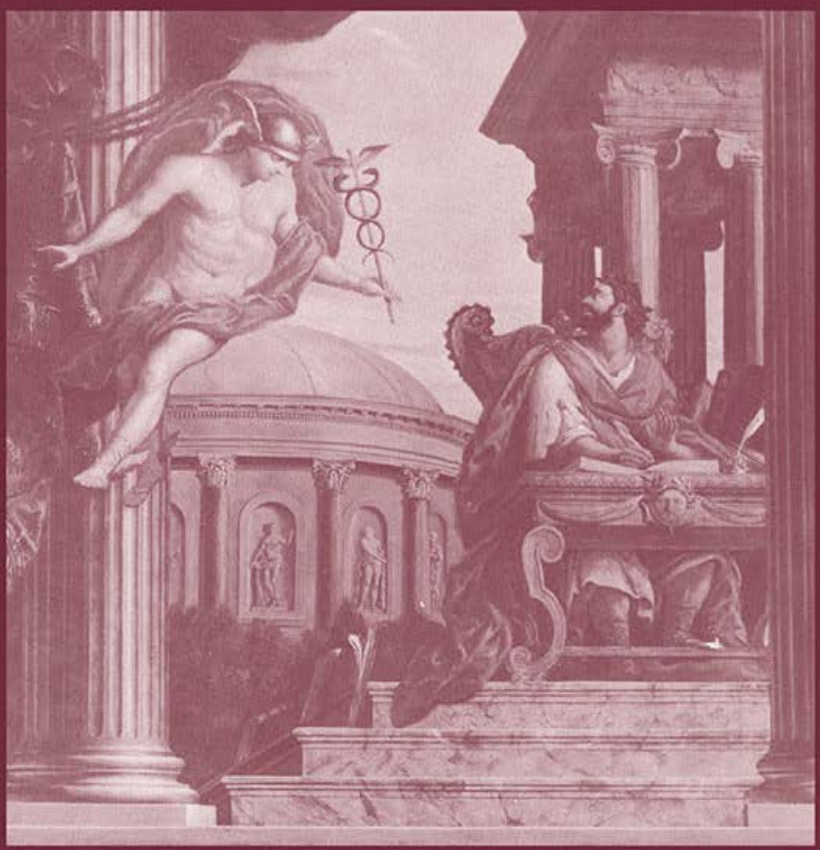
# EMPEROR AND AUTHOR

*The Writings of Julian the Apostate*



*Edited by*

Nicholas Baker-Brian

*and*

Shaun Tougher

# Emperor and Author:

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The symbol of the Press is the Red Kite. This bird, once widespread in Britain, was reduced by 1905 to some five individuals confined to a small area known as 'The Desert of Wales' – the upper Tywi valley. Geneticists report that the stock was saved from terminal inbreeding by the arrival of one stray female bird from Germany. After much careful protection, the Red Kite now thrives – in Wales and beyond.

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Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher
Cardiff, Wales, April 2012



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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| *AJA* | *American Journal of Archaeology* |
| *AncW* | *Ancient World* |
| *AntTard* | *Antiquité tardive* |
| Blockley | R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, vol. 2, *Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes* (Liverpool, 1983) |
| *Byz* | *Byzantion* |
| *BZ* | *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* |
| *CIL* | *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* |
| *CQ* | *Classical Quarterly* |
| *DNB* | *Dictionary of National Biography* |
| *DOP* | *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* |
| *GRBS* | *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* |
| *ILS* | *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* |
| *JECS* | *Journal of Early Christian Studies* |
| *JHS* | *Journal of Hellenic Studies* |
| *JLA* | *Journal of Late Antiquity* |
| *JRA* | *Journal of Roman Archaeology* |
| *JRS* | *Journal of Roman Studies* |
| *LIMC* | *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* |
| *Num. Chron.* | *Numismatic Chronicle* |
| *PG* | *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne |
| *PLRE* | *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, vol. 1, AD 260–305,* ed. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris (Cambridge, 1971) |
| *RIC* | *Roman Imperial Coinage* |



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# INTRODUCTION

*Nicholas Baker-Brian* and *Shaun Tougher*

The Roman emperor Julian (r. AD 361–363) is famous for being the last pagan ruler of the Roman empire, who attempted to bring a halt to the religious revolution initiated by his uncle the emperor Constantine I (r. 306–337), the first Christian Roman emperor, better known as Constantine the Great.[1] The emperor Julian is often known simply as Julian the Apostate, because he was brought up a Christian but converted to paganism as a young man, in his twentieth year he says.[2] However, Julian should not just be remembered as the last pagan Roman emperor, but as an emperor who was an author, and a prolific one at that. He turned his hand to a wide variety of literary forms: letters, hymns, satires, panegyrics, invectives, and even history (e.g. his lost account of the battle of Strasbourg).[3] The tenth-century Byzantine encyclopaedia known as the *Suda* reflects well this dichotomous aspect of Julian, despite certain confusions of fact. Its entry for the emperor begins:

> Julian the Transgressor and the Apostate, emperor of the Romans, [nephew (ἀνεψιὸς)] of the emperor Constantine the Great, born of his brother Dalmatus and a mother named Galla. He wrote the so-called *Caesars*, which dealt with the emperors of the Romans starting with Augustus, and another book *On the Three Figures* and the so-called *Kronia* and the *Beard-hater* or *Antiochic*, *Whence the Evils*, *To the Uneducated*, *To Heraclitus the Cynic How to be a Cynic*, various letters, and other things.[4]

Julian was an inveterate communicator; he confessed to the people of Antioch that his 'fingers are nearly always black from using a pen'.[5] Glen Bowersock has memorably observed that Julian's writings 'provide an insight into character and disposition such as can be had for no other classical figure apart from Cicero'.[6]

Julian's emergence as an author can be explained to a large extent by the degree of education he experienced (ranging from having a personal tutor when a boy to attendance at university when a young man) as a member of the imperial family, an education which was exacerbated by the political circumstances of his youth. Julian was born 331 or 332 in Constantinople into the imperial family, his father Julius Constantius being the half-brother of the Augustus Constantine I, since they had the same father, the emperor Constantius I (Caesar from 293–305, and Augustus from 305–306).



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The rich sources for Julian's life provide us with glimpses (not always as clear as one would like) of his education.[7] An important early tutor was the eunuch Mardonius, who taught Julian from seven years old, and who had also taught Julian's mother Basilina (who died shortly after Julian's birth). Mardonius is credited by Julian himself as being a formative influence upon him, endowing him in particular with his great love of Homer. The bishop of Nicomedia, Eusebius (who became patriarch of Constantinople in the late 330s, after the death of Constantine), also seems to have had a part to play in Julian's upbringing, being a relative of the boy.[8] In 337 Julian's life was dramatically fractured, for in this year the emperor Constantine died; in the political fallout nine of Julian's male relatives were killed, including his father. The main figure in these deaths was Constantine's son Constantius II (337–361), and from this point on Julian felt the controlling hand of his cousin upon his life, a situation which had profound ramifications for his education. Soon after 337 Julian (together with his half-brother Gallus) was to spend a six year stint (probably from 342 – soon after Eusebius died – to 348) at the imperial estate of Macellum in Cappadocia. It is often assumed that a key figure in their intellectual formation at this time was the bishop of Cappadocian Caesarea, George, for later on, when George was murdered in 361 in Alexandria (having becoming patriarch of that city), Julian requisitioned his library, commenting to the Prefect of Egypt that George had previously lent him some of his books when he was in Cappadocia, and that they comprised many on rhetoric and philosophy as well as on Christianity.[9]

After Macellum, Julian appears to have spent time studying in both Constantinople and Nicomedia. He was taught grammar by the Spartan Nicocles, and rhetoric by the sophist Hecebolius, a Christian who converted to paganism during Julian's reign. There is some question about whether Julian was taught philosophy by Themistius, an expert in Aristotle, though he was dogged throughout his long career by accusations of being a sophist rather than a philosopher. Famously, it was at Nicomedia that Julian encountered the great Antiochene sophist Libanius. Forbidden to attend Libanius' lectures, Julian accessed them though written versions. Libanius was later to assert that, given the similarity of Julian's style to his own, it was assumed that Julian had been his pupil. It is of note that one of the most important manuscripts for the works of Julian, the *Vossianus gr.* (V) dating to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, predominantly consisted of a collection of Libanius' letters, to which Julian's works were appended (as a third volume of three).[10]

It was also at Nicomedia that Julian's interest in philosophy developed further, for he moved on from there to seek out Neoplatonic philosophers



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at Pergamum. These were headed by Aedesius, a pupil of Iamblichus (whose thought was a key influence upon Julian), but also included his own pupils Eusebius of Myndus and Chrysanthius of Sardis (and perhaps it was in Pergamum that Julian met the doctor and author Oribasius, for the city was his home town).[11] Discussions with these men brought the figure of Maximus of Ephesus to Julian's attention, another Neoplatonist, one celebrated for his adeptness at theurgy. Thus Julian left Pergamum for Ephesus, where Maximus seems to have been instrumental in Julian's final abandonment of Christianity and embracing of paganism, about 351.

Julian's formal education developed further a few years later. Having been summoned to Milan under a cloud in the wake of Gallus' execution for treason in 354 (Gallus having been appointed Caesar by Constantius in 351), he was eventually despatched to Athens in the summer of 355 to attend the university, Julian's enthusiasm for the intellectual life being well known at the imperial court. Spending a few months at the university, Julian came into contact with a range of celebrated intellectuals. Fellow pupils included the future Church Fathers, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus. It is possible that he was taught by the sophists Prohaeresius (a Christian) and Himerius (the son-in-law of the Platonist Nicagoras). He may also have met the Neoplatonist Priscus, another pupil of Aedesius. Julian's study in Athens was short-lived; he was soon recalled to Milan, where he was appointed Caesar himself, on 6th November 355. Julian's elevation to an imperial role, however, was to provide the platform for his literary career. Almost at once he utilised the pen as well as the sword, his first major work being a panegyric of the emperor, the nature of the imperial office and imperial power being subjects that were to preoccupy him greatly in his writings.[12]

In general, Julian's religious identity has been the primary interest of the emperor for historians and writers, witness for instance Henrik Ibsen's *Emperor and Galilean* (1873), which in 2011 was staged for the first time in England, at the National Theatre in London (9th June to 10th August). Its preoccupation with religious fanaticism – as well as its culmination in a doomed invasion – gave it a certain currency.[13] This is not to say that Julian's writings have been neglected. A key figure in making Julian's texts widely available and accessible (they are accompanied by English translations) was Wilmer Cave Wright, the Professor of Greek at Bryn Mawr College from 1897–1933,[14] whose editions and translations of Julian's works appeared in three volumes in the Loeb Classical Library series (volumes 1 and 2 in 1913, and volume 3 in 1923).[15] Volume 1 contained Julian's two panegyrics on Constantius, his speech of thanks to Constantius' wife the empress Eusebia, and his hymns to the Mother of the



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Gods and Helios. Volume 2 comprised his two speeches against the Cynics, his consolation to himself on the departure of Salutius, his letters to the Athenians and Themistius (as well as a fragment of a letter to a priest), and his satires the *Caesars* and the *Misopogon*. Volume 3 was devoted primarily to his letters, but also contained the fragments of his anti-Christian tract *Against the Galileans*. For the text of Julian's works Wright utilised with some revisions the edition of F. C. Hertlein (published in 1875–76 in the Teubner series; the editio princeps by Dionysius Petavius – Denis Pétau – had appeared in 1630). However, a new edition (with French translation, for the *Belles Lettres* series) was soon initiated by Joseph Bidez,[16] the first volume (1.2, confusingly) appearing in 1924 (letters and fragments) and the second (1.1) in 1932 (containing the discourses Julian wrote as Caesar: the two panegyrics to Constantius, the speech of thanks to Eusebia, the consolation to himself on the departure of Salutius, and his letter to the Athenians).[17] The final two volumes appeared in the 1960s, produced by other scholars. The third volume (2.1) (containing the letter to Themistius, the speeches against the Cynics, and the hymn to the Mother of the Gods) by Gabriel Rochefort appeared in 1963, and the final volume (2.2) (containing the *Caesars*, the hymn to Helios, and the *Misopogon*) by Christian Lacombrade in 1964.[18] Notably, the *Belles Lettres* edition amended the numbering of Julian's works, to place them in chronological sequence, but the numbering deployed by Wright also remains in use as her volumes are the most accessible and familiar (her numbering is indeed followed in this volume unless otherwise indicated).

A string of further editions of individual or linked texts of Julian have been published since 1964, usually with translations and commentaries (thus adding significantly to the brief remarks of Wright on the texts, and the fundamental but concise introductions of Bidez and his fellow *Belles Lettres* editors). For instance, an edition of Julian's letter to Themistius was published in 1984 by Carlo Prato and Alfonsina Fornaro.[19] Prato, in conjunction with Jacques Fontaine (who provided the introduction) and Arnaldo Marcone (who provided commentaries and Italian translations), published in 1987 editions of Julian's *Letter to Themistius* (again), *Misopogon*, and hymns to the Mother of the Gods and Helios.[20] The hymn to the Mother of the Gods was edited once more in 1992 by Valerio Ugenti.[21] Prato had already published an edition of the *Misopogon* in 1979 with Dina Micalella, with whom he also produced an edition of Julian's speech against the Cynics in 1988.[22] Julian's attack on the Cynic Heraclius was the subject of an edition by Rosanna Guido, published in 2000.[23] Julian's attack on the Christians has not been neglected either, Emanuela Masaracchia producing an edition in 1990.[24] In 1973 Bertold Weis published the letters



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of Julian with Greek text (mostly following Bidez) and German translation.[25] The satires have also attracted further attention. In 1998 Friedhelm Müller published editions of the *Caesars* (or *Symposion*) and the *Misopogon* (or *Antiochikos*), with German translation and commentary, and the *Caesars* was reedited by Rosanna Sardiello in 2000.[26] Julian's panegyrics have also received some notice. In 1997 Ignazio Tantillo published a text of Julian's first panegyric of Constantius II (with Italian translation and commentary), but this simply reproduced almost entirely unchallenged Bidez's edition, as Tantillo acknowledges.[27] Despite all this piecemeal work, however, one eagerly awaits the new edition of the works of Julian by Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, which is scheduled to be published by De Gruyter in September 2012.

Thus Julian's works have continued to receive study and attention since the still vital editions published by the Loeb Classical Library and *Les Belles Lettres*, though it is noticeable that most of the further editing, translating and commenting has not been done by English-speaking scholars (it is a surprising, and telling fact, as Rowland Smith notes in this volume, that one of Julian's most fêted works, the *Caesars* – his satire on the emperors of Rome – has not yet been published in English translation with a commentary). While historians have drawn upon Julian's works to illuminate his life and thought – and in the case of Jean Bouffartigue's magisterial study *L'Empereur Julien et la culture de son temps* (1992) to reveal Julian as an avid reader of classical and philosophical writings – there is the sense that still not enough attention has been devoted to the emperor's writings in their own right. More fundamentally, the topic of Julian as author needs to be placed centre stage. Recent publications reveal the potential for such work, as well as the limitations of current study. For instance, Julian's writings have been the subject of detailed discussion in a volume of papers entitled *Kaiser Julian 'Apostata' und die philosophische Reaktion gegen das Christentum*, edited by Christian Schäfer (2008). The chapters in this volume consider his writings primarily from a philosophical and cultural point of view, thereby shedding light on Julian's own role in mediating certain philosophical ideas and ideals current in the late empire. Within this narrow remit, notable contributions include Theo Kobush's examination of *Against the Galileans*, Matthias Perkams' consideration of the second oration on Constantius, *Against Heraclius the Cynic*, and the *Letter to Themistius*, Martin Hose on the hymns to Helios and the Mother of the Gods, Markus Janka's literary dissection of the *Misopogon*, and the analysis of Julian's letters by Katharina Luchner. In addition, in 2009 volume seventeen of the journal *Antiquité Tardive* was devoted to 'L'empereur Julien et son temps' (edited by Jean-Michel Carrié). This begins



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with an intriguing posthumous chapter by Jean Martin on Julian's autobiographical writings,[28] though the rest of the volume is divided into sections on 'Biography', 'Julian as Legislator', 'Julian and Religions', 'The Antioch of Julian', and articles on various late antique topics. Some of the other articles on Julian do deal with him as author, such as Alberto Quiroga's study of the *Misopogon*'s subversion of rhetoric, and Carrié's consideration of the style of Julian's laws,[29] but the majority dealt with more traditional historical aspects of the reign.

Hence it was the objective of our conference (held in Cardiff in July 2009) to consider Julian primarily as an author, to explore his writings as literary texts, and to place him and his work in the broader context of the cultural milieu of the Roman empire in the fourth century. The conference also sought to examine the relationship between Julian's imperial identity and his literary output. A further goal was to consider all forms of communication of the emperor, thus letters, laws, epigraphy, coinage and art were examined too, not just his major literary works. The current volume maintains these objectives and contains all the papers given at the conference. It is topped and tailed by chapters by Susanna Elm and Jacqueline Long, designed to introduce and conclude the other contributions, just as they had done at the conference. Susanna Elm places Julian in his cultural and historical context. She considers in particular how Julian came to be characterised as 'The Apostate' by his Christian opponents, but also demonstrates that the impact of Julian was vital in forming Christian identity, to such an extent that he is in his own right a Church Father (a conclusion to which one can well imagine his own reaction). Jacqueline Long provides a review of the chapters in the volume, drawing together the threads of the discussions and establishing ways ahead for further study. The main contributions follow a broadly chronological structure, though there is also thematic grouping at play. Shaun Tougher, Hal Drake and Liz James discuss Julian's three imperial panegyrics, all questioning the Caesar's purposes in these texts. The two panegyrics on Constantius II are taken in sequence, in order to keep the focus on this emperor, even though the speech of thanks to Eusebia probably predates the second panegyric on Constantius and is often closely associated with the first panegyric on Julian's cousin. All three panegyrics speak of Julian's relationship with the imperial court during his Caesarship in Gaul, as do the next two texts considered, discussed by Josef Lössl and Mark Humphries respectively: Julian's consolation to himself on the departure of Salutius (who was a key support for Julian in Gaul but was recalled by Constantius) and his letter to the Athenians, Julian's famous justification of his 'usurpation' and opposition to Constantius. Letters are



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kept in focus by the following duo of papers, John Watt's consideration of Julian's letter to Themistius and Michael Trapp's reflections on Julian's letter collection and his art as a letter writer in general. The letter to Themistius is a fascinating text as it deals with Julian's perception of the nature of the imperial office, and seemingly sets him at odds with the views of Themistius, a leading pagan philosopher cum sophist who was strongly associated with the court and ideology of Constantius (and to add further to the interest of the letter, it may date to 355, at the time of Julian's elevation to the Caesarship, rather than to his eventual emergence as sole Augustus on the sudden death of his cousin in late 361). Moreover, as Watt discusses, it is possible that Themistius' reply to Julian's rejoinder exists in an Arabic translation.

Trapp's paper also forms part of a subset of chapters all dealing with various other forms of communication deployed by Julian beyond his major works: Jill Harries considers Julian's laws, Benet Salway the inscriptions issuing from him, Fernando López Sánchez the coinage of Julian, and Eric Varner not just the coinage but all the art associated with the emperor. It was decided to place these contributions at this point in the volume as they emphasise the emergence of Julian as sole ruler, taking on the administration of the whole empire, making his mark upon his subjects. Also, it was deemed that these other forms of communication were as integral to Julian's oeuvre as his major texts, and to group them at the end of the volume might have conveyed an erroneous impression that they were considered less important or an afterthought: they were an integral part of the conference plan from the start. One of the issues that emerges from these other sources is religion, which is picked up by the subsequent chapters of J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, Andrew Smith, Arnaldo Marcone and David Hunt, who all discuss Julian's religious project. Liebeschuetz considers Julian's hymn to the Mother of the Gods in the general context of the emperor's attempt to revive paganism, Smith focuses on Julian's use of Neoplatonic concepts in his hymn to Helios, Marcone explores Julian's hostility to the Cynics in his attacks against Heraclius individually and then the Cynics as a group, while Hunt also considers invective, this time against the Christians (or the 'Galileans', as Julian called them), showing how the emperor's own Christian upbringing had given him a strong grasp of the Christian disputes of his time.

The final two main contributions consider Julian's famous satires, the *Caesars* and the *Misopogon*, but the chronological sequence of the texts is inverted because Rowland Smith's discussion of the *Caesars* is greatly concerned with its reception. Nicholas Baker-Brian's treatment of the *Misopogon* returns us to the preoccupations of imperial ideology and



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Constantius II, highlighting the centrality of the virtue of self-control in the text, and revealing Julian to be competing with his cousin even after his death. Smith considers the reception of Julian's *Caesars* (and effectively of Julian himself) from the sixteenth down to the eighteenth century, revealing how fascinating – and important – an aspect of the study of Julian this approach is.[30] It also reveals how deep an interest there has been in Julian, one in fact that shows no signs of abating. For such a short-lived emperor, Julian has had a major impact on historians and thinkers, writers and artists. This is not just because of his attempt to restore paganism and undermine Christianity, but also because he was an emperor who was an author.

**Notes**

[1] For recent accounts of Julian's life and reign, see for instance Rosen 2006 and Tougher 2007. For a recent treatment of Constantine I, see Barnes 2011.

[2] *Ep.* 47 434d, Wright 1923, 148–9.

[3] Julian's memoir of the battle of Strasbourg is mentioned by Eunapius (Blockley, fragment 17). See also Matthews 1989, 378.

[4] 'Julian.' Suda On Line. Tr. Abram Ring. 24 August 2004. 1 April 2012 <http://www.stoa.org/sol-entries/iota/437>. Ring translates 'ἀνεψιὸς' as 'cousin', but it can mean 'nephew', which we give here. For the correct identities of Julian's father and mother see the subsequent discussion. Flavius Dalmatius was a paternal uncle of Julian. Galla was the first wife of Julian's father, and the mother of Julian's half-brother Gallus.

[5] *Misop.* 339b, trans. Wright 1913, vol. 2, 425.

[6] Bowersock 1978, 4.

[7] For an overview of Julian's education, and a discussion of the sources for its reconstruction, see Bouffartigue 1992, 13–49. It should be noted that the chronological problems and details of Julian's early life will be discussed at length in John Vanderspoel's forthcoming monograph on the emperor, and we would like to thank him for sending us copies of unpublished papers which reveal his train of thought.

[8] For Eusebius see for instance Gwynn 1999.

[9] *Ep.* 24, Wright 1923, 74–7. *Ep.* 38, Wright 1923, 122–5, also mentions George's library, and notes that it was extensive and comprehensive, and that it contained diverse philosophical works and histories as well as books by Christians.

[10] For the manuscript tradition of Julian's works see especially Bidez 1929, but also Bidez 1932, xv–xxx.

[11] For Oribasius see for instance Baldwin 1975. Oribasius is first mentioned in connection with Julian when it is reported that Julian took him to Gaul when he was appointed Caesar, but Julian indicates that he was already his friend by then: Eunap. *VS* 498, Jul. *Ep. ad Ath.* 277c. Julian remarks that when appointed Caesar he entrusted Oribasius with the care of his books. Julian later commissioned Oribasius to write two epitomes of medical texts, one of the works of Galen and the other of diverse medical authors.

[12] It is possible that Julian's *Letter to Themistius* also dates to the beginning of his Caesarship. This letter was a response to one of Themistius', congratulating him on his elevation to the Caesarship (or to sole power in 361). In it Julian questions Themistius' conception of the nature of the imperial office: see the chapter by John Watt in this volume.

[13] The part of Julian was played by Andrew Scott, familiar to TV audiences for playing the role of Moriarty in the BBC TV series *Sherlock*. In addition to inspiring plays, poems and paintings, Julian has been the subject of numerous historical novels, the most recent of which is Paul Waters' *The Philosopher Prince*, published in 2010. This focuses on Julian's time in Gaul, and a sequel seems inevitable (it is itself already a sequel to his *Cast Not the Day*, which begins the story of his protagonists, the lovers Drusus and Marcellus). However, probably the most famous – and best – of the novels about Julian is Gore Vidal's *Julian*, a best seller when it was published in 1964. Notably Vidal writes primarily in the voice of Julian (as well as voicing Libanius and Priscus), and shows interest in the subject of Julian as a writer as well as a pagan and politician. Shaun Tougher aims to discuss Vidal's novel more fully elsewhere.

[14] For a fascinating account of the career of Wright see Emerson 1954.

[15] Wright 1913–23.

[16] Bidez and Franz Cumont had already published a collection and edition of Julian's letters, laws and fragments in 1922: Bidez and Cumont 1922. Bidez also wrote an important history of Julian's life and reign: Bidez 1930.

[17] Bidez 1924 and 1932.

[18] Rochefort 1963 and Lacombrade 1964.

[19] Prato and Fornaro 1984.

[20] Fontaine, Prato and Marcone 1987.

[21] Ugenti 1992.

[22] Prato and Micalella 1979 and 1988.

[23] Guido 2000.

[24] Masaracchia 1990.

[25] Weis 1973. For Julian's letter writing see Caltabiano 1991.

[26] Müller 1998, Prato and Micalella 1979, and Sardiello 2000.

[27] Tantillo 1997, 52. In 2008 Stefano Angiolani published an Italian translation of Julian's speech of thanks to Eusebia, but did not provide an edition: Angiolani 2008.

[28] Martin 2009.

[29] Quiroga 2009, Carrié 2009.

[30] For treatment of the reception of Julian see especially Braun 1978 and Richer 1981, but also Browning 1975, esp. 226–35, and Rosen 2006, esp. 399–462.

1

# JULIAN THE WRITER AND HIS AUDIENCE

*Susanna Elm*

Julian arrived in Constantinople on 11th December 361 as sole Augustus of the Roman empire and legitimate successor of his recently deceased cousin Constantius II. Julian's peaceful *adventus* into the city of his birth was not, however, the predictable result of dynastic regularity. As Caesar, Julian had challenged Constantius' supremacy; he had, in fact, been a usurper. Julian himself acknowledged this, albeit somewhat obliquely. His march against Constantius, resolved by the latter's death, had been accompanied by another campaign, one of letters. Acclaimed as Augustus by his troops, Julian while *en route* against his cousin the reigning Augustus devoted significant time and effort to composing letters to cities in the west – Rome, Corinth, Sparta, Athens, in sum, cities with a great degree of cultural cachet – to persuade his implied audience of the legitimacy, indeed the divinely-preordained inevitability of his actions. In fact, writing about the divine in relation to his imperial mandate was to be one of Julian's central occupations. No sooner had he arrived in Constantinople as emperor than he invited a wide circle of persons to court with the intention of engaging them (and through them all his subjects) in philosophical debates, in which he proclaimed his own perspectives and positions regarding the correct way to rule the *oikoumenē*.[1]

Indeed, no Roman emperor wrote more and no Roman emperor is therefore better known to modern historians than Julian. But this prolific productivity has not elicited a corresponding response from these same modern historians. Despite innumerable scholarly works on the emperor Julian (indeed, if we consider all works on the emperor they extend in near uninterrupted sequence from the time of his death in 363 to today), his writings have received far less scrutiny than one would assume.[2] Similarly investigations of Julian's audience, in particular the response of his Christian audience, have been few. Though every scholar of Julian is more than aware of the emperor's famous edict regarding teachers and its impact on his Christian contemporaries, the extent and the contours of that impact have usually been presupposed rather than studied in detail.



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Such investigations as there are tend to be limited to the few Christian works attacking the emperor directly (after his demise).[3] And yet a few months after Julian's *adventus* into Constantinople, at the same time as he proclaimed his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* in March 362,[4] one of Julian's immediate contemporaries apologized to his family and friends in a small city in Cappadocia for choosing to lead henceforth 'the true philosophical life'. About a year later, the young man presented a formal, written form of that apology which was to exert an enormous impact over the subsequent centuries. Julian's writings had been a catalyst both for his choice of the philosophical life and its subsequent written formulation: Gregory of Nazianzus' entire literary oeuvre, in fact, responded to Julian's writings, and it stands paradigmatic for much of the response of Julian's Christian subjects, after all a significant part of the imperial audience. And yet, students of Julian have paid comparatively scant attention to that response as formulated in Gregory's ample writings or in those of other Christian contemporaries of the emperor such as Basil of Caesarea or Gregory of Nyssa, and in the subsequent generation as represented by John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and many others.

The reasons for such comparative lack of interest are not difficult to see. After all, Julian the emperor and 'Apostate', and Gregory of Nazianzus, 'the Theologian', are also emblematic of the relationship between Christianity and the later Roman empire and its scholarly conceptualization. Both belonged to the first generation of Romans born after Constantine had made Christianity legal, and hence made it a real career option for elite men. These elite men were, without exception, deeply imprinted by their formation in *paideia*. Every Christian writer who mattered had undergone training on the basis of the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Thucydides, Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle (or in the case of the Latins Cicero, Varro, Livy, Sallust, Vergil, Ovid, Seneca, and so forth). These Christian writers were forensic rhetoricians, physicians, and teachers (of the imperial family too, regardless of its religious affiliation); they were also high imperial administrators of the emperor and his court, and were leaders, advisors and administrators of their fellow Christians in the empire. For them, in sum, as for all other members of the elites, classical learning was *the* status marker as well as the *conditio sine qua non* for any leadership position: Christian members of the elites were thus very similar to their non-Christian elite contemporaries.[5]

And yet, the relationship between Rome and Christianity continues in modern times to be cast in the grand narrative according to which the Roman empire declined and fell soon after Christianity had triumphed.

According to this narrative, the origin of which can be found in the Christian histories of Late Antiquity, non-Christian 'Romans' became labeled as pagans: the empire and its pagan 'Romans' were thus regarded as being destined to fade away, at the very latest when christianized barbarians arrived at Rome's gates. We are all familiar with the many variations of this theme. Such a narrative assumes, of course, that the Roman empire and Christianity acted as distinct entities, oil and water, preserving their essential nature even when thrown together. On the one side, the Roman empire of the pagan gods; on the other, Christianity, which was catapulted into the Graeco-Roman world fully formed. Recent scholarship has modified and nuanced this binary model to a considerable degree. Yet, old dichotomies are hard to shake, and the division of the late Roman world into pagans and Christians has proven particularly resilient. This has direct consequences for Julian the writer and his audience, especially his Christian audience.

Julian's Christian contemporaries, men such as Gregory, emphasize the deep gulf separating themselves from those 'on the outside', their 'pagan' relatives, friends, and neighbors. Julian's hostility to his Christian cousin Constantius and all those similarly deluded fairly leaps off the pages of his writings. Modern scholarly disciplines are not conducive to bridging that gulf constructed (*nota bene*) by our sources.[6] Scholars of ancient history commonly end their studies with Constantine's precursor Diocletian (often appending a short last chapter gesturing toward a Roman empire ruled by a Christian and hence no longer part of their intellectual domain). Those who venture further into that Christian Roman realm tend to remain on the safe side of individual emperors and their rule, that is, by studying questions of imperial legislation, administration, and the army, with occasional forays into Christian councils, especially those where imperial involvement is palatable. Here, the emperor Julian provides welcome relief as a 'pagan' emperor and thus 'normal' material for 'real' ancient historians. The strangeness of his paganism (potentially tainted by his Christian upbringing) can be tempered by leaving his philosophical writings, such as his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* or his *Hymn to King Helios*,[7] to philosophers, better equipped to deal with such obscure musings than ancient historians concerned with the *realia* of governance. Alas, most philosophers interested in classical philosophy are just that, so that for many of them Julian's philosophical writings have little to offer, since Julian (as emperor) was no 'professional' philosopher and his writings thus lack originality or system; he was undoubtedly no Iamblichus or Proclus.

With Julian's impact on the writings of his most prominent Christian contemporaries we enter the realm of social historians (who are very

interested in the writings of these men, but not so much in their theology, that is, in the 'philosophical' dimension of these men's literary output where Julian's impact might, after all, be located), and that of theologians and Church historians.[8] The latter two in particular have their own concerns and scholarly traditions, which do not necessarily privilege dedicated searches for the 'pagan' roots of the fundamentals of Christian thought and action. Julian, therefore, makes cameo appearances in more historical studies of Gregory, while most strictly-theological studies devoted to Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea and other contemporaries directly affected by Julian's rule pay no attention to the emperor's writings and thus do not investigate their potential impact.[9]

Of course, all those involved in the study of Late Antiquity, whether from a secular or theological vantage point, labor hard to cross disciplinary boundaries, to disrupt and complicate narratives of triumph and decline, and to soften the divide between non-Christian and Christian, both orthodox and heretical. To speak of 'transformation' has therefore been one of the hallmarks of recent scholarship, and despite welcome and necessary caveats that admittedly somewhat vague term continues to be of heuristic value.[10] To speak of transformation implies a small but significant point: the Roman empire became a Christian Roman empire over time and through numerous incremental steps, in a dynamic process of challenge and response, trial, error, dialogue and fierce debate. Very little was set in stone. Many of the developments we now take for granted need not have turned out the way they did, were it not, for example, for the short reign of Julian and for the long and stable reigns of Theodosius I (379–395) and especially Theodosius II (408–450). But to posit transformation (in our context the transformation of the late Roman elites from pagan to Christian) is one thing, to prove and demonstrate such a process of small but significant adjustments in detail is quite another. The *adventus* of Julian into Constantinople as sole Augustus, his actions, laws and especially his writings and the response they elicited from his audience, as captured by the young man who purposely embraced the 'true philosophical life' only a few months later, was just such an incremental step.

## Julian and Gregory

Emperor Julian's reign lasted a mere 20 months. He died during the night of 26th June 363, fatally wounded on the battlefield while in retreat from Ctesiphon – the ignominious end of his glorious Persian campaign.[11] Yet these 20 months reverberate until today. Ostensibly repulsed by his cousin Constantius, whom Julian accused of having murdered several members of their family in order to secure his rule when Julian was seven years old,

Julian also rejected the Christianity into which he had been born and which he associated with his cousin's criminal deeds. Inspired instead by Plato's definition of the ideal ruler as philosopher king, Julian understood and presented himself as philosopher, priest, and emperor,[12] divinely inspired and called to rule by the gods who had created Greece's greatness, Zeus, Helios the Sun, Athena, Hermes. Therefore, immediately upon his accession, Julian began to publish imperial letters and edicts aimed at strengthening and invigorating the triad he considered the basis of the greatness of Greek culture: *logoi*, *hiera* and the *polis* – Greek language and culture, its gods and all things sacred, and the city as the physical locus of Greek culture, government and religion. These three he also considered the wellspring of Rome's supremacy and hence guarantor of its *imperium*, without which the *oikoumenē* of the Romans could not be safeguarded, far less prosper. For Julian, Rome and its empire was the divinely appointed heir to Greece. In his words:

> the Greek colonies civilized the greater part of the *oikoumenē* thus preparing it to more easily submit to the Romans. For the Romans are not only Greek by origin (οὐ γένος μόνον Ἑλληνικόν), but also the sacred laws and the pious belief in the gods, which they have instituted and preserve, are from beginning to end Greek.[13]

Greek language, culture and learning, worship of the gods that had inspired them all, and the invigoration of the municipalities were therefore Julian's political program. That and the war against Persia; victory where his cousin had failed was to be the ultimate sign that his imperial power had indeed been bestowed *nutu caelesti*, by divine grace (Amm. Marc. 22.2.3).

Part and parcel of that political program was an attempt at re-education. The Christians, so Julian thought, had foolishly deserted – apostate is the Greek term for deserter – the community of educated, civilized men, namely the community of the Greeks and Romans, and the universality they represented because they had succumbed to childish myths about a so-called god. That 'god' was at best responsible for a tiny corner of the vast *oikoumenē*, Galilee, and by adopting him his followers had in fact deserted their Greek and Roman roots to become 'Galilean'. How this myth had fogged their minds Julian could not fathom. It was as if they not only suddenly declared the governor of an insignificant region more powerful than the emperor of the entire known world (following the mistake of the followers of Moses), but then had deserted even that minor lord too 'to worship the corpse of the Jews'.[14] But Julian considered it an important part of his imperial philanthropy 'to teach, but not to punish, the insane',[15] that is, to reintegrate the demented Christians into the universal community of the civilized. One way to achieve that aim was to point

out – by imperial letter with the force of law – that those who did not believe in the gods who had laid the foundation of Greek and Roman civilization, especially its philosophy, could not then use that philosophy to elucidate the simplistic assumption of their myth (for example, how *one* God could be Father, a Son born of a human woman, and a Divine Spirit, elucidations which forced them 'to gnaw at the learning of the Greeks').[16] Such persons could, further, not publicly engage in teaching and living the true philosophical life though they were welcome to expound Matthew and Luke in the churches of the Galileans.[17]

Julian's entire program, but especially the imperial letter concerning Christian teachers of late June or early July 362 (*Ep.* 36), sent shockwaves through the Christian elites. Among those directly affected was Gregory of Nazianzus. He was Christian, he had just returned from advanced study of philosophy at Athens, he had been teaching as a public (though unpaid) rhetorician, and he had decided to embark precisely on the kind of philosophical life now declared unfit for Christians by the new emperor. Julian had grown up not far from Nazianzus (at Macellum, an imperial estate near Caesarea), Gregory had met him at Athens, where both had studied philosophy, and Gregory's younger brother Caesarius was one of Julian's personal physicians.[18] In sum, Gregory had a fair idea what Julian proposed, he had means to gain access to the emperor's writings and pronouncements beyond imperial letters, and he was personally affected by them. The affront Julian's actions, thoughts, and writings represented for Gregory galvanized him into a response with far-reaching consequences. Spurred by Julian's laws, edicts, writings and above all by his self-presentation as Platonic emperor and philosopher-priest, devoted to lead his *oikoumenē*, the empire, to salvation as a servant (really slave) of the true gods of the Greeks and the Romans, Gregory developed his own concept of the Christian leader as philosopher and priest, now in the form of the bishop as servant (really slave) of the God *Logos*. Both followed Plato in considering the philosophical life *the* condition for leadership. Since Julian had proclaimed that those who did not believe in the Gods who had founded Greek philosophy could not use its techniques, for example to define the nature of the Trinity as three in one, Gregory set out to do just that in a manner that took into account Julian's writings on the relationship between the Supreme Divine Father and his Sons (Helios, Apollo, Asclepius etc.). Where Julian had denied that Christianity could be the foundation of Rome's world rule as proven by Constantius' amorality and his corresponding losses in Persia, Gregory sought to show the opposite, especially after the emperor's disastrous death on the Persian battlefields. As I will briefly address below, it is Gregory who

created the image of Julian as 'the Apostate', an image which is still predominant today.

Because Julian sought to force Christians to do without 'pagan' learning, Gregory and other Christians had to acknowledge and grapple with the 'pagan' elements in their ways of thinking as never before. One result was Gregory's entire oeuvre of 45 orations in all classical genres and 19,000 verses in all meters, in which he 'rewrote' the key-concepts of the 'pagans' – Plato's notions of leadership as laid down in the *Republic* and the *Laws*; Aristotle's use of logic; Homeric themes; how Christians should be honored through funeral orations; how to praise emperors, compose letters; write poetry as Christian – to lay the foundations of Byzantine and much western thought.[19] He did so by incorporating Christian elements into the classical matrix. As a result, Gregory became one of the leading intellectuals of his day and one of the most widely read authors of Byzantium – only the Scriptures had a wider manuscript distribution – with a significant impact on such westerners as Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine and pope Gregory the Great. He became none other than Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, the 'Theologian', whose signal contributions to the formulation of the Trinity – 'the God who is one must be preserved and three *hypostaseis* professed, each with its own specific properties (τὸν ἕνα Θεὸν τηρεῖν καὶ τὰς τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις ὁμολογεῖν, καὶ ἑκάστην μετὰ τῆς ἰδιότητος)' (Greg. Naz. *Or.* 2.38) – dominated Christian doctrine for generations and made him one of the three Hierarchs of the Orthodox Church (and a favorite of Pope Benedict XVI). And the emperor was henceforth Julian 'the Apostate'.[20]

**Historiography once more – Pagan vs. Christian**

Paradoxically, however, Gregory's very success as 'the Theologian' and one of the leading Fathers of the Christian Church as a whole turned him – historiographically speaking – into a somewhat marginal figure. Scholars consider him so Christian, so passionately devoted to philosophical retreat and pure thought, as to be constitutionally incapable of functioning in the real world of Church and other politics. In fact, if (influenced, for example, by Max Weber or Hans von Campenhausen) one considers normative the bishop as an institutional figurehead wedded to one see and characterized by his sacramental functions, then Gregory was indeed an abject ecclesiastical failure.[21] He was a reluctant priest and a lack-luster adjunct bishop. After his ordination as bishop of Sasima he refused to assume his duties – he never even went there, though the place was close by. Instead he disappeared for three years of retreat, from where he emerged – somewhat inexplicably for modern scholars – as the leader of the

'orthodox' Christian congregation in Constantinople in 379. Less than a year later, the new emperor Theodosius I made him bishop of the capital, but a mere nine months after that, while presiding at the first ecumenical council of 381, Gregory resigned, left Constantinople, and retired to his estate near Nazianzus.[22] Fits and starts, which have garnered him scholarly characterizations as sensitive soul and a *romantique avant la lettre* or as an indecisive, pusillanimous, and labile man, who simply could not make up his mind and stick with it.[23] These near-canonical scholarly characterizations of Gregory as gifted theologian but 'weltfremder' man and disastrous bishop were also what piqued my own curiosity. Could a man, made bishop of Constantinople at a very tense time by the mandate of the very emperor Theodosius who made catholic Christianity the *religio* of the entire realm – could such a man really have been such a clueless loser?

My answer is 'No', but to arrive at that conclusion required first an opening of the Christian bubble in which scholars have sealed Gregory so hermetically. What if, say, Gregory had not just contemplated the Christian Scriptures in solitary splendor, but had actually read Julian's writings and responded to them? Which would mean that he had shaped his concept of the bishop as philosopher, alternating periods of active political involvement with those of retreat and writing, in direct response to Julian's claim to embody just such a philosopher as leader. A possibility, I should point out, categorically excluded by nearly all scholars who have ever published on Gregory, with the exception of Leonardo Lugaresi and Ugo Criscuolo.[24] And yet, that was the case. This was the model of the orthodox Christian bishop Gregory had first delineated in the apology I mentioned above, his famous *Oration* 2, entitled by the manuscript editors 'Apology for his Flight' or 'On the Priesthood'. This was the model he propagated time and again in his subsequent orations, a model that became normative for Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great – and Julian had been the catalyst for this model.

To puncture Gregory's Christian bubble required a similar operation on the part of Julian, for his part encased in the historiographical bubble of the pagan 'Apostate' intent on persecuting Christians, albeit in a somewhat more subtle manner than by throwing them to the lions.[25] Julian had been brought up Christian: George of Cappadocia, later bishop of Alexandria, had been among his teachers. But, to cite Klaus Rosen, 'there is no trace of his Christianity to be found in his rather obtuse philosophical speculations'.[26] As a consequence of this view, which Rosen shares with other scholars engaged with Julian, there is little reason to mention a single work of Gregory in connection with the emperor – with the exception of Gregory's two invectives against Julian which I will address shortly. Thus,

Julian's precise knowledge of the Christian debates of his time, and his engagement in these debates through his ('pagan') philosophical and other writings have not been elucidated, nor as a consequence has the Christian response to that 'pagan' challenge, which was as significant as the challenge had been. Therefore, despite the enormous scholarly attention lavished on Julian, scholarship has not truly investigated *all* of his writings – including his philosophical works. It has only scratched the surface of the actual impact of Julian's writings on his contemporaries, that is, on the thoughts and writings of the emperor's Christian contemporaries, also known as the Fathers of the Church, who were then formulating the tenets of orthodoxy.[27] Julian's works have not been fully appreciated, for instance, by historians with 'an active interest in secular aspects of the end of the Roman world, such as its political, economic and military history', and who are thus understandably reluctant to probe Julian's philosophy for Christian influences.[28] Nor have they been appreciated by theologians and most church historians, who are reluctant for equally understandable reasons to concede that Gregory may have read a single piece of writing by the emperor, even when he cites its title, had a brother at court, and claims that the emperor targeted him and Basil of Caesarea especially because he had known them since their days in Athens (*Or.* 5.39), and despite the fact that Gregory's entire oeuvre does in fact respond to Julian's writings point by point.[29]

**Creating the Apostate**

To add substance to my remarks, I would like to discuss briefly some aspects of the two orations by Gregory discussed both by all historians concerned with Julian and all church historians concerned with Gregory, namely Gregory's *Orations* 4 and 5. These are the famous 'invectives' in which Gregory 'created' Julian as *the Apostate*. For many, they stand symptomatic for Gregory and his value as a historical source. 'Simultaneously hysterical and pedantic, fiercely caustic and pompously ponderous' (according to Raymond Van Dam), these literary products exhibit above all their author's lack of historical sensibility.[30] Church historians also dislike these orations since 'this kind of joyful scalp dance on the body of a dead enemy of yesterday is somewhat embarrassing'.[31] Indeed, it is a challenge to integrate the picture of a happily dancing Gregory, swinging Julian's bloody scalp, with that of the 'sweet and gentle man', paragon of a 'spirit of high culture, brilliant and gracious, a sweet and tender soul through a lack of practical sense, perhaps, badly armed to sustain the battles into which the hazards of life will throw him' – the historiographical Gregory in a nutshell.[32]

In fact, the metaphor of the dance with the scalp is apt. Gregory's orations against Julian were a performance piece. First, Gregory explicitly and emphatically did not wish to write history (*Or.* 4.20). Second, he claimed to perform a sacred ritual. His orations were a *panegyric,* a celebratory hymn (*Or.* 4.7, 4.8; *Or.* 5.35) and a 'bloodless sacrifice of words to the Word', Christ, the *Logos* (*Or.* 4.3). As such his performance stood in sharp contrast to that of the emperor. While Gregory' oration performed a sacred ritual, Julian's entire reign had been nothing but theater, a 'fiction without any roots in reality' (*Or.* 4.113 and 114), 'making one laugh rather than cry' (*Or.* 4.78). Gregory's aim was to make Julian lose face and so he presented the man and his rule as histrionics. And through his performance of Julian's past as theater Gregory, as it turned out, formed his future. His picture of Julian's reign shaped historiography more than anything the emperor had ever done or written in the short twenty months of his reign.

Though usually treated as one piece, Gregory wrote the two orations against Julian over one year apart and for different, albeit overlapping, audiences. *Oration* 4, prepared while Julian was still alive but completed after the emperor's death, probably in 364 during the first months of Valentinian I's and Valens' rule, addressed an (intended) audience more concerned with the theological controversies that so dominated the early 360s. *Oration* 5, in contrast, was written during the interlude of Procopius' usurpation (365–366), and uses the specter of Julian and the glorification of his memory by men such as Libanius – after all Julian was a duly divinized legitimate Roman ruler – to argue against Procopius and in favor of Valens. It thus enters a debate regarding the legitimacy of Julian's successors. Both orations, despite their differences, address an audience consisting, so far as we can tell, of members of the new service elite then in the process of becoming an empire-wide aristocracy. These men, many of whom sat in the new Constantinopolitan senate, were scions of the native municipal elites, such as Gregory's brother Caesarius.[33] Most of these men were Christian, and it was for their benefit that Gregory formulated in these two orations the correct ways in which, as Christian public men, they ought to conduct themselves and the affairs of the *politeia*.

As his two orations against Julian reveal, Gregory shared Julian's assessment regarding the centrality of *logoi*, *hiera* and the *polis*, Greek culture, the sacred and the city. He also saw them as intrinsically linked with each other as well as foundational for the well-being of the Roman empire, the *oikoumenē* of the Romans – both Julian and Gregory use the same terms. Gregory differed sharply, of course, with regard to the divinity that had originated all three, four if we count the empire. Those whom Julian had considered gods, Gregory considered demons, and the figure Julian had

declared to be the pseudo-divinity of a marginal people was Gregory's universal *pantokratōr*: a small but significant difference. As a result, Julian had, according to Gregory, misconstrued the sacred, with the consequence that his understanding of *logoi* and the *polis* was equally faulty. In a private person such a mistake might be merely reprehensible, but in an emperor, 'such comportment alone suffices to pillory (*stēliteusai*) the moral character of a ruler', because a ruler's comportment affects the fundamentals of the state (*Or.* 4.81). And that is one of the central issues at stake in Gregory's allegedly a-historic orations: the Roman empire (*archē*), the roots of its power, and the manner in which the community of the Romans ought to be governed – according to Gregory (*Or.* 4.74). To clarify his views regarding these matters, Gregory focused on the most central places in which the emperor performed imperial rule and where his impact on the triad *logoi*, *hiera* and *polis* was most directly visible: the theater and the market place.

The theater – as is well known and was abundantly clear to Gregory – was of crucial importance for the self-representation and self-constitution of any city. Here the city's elites were seated in hierarchical order and proportional overabundance, viewing the results of their own financial munificence as they were observed in so doing by the non-elites (*Or.* 4.113). In addition, the theater was 'the primary vehicle for the inculcation of classical culture' because here mimes and pantomimes performed the tragedies and comedies as well as all the essential myths regarding the gods of the Greeks and Romans: the essence of *logoi* and the *hiera*.[34] These very same *logoi* and the *hiera* at their center were what Julian had sought to reinvigorate, albeit not their theatrical performance. That interpretation was Gregory's obvious defamation. Like many intellectuals, Julian and Gregory shared the ambivalence the theater evoked.[35] It was powerful and attractive, it transmitted Greek culture, but it did so in a popular, mocking, and often rather licentious fashion. To be a mime and pantomime was considered shameful, *infamus*.[36] Theater was by its very nature dissimulation, fiction, lie. To call Julian's entire reign nothing but theater (*Or.* 4.113) said it all.[37] Julian had erected 'a polis constructed of words' that could not be sustained by deeds, because it lacked 'the force of a system that is derived from divine inspiration' (*Or.* 4.44, 4.113; Pl. *Resp.* 369c). All of Julian's imperial acts were simulations of reality destined to be fleeting – recall that the men whom Gregory here addressed, all Christian, were also the ones who continued to fund just such theatrical games for public enjoyment and at immense costs to themselves.[38]

Gregory's argument works on several levels. First, if Julian's acts and deeds, including his legislative acts and deeds, were 'theater', demonically inspired dissimulations destined to be transitory, then Gregory's words



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were 'reality' rooted in deeds and lasting because they expressed a divinely inspired system. Thus, his words overwrote Julian's (legislative) acts and deeds. Second, in a long treatment of the nature of the myths portrayed in the theater, myths so dear to Julian, Gregory dismantled the religious and thus ethical foundations upon which Julian's transient '*polis*' – that is, his rule – rested. Like their theater performances, the myths of Julian's gods were devoid of all the ethical prerequisites of appropriate rule, such as restraint, justice, prudence, philanthropy, and, above all, piety; no wonder, therefore, that Julian's disastrous performance as ruler showed such deficiencies (*Or.* 4.113–123). For, third, Gregory's attack aimed not only at Julian's deeds and works but also at his person. Gregory knew that Julian personally disdained the theater almost as much as he did, and for similar reasons. Julian considered the mockery of the Gods and the licentious displays of their myths shameful. And he had made his feelings known, for example in the *Antiochikos* or *Misopogon*, which Gregory cited by title in his *Oration* 5.41.[39] Of course, Julian's actual attitude towards the theater was of no consequence. At every stage Gregory sought to portray the emperor as a bad actor who did not comport himself as a real emperor should. When Gregory had first laid eyes on Julian in Athens and observed him twittering and twitching, he could already divine what the future would bring:

> What more can I say? I looked at the man prior to his deeds and recognized him by them...and I said to [my companions]: 'what disaster is the Roman state nurturing here!'[40]

The theater was a place where the emperor interacted directly with his subjects, where he performed imperial rule and was seen doing so. It was also one of the places where imperial letters and decrees were received and read aloud in a highly ritualized manner as if the emperor were present.[41] A second site where the same interaction occurred was the *agora*, the market place, and it is here too, of course, that Gregory engaged Julian.

Even though they are usually characterized as invectives, and even though he followed the structural demands of that genre, Gregory himself emphatically declared that his *Orations* 4 and 5 against Julian were not invectives, because he considered himself incapable of writing a *psogos* that could do justice to Julian's misdeeds (*Or.* 4.79). The distinction is relevant. By explicitly foregoing the genre *psogos* (as well as that of history) Gregory also chose to forego the role of the prosecutor arguing his case to elicit a conviction (the generic conceit characteristic of the *psogos*).[42] Instead, he called his orations a '*stēlographia*', a 'writing-on-a-stēlē' or pillar (*Or.* 4.20). As Alois Kurmann has pointed out, the term is a neologism deriving from

the verb *stēliteuein*, to inscribe the name of convicted criminals after their execution onto a pillar in the market place. Persons thus inscribed or pilloried were marked and shamed forever and for all to see.[43] In Gregory's eyes, thus, Julian had already received his sentence. By divine decree he had been convicted and executed in the theater of war. God had been prosecutor, judge and executioner. Gregory merely proclaimed the sentence and explicated it to all present and to those in the future. Anticipating Augustine in the *City of God* (5.21), that God grants earthly rule both to the pious and to the impious, but that he does so advisedly, Gregory's oration provided a providential explanation for Julian's rule and the calamity it entailed for the entire community of the empire. God had permitted Julian's rise to chastise the Christians, who had not used their new power wisely. But, he had also decreed his demise by ensuring that his rule was as transient as a theater performance.

That Gregory called this sentence a 'writing-on-a-stēlē', furthermore, draws attention to the act of *stēliteuein* as a public proclamation of legal acts. Such public proclamations were the domain of those who ruled. On just such pillars in the public places Julian's edict and imperial letters had been posted, including the *Misopogon*, in which Julian had presented himself as the embodiment of the just Platonic philosopher-king outlined in the *Laws*, or his famous letter excluding Christians from *logoi*. Gregory's *Oration* 4, consequently, labors hard to showcase Julian as the embodiment of the unjust ruler, whose legislation cannot be allowed to stand since it is driven by mistaken assumptions of justice, lack of ethical fiber and above all bad craftsmanship as shown in the incorrect use of grammar and rhetoric that led Julian to exclude Christians from 'speaking Greek' (*Or.* 4.100–107). In his metaphorical counter-stēlē Gregory – in a performative act of his own – overwrote all of Julian's acts and most of his concepts, one by one. And while Julian's words, written on stone, would pass like dried grass, Gregory's words though written on flimsy linen or wax tablets would last:

> Here our *stēlē* for you, higher and more visible than those of Hercules, because those are merely planted in one place and are visible only to those who go there. This *stēlē* instead cannot but move about and make itself known to all. It will even be received in the future, of that I am certain, to pillory you and your works and to teach everyone not to attempt such a rebellion 'apostasy' against God, so that they may not be punished in like manner for having committed similar crimes.[44]

**Emperor and priest**

Julian was a deserter (*apostate*) whom God had judged and condemned to execution in war. In so doing God had issued a stern warning regarding the

conduct of imperial rule and of the governance of the *oikoumenē* of the Romans. What was at stake for Gregory was in fact the relationship between Christian God, emperor, and priest. By calling his discourse a 'writing on a stēlē', Gregory signaled that he was posting a divine decree that overwrote imperial ones. And by attacking Julian as lacking imperial *gravitas* and the crucial capability of acting as a just Roman imperial legislator, he at the same time defined what being a true and just Christian emperor entailed. To further highlight his point, Gregory juxtaposed Julian's negative image with a positive portrayal of his cousin Constantius as the paragon of an ideal Christian ruler. Constantius' sole fault had been too much philanthropy out of which he had permitted Julian to survive (*Or.* 4.3).[45] Other than that, Constantius 'knew very well, because he reflected upon such things in a manner more elevated and imperial than most, that the Roman power had grown together with Christianity and that the *imperium* arrived together with Christ' (*Or.* 4.37). To assure the greatness of the empire thus required the appropriate nurturing of all things Christian, the unity of Christian teaching (or *orthodoxa*); the appropriate protection of Christian *hiera*, and, of course, the creation through tax exemptions, removal of 'pagan' symbols, and so on, of the Christian *polis*. Julian, this 'best of all governors of the commonwealth' (*Or.* 4.74), had failed to realize that to eradicate Christianity, 'now that it ruled sovereign', was 'to rip out the roots of Roman rule and to place the entire commonwealth into grave danger' all because of his newfangled philosophy on the throne, which brought nothing but disorder and war.

Gregory, to recall, wrote these two orations during the reign of Julian's successors who were all Christian. But much remained uncertain: how would these new emperors comport themselves as Christian emperors? Julian's edicts needed to be rescinded, but would the new emperors do that given that he had been a legitimate and duly divinized emperor? How would *they* treat Christian *logoi*? After all, Julian had been raised as a Christian from childhood, but he had deserted. Instead of adhering to what his priests and bishops had taught him, he had gone off to invent his own *logoi* – a stern warning to Christian emperors not to deviate from the words of their bishops such as Gregory. And what about the theater and the marketplace? How was a Christian emperor to comport himself there? For example, as Neil McLynn has so persuasively pointed out, the manner in which a Christian emperor should perform imperially in the new theater – the church – was at that point entirely unclear: how was one to integrate the emperor into the liturgy?[46] And by the time of *Oration* 5 the issue had become even more pressing: Procopius, after all, had justified his usurpation against Valens because of his shared dynastic lineage with Julian

and Constantine the Great. A call to support Valens instead (as which *Oration* 5 in fact functions) had therefore to be very convincing indeed.[47]

To conclude, characterizing Julian as a bad actor performing badly the part of a ruler allowed Gregory to achieve a number of aims. It permitted him to define what he considered appropriate Christian rule by opposing Julian and Constantius, tyrannical and just legislation, disastrous and justified conduct of war, appropriate behavior in the *agora* and its opposite. And it allowed him to do far more. Gregory also used the theater to attack Julian's understanding of myth as the emperor had defined it in his writings against Heraclius[48] and in his two hymns to the Mother of the Gods and to King Helios. In so doing, Gregory addressed at the same time emerging debates regarding the correct exegesis of the Bible, literally or allegorically, which also erupted as a consequence of Julian's views on myth and its allegorical interpretations.[49] Further, Gregory used arguments he had sharpened in *Oration* 4 against Julian's use of 'being Greek' (*hellēnizein*) against Eunomius and other Christians he considered heretical or 'Arian' in his famous so-called *Theological Orations*. Perhaps most importantly, by associating a number of ways of acting and arguing as a Greek person with the emperor Julian, Gregory created '*hellēnizein*' as a way of being Greek henceforth clearly delineated as Julianic and thus not acceptable for his audience. At the same time he also clarified that what remained of being and speaking Greek, including its philosophy (the true *logoi*), and the shape of the *polis* as configured by Gregory, was 'ours', i.e. Christian, and had been so since the beginning. After all, the *imperium* of the Romans had begun with Christ. Hellene, as we know, became the equivalent of pagan.[50]

Point by point, argument by argument, Gregory's orations counter Julian and his notions. What is true for *Orations* 4 and 5 also applies to the rest of Gregory's phenomenally influential oeuvre. Julian's rule, then, may have been a transient theater performance, but the effect of his writings on his Christian audience proved to be of a magnitude that has yet to be fully appreciated. Bringing Julian's and Gregory's writings into dialogue shows that both men had far more in common than divided them: merely the definition of the divinity that had created Greek and Roman supremacy. Integral for all and to everything these men thought and wrote was the 'pagan learning' they all shared. Phrased differently, without paganism no Christianity, without Julian's writings no Gregory the Theologian. And what is true for Gregory's writings also applies to a number of his important contemporaries and successors. Thus, paradoxical though it may sound, through the Christian (and especially Gregory's) response to the pagan Apostate's writings, Julian became in effect yet another Father of the Church.

**Acknowledgements**
I would like to thank Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher for the wonderful conference in Cardiff dedicated to Julian the writer, at which this paper was presented. I benefited enormously.

**Notes**

[1] For Julian's rise see now Tougher 2007, 16–21, 31–43. The view of Szidat 1997 that Julian was technically not a usurper has not found widespread scholarly acceptance. For Julian's *Letter to the Athenians* see the chapter by Mark Humphries in this volume. For a comprehensive account of Julian's reign see Rosen 2006.

[2] See now the important contributions in Schäfer 2008.

[3] For a summary of the scholarly debates regarding this edict see Germino 2004.

[4] For Julian's *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* see the chapter by J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz in this volume.

[5] The essential discussion of *paideia* in Late Antiquity continues to be Brown 1992. See also the contributions in Borg 2004.

[6] See Elm 2003 for additional bibliography, as well as Elm 2012. For approaches to Julian the philosopher see the remarks in Bouffartigue 1992; O'Meara 2003; and now Schäfer 2008 and Cürsgen 2008.

[7] For the *Hymn to King Helios* see the chapter by Andrew Smith in this volume.

[8] For a social historical approach see especially Van Dam 2002a, 2002b and 2003; and the important papers now collected in McLynn 2009. See also McGuckin 2001 and Gautier 2002.

[9] The best and most recent work devoted to Gregory's theology is Beeley 2008.

[10] See in particular Ward-Perkins 2005; Kelly 2009.

[11] Matthews 1989, 181; Tougher 2007, 63–71.

[12] E.g. *Ep. ad Them.* 267a. For Julian's *Letter to Themistius* see the chapter by John Watt in this volume.

[13] *Or.* 4 152d–153a.

[14] *C. Gal.* fr. 36 171e; fr. 43 194d. For Julian's *Against the Galileans* see the chapter by David Hunt in this volume.

[15] *Ep.* 36 (for the numbering of Julian's letters I follow the Loeb Classical Library edition of Julian's writings by W. C. Wright).

[16] *C. Gal.* fr. 55 229c–d.

[17] *Ep.* 36.

[18] For Gregory's engagement as rhetorician after returning from Athens see McLynn 2006, 220–4; for biographic details see Beeley 2008, 7–14.

[19] Daley 2006, 1–61.

[20] For Gregory's reception of the honorific 'the Theologian', and for his later impact, see McGuckin 2001, xxii–vii, 399–402.

[21] For an overview of scholarly constructions of the bishop see now the seminal work by Rapp 2005, esp. 3–22 and 24–33; also Sterk 2004, esp. 119–40. Still foundational is Campenhausen 1953.

[22] Beeley 2008, 3–16, 34–62.

[23] For bibliographic details see Elm 2009, 281–2.

[24] Lugaresi 1993, 15, and 1997; Criscuolo 1987, 205.

[25] Tougher 2007, 55–62, for a discussion of scholarly views.

[26] Rosen 2006, 287, translation mine.

[27] What has been studied is the tip of the iceberg: decidedly anti-Julianic texts such as Gregory's orations *Against Julian* (Orr. 4 and 5) and other direct responses to Julian's writings, especially to his *Against the Galileans*, most notably by Cyril of Alexandria.

[28] Ward-Perkins 2005, 180.

[29] Elm 2012. There are notable exceptions, especially Thome 2004, and García Garrido 2000.

[30] Quasten 1974, 242; Bowersock 1978, 5, considers Gregory's work a useful collection of gossip; Van Dam 2002b, 194–5.

[31] 'cette espèce de danse allègre du scalp sur le corps d'un ennemi mort de la veille a quelque chose de gênant': Bernardi 1978a, 91, trans. mine.

[32] '...esprit de haute culture, brilliant et grâcieux, âme douce et tendre, mal armée, faute peut-être de sens pratique, pour soutenir les luttes dans lesquelles le hazard de la vie le jettera': P. Godet as cited by Lugaresi 1993, 13–14, trans. mine.

[33] For the dating see Elm 2012, Bernardi 1983, 11–37, and Lugaresi 1993, 39–48, whose suggestions concerning a later date for Or. 5 I am following. Sarris 2004, esp. 62; Banaji 2001, 49–51.

[34] Leyerle 2001, 13–20, quote 18.

[35] Compare denunciations of the Roman senators' lust for the theater in Lugaresi 2003, 299.

[36] Lim 2003, 87–91.

[37] As Gregory elaborates in *Or.* 4.113–19, Julian's claim to Greek culture and the sacred was nothing but a recourse to the 'fictions and vain words of the poets' (*Or.* 4.118), particularly those of 'Homer...the great comediograph, or better tragediograph of your gods' (*Or.* 4.116).

[38] Lim 2003, 84–6; also Sarris 2004, 63.

[39] For Julian's *Misopogon* see the chapter by Nicholas Baker-Brian in this volume.

[40] *Or.* 5.32. This is the famous and widely quoted characterization of Julian's physique; Bowersock 1978, 12; Rosen 2006, 18.

[41] Matthews 2000, 195–9.

[42] Koster 1980, 7–17, 38–9, focuses on Latin authors but is nonetheless fundamental (he does not treat Christian writers).

[43] Kurmann 1988, 19–20.

[44] *Or.* 5.42.

[45] Note that in Julian's *Misopogon* (357b) he asserts that Constantius did the Antiochenes harm in one thing, not executing Julian when he had appointed him Caesar.

[46] McLynn 2004, 235–6.

[47] A few years later Gregory reversed the call to support Valens, of course, as evident in his famous description of the somewhat hostile encounter between an emperor and a bishop in a church. Again, Gregory used the term stēlē. Now the bishop, Basil, was the solid pillar and the public display of power took place in the church. Lo and behold, the emperor, now Valens, twitched again. The winner was, of course, the bishop Basil (*Or.* 43.52).

[48] For Julian's attack on the Cynic Heraclius (*Or.* 7) see the chapter by Arnaldo Marcone in this volume.

[49] As shown in Thome 2004, an excellent monograph.

[50] Elm 2010a.

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# READING BETWEEN THE LINES: JULIAN'S *FIRST PANEGYRIC* ON CONSTANTIUS II

*Shaun Tougher*

## Introduction

Of all Julian's writings it is probably safe to say that his panegyrics have excited least interest.[1] This may have been because of the dim view traditionally taken of this type of literature (witness Syme's verdict on Pliny the Younger's speech of thanks to Trajan, that it 'has done no good to the reputation of the author or the taste of the age'),[2] but also because of the unseemly scenario of Julian flattering his cousin the emperor Constantius II (337–361), the man held responsible for the deaths of so many of Julian's relatives (not least his half-brother the Caesar Gallus, executed in 354). However, in the course of the twentieth century there was a sea-change in the attitude to panegyric, from one of instinctive distaste to one of greater understanding and appreciation, a development which shows no signs of abating in the twenty-first century.[3] Further, it has been realised that Julian's panegyrics (and his writings in general) should not necessarily be taken at face value. This is true in particular of the *Second Panegyric on Constantius II* (*Or.* 2): Polymnia Athanassiadi detected in the speech an 'auto-panegyrical flavour', while Florin Curta developed this notion further and interpreted it as 'a veritable political program of the future emperor'.[4] The character of Julian's *Speech of Thanks to the Empress Eusebia* (*Or.* 3) (Constantius' wife) as supposedly sincere and spontaneous has been questioned, and it has been argued that beneath its surface are found deeper, more personal concerns, as well as criticism of the regime of Julian's cousin.[5] These conclusions about the other two panegyrics suggest that the *First Panegyric on Constantius II* (*Or.* 1) deserves to be considered with a sharper eye.[6] This is the objective of the present chapter. I will begin by establishing and scrutinising accepted truths about the date and context of the panegyric before concentrating especially on the question of the models Julian used for his speech. These issues all bring into focus my key question: how should we read Julian's *First Panegyric on Constantius*?



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**Accepted truths**

To start with, let us establish key accepted truths about the text, all found in Joseph Bidez's classic assessment of it. It has been dated to the early years of Julian's Caesarship. In the speech Julian himself alludes to his appointment to the Caesarship (6th November 355) in the aftermath of Constantius II successfully crushing usurpers in the west in the 350s; Julian focuses mainly on the cases of Vetranio and Magnentius, but also refers to the suppression of Silvanus. Thus some have tied the speech closely to Julian's elevation to the Caesarship in Milan, and have asserted that it was written before his departure for Gaul in December.[7] However, in the speech Julian also asserts that he has not as yet conducted a military campaign of his own, but has only shared in one of Constantius, which has led to AD 356, prior to the capture of Cologne in that year, being proposed as the date of the speech.[8] Yet the panegyric has also been placed in the context of specific military and political events in 356–357: the failure of the Master of Cavalry Marcellus to relieve Julian at Sens (where he was wintering) and the subsequent allegations of Marcellus against Julian at Constantius' court in Milan (accusing the Caesar of arrogance and 'strengthening his wings so as to rise up higher')[9] as well as the concomitant mission of Julian's chamberlain the eunuch Eutherius to the court, to defend the Caesar. It has been suggested that the panegyric came with Eutherius to Milan, and was designed to convince Constantius of Julian's trustworthiness and loyalty: in effect, the panegyric has been read as diplomatic in character, a deliberate attempt to secure the favour of the emperor.[10]

Regarding the literary nature of the speech, it has been declared that Julian has followed closely the model laid down for composing *basilikoi logoi* in the rhetorical handbook attributed to Menander Rhetor (see below and the Appendix).[11] Wilmer Cave Wright asserts that Julian 'follows with hardly a deviation the rules for the arrangement and treatment of a speech in praise of an emperor...as we find them in Menander's handbook', while Bidez observes that the speech was composed 'suivant toutes les règles de l'art; on dirait même que Julien...avait sous les yeux un traité analogue aux conseils de Ménandre'.[12] Indeed Athanassiadi pronounced that the

> panegyric follows so faithfully the model...that it arouses the suspicion that its author saw in slavish imitation the only way of absolving himself from the charge of lying. By refusing to make intelligent use of the ready-made model before his eyes he proclaimed unambiguously that his true self...was not participating in the composition of this disgraceful panegyric.[13]

She also described it as a work of 'studied unoriginality'.[14] In addition, it is often remarked that Julian had certain other models in mind when he wrote

his speech, in particular speeches written by the oratorical giants of his day, Themistius and Libanius.[15] Themistius especially was associated with praising Constantius II. He addressed his oration *On Love of Mankind* (*Or.* 1) to the emperor in person at Ancyra, probably in 347 (though possibly in 350), a speech which also goes by the title *Constantius*.[16] He took the emperor as his subject again in 355, in his *Speech of Thanks to Constantius* (*Or.* 2), written in response to his adlection to the Senate of Constantinople by the emperor.[17] This speech was not delivered in person, for in 355 Constantius was in the west. Interestingly the speech touches on Julian directly as by that date he had been chosen as Caesar,[18] and of course Themistius also wrote a letter (*protrepticus*) to Julian on his appointment as Caesar.[19] As for Libanius, probably in 348/9 he had delivered a panegyric on Constantius and his brother Constans (*Or.* 59) at Nicomedia, though neither emperor was present.[20] These three orations are considered to have been literary models for Julian's first speech on Constantius II, and it is notable that Julian sent a copy of his panegyric to Libanius; Bidez assumed that Themistius also received a copy.[21]

**Deconstruction time**

Let us begin by scrutinising the issues of dating and context more closely, before concentrating especially on the question of Julian's models. Regarding the date of the speech, it is clear that Julian is already Caesar, but the question of which joint campaign with Constantius he is referring to is a live one since the details of his early career have been problematised by Vanderspoel. Vanderspoel has suggested that, prior to becoming Caesar, Julian had already been involved with his cousin in a campaign against the Alamanni, in 354.[22] Thus the *First Panegyric* could indeed date to late 355, rather than 356. However, if that was the case, it seems rather odd that the speech does not emphasise more Julian's elevation to the Caesarship and make of it a *Speech of Thanks*, akin to his *Speech of Thanks to Eusebia*, written after a visit of the empress to Rome in 356.[23] Regarding the dating of the panegyric to 357 Tantillo has also associated it with this year, but in a rather different context to the one usually imagined.[24] He connects it with Constantius' triumphal visit to Rome in April and May 357, celebrating his victory over Magnentius, and suggests that Julian's wife Helena brought the speech (as well as the one for Eusebia) with her to Rome. This is certainly an intriguing hypothesis, but I would still lean towards favouring 356 because of the reference to the lack of an independent military campaign.[25] However, what deserves to be emphasised more than issues of dating is that the panegyric is Julian's first major extant literary work, unless one dates his *Letter to Themistius* to 355/6 rather than 361/2.[26] Even if the