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The Classical Quarterly 70.2 865–870 © The Author(s), 2020. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Classical Association.
doi:10.1017/S0009838820000610

JULIAN, AETIUS AND 'THE GALILEANS'

By the mid fourth century C.E., violently divergent Christian communities had developed across the Roman empire: Nicene or Homoousian (God and Jesus 'are of the same substance'), Homoiousian ('are of similar substance'), Homoian (Jesus is 'like' God), Anomoean or Heterousian (God and Jesus 'are of different substance') and others. The first emperor to be a strong supporter of traditional cult in more than a generation, Julian ruled over an empire of numerous religious groups that were often at variance with one another, both extra- and intra-communally, and how all of these should be treated was one of the chief problems pressing the emperor upon his accession in late 361. Julian's religious thought and action during his short sole reign (3 November 361 to 26 June 363) has long exercised scholars, its impact on Christians and Christianity in particular.[1] To be sure, Julian tended to be hostile to Christians and Christianity, but he was by no means hostile to all, and he even favoured some Christians, some of whom he counted among his friends and officials. The emperor's Christian policy thus was complicated.[2] One of the best examples of this complexity is Julian's epistle to the Heterousian Christian leader Aetius (*Ep*. 15 Wright = 46 Bidez). In a shorter note published in this journal, Pierre-Louis Malosse focussed his attention on Julian's letter to Aetius, which dates to early 362 and which is the only such epistle to this future bishop that is extant.[3] As transmitted, Julian's missive to Aetius is critical for the light it helps to shed on the emperor's views and treatments of Christians at the outset of his sole reign, and my conclusions on this missive differ from those of Malosse.

In the course of discussing Julian's epistle, Malosse suggested an emendation to the Greek text that I do not find compelling, particularly because he did not appreciate the context of the letter more fully, as I will demonstrate below. My intention here is to defend the previous rendering of the text and to offer a new way to read it. For convenience, I begin by quoting Julian's short missive in full as presented in the critical edition of Joseph Bidez:

[1] E.g. J. Bidez, 'L'évolution de la politique de l'empereur Julien en matière religieuse', *BAB* 7 (1914), 406–61; G.W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 79–105; R. Braun, 'Julien et le Christianisme', in R. Braun and J. Richer (edd.), *L'Empereur Julien. De l'histoire à la légende (331–1715)* (Paris, 1978), 159–88; P. Athanassiadi, *Julian: An Intellectual Biography* (New York, 1992), 89–191; R. Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (New York, 1995); S. Tougher, *Julian the Apostate* (Edinburgh, 2007), 54–62; S. Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome* (Berkeley, 2012); and M. Marcos, '*Callidior ceteris persecutor*: the Emperor Julian and his place in Christian historiography', *HSPh* 110 (2019), 371–451.

[2] See Marcos (n. 1).

[3] P.-L. Malosse, 'Galileans or Gallus? (Julian's letter to Aetius)', *CQ* 60 (2010), 607–9.

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κοινῶς μὲν ἅπασι τοῖς ὁπωσοῦν ὑπὸ τοῦ μακαρίτου Κωνσταντίου πεφυγαδευμένοις ἕνεκα τῆς τῶν Γαλιλαίων ἀπονοίας ἀνῆκα τὴν φυγήν, σὲ δὲ οὐκ ἀνίημι μόνον, ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ παλαιᾶς γνώσεώς τε καὶ συνηθείας μεμνημένος, ἀφικέσθαι προτρέπω μέκρις ἡμῶν· χρήσῃ δὲ ὀχήματι δημοσίῳ μέχρι τοῦ στρατοπέδου τοῦ ἐμοῦ καὶ ἑνὶ παρίππῳ.[4]

For all those who had been exiled in common in any way by the blessed Constantius on account of the madness of the Galileans I have rescinded exile, but you, since I remind myself of both [our] previous familiarity and intimacy, I not only release [from exile] but also urge to come to me; and you will be furnished with a public transport to my court and one additional horse.[5]

In place of τῶν Γαλιλαίων, Malosse proposed to read τοῦ Γάλλου (that is, Gallus Caesar, Julian's half-brother and immediate predecessor in the Caesarship), but this emendation is unlikely to be correct for the following textual and historical reasons. First, applying a definite article before Gallus' name is problematic. In the fifth century, Philostorgius apparently did not use it in his (fragmentary) *Ecclesiastical History* at 6.7,[6] the passage that Malosse ([n. 2], 608) says is 'closely connected' with Julian's epistle to Aetius, though Philostorgius does use a definite article before Gallus' name earlier (τοῦ Γάλλου, *Hist. eccl*. 3.28). Despite being fragmentary, the Heterousian Philostorgius is a well-informed source, especially on Aetius and his associations and interactions with emperors and fellow clerics. But Philostorgius does not quote Julian's epistle to Aetius, and Philostorgius' text consists of Photius' summaries of it. Thus, we should not consider Philostorgius' text as superior to that of Julian, as Malosse did; the text of Julian's letter seems authentic and secure, and Julian was in a better position to know about Aetius and about his own brother. Rather, we should look for ways to read Julian's and Philostorgius' texts that are compatible.

Second, in his letter to Aetius, Julian does not refer to his brother as 'blessed' (ὁ μακαρίτης), which we should expect, as he had done so in his earlier *Epistle to the Athenians* from 361, in which Julian rehabilitated Gallus' name and memory after Constantius had condemned them: τὸν μακαρίτην ἀδελφὸν ἐμὸν Γάλλον (271A). Indeed, it would seem strange if the 'madness' (ἡ ἀπόνοια) of Gallus is referred to, while Constantius is ὁ μακαρίτης in the same letter, and to an addressee who had been a friend and ally of the one and an enemy of the other.[7] That some manuscript copyist later 'corrected' and replaced 'Gallus' with 'Galileans' in the text is not supported by any evidence.[8] To be sure, Philostorgius' fellow church-historian, Sozomen, refers to and paraphrases Julian's letter to Aetius and mentions Gallus, not Galileans (*Hist. eccl*. 5.5.9),[9] but Sozomen (like Philostorgius) does not quote the letter directly and he may simply be following Philostorgius in his paraphrase by linking

[4] J. Bidez (ed.), *L'empereur Julien, Œuvres completes, Tome I – 2^e partie, Lettres et fragments* (Paris, 1924), 65–6.

[5] My translation. See also W.C. Wright (ed.), *The Works of the Emperor Julian* (Cambridge, Mass., 1923), 3.35, 3.37. Cf. Malosse (n. 3), 607, who translates συνήθεια as 'link' in place of Wright's 'intercourse'. 'Intimacy' seems more precise and accurate here; cf. Bidez (n. 4), 66: 'longue intimité'.

[6] ὅτι τὴν βασίλειον ἀρχὴν ἁρπάσας ὁ Ἰουλιανός, ἅτε δὴ Ἀέτιον διὰ Γάλλον δῆθεν κινδυνεύοντα, τῆς φυγῆς ἀνακαλεῖται· οὐκ αὐτὸν δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, ὅσοι δογμάτων ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ὑπερορίαν ὑπέστησαν. The text is that of J. Bidez and F. Winkelmann (edd.), *Philostorgius: Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1981[3]).

[7] For Aetius and Gallus, see Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl*. 3.27 and Sozom. *Hist. eccl*. 5.5.9. For Aetius and Constantius, see Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.8, 4.12 and Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.5.9.

[8] Cf. Malosse (n. 3), 609. See Bidez (n. 4), 66, whose reading of τῶν Γαλιλαίων seems to be secure as the transmitted text.

[9] Ἀέτιον δὲ τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς Εὐνομίου αἱρέσεως, ὡς ὑπὸ Κωνσταντίου ὑπερορίαν φυγὴν καταδικασθέντα καὶ ἄλλως ὕποπτον διὰ τὴν πρὸς Γάλλον ὁμιλίαν, εὐμενῶς μάλα γράψας

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Aetius' exile to his association with Gallus (διὰ τὴν πρὸς Γάλλον ὁμιλίαν, Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.5.9; cf. Ἀέτιον διὰ Γάλλον δῆθεν κινδυνεύοντα in Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.7). While Philostorgius and Sozomen leave the precise nature of Aetius' connection with Gallus undefined here, Philostorgius provides us with other information that helps to clarify that connection and its meaning (see below).

Malosse ([n. 3], 608) also objected to τῶν Γαλιλαίων on the grounds that it would have been 'very discourteous' to Aetius as a Christian; but we do not know how Aetius would have taken such a phrase, which is used in a particular context. Julian knew Aetius relatively well, as Julian himself tells us, παλαιᾶς γνώσεώς τε καὶ συνηθείας μεμνημένος,[10] and so Aetius may have understood the emperor's use of 'the Galileans', which is not directed against him, in an inoffensive way, since the letter in which it is used denigrates Aetius' Christian opponents by othering them into this narrow but nebulous category. Julian also employs the term 'Galileans' in generalized and uncomplimentary fashion elsewhere,[11] yet this only serves to highlight his use of it in contrast to Aetius. By granting a *beneficium* to Aetius and by making a distinction between him and other Christians in a personal letter to him, Julian can be seen engaging in patronage aimed at building his support among some Christians early in his reign,[12] and placing his Christian adversaries, potential or real, into a negative category that was as yet undefined and flexible and hence useful to the emperor in terms of messaging. Considered in isolation, one might conclude that Aetius was a special case, just one Christian whom the emperor singled out owing to his past personal connection with him.

But Aetius was not alone. Nor did Julian have prior personal relationships with all those Christians whom he favoured. The emperor also granted favourable treatment to Aetius' co-religionist, Eunomius, and to the apparently divergent Meletius and Paulinus as well,[13] though we do not have any letters to them from Julian. All these Christian leaders had suffered at the hands of Constantius, yet this commonality alone is insufficient in explaining Julian's friendly behaviour towards them, since Julian also favoured some Christians that Constantius had supported and notably maintained the imperial animus against Athanasius. For example, Julian retained the apparently Christian Jovian, the future emperor, as *protector domesticus* in early 362, and subsequently promoted him to *primicerius domesticorum* by 363.[14] He also honoured the Christian Caesarius, the younger brother of Gregory of Nazianzus, with his friendship, and summoned him to his court at Constantinople so as to employ him as a chief physician there, a position that Caesarius accepted in early 362.[15] Constantius had supported the careers of Jovian and Caesarius.

μετεκαλέσατο πρὸς αὐτόν, δημόσια ὑποζύγια δεδωκώς. The text is that of J. Bidez and G.C. Hansen (edd.), *Sozomenus: Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1960).

[10] See Malosse (n. 3), 607, who sees this phrase as 'a sort of *quasi simile*, an ersatz of *philia* and *hetairia*' and comprising 'terms, one could say, that express a lesser degree of friendship'; cf. Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.27, 9.4.

[11] See Julian, *Ep.* 39 Wright (= 54 Bidez), *Ep.* 36 Wright (= 61c Bidez) 423D, *Ep.* 19 Wright (= 79 Bidez), *Ep.* 37 Wright (= 83 Bidez), *Ep.* 20 Wright (= 89a Bidez) 454B, *Ep.* 23 Wright (= 107 Bidez) 378B, *Ep.* 24 Wright (= 110 Bidez), *Ep.* 47 Wright (= 111 Bidez), *Ep.* 41 Wright (= 114 Bidez), *Ep.* 40 Wright (= 115 Bidez) 424C, *Mis.* 357C, 363A and *Contra Galilaeos*. On Julian's use of the term 'Galileans', see S. Scicolone, 'Le accezioni dell'appellativo "Galilei" in Giuliano', *Aevum* 56 (1982), 71–80.

[12] See Marcos (n. 1).

[13] Elm (n. 1), 54–7, 280–1.

[14] *PLRE* 1.461, Fl. Iovianus 3; Marcos (n. 1), 418–19 n. 102.

[15] *PLRE* 1.169–70, Caesarius 2; Elm (n. 1), 68 and 337 n. 5; Marcos (n. 1), 407–9.

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One might see these promotions of Christians as exceptions, but Julian also had some unnamed Christians in his entourage outside of Cyzicus while en route to Antioch in 362 (Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.15.6), perhaps Heterousians, such as Aetius and Eunomius, and others. He also variously supported other Christian sects, such as the Donatists or other dissidents in North Africa, the Novatians of Cyzicus and the Valentinians of Edessa, who had suffered at the hands of rival Christian groups and their bishops (more below).[16] Furthermore, if the Basil who is the recipient of a letter from Julian inviting him to his court (*Ep*. 26 Wright = 32 Bidez) is Basil of Caesarea, who was a fellow student of Julian's at Athens, a Christian and a future bishop, then the emperor's epistle to him would further illustrate that his Christian policy was neither simple nor uniform, and not unlike the policy of his immediate predecessors and successors, all of whom supported and opposed Christians and pagans in various configurations and to various degrees. As for Julian, the first line of his epistle to Aetius above refers to his now-lost edicts of toleration, which the emperor had issued sometime in late 361/early 362, and which allowed those Christians banished by Constantius to return to their homes.[17] And the reasons behind Aetius' banishment and restoration are critical to understanding Julian's letter and the position he takes in it with respect to Christians.

Aetius was exiled by Constantius in 360 (Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.8), more than five years after Gallus' execution in late 354, and not for the first time: Constantius had exiled Aetius over his Christology in 358.[18] If Aetius was exiled because of his relationship with Gallus, why did it take so long? Malosse ([n. 3], 608–9) treated the religious and political reasons for Aetius' banishment in 360 as coequal, but both of Aetius' periods of exile make better sense as consequences of doctrinal disputes between the Homoian Constantius and Heterousian Aetius than as belated retribution owing to his (vague) association with 'Gallus' rebellion' (κοινωνοὶ τῆς κατὰ Γάλλον ἐπαναστάσεως in Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.8); indeed, this is precisely the conclusion that Philostorgius, who thought highly of Gallus and Aetius, subsequently makes (ὅσοι δογμάτων ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ὑπερορίαν ὑπέστησαν, 6.7). If Aetius' second exile in 360 was in fact partly due to his association with Gallus' misbehaviour at Antioch, as Philostorgius noted only at 4.8, then it was a mere pretext given by Aetius' ecclesiastical enemies. This would make more intelligible what Philostorgius and Sozomen tell us, if we see in their mentioning of Gallus an 'official reason' for Aetius' exile, one that is compatible with the previous rendering of Julian's text in the pejorative 'the Galileans', whose chicanery against Aetius he characterizes as ἡ ἀπόνοια (more below); the emperor clearly did not consider Aetius part of that same group. In fact, we should recall that Julian treated other leading Christians, some of different views, such as Eunomius, Meletius and Paulinus, similarly.

Moreover, despite having spent five years in Gaul as Caesar, Julian had actually not been, as Malosse ([n. 3], 608) asserted, 'far from Christian doctrinal disputes', such as those discussed at the Synod of Béziers in 356, which led to the exile of Hilary of

[16] For Julian's positive treatment of dissident African Christians, see B.D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), 149–53. For the Novatians and Valentinians, see Marcos (n. 1), 410.

[17] Julian, *Ep*. 24 Wright (= 110 Bidez); J. Bidez and F. Cumont (edd.), *Imp. Caesaris Flavii Claudii Iuliani, Epistulae, leges, poemata, fragmenta varia* (Paris, 1922), 51–2 (*ELF* 45).

[18] See Elm (n. 1), 235–8.

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Poitiers and in which Julian had played a part.[19] Julian evidently knew the actual reason(s) behind Aetius' exile, which he describes as ἕνεκα τῆς τῶν Γαλιλαίων ἀπονοίας, that is, on account of their excitability and intrigues; in short, 'madness' in thought and deed.[20] Thus, the original rendering of Julian's letter to Aetius is quite intelligible; the emperor can be seen making distinctions in his epistle between Aetius and other Christians, whom he categorizes as 'the Galileans', in part, because of their hostile manoeuvres, which led to Aetius' exile. Aetius and others, it seems, had not engaged in such manoeuvres, which set them apart from other Christians in Julian's eyes. The term 'the Galileans' in the emperor's letter to Aetius should be read as meaning not only a group of people emanating from a narrow geographical place—that is, the Galilee, from where the faithful first sprang[21]—but also believers who conceived of piety in a particularly narrow intellectual sense, and who attacked their religious opponents. This view dovetails well with Julian's negative treatment of certain Christian groups and bishops, who had attacked rival Christians in eastern cities and whom he saw as unbearable rabble-rousers and referred to as 'Galileans'.[22] That Julian saw 'the Galileans' as narrow-minded practitioners of piety is evident in his late (fragmentary) work 'Against the Galileans',[23] though this work—of which we know so little since it is only excerpted by Cyril of Alexandria—does not discuss their acts of physical violence against others, and does not differentiate between Christian and Galilean.

Malosse ([n. 3], 607) concluded that Julian's short missive to Aetius 'is unconnected with religious matters'. But this is not a certainty. Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that Julian, shortly after arriving in Constantinople, summoned both Christian bishops and members of the populace of different creeds and communities to the palace there in a bid to produce a *modus vivendi* for all in what was in effect an ecumenical council (otherwise unknown outside of Ammianus);[24] this council could have been summoned and convened during the emperor's nearly sixth-month stay in Constantinople (11 December 361 to approximately late May 362), though we do not know how widely Julian's invitations to court were extended and which bishops attended his council. Scholars have focussed more on Julian's possible motive(s) for summoning a council of Christian leaders than on the very fact that he summoned one. They have also not paid sufficient attention to Julian's epistle to Aetius alongside Ammianus' passage at 22.5.3, which offers another critical window into the early months of Julian's reign as sole Augustus.[25] The emperor's letter to Aetius may be one of the many letters related

[19] See C.L. Beckwith, 'The condemnation and exile of Hilary of Poitiers at the Synod of Béziers (356 C.E.)', *JECS* 13 (2005), 21–38, at 31–4, for Julian's involvement.

[20] Julian uses ἡ ἀπόνοια elsewhere to describe the unbearable religious attitude and behaviour of some Christians and Jews: Julian, *Ep*. 20 Wright (= 89a Bidez) 454B (Jews in general), *Ep*. 24 Wright (= 110 Bidez) (Athanasius), *Ep*. 41 Wright (= 114 Bidez) 436B (some recently recalled Christian leaders in general); cf. *Or*. 2 67A, for the 'boldness and madness' of Shapur II, and *Or*. 7 209A, 210B, for 'madness' in Heracleios' conception of Cynicism and the physical 'madness' of robbers respectively.

[21] See Scicolone (n. 11).

[22] See Julian, *Ep*. 40 Wright (= 115 Bidez) and *Ep*. 41 Wright (= 114 Bidez); Marcos (n. 1), 426–9.

[23] See Elm (n. 1), 300–27; D. Hunt, 'The Christian context of Julian's *Against the Galileans*', in N. Baker-Brian and S. Tougher (edd.), *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian the Apostate* (Swansea, 2012), 251–61.

[24] Amm. Marc. 22.5.3: *dissidentes Christianorum antistites cum plebe discissa in palatium intromissos monebat ciuilius, ut discordiis consopitis quisque nullo uetante religioni suae seruiret intrepidus*.

[25] E.g. see Bidez (n. 4), 66 n. 1, who briefly noted a connection between Julian's epistle to Aetius and his summoning of bishops and others to the Sacred Palace of Constantinople at Amm. Marc.

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to the council at Constantinople, the place to which Julian presumably summoned Aetius in early 362. Although Ammianus in the subsequent passage—so often seized on by scholars—frames Julian's summoning of bishops and others above as actually meant to perpetuate bestial discord among various Christian creeds and communities (22.5.4), what matters here is that the emperor apparently saw Aetius as playing some kind of role in promoting his religious policy.

To conclude, the transmitted text τῶν Γαλιλαίων in Julian's epistle to Aetius affords a new reading of his epistle when reconsidered in tandem with Philostorgius' text. Aetius had been exiled ostensibly for his guilt by association with Gallus, which would have been an easy pretext for his Christian opponents, 'the Galileans', to advance in order to have him banished for his opposing Christology. Julian's negative use of 'the Galileans' in his short letter conveys his perception of some Christians as narrow-minded practitioners of piety and insufferable agitators and, by contrast, his positive view and understanding that other Christians, such as the Heterousian Aetius, represented believers whose piety was more universalizing and less confrontational than the piety of other Christians, that is, more compatible with and/or accepting of traditional cult, which Julian sought to reinvigorate through various traditional and non-violent means. In this light, separating 'Christians' from 'Galileans' may have been a motive behind and a function of Julian's well-known legislation on teachers of classical learning, which is typically understood as targeting Christian professors.[26] Moreover, the Donatists or other Christian dissidents in North Africa, the Novatians of Cyzicus and the Valentinians of Edessa had little in common beyond the facts that they had suffered harm at the hands of their more powerful Christian rivals and that Julian granted them his protection. In so doing, the emperor engaged in patronage aimed at cultivating certain types of Christian supporters early in his reign. This new reading is consistent not only with Julian's friendly treatment of some Heterousian and other clerics but also with the fact that the emperor retained and even welcomed some new Christians at his court. Like Aetius, those Christians that Julian favoured above, and perhaps others, were evidently not considered members of 'the Galileans', a term that could be multivalent. Julian's communications with and treatments of Christians were careful, complex and clever.[27]

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22.5.3; and Elm (n. 1), 65, who quotes Ammianus' passage at 22.5.3 and connects it with Julian's edicts of toleration, but goes no further. See also J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler (edd.), *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII* (Groningen, 1995), 58–60.

[26] See Marcos (n. 1), 414–17, with references to earlier scholarship.

[27] For more on this, see Elm (n. 1) and Marcos (n. 1).

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