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LIBANIUS
SELECTED ORATIONS
VOLUME I



Translated by
A. F. NORMAN

LIBANI

SELECTED ORATIONS

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VOLUME I

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

臧书章



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LIBANIUS

ORATIONS

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PREFACE

THE present volume contains all the orations of Libanius that bear directly on the career of Julian, with the exception of the fragmentary *Oration* 60 (*The Monody on the Temple at Daphne*). A volume of orations of the post-Julianic period and one of selected letters will complete the whole.

The reduction of the massive corpus of the works of Libanius into the confines of a three volume selection necessarily involves a choice that may appear invidious. It has, for instance, proved impossible to include any of those declamations for which Libanius was renowned in his lifetime and among the Byzantines generally, or of the *Hypotheses* of the orations of Demosthenes, upon which his fame rested until fairly recent years. Considerations of space also preclude the insertion of two highly individual compositions, *Orations* 11 and 1 (*The Antiochikos* and the *Autobiography*), but English translations of these are readily available (*cf.* Bibliography). The criterion of selection has been the relevance of these compositions to the understanding of the life and society of his age and of the development of his career and personality. On both counts the orations on Julian are of the highest importance.

The text is based on Foerster's magisterial work
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on the manuscripts described in his Teubner Edition, but since several of the standard works of reference, those of Sievers and Seeck, for instance, antedate Foerster's work, it has been necessary to supplement his paging and sections by reference, in the Orations, to the pagination of Reiske's edition and, for the Letters, to the enumeration of Wolf, to enable the reader to pick a way through the rather cumbersome combination of reference characteristic of more recent works on Libanius.

In the typing of this volume my thanks are due to Mrs. K. W. Peacock for her ready and invaluable assistance.

A. F. N.

INTRODUCTION

ON July 18th A.D. 362 Julian arrived in Antioch for his final preparations for the Persian campaign, to be greeted with a mixture of emotions by the inhabitants and an air of expectant unease.

Julian was born in A.D. 331, son of Constantine's half-brother; his mother died at his birth and his father in the murders following Constantine's death in A.D. 337, which only he and his elder brother Gallus escaped. Responsibility for the massacre he always laid firmly at the door of his cousin Constantius II. As princes of the blood and therefore objects of suspicion, the two boys owed their preservation to the Christian church and, in particular, to the Arian bishop, Eusebius. After his death, in A.D. 341/2,^a they were relegated to a quasi-exile on the imperial estate of Macellum in Cappadocia, and there Julian languished for six years. The early literary

^a Seeck's dating of the Macellum period to A.D. 345/51 (*Untergang*, iv, pp. 205 ff.) accepted by Festugière (*Antioche*, p. 64) is disproved by Lib. *Or.* 18. 13 ff.—the account of Julian's relations with Libanius in Nicomedeia. Libanius was there in the period A.D. 344/9, and the only time, on Seeck's view, for this acquaintance to be made is therefore A.D. 344/5. But at the age of 13/14, Julian had not yet reached the age for rhetor training, and the term *πρόσηβος* is inapplicable. Bidez (*Vie*, pp. 38 f., 55) and Baynes (*J.H.S.* 45, 1925, pp. 251 ff.) adopt the dating 342/7 for Macellum, and this allows Julian to be in Nicomedeia at the end of Libanius' term, and at an age when attendance at a rhetor was normal.

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education, begun in Constantinople under his pedagogue Mardonius, was here consolidated and amplified by due instruction in Christian practice and doctrine, so that Julian, enthusiastic and visionary, could at this time aspire to the priesthood. The Arian George of Cappadocia furthered his studies by the loan of items from his library, including works of pagan, and particularly of neo-Platonist, philosophy, so giving Julian his first insight into an entirely new world of experience and exciting his eager curiosity.

The sojourn at Macellum ended after Gallus was summoned to court in A.D. 347. Julian returned to Constantinople where he attended Nicocles' school, but for all his discreet deportment he could not fail to attract attention. He was once again packed off to Nicomedeia under his teacher and watch-dog, Hecebolius—contact with Libanius, the Sophist there, being forbidden him.

In A.D. 351 his position was suddenly changed, with the elevation of Gallus to the rank of Caesar, and for the first time he could pursue his interests without interference. The illicit readings of neo-Platonism now bore fruit, and he betook himself first to Pergamum, and thence to Maximus of Ephesus for instruction and conversion. His attachment to the doctrines and practice of the neo-Platonist thaumaturges was immediate and final.^a Henceforth Maximus was his mentor, the forbidden rituals of initiation, purification and divination of a militant paganism were his inspiration. He succeeded in keeping his apostasy secret, but he was inevitably involved in the disgrace and fall of his brother

^a Related by Eunapius, *V.S.* 473 ff., dated by his own reference to A.D. 351, *E.L.F.* No. 111.

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Gallus (for which *cf.* Amm. Marc. Bk. 14). Some idea of the prolonged strain under which he laboured can be gathered from the bitter narrative of his *Letter to the Athenians*. In autumn A.D. 354, he was summoned to court at Milan, the target for the innuendo and malice of the ruling clique among the courtiers, and there he cooled his heels for some time, never entirely free from danger and denied access to his cousin until the Empress Eusebia unexpectedly took up his cause. In consequence Constantius' suspicions were allayed, and early in A.D. 355, to his great delight, Julian was sent to Athens to further his studies. Here his association with the neo-Platonist Priscus served to confirm the work begun by Maximus in Ephesus, and that with Basil and Gregory was to result in the uncharitable exaggeration of Gregory's *Invectives*,^a which became the stock portrayal of the Apostate in the orthodox Church historians.

His period in Athens was short: by autumn he was recalled to court. The crisis in the West following usurpations and barbarian inroads had finally convinced Constantius that an imperial presence was required there. Despite his suspicions and hesitations, he elevated Julian to the rank of Caesar, as he had done Gallus before him, invested him before the army,^b married him off to another of his sisters, Helena, and arranged for him to be the figurehead of the government of Gaul. In mid-winter A.D. 355 Julian entered his province at the head of a force of 360 troops, twenty-four years old, a tiro in arms, to show the imperial presence in Gaul or—as his friends suspected—to find his death.

^a Greg. Naz. Or. 5. 23: *cf.* Socr. H.E. 3. 23.

^b *Cf.* Amm. Marc. 15. 8.

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The usual precautions were taken to keep Julian from displaying any initiative in his new office. Although he received the honour of the consulship, the control of affairs lay with the officials nominated by Constantius, and his every action was under the scrutiny of the ubiquitous agents of the secret service. He did, however, discover a loyal and capable subordinate in Salustius, and although in a subordinate capacity he took part in the campaign of A.D. 356.^a

By the composition of the *Panegyrics* upon Constantius and upon the Empress (*Or.* 1 and 3), he made an open profession of his loyal acceptance of his position in winter A.D. 356-7, and the tactful replies of his friends acknowledging his presentation copies served to confirm this attitude under the scrutiny of the secret service (*e.g.*, Libanius to Paul "the Chain," *Ep.* 370). In the same winter, independent military action was forced upon him by the Germans, who kept him under siege in his own headquarters, ignored by his local commander, Marcellus. In consequence, Julian's prestige was enhanced by his successful resistance and the uncooperative Marcellus replaced. His independence in the direction of the affairs of Gaul became firmly established in A.D. 357 by reason of the incompetence of Constantius' generalissimo, Barbatio. Julian had been instructed to act in concert with him, but Barbatio, taking independent action in Upper Germany, was soundly thrashed and retired, leaving Julian isolated to bear the full brunt of the German invasion. At Strasburg Julian gained his first major success over the Germans, captured their leader whom he sent to Con-

^a Amm. Marc. 16. 1-3; Lib. *Or.* 18. 43 ff.

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stantius, invaded Germany proper and forced the minor chieftains to come to terms, before returning to Gaul.

This eager and successful assumption of the responsibilities of his position marks the point that sets him upon a collision course with the suspicious and vacillating Constantius. Although he continued to show due deference to his Augustus, Julian knew from recent history that to retreat from his new position of power would be fraught with danger to himself and disastrous to his provinces. In fact, for the consolidation and reconstruction of Gaul fresh campaigns in Germany were necessary, together with the resumption of the British corn trade with the Rhine. Thus in A.D. 358 a campaign in Lower Germany resulted in the submission of more German chieftains and the controlled return of their Gallic prisoners, a course of events to be repeated in A.D. 359.

The survival of Gaul was thus assured, but with it came the resurgence of Gallic nationalism that had been so potent in the preceding century. An absent Augustus afforded the provinces and armies little effective direction or protection. A Caesar in their midst had proved that they could withstand external pressures, and the successes of the last three years had concentrated upon him the enthusiasm and loyalties of both provincials and the army. Such unanimity could not fail to be reported by Constantius' agents, and provided the seeds of discord. This situation had, indeed, been foreseen by Julian: in the winter of A.D. 358/9, a second affirmation of loyalty came from his pen, the second *Panegyric* on Constantius (*Or.* 2), but its effect was almost

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immediately lost by the feud that broke out between Julian and his praetorian prefect Florentius over corruption in the civil administration. Florentius, piqued at Julian's refusal to support his oppressions, reported to court that the quaestor Salustius was exercising an improper influence over his Caesar, and so secured his recall. This was a slight from his superior that Julian could not fail to resent. His friend's departure was speeded with his *Or. 8 (Consolatory Address on Salust's Departure)*.

The break came in A.D. 360. Constantius, after serious reverses in the Persian war, had to re-establish the Eastern armies, and after Julian's pacification of Gaul and elimination of the German problem, the only obvious reservoir of man-power was in the armies of Gaul. Reasonable though this assessment might be, the demands for reinforcement, both in their content and in the manner of their transmission, served to precipitate the final crisis. The pick of Julian's troops were to be withdrawn for Eastern service, regardless of the restrictions in the articles of service of many of them: the orders were handed direct to Julian's subordinates without reference to him. In addition, Constantius' agent was stupid enough to insist that the drafts should concentrate on Paris, the site of Julian's headquarters, despite his protests about the size of drafts and the unsuitability of rendezvous. The aggrieved soldiery were duly concentrated with orders to march, and the inevitable mutiny occurred. Once again a provincial army took matters into its own hands and proclaimed Julian Augustus willy-nilly. Even so, Julian was unready to take up arms yet to support his claim to his new position, and, in the

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usual way of such usurpations, a protracted series of negotiations took place throughout the whole of A.D. 360 : caught between his angry troops and the demands of Constantius, he could not give way, even if he now wanted to do so.

In fact, he did not : recent history showed only too clearly the fate reserved for unsuccessful usurpers, and in the face of Constantius' demand for complete submission, his only course was to go on. At this time, the last tenuous tie with his cousin was broken with the death of Helena. Whatever his feelings towards her, it is a fact that after her death he never touched another woman, and he increasingly comforted himself with an ascetic paganism, consulting his gods for indications of their will. In his state of nervous exaltation and his rigorously frugal regimen, such indications were not slow in coming. Already at Paris he had been visited by the *Genius Populi Romani* : now at Vienne, on the occasion of his quinquennalia, he was reassured by another vision that announced the imminent death of Constantius. With such, and other, tokens of divine support he at last felt himself ready to move against Constantius—but even so, the time for dissembling was not yet done. He found it politic to attend church in this very orthodox community.

The spring of A.D. 361 saw him in action at last, and again Constantius made the move that gave him the initiative by entering into communication with Julian's old enemy, the German Vadomarius, and engaging him to invade Rhaetia ; Julian's punitive expedition against the Alemanni set him well on his way to the East. Instead of delivering his main thrust in the direction usually taken by usurpers from

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Gaul and advancing into northern Italy, he was now half-way to the capital of the Danubian provinces, and this position was consolidated by his surprise advance and journey down-river. A sudden descent captured Sirmium, and Julian moved on to Naissus, the birthplace of his grandfather, there to guard the pass of Succi.

Here he had need to regroup, and since he had by-passed large concentrations of Constantius' supporters, to bring some form of decent administration into his newly acquired provinces. Most notable is the string of manifestos dispatched to the various communities, Greek and Roman, in justification of his rebellion. The surviving example is the *Letter to the Athenians*, but Corinth, Rome, Sparta and others received copies of this polemic also, and it forms the basic material for Libanius' account of Julian's career in *Or.* 18. As a further gesture to the intelligentsia and nobility of Rome proper, where his letter received an unfavourable reception, the rhetor Mamertinus was nominated consul for A.D. 362 (hence the *Gratiarum Actio*), the senator Maximus appointed prefect of Rome "to oblige Vulcatius Rufinus," and Symmachus treated with an uncommon deference. In the event, the campaign of propaganda proved unnecessary: Constantius died in Cilicia early in November while marching to engage him. This was the crowning mercy that confirmed him as sole Augustus without recourse to family feud or bloodshed, and after his earlier expressions of bitterness against Constantius, an emotional reaction set in with this revelation of divine protection. He proclaims to his friends his unwillingness to have resorted to force (*E.L.F.* No. 26 ; 28), and renders

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thanks to the gods of his salvation without fear or dissimulation (*E.L.F.* No. 29). The body and memory of Constantius received full honour: abuse of the dead emperor and his policies was no longer for him, and even the more rancorous of his supporters found it politic to preface any detraction of Constantius with studied apology, as Libanius does. The whole tenor of his first six months in Constantinople is that of conciliation and reconstruction. The *Letter to Themistius*, written before his imperial entry into the capital, is an exposition of the monarch as subject to law, directed by philosophy, and the proponent of the rule of reason, and the rule of reason denied the rightness or the efficacy of any kind of persecution. The old religion was freed of the bans to which it had been subjected, and its ritual and practices once more became part of a *religio licita*, so that sacrifice and divination once more became possible. The Christians were treated with a tolerant and neutral impartiality, into which it is unnecessary and ungenerous to read any deep Machiavellian designs. The banished, whether Novatian, Donatist, Arian or Orthodox, were allowed to return to their seats from which sectarian bigotry had expelled them in large numbers. In the event, the return of such exiles and their claim for restitution of their rights was to create widespread discord and opposition, but there is no reason to believe that it was ordered with this end in view. Simultaneously, every effort was made to secure decent administration, not least in fiscal matters—a foretaste of which had been given to the Illyrian provinces during the days of waiting at Naissus. The upper-class municipal society was to be conciliated, no less than the senatorial class, by a

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definition of rights and obligations. By mid-March, a full-scale piece of legislation had been framed dealing with curial recruitment, municipal properties, *munera extraordinaria* and other dues, reversing the trend towards a centralized officialdom of the previous generation. This same army of officials was drastically reduced (*cf.* Lib. *Or.* 2. 58) and the ubiquitous *agentes-in-rebus* and imperial notaries almost entirely disbanded. The purge of the palace took place without delay : all the paraphernalia of royalty was dispensed with—barbers, cooks, eunuchs and the rest, that had battered on the old régime. All was affability and efficiency, directed to the welfare of the Empire and its subjects. Men of education and good antecedents, Celsus in Cilicia, or the rhetor Belaeus in Arabia, for instance, were promoted to positions of office, and a less autocratic or bigoted monarch could hardly be imagined. No matter what their persuasion, the meritorious were offered a welcome with him : pagans like his old friends the doctor Oribasius or Salust, Christians of every breed—the orthodox Basil (Julian, *Ep.* 32), the heretic Aëtius (*Ep.* 46), the sophistic Prohaeresius (*Ep.* 31), Caesarius brother to the egregiously eloquent Gregory Nazianzen (*cf.* *R.E.* iii. 1299, *s.v.*)—and the principal devotees of neo-Platonist doctrine and practice like Priscus and Maximus—all received some conciliating, even affectionate, marks of attention. The one blot on his scutcheon was the series of court-martial held at Chalcedon where not only the guilty agents of the previous reign like the eunuch Eusebius and the murderous Paulus, but the efficient and even innocent, like Ursulus, were condemned. Here Ammianus speaks with downright disapproval and

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even Libanius had much ado to make a decent justification.

Such universal tolerance and beneficence was all very well in theory, but in practice it soon fell foul of long-established vested interests. Recruitment to the *curiae* meant the abolition of immunities gained during the past generation, notably those of the Christian clerics: the restoration of municipal properties equally involved losses to important individuals and religious organizations; so did the reopening of the pagan temples and the resumption of pagan sacrifices and rituals, for which financial provision had to be made. Opposition from the Christian communities grew apace. Nor did conciliation reach the local level: the return of the exiled heretics or orthodox produced a ferment in the various cities. Even by Christmas A.D. 361, the Alexandrians had lynched the Arian bishop, George, and members of the administration (*cf. E.L.F.* No. 60)—and this serious disturbance, though occurring in a city noted for its excessive violence, symbolizes the general unrest. Overriding all else was the need of a speedy solution to the political and religious problems of empire, for Julian as heir to Constantius had also inherited the war with Persia. Yet it was not religious conflict or self-interest that alone provoked criticism. Philosophy, in its popular manifestation of Cynicism, also took him to task upon his imperial conduct; in particular an impudent busy-body named Heracleios presented himself before him with a diatribe on the art of government, of which a highly irreverent use of myth formed a part. The myth for any professed follower of Plato was an integral part of the philosophic method, and Julian, outraged at the