

THE ORATIONS OF  
THE EMPEROR JULIAN

ORATION I

# THE ORATIONS OF JULIAN

## INTRODUCTION TO ORATION I

JULIAN's training in rhetoric left its mark on all his writings, but technically speaking his work as a Sophist is comprised in the three panegyrics (Orations 1-3) and the prose "Hymns" (Orations 4-5). Oration 1 was considered his masterpiece and was used as a model by Libanius. It was written and probably delivered in 355 A.D., before Julian went to Gaul. The excuse of being an amateur is a commonplace (τόπος) in this type of epideictic speech. He follows with hardly a deviation the rules for the arrangement and treatment of a speech in praise of an emperor (βασιλικὸς λόγος) as we find them in Menander's handbook of epideictic oratory written in the third century A.D. The speech is easily analysed. First comes the prooemium to conciliate the audience and to give the threads of the argument, then the praises of the emperor's native land, ancestors, early training, deeds in war (ὁ περὶ τῶν πράξεων λόγος) and in peace (ὁ περὶ τῆς εἰρήνης λόγος), and the stereotyped contrasts with the Persian monarchs, the Homeric heroes, and Alcibiades. In the two last divisions the virtues of Plato's ideal king are proved to have been displayed by Constantius, his victories are exaggerated and his

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defeats explained away. Then comes a description of the happy state of the empire and the army under such a ruler, and the panegyric ends abruptly without the final prayer ( $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) for the continuance of his reign, recommended by Menander. This peroration has evidently been lost. The arrangement closely resembles that of Oration 3, the panegyric on the Empress Eusebia, and the "Evagoras" of Isocrates, which Julian frequently echoes. Julian's praises were thoroughly insincere, a compulsory tribute to a cousin whom he hated and feared.

## ΙΟΥΛΙΑΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ ΕΓΚΩΜΙΟΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΤΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΑ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΟΝ

Πάλαι με προθυμούμενον, ὦ μέγιστε βασιλεῦ, τὴν σὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ πράξεις ὑμνῆσαι καὶ τοὺς πολέμους ἀπαριθμήσασθαι, καὶ τὰς τυραννίδας ὅπως ἀνήρηκας, τῆς μὲν λόγῳ καὶ πειθοῖ τοὺς δορυφόρους ἀποστήσας, τῆς δὲ τοῖς ὅπλοις κρατήσας, τὸ μέγεθος εἶργε τῶν πράξεων, οὐ τὸ βραχὺ λειφθῆναι τῷ λόγῳ τῶν ἔργων δεινὸν κρίνοντα, ἀλλὰ τὸ παντελῶς τῆς ὑποθέσεως διαμαρτεῖν δόξαι. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ περὶ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν ποίησιν διατρίβουσιν οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν εἰ ῥαδίως ἔξεστιν ἐγχειρεῖν τοῖς ἐπαίνοις τῶν σοι πραχθέντων· περίεστι γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐκ 2 τῆς τοῦ λέγειν μελέτης καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὰς ἐπιδείξεις συνηθείας τὸ θαρσεῖν ἐν δίκῃ. ὅσοι δὲ τοῦ μὲν τοιοῦτου μέρους κατωλιγώρησαν, ὥρμησαν δ' ἐφ' ἕτερον παιδείας εἶδος καὶ λόγων ξυγγραφῆν οὐ δῆμῳ κεχαρισμένην οὐδ' ἐς θέατρα παντοδαπὰ τολμῶσαν ἀποδύεσθαι, πρὸς τὰς ἐπιδείξεις ἔχιοιεν ἂν εἰκότως εὐλαβεστέρως. ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἄδηλον τοῦθ' ὅτι τοῖς μὲν ποιηταῖς Μοῦσαι καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν B ἐκεῖθεν ἐπιπνεομένους τὴν ποίησιν γράφειν ἄφθονον

## PANEGYRIC IN HONOUR OF THE EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS

I HAVE long desired, most mighty Emperor, to sing the praises of your valour and achievements, to recount your campaigns, and to tell how you suppressed the tyrannies; how your persuasive eloquence drew away one usurper's<sup>1</sup> bodyguard; how you overcame another<sup>2</sup> by force of arms. But the vast scale of your exploits deterred me, because what I had to dread was not that my words would fall somewhat short of your achievements, but that I should prove wholly unequal to my theme. That men versed in political debate, or poets, should find it easy to compose a panegyric on your career is not at all surprising. Their practice in speaking, their habit of declaiming in public supplies them abundantly with a well-warranted confidence. But those who have neglected this field and chosen another branch of literary study which devotes itself to a form of composition little adapted to win popular favour and that has not the hardihood to exhibit itself in its nakedness in every theatre, no matter what, would naturally hesitate to make speeches of the epideictic sort. As for the poets, their Muse, and the general belief that it is she who inspires their verse, obviously gives them unlimited

<sup>1</sup> Vetricano.

<sup>2</sup> Magnentius,

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παρέχει τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πλάσματος· τοῖς  
 ῥήτορσι δὲ ἢ τέχνη τὴν ἴσιν παρέσχευ ἀδειαν,  
 τὸ μὲν πλάττειν ἀφελομένη, τὸ δὲ κολακεύειν  
 οὐδαμῶς ἀπαγορεύσασα, οὐδὲ αἰσχύνῃ ὁμολογου-  
 μένην τῷ λέγοντι τὸ ψευδῶς<sup>1</sup> ἐπαινεῖν τοὺς οὐκ  
 ἀξιούς ἐπαίνου κρίνασα. ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἐπειδὴν καινόν  
 τινα μῦθον καὶ μηδέπω τοῖς πρόσθεν ἐπινοηθέντα  
 φέρωσιν αὐτοὶ ξυθέντες, τῷ ξένῳ τοὺς ἀκούοντας C  
 ψυχαγωγήσαντες πλέον θαυμάζονται· οἱ δὲ τῆς  
 τέχνης ἀπολαῦσαί φασιν ἐν τῷ δύνασθαι περὶ τῶν  
 μικρῶν μειζόνως διελθεῖν, καὶ τὸ μέγεθος ἀφελεῖν  
 τῶν ἔργων τῷ λόγῳ, καὶ ὅλως ἀντιτάττειν τῇ  
 τῶν πραγμάτων φύσει τὴν δύναμιν<sup>2</sup> τῶν λόγων.

Ἔγὼ δὲ εἰ μὲν ἐώρων ταύτης ἐμαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ  
 παρόντος ἐν χρεῖα τῆς τέχνης, ἦγον ἂν τὴν προ-  
 σήκουσαν ἡσυχίαν τοῖς ἀμελετήτως ἔχουσι τῶν  
 τοιούτων λόγων, παραχωρῶν τῶν σῶν ἐγκωμίων D  
 ἐκείνοις, ὧν μικρῷ πρόσθεν ἐμνήσθην. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἅπαν  
 τοῦναντίον ὁ παρὼν ἀπαιτεῖ λόγος τῶν πραγ-  
 μάτων ἀπλήν διήγησιν οὐδενὸς ἐπεισάκτου κόσμου  
 δεομένην, ἔδοξε κάμοι προσήκειν, τοῦ<sup>3</sup> ἀξίως  
 διηγήσασθαι τῶν ἔργων ἀνεφίκτου καὶ τοῖς προλα-  
 βοῦσιν<sup>4</sup> ἤδη φανέντος. ἅπαντες γὰρ σχεδὸν οἱ  
 περὶ παιδείαν διατρίβοντές σε<sup>5</sup> ἐν μέτρῳ καὶ 3  
 καταλογάδην ὑμνοῦσιν, οἱ μὲν ἅπαντα περι-  
 λαβεῖν ἐν βραχεῖ τολμῶντες, οἱ δὲ μέρεσιν  
 αὐτοὺς ἐπιδόντες τῶν πράξεων ἀρκεῖν ᾤθησαν,

<sup>1</sup> ψεῦδος V.      <sup>2</sup> τὴν δύναμιν Wytttenbach, δύνασθαι τὴν  
 MSS, Hertlein.      <sup>3</sup> τοῦ Reiske adds.      <sup>4</sup> τοῖς προλαβοῦσιν  
 Hertlein suggests, τότε προλαβοῦσιν MSS,      <sup>5</sup> σε Schaefer adds,

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license to invent. To rhetoricians the art of rhetoric allows just as much freedom; fiction is denied them, but flattery is by no means forbidden, nor is it counted a disgrace to the orator that the object of his panegyric should not deserve it. Poets who compose and publish some legend that no one had thought of before increase their reputation, because an audience is entertained by the mere fact of novelty. Orators, again, assert<sup>1</sup> that the advantage of their art is that it can treat a slight theme in the grand manner, and again, by the use of mere words, strip the greatness from deeds, and, in short, marshal the power of words against that of facts.

If, however, I had seen that on this occasion I should need their art, I should have maintained the silence that befits those who have had no practice in such forms of composition, and should leave your praises to be told by those whom I just now mentioned. Since, on the contrary, the speech I am to make calls for a plain narrative of the facts and needs no adventitious ornament, I thought that even I was not unfit, seeing that my predecessors had already shown that it was beyond them to produce a record worthy of your achievements. For almost all who devote themselves to literature attempt to sing your praises in verse or prose; some of them venture to cover your whole career in a brief narrative, while others devote themselves to a part only, and think that if they succeed in doing justice to that part they have proved themselves equal to the task.

<sup>1</sup> Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 42 c.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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