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GALILEANS OR GALLUS? (JULIAN'S LETTER TO AETIUS)

On his arrival at Constantinople and in the first months of his reign, Julian sent out many letters of invitation, mostly to pagans; but among these was one[1] to Aetius, the Anomoean leader. This man, known by Julian in the days when he was something of a student of philosophy (and of paganism!),[2] had been banished to Phrygia two years earlier by Constantius. The following is Wilmer Cave Wright's (slightly amended) translation of this letter: 'I have remitted their sentence of exile for all in common who were banished in whatever fashion by Constantius of blessed memory, on account of the folly of the Galileans. But in your case, I not only remit your exile, but also, since I am mindful of our old acquaintance and link, I invite you to come to me. You will use a public conveyance as far as my headquarters, and one extra horse.'[3] This shows that Julian could treat some Christians with much kindness, when he had a personal relationship with them. Nevertheless, he does not address Aetius as *philos* or *hetairos,* as he does his pagan friends.[4] Instead, he uses a sort of *quasi simile*, an ersatz of *philia* and *hetairia*: *palaia gnôsis te kai synetheia*, terms, one could say, that express a lesser degree of friendship. This letter is often quoted or referred to by modern historians[5] on the subject of Julian's tolerance decrees at the beginning of his reign, when the Nicene/homoousian bishops who had been prosecuted by Constantius were allowed to come back from exile – whether these historians are praising Julian for his generosity or accusing him of wanting to cause dissension in the Church, since there would be more than one bishop for each see. In my opinion, this letter should not be suspected of being a forgery,[6] but it is unconnected with religious matters.

[1] *Ep.* 46 Bidez (Cuf), 15 Wright (Loeb).

[2] Aetius is known as a skilful dialectician: this could be the main reason for Julian's attention to him.

[3] *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 μέχρις ἡμῶν· χρήσῃ δὲ ὀχήματι δημοσίῳ μέχρι τοῦ στρατοπέδου τοῦ ἐμοῦ καὶ ἑνὶ παρίππῳ.*

[4] Only three addressees of Julian's personal letters are not said to be (or implied to be) *philoi* or *hetairoi*, and these are – surely or presumably – Christians: Aetius, Basilius (*Ep.* 32), Prohaeresius (*Ep.* 31). See my study 'Les bagues de l'Empereur Julien. La mise en pratique de la rhétorique épistolaire dans la correspondance personnelle d'un empereur', *Rhetorica* 25.2 (2007), 183–203.

[5] See e.g. J. Bidez, *Vie de l'Empereur Julien* (Paris, 1930), 228; C. Fouquet, *Julien. La mort du monde antique* (Paris, 1985), 242 ; A.F. Norman, *Libanius, Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA and London, 1987), xviii ; S. Elm, 'Orthodoxy and the true philosophical life: Julian and Gregory of Nazianzus', *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001), 69–85, at 75 ; K. Bringmann, *Kaiser Julian* (Darmstadt, 2004), 86.

[6] It could be though, as far as I know, it never has been: it was favourable to the Nicene party, giving evidence of friendly connection between 'the Apostate' and their own enemies, Arians and Jews. This is probably the purpose behind the forgery of Julian's ep. 51 (Wright) to the Jews: see P. van Nuffelen, 'Deux fausses lettres de Julien l'Apostat', *Vig. Chr.* 56 (2002), 131–50 – but,

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First, Aetius was not exactly in the same position as those Nicaean bishops (at this time, he was not even a bishop) who had been exiled by Constantius for their religious opinions, as was the case with, for example, Athanasius. Secondly, there is something odd in Julian's comments: how can he speak in a letter sent to a Christian of the '*aponoia* of the Galileans'? He seems to distinguish Aetius from the other Christians: in his mind, perhaps, Aetius was not like the others, but it would have been very discourteous to denigrate Christianity in this otherwise very courteous letter to him. The key to the enigma is found in a sentence of Philostorgius : 'Julian, when he seized upon the empire, recalled Aetius from banishment as one being then in danger on account of Gallus – he did not recall only him, but also the other ones, all those who had infringed the decrees of the Church.'[7] It is clear that Philostorgius' and Julian's texts are closely connected; hence the former is likely to have borrowed his information from the latter. But Philostorgius could have had a better text than we have.[8] I think that what Julian in fact wrote was: *ἕνεκα τῆς τοῦ Γάλλου ἀπονοίας*, which means 'because of Gallus' mad behaviour/arrogance'. One must not be surprised if Julian talked about his own half-brother using a word such as *aponoia*: in his *Letter to the Athenians*, written shortly before letter 46, he uses similar words about him (*ἄγριος*, *τραχύς* …) and describes him as being 'incapable of controlling himself' and 'too cruel'.[9]

In fact, Aetius was banished by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 360), but Philostorgius says that he had then been denounced to Constantius by his Christian enemies for his involvement in 'Gallus' uprising'.[10] It is likely that, at this time, Julian was unaware of the religious reasons for Aetius' banishment: he had just arrived from Gaul, where he had stayed for six years far from Christian doctrinal disputes. One of his first steps when he became emperor was to rehabilitate Gallus, who had been condemned to *damnatio memoriae*: he gave him the title of *makarites*[11] and took people responsible for his execution to court.[12] And it is certain that Gallus' fall was not unique; many other people must have been executed or banished on this occasion (Gallus had his own court, close aides and supporters: it would be surprising if these people did not fall from grace). So Julian was likely to grant an amnesty to all these people, and Aetius, as far as he knew, was one of these. Perhaps some friends of Aetius interceded with the emperor, pointing out the fact that he had been condemned because of his connection with Gallus. Therefore, it is very likely that the emperor meant to tell Aetius: 'Constantius banished many

on ep. 84 (Bidez), see Jean Bouffartigue's reply, 'L'authenticité de la lettre 84 de l'Empereur Julien', *Rph* 79.2 (2005), 231–42. But there is no other reason for suspecting ep. 46/15.

[7] Philos. *Hist. Ecc*. 6.7 (Bidez 75): … *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*.

[8] Philostorgius' text is in fact Photius' abstract, but there is no sign (or suspicion from any scholar) that it could be corrupted here, and the meaning is clear.

[9] Julian, *Or.* 5.271D, 272B, 272C. See my own study, 'Enquête sur les relations entre Julien et Gallus', *Klio* 86.1 (2004), 185–96.

[10] Philos., *HE* 4.8 (Bidez 62).

[11] Julian, *Or*. 5.271a.

[12] See Amm. Marc. 22.3. There is no contradiction between this and Julian's severe judgement on Gallus as a man: the rehabilitation of his half-brother as emperor ensured his own legitimacy, as, later on, did the defence of Constantius' reputation, when he would call him, too, *makarites* (epp. 79 and 110) and declare that he was angry with those who abused him (*Misopogon*, 357c), though his cousin, while alive, had been his main enemy. Furthermore, at this point of his career, Julian set out to show himself as repairing *all* his predecessor's mistakes.

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people who were at the court of Gallus. I called them all back from exile, but, for you, I am going to do more …'

Philostorgius,[13] as well as the orthodox historians, thought that Julian was referring to the main, religious amnesty on which their minds were focussed. But Philostorgius, who was closer than the others to Julian's text,[14] kept on the name of Gallus in his account of the event, while it disappeared in other versions.[15] Later on, Julian's letter was corrected (*τῶν Γαλιλαίων* instead of *τοῦ Γάλλου*) by some copyist, either by a sort of Byzantine 'hypercriticist' who was accustomed to come across Julian speaking of 'Galileans' with injurious words – while there is only one 'Gallus' in the works of the Emperor[16] –, or much earlier, perhaps as soon as the fifth century, at the time of the ecclesiastical historians and in connection with them.

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[13] See the end of the passage quoted above (n. 3).

[14] There are several clues to Philostorgius' good knowledge of Julian's texts. For instance, his account (3.21–2 and 26) of the years 350–3 (Constans' death, Vetranio's usurpation, war between Constantius and Magnentius) is very close to that of Julian (*Or*. 1.21–6 and 32), and it seems to come from no source other than the Emperor's first eulogy of his cousin.

[15] Sozomenus, too, *HE* 5.5. explicitly mentions the link with Gallus.

[16] Julian, *Letter to the Athenians*, 3: *τὸν μακαρίτην ἀδελφὸν ἐμὸν Γάλλον*, 'the blessed Gallus, my brother'. Of course, the *Oration on the Mother of the Gods* cites the name of Cybele's priest Gallus.

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