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THE SECOND HALF OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

‘In the Gardens of Adonis’. Religious Disputations in Julian’s *Caesars**

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Abstract

The emperor Julian’s *Caesars* is a multilayered dialogue that served him to divulge and to defend the nuclear aspects of his political, philosophical and religious program. After setting the scene by means of an ἔκφρασις, the central part of the dialogue is a parade of a number of Roman emperors that are presented in front of a *deorum concilium*. Following this, a contest is proposed by Hermes in which Alexander, Julius Caesar, Octavian, Marcus Aurelius, Trajan and Constantine will speak to defend their deeds. With this in mind, I would like to investigate how religious disputation at different levels was reflected in this dialogue. On a first level, Julian’s criticism of Christianity and his approval of some pagan religious practices feature throughout the work. On a second level, I want to scrutinize the use of some literary techniques borrowed from the Menippean satire (such as the use of ψόγος, catoscopia, and σπουδογέλοιον) as part of Julian’s literary weaponry used in his controversy against the Cynics of his time.

Caesars is a charming and farcical dialogue written by the emperor Julian that begins with Julian himself retelling to an interlocutor the myth that Hermes had told him about the symposium Quirinus organized to commemorate the Saturnalia with the gods. Julian narrates that once the gods occupied their places in a hierarchical order in the upper part of the sky, Roman emperors (together with Julius Caesar) paraded in front of them in chronological order, and were exposed to their comments – especially to the ironic remarks of the satyr Silenus. After that, Hermes arranged a contest (an ἀγὼν λόγων and a set of questions) among four emperors (Octavian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Constantine) plus Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great (invited by Heracles). Bearing in mind Julian’s inclinations, it is unsurprising that Marcus Aurelius was proclaimed the winner. Finally, Zeus encouraged them to select a deity as a patron and benefactor. Alexander went for Heracles; Octavian opted for

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Studia Patristica XCVI, 37-46.

Apollo, while Marcus for Zeus and Cronos, Trajan for Alexander, Julius Caesar was accepted by Ares and Aphrodite, and Constantine ended up in the arms of *Truphe* and *Asotia* (the personifications of Pleasure and Incontinence) before meeting Jesus, who is mockingly portrayed proclaiming the benefits of baptism. The dialogue concludes with Hermes announcing to Julian that he has been put under the protection of Mithras.

Literally indebted to Plato's *Symposium*,[1] Seneca's *Apocolocynthosis*, Lucian's *The Parliament of the Gods*, and Plutarch's *Lives*, I hope to show that *Caesars* was a programmatic work that the emperor employed in his exploration of the dialogue form by deploying literary strategies in the context of different religious disputations. A religious analysis of the work reveals, in my opinion, two possible levels of interpretation. Thus, in the first place, I will deal with how Julian's hostility towards Christianity is reflected in the dialogue. Second, I will argue that *Caesars* can also be interpreted as a response of the emperor to the internal disputations within paganism when determining what being a pagan meant and involved. This had become a theme that embittered debates in the fourth century AD cultural and religious landscape, as exemplified by the quarrels that Julian had with the Cynics of his time. In this particular context, I will contend that the emperor integrated this antagonism into *Caesars* by subtly using literary forms that he respected from the prior Cynic tradition in order to attack contemporary Cynics.

The persistent vindicator

The renovation and reinvigoration of the religious practices that Julian meant to implement rested on his Neoplatonic philosophy.[2] In the case of *Caesars*, this is shown by the Neoplatonic significance of the ἔκφρασις at the beginning of the myth retold by Julian (307c-308a). The visual arrangement of the four superior gods (Cronos, Zeus, Rhea and Hera; 308c: τοῖς μεγίστοις θεοῖς) and the colors used in the description of the divine realm where the gods reside imprint a strong Neoplatonic stamp that sets the religious and theological tone for the rest of the dialogue.[3] This ἔκφρασις, which comprises some of the principal constituents of Julian's Neoplatonic theological principles, is the point

[1] On the impact of this work on late antique dialogues, see Averil Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity* (Washington, D.C., 2014), 13, 40-3. For Julian borrowing elements from Plato's *Symposium* for this dialogue, see María Dolores Gallardo, 'Los *Simposios* de Luciano, Ateneo, Metodio y Juliano', *CFC(G)* 4 (1972), 239-96, 285, 295-6; Joel C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore, 1993), 125.

[2] Maria Carmen De Vita, *Giuliano Imperatore Filosofo Neoplatonico* (Milano, 2011), 73-111.

[3] Friedhelm L. Müller, *Die Beiden Satiren des Kaisers Julianus Apostata* (Stuttgart, 1998), 180-1.

of reference to which allusions to Christianity and references to different branches of paganism in *Caesars* should be compared to.[4]

It is not necessary to dig very deep under the surface of the dialogue to find elements of Julian's hostile attitude towards Christianity. His criticism is firstly phrased in the caricature of the emperor Constantine, whose characterization owes a great deal to the rhetorical form of ψόγος. He appears as the embodiment of carnal vices and an emperor dominated by his lust for mundane pleasures (note the variety of terms used for this purpose: 318a: ἡδονῇ δὲ καὶ ἀπολαύσει χειροηθέστερον; 329a: πρὸς τὴν Τρυφὴν ἀφεώρα; 335b: πολλὰ χαρίσασθαι ταῖς τε ἐπιθυμίαις ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ταῖς τῶν φίλων… ὀψοποιοῦ καὶ κομμωτρίας βίον ἔχων).[5] In his intervention in the contest among the six short-listed ruling figures, Constantine's claims that his deeds exceeded those of the rest of the emperors (329b-c) clashed with the narrator's objections (we are warned that Constantine's rivals in civil wars – Maxentius and Licinius – were effeminate and old, and his campaigns against barbarians made him a laughing stock), and also with Silenus' reply (329c-d): 'are you not offering us mere gardens of Adonis?'.[6] The satyr's gibe makes reference to the ephemeral nature of the seeds planted during the celebration of the festival of Adonis,[7] thus implying that, unlike the achievements of the rest of the contestants, Constantine's deeds would not last in the memory of mankind.

His weaknesses are represented by the deities he chose as patrons, since Constantine was warmly welcomed by Pleasure (*Truphe*) and Incontinence (*Asotia*) (336a): 'She [i.e., Pleasure] received him tenderly and embraced him, then after dressing him in raiment of many colors and otherwise making him beautiful, she led him away to Incontinence'. *Truphe* is a concept that Julian usually applied to those he considered to be non-Hellenic in the cultural sense of the term, from Persians – *e.g.*, *Or.* 1. 9.57 – to the unruly Antiochenes he disapproved of – *Or.* 7.6.4 – to the Cynics he so despised – see, for example, the *prooemium* of his *To the uneducated Cynics*. So the portrayal of Constantine as a protégée of *Truphe* fits well with the ideology of Julian, who started a tendency of ψόγος literature against Constantine among pagan writers that ran parallel to the encomiastic writings found in Christian sources.[8] Constantine's characterization contributed to highlighting the sharp contrast between

[4] Christopher P. Jones, *Between pagan and Christian* (London-Cambridge MA, 2014), 1-8.

[5] For the significance of ὀψοποιοῦ καὶ κομμωτρίας, see Karl O. Sandnes, 'Christian Baptism As Seen by Outsiders: Julian the Apostate as an Example', *VC* 66 (2012), 503-26, 506-7.

[6] Julian's translations are taken from Wilmer C. Wright, *Julian. Volume III* (London-Cambridge MA, 1913).

[7] Vid. Theoc. XV 112-35; Plutarch, *On the delays of the divine vengeance* 560c; Pl., *Phaed.* 276b.

[8] Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (London-Cambridge MA, 1981), 272-4.

his set of flaws and the virtues of his role model, Marcus Aurelius, whose excellence had been extolled earlier in the dialogue.[9]

Second, Julian's attack on Christianity is further developed by his bitter scorn for Christian baptism in the following scene.[10] Constantine meets Jesus, who is preaching on baptism (336b): 'He that is a seducer, he that is a murderer, he that is sacrilegious, and infamous, let him approach without fear! For with this water will I wash him and will straightway make him clean. And though he should be guilty of those same sins a second time, let him but smite his breast and beat his head and I will make him clean again'. In a thorough study, O. Sandnes has analyzed Julian's main objections to baptism in *Caesars* and in his *Against the Galileans*. According to Sandnes' study, Julian detested the unrealistic immediateness of the forgiving character of baptism as this confronted the hard work involved in the learning and practice of the Hellenic paideia, the true remedy, according to the emperor Julian, of all the soul's maladies and needs. In short, Julian considered baptism to be a low shortcut to a second chance in the lives of debased people. His irony peaked when he wrote about it (*Against the Galileans*, 245c-d): 'as though water itself had acquired the power to cleanse and purify not the body only, but even the soul (…) shall it then do away with adultery, theft, and all sins of a soul?'. Thus, baptism appears in Julian's writings as the oversimplified reverse of what the study and praxis of the Hellenic paideia could offer in the process of the cleansing and development of a person's soul.[11] Additionally, Julian's critique of Constantine and baptism is underlined by its rhetorical disposition in the dialogue, since these passages precede the sudden epilogue, in which Hermes announces to Julian that he will be put under the guidance of Mithras (336c).

Julian's antipathy towards Constantine did not save the rest of the emperors in *Caesars* from being ridiculed. The dynamics of the parade in front of the gods observes a similar arrangement: a brief note on the physical appearance or moral behavior of each emperor followed by an ironic remark by the gods – most of the time by Silenus. The carnivalesque nature of the parade of the emperors allowed Julian to incorporate moralizing trivia about their lives: from their excesses in the affairs related to Aphrodite (this is how delicately Julian referred to their sexual episodes) to their abuses and misbehavior (some emperors – Nero, Caligula, Caracalla, Helliogabalus, Carus – are sent to Hades or are not allowed to appear before the gods). This sequence gives way to a more condescending attitude when it comes to commenting on the religious measures

[9] Pascal Célérier, *L'ombre de l'empereur Julien. Le destin des écrits de Julien chez les auteurs païens et chrétiens du IV^e^ au VI^e^ siècle* (Paris, 2013), 315-25.

[10] On the rites and theological meaning of baptism among Greek-speaking Christians in fourth century AD, see Gordon S. Mikoski, *Baptism and Christian Identity. Teaching in the Triune Name* (Grand Rapids, 2009), 86-112.

[11] See his *Ep*. 112 in which he complains about Athanasius of Alexandria baptizing Greek aristocratic women.

adopted by emperors with beliefs similar to Julian's. This is the case with his appraisal of the emperors Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian. Regarding the former, the gods are so admired by Claudius' (313d) μεγαλοψυχία that 'they thought it just that the posterity of such a lover of his country – φιλοπάτριδος ἀνδρός – should rule as long as possible'. These praising words are meant to acknowledge Claudius' efforts to promote the cult of Sol Invictus by minting coins with allusions to this deity,[12] a cult with evident Mithraic connotations and, therefore, close to Julian's religiosity. The treatment of Aurelian is equally noteworthy. Despite being accused of numerous murders, Helios himself stands up to defend him (313d-314a): 'He has paid the penalty, or have you forgotten the oracle uttered at Delphi, "If his punishment match his crime justice has been done?"'.[13] While Constantine is presented as a *bon vivant* more concerned with earthly pleasures than ruling the Empire properly, Claudius and, especially, Aurelian are given special treatment because of their role in the development of the cult of Sol Invictus. In this sense, it is noteworthy that Julian omits Constantine's adoption of some images from Sol Invictus. Although this did not last long (by the decade of the 320s these representations had disappeared),[14] it is telling of Julian's ability to accommodate facts to his narrative.

Hellenism Revisited

Caesars also plays host to cultural debates that were not completely disengaged from religious discussions concerning the best way to conciliate the different branches of Hellenism in the fourth century AD. From a cultural and literary viewpoint, the content of *Caesars* is expressed through the use of diverse literary forms embedded in the dialogue that go beyond the function of simply providing the work with a formal structure. In composing this dialogue, Julian used literary strategies supported by the practice of ψόγος, *catoscopia*, and σπουδογέλοιον, three literary forms commonly featured in the Menippean Satire, a genre generally practiced by Cynics.[15] The first two (ψόγος and *catoscopia*) are full of moralizing possibilities that conform to the equally moralizing nature

[12] Patricia Southern, *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine* (London, 2015), 181-2, 279-80.

[13] Eric. R. Varner, 'Roman authority, imperial authoriality, and Julian's artistic program', in Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (eds), *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian the Apostate* (Swansea, 2012), 183-210, 186. On the relationship between Helios and the Flavian dynasty, see Polymnia Athanassiadi, *Julian and Hellenism: an Intellectual Biography* (Oxford, 1981), 179.

[14] Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2012), 326-37.

[15] For a comprehensive treatment of the Menippean Satire (including the use of ψόγος and *catoscopia*), see J.C. Relihan, *Ancient* (1993) and Howard D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered. From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, 2005).

of *Caesars*. The unsophisticated and simple treatment of ψόγος in theoretical treatises[16] made it a leitmotif widely used in Greek literature for its capacity to create a scenario in which an author would have free rein to criticize. In the case of *Caesars*, ψόγος is an endemic presence that helps Julian to moralize on the ethics of the actions of previous emperors. In the same vein, a *catoscopia* (a technique from the Menippean satire that was used to put things in perspective by 'looking down' – that is the meaning of the term) features at the initial ἔκφρασις of the dialogue when the gods look down on the emperors' parade, an efficient way of putting human affairs in their appropriate perspective.

Julian capitalized on the use of ψόγος and *catoscopia* by bringing σπουδογέλοιον into the scene.[17] A common characteristic of satires, this blending of serious and funny topics in *Caesars* was not primarily intended to soften the gravity of the topics he dealt with but to underline the follies of his time and that of his predecessors. The 'serio-comic' suited Julian's needs as shown by its utilization throughout the dialogue in multiple ways: the use of the trope *mise en abyme* to retell Hermes' account,[18] the reversal of some of the themes from the literary topic of the *deorum concilium*,[19] the search for marked contrasts (*e.g.*, the serious implications of Silenus' jokes), the *epanothorsis* or rectification of a literary quotation to accommodate it to the work's purposes (313c), the personification of allegorical figures (*i.e.*, *Truphe* and *Asotia*),[20] and the *ethica interpretatio* of the emperors.[21] The presence of σπουδογέλοιον in *Caesars* is also demonstrated in metaliterary tropes: the underlying theological issue of the dialogue (namely, the Mithraic legitimation of the imperial power)[22] is twisted as Julian thought that he would achieve the divine condition that the emperors of the dialogue strove for without undertaking the process of apotheosis he mocked throughout this dialogue.[23] Also, the acknowledgment of his lack of any talent for joking and entertaining (306a-b) while composing a

[16] *E.g.*, Arist. *Rhet*. 1368a38; Men. Rh. 331.18.

[17] I am following here the understanding of σπουδογέλοιον from Alberto Camerotto *Le metamorfosi della parola. Studi sulla parodia in Luciano di Samosata* (Pisa-Roma, 1998), 125: 'non è semplicemente la compresenza in un unico testo di elementi comici e di elementi seri, ma rappresenta piuttosto l'ethos specifico di opere'. On the relationship between ψόγος and σπουδογέλοιον, see Javier Campos Daroca and Juan Luis Lopez Cruces, 'Spoudaigéloion, cinismo y poesía moral helenística', in *In Memoriam J. Cabrero Moreno* (Granada, 1992), 37-50, 42.

[18] On the pertinence of choosing Hermes as the emissary in the context of σπουδογέλοιον, see Rosanna Sardiello, *Simposio. I Cesari* (Lecce, 2000), 108.

[19] Sandra Romano Martín, *El tópico grecolatino del concilio de los dioses* (Hildesheim-New York, 2009).

[20] Cristobal Macías, 'Algunas notas sobre el ideario y modo de vida cínicos', *AnMal Electrónica* 26 (2000), 3-40, 36-8.

[21] On this topic, see Pedro P. Fuentes González, 'Teles y la *interpretatio ethica* del personaje mitológico', *Florentia Iliberritana* 3 (1992), 161-81.

[22] P. Célérier, *L'ombre de l'empereur Julien* (2013), 156-7.

[23] J.C. Relihan, *Ancient* (1993), 120, 126.

parody fits well with the spirit of σπουδογέλοιον. In fact, the term σπουδογέλοιον is brought about by Silenus' reply to Dionysus' comment about his thoughtful considerations of the emperor Probus (314d): 'Do you not know that Socrates also, who was so like me, carried off the prize for philosophy from his contemporaries, at least if you believe that your brother tells the truth? You must allow me to be serious (σπουδαῖα) on occasion and not always jocose (γελοῖα)'.[24]

The σπουδογέλοιον was not a genre exclusively used by Cynics, but in my opinion its treatment in *Caesars* is indebted to the Cynic tradition. Following the behavior of two founder members of Cynicism, Diogenes and Crates, Julian's reformist plans put him in the position of a religious outsider within the spheres of power operating from the antipodes of the normative habits of his time, thus prompting him to chastise what for him were the cultural insiders (*i.e.*, Cynics and Christians).[25] In the speech against the uneducated Cynics there is a section that explains and seems to advance the use of σπουδογέλοιον in *Caesars*. After defending the use of jokes in philosophy, Julian reminds us that Democritus laughed (186d: ἐγέλα) 'when he saw men taking things seriously (σπουδάζοντας)', and quotes Plato's (*Symp*. 215a) definition of Cynic philosophy as 'like those images of Silenus that sit in the shops of the statuaries, which the craftsmen make with pipes or flutes in their hands, but when you open them you see that inside they contain statues of the gods'.[26] Like this Platonic image of Silenus (one of the main characters of Julian's dialogue), Julian's *Caesars* concealed something divine (in this case, part of the emperor's religious and theological tenets) under a comedic form (the jokes and the *reductio ad absurdum* continuously present in the dialogue).

This presence of elements frequently used in Cynic literature – ψόγος, *catoscopia* and σπουδογέλοιον – implies, in my opinion, that there is a thematic subtext in *Caesars* addressed to the Cynics of his time, with whom Julian was having a dispute. Julian composed two works on the topic: *Against the Cynic Heraclius* (*Or*. 7) was the emperor's reply to a lecture given by the Cynic Heraclius in which a myth inappropriately represented the philosopher as Zeus and Julian as Pan. In this oration, Julian strongly criticizes the impiety of the text and disserts on how to compose a philosophical myth. In a second invective, *Against the Uneducated Cynics* (*Or*. 6), Julian, replying to a Cynic who had ridiculed Diogenes, sets out to praise the Cynicism of the early days (mainly that practiced by Diogenes), and to condemn how this philosophy had

[24] On the implications of the assimilation between Silenus and Socrates, see H.D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered* (2005), 59. See Plat., *Symp*. 215a; X., *Symp*. 5.7.

[25] J. Campos Daroca and J.L. López Cruces, 'Spoudaigéloion' (1992), 44-5.

[26] Carlo Prato and Dina Micalella, *Giuliano Imperatore. Contro I Cinici ignoranti* (Lecce, 1988), 66-7.

degenerated in his own time.[27] That Julian included a Cynic subtext in *Caesars* is supported, in my opinion, by two arguments that help contextualize the use of the abovementioned literary forms against the background of Julian's disputations with the Cynics of his time. First, thematically and chronologically, *Caesars* is contemporary to the 'Cynic episode'. As J. Long has commented, there is a group of Julian's writings (including *Caesars* and the two orations against contemporary Cynics) thematically linked by the emperor's efforts to put forward his philosophical program.[28] As for the date of *Caesars*, if we accept Lacombrade's and Sardiello's persuasive arguments setting the composition in December 362, acceptance of the use of literary strategies in *Caesars* addressed to respond to the Cynics is strengthened as orations 6 and 7 were composed in the first half of 362.[29]

Second, by adopting literary motifs from their own tradition, Julian wanted to *instruct* Cynics on how to practice the type of philosophy initiated by the 'real' Cynics, Diogenes and Crates.[30] In *Caesars*, as we have seen, lessons in morals and ethics take the shape of two forms with a long-standing Cynic pedigree – ψόγος and σπουδογέλοιον – in order to constitute a distorted *speculum principum*. In doing so, Julian was making his point: his knowledge of the true Cynic legacy allowed him to integrate its critical view on the nature of the imperial power and, at the same time, to cushion the impact of the potential criticism of contemporary (and 'false') Cynics. This assumption dovetails with his desire to integrate Cynicism into his all-inclusive philosophical program in his attempt to reorganize pagan cultural and religious practices.[31] 'Let no one divide philosophy', Julian proclaimed (*Or*. 6.184c-d), 'rather let no one make it out to be plural instead of one. For even as truth is one, so too philosophy is one'.

Similarly relevant to the connection of *Caesars* to his controversy with the Cynics is the use of a philosophical myth. Julian's oration against Heraclius had been prompted by the misconception of the nature of myth in the lecture of the Cynic philosopher. In that invective, the emperor dealt with the philosophical use of myth, which he describes in terms of style and content (218a-d).[32] Myths,

[27] Some of his arguments also appear in Dio, *Or*. 32.9; Epictetus' *Of the Cynic Philosophy*.

[28] Jacqueline Long, 'Afterword: Studying Julian the author', in Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (eds), *Emperor and Author. The Writings of Julian the Apostate* (Swansea, 2012), 323-38, 329-30.

[29] Christian Lacombrade, *L'empereur Julien: œuvres completes. Vol. II.2* (Paris, 1964), 28-30; Sandnes, 'Christian Baptism' (2012), 504; R. Sardiello, *Simposio* (Lecce, 2000), VIII-X. *Or*. 6 (*Against the Uneducated Cynics*) is set in the summer of 362 by C. Prato and D. Micalella, *Giuliano Imperatore* (1988), XI-XII, whereas *Or*. 7 (*Against the Cynic Heraclius*) in the Spring of the same year by C. Lacombrade, *L'empereur Julien* (1964), 41-3.

[30] For a praise of the original Cynic philosophy, *Or*. 6.182c-197d.

[31] Theresa Nesselrath, *Kaiser Julian und die Repaganisierung des Reiches: Konzept und Vorbilder* (Münster, 2013) is a thorough study of Julian's efforts to 'Repaganisierung'.

[32] For the rhetorical instructions on the composition of a myth, see Theon 3.72.28: Μῦθός ἐστι λόγος ψευδὴς εἰκονίζων ἀλήθειαν.

Julian argues, find their place in practical philosophy and in the context of the type of theology related to Mysteries (216b-c). He continues to affirm that the insertion of incongruous elements (ἀπεμφαίνοντες) into theological myths will lead men to look for their hidden meaning (223c-d): 'there is some hope that men will neglect the more obvious sense of the words, and that pure intelligence may rise to the comprehension of the distinctive nature of the gods that transcends all existing things'. These recommendations reassert Julian's criticism of Heraclius' impious myth, which should be confronted with the presentation of *Caesars* as a philosophical (and, consequently, legitimate) myth (306c) that stands out because it clearly invites us to go beyond the allegorical narration in search for hidden meaning.[33] Therefore, I think that it is worth considering if the use of Cynic literary forms and of a myth with theological implications in the composition of *Caesars* would act as a reply to the contemporary Cynics Julian abhorred.

Another point of convergence between *Caesars* and Julian's quarrels with Cynics is the exploitation of some topics from a religious perspective. A great deal of his argumentation against contemporary Cynics was supported by comparing them with Diogenes, to whom he devoted hagiographical paragraphs to praise his philosophical and self-restraining life-style (*Or*. 6.194d-195c; 7.211a-213a). This was not empty rhetoric: Derek Krueger has considered Julian's respect for Diogenes to be part of his rhetorical weaponry in his conflict with Christians. In Julian's writings, Diogenes appears as the pagan role model of a set of philosophical virtues that could constitute 'an alternative to Christian asceticism' and to contemporary Cynics that had surrendered to earthly pleasures (*Or*. 6.182a-c, 192d, 196c-d).[34] Contrary to the exemplarity of Diogenes, the Cynics of Julian's time were likened to the Christian monks regarding their insolent behavior. 'Long ago', Julian confesses (*Or*.7. 224b), 'I gave you a nickname and now I think I will write it down. It is "apotaktistai", a name applied to certain persons by the impious Galileans'. These wandering monks shared a number of characteristics with Cynics: their outspokenness and appeal to popular masses for their criticism of religious traditions, their extravagant appearance

[33] See M.C. De Vita, *Giuliano Imperatore* (2011), 107-18; Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, 'Mit ‚Waffen' Platons gegen ein christliches Imperium. Der Mythos in Julians Schrift, Gegen den Kyniker Herakleios', in Christian Schäfer (ed.), *Kaiser Julian ‚Apostata' und die philosophische Reaktion gegen das Christentum* (Berlin-New York, 2008), 207-19; R. Sardiello, *Simposio* (Lecce, 2000), 87. Jason König, *Saints and Symposiasts: The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Graeco-Roman and early Christian Culture* (Cambridge, 2012), 198-9 considers that the interpretation of the Platonic influence on *Caesars* should be nuanced.

[34] Contrast this with *Or*. 7.226a-c. See also Derek Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius' Life and the late Antique city* (Berkeley, 1996), 80; John Hugo Wolfgang Gideon Liebeschuetz, 'Julian's *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*: the revival and justification of traditional religion', in Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (eds), *Emperor and Author. The Writings of Julian the Apostate* (Swansea, 2012), 213-27, 217.

and their reluctance to embrace hierarchical militancy.[35] Although the accuracy and intention of Julian's comparison between monks and Cynics is still a matter of debate among modern scholars,[36] it is true that the emperor thought of Cynics as 'cultural nihilists', 'anarchist drop-out',[37] and disruptive elements that could jeopardize the implementation of his reformist program.

Conclusions

It is ironic to note how premonitory Silenus' reference, when mocking the emperor Constantine, to the ephemeral essence of the Gardens of Adonis was for Julian. He barely had time to implement his reforms, although they had been planned and became the material for works such as *Caesars*, whose dialogic nature permitted Julian to compose a multilayered text capable of addressing a wide variety of topics. By resorting to the integration of different literary forms, Julian was able of exploring the limits of dialogue as a flexible genre that could accommodate his program and allow him to produce a serious satire. This is the case for his attacks against Christianity and the Cynics. I think that it is important to bear in mind that Julian's plans for reforming paganism were a large mechanism formed by small constituents. If one of these constituents (in this case, the Cynics of his time) was misplaced or failed to work, the whole system would be affected. This troubled the emperor's sense of entitlement and appropriation of the Classical paideia,[38] an attitude that Gregory of Nazianzen denounced in one of his invectives against Julian (*Or*. 4.103-106). The adoption of subverted rhetorical topics and countercultural tropes such as those employed by Cynics make *Caesars* ooze a distinctly dialectic and hybristic air.

[35] Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks. Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002), 2-4; Gilles Dorival, 'Cyniques et chrétiens', in Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé and Richard Goulet (eds), *Le Cynisme ancient et ses prolongments* (Paris, 1993), 419-33; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 'Julian's *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*' (2012), 219; Arnaldo Marcone, 'The forging of an Hellenic Orthodoxy: Julian's speeches against the Cynics', in Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (eds), *Emperor and Author. The Writings of Julian the Apostate* (Swansea, 2012), 239-50, 239-40; Louisa Shea, *The Cynic Enlightment: Diogenes in the Salon* (Baltimore, 2010), 4-5; Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: militant devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, 2009), 35.

[36] A. Marcone, 'The forging of an Hellenic Orthodoxy' (2012), 239, 245-6; Rowland Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London, 1995), 83-90.

[37] A. Marcone, 'The forging of an Hellenic Orthodoxy' (2012), 239; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 'Julian's *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*' (2012), 219.

[38] R. Smith, *Julian's Gods* (1995), 79-89.

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