

ORATION II

INTRODUCTION TO ORATION II

THE Second Oration is a panegyric of the Emperor Constantius, written while Julian, after his elevation to the rank of Caesar, was campaigning in Gaul.¹ It closely resembles and often echoes the First, and was probably never delivered. In his detailed and forced analogies of the achievements of Constantius with those of the Homeric heroes, always to the advantage of the former, Julian follows a sophistic practice that he himself condemns,² and though he more than once contrasts himself with the "ingenious rhetoricians" he is careful to observe all their rules, even in his historical descriptions of the Emperor's campaigns. The long Platonic digression on Virtue and the ideal ruler is a regular feature of a panegyric of this type, though Julian neglects to make the direct application to Constantius. In the First Oration he quoted Homer only once, but while the Second contains the usual comparisons with the Persian monarchs and Alexander, its main object is to prove, by direct references to the Iliad, that Constantius surpassed Nestor in strategy, Odysseus in eloquence, and in courage Hector, Sarpedon and Achilles.

¹ 56 B and 101 D.

² 74 D.

ΙΟΥΛΙΑΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ

ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΠΡΑΞΕΩΝ
ἢ ΠΕΡΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ.

Τὸν Ἀχιλλέα φησὶν ἢ ποιήσεις, ὅποτε ἐμήνισε καὶ διηνέχθη πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα, μεθεῖναι μὲν ταῖν χεροῖν τὴν αἰχμὴν καὶ τὴν ἀσπίδα, ψαλτήριον δὲ ἀρμολόμενον καὶ κιθάραν ἄδειν καὶ ὑμνεῖν τῶν ἡμιθέων τὰς πράξεις, καὶ ταύτην διαγωγὴν τῆς ἡσυχίας ποιεῖσθαι, εὖ μάλα ἐμφρόνως τοῦτο διανοηθέντα. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀπεχθάνεσθαι καὶ παροξύνειν τὸν βασιλέα λίαν αὐθαδὲς καὶ ἄγριον τυχὸν δὲ οὐδὲ ἐκείνης ἀπολύεται τῆς μέμφεως ὁ τῆς Θέτιδος, ὅτι τῷ καιρῷ τῶν ἔργων εἰς ὧδὰς καταχρῆται καὶ κρούματα, ἐξὸν τότε μὲν ἔχεσθαι τῶν ὀπλων καὶ μὴ μεθιέναι, αὐθις δὲ ἐφ' ἡσυχίας ὑμνεῖν τὸν βασιλέα καὶ ἄδειν τὰ κατορθώματα. οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονά φησιν ὁ πατήρ 50 ἐκείνων τῶν λόγων μετρίως καὶ πολιτικῶς προσενεχθῆναι τῷ στρατηγῷ, ἀλλ' ἀπειλῇ τε χρῆσθαι καὶ ἔργοις ὑβρίζειν, τοῦ γέρωσ ἀφαιρούμενον. συνάγων δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐς ταῦτὸν ἀλλήλοις ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας μεταμελομένους, τὸν μὲν τῆς Θέτιδος ἐκβοῶντα

Ἄτρείδη, ἦ ἄρ τι τόδ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἄρειον
Ἐπλετο, σοὶ καὶ ἐμοί,

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OR, ON KINGSHIP

ACHILLES, as the poet tells us, when his wrath was kindled and he quarrelled with the king,¹ let fall from his hands his spear and shield ; then he strung his harp and lyre and sang and chanted the deeds of the demi-gods, making this the pastime of his idle hours, and in this at least he chose wisely. For to fall out with the king and affront him was excessively rash and violent. But perhaps the son of Thetis is not free from this criticism either, that he spent in song and music the hours that called for deeds, though at such a time he might have retained his arms and not laid them aside, but later, at his leisure, he could have sung the praises of the king and chanted his victories. Though indeed the author of that tale tells us that Agamemnon also did not behave to his general either temperately or with tact, but first used threats and proceeded to insolent acts, when he robbed Achilles of his prize of valour. Then Homer brings them, penitent now, face to face in the assembly, and makes the son of Thetis exclaim

“ Son of Atreus, verily it had been better on this wise for both thee and me ! ”²

¹ Agamemnon.

² *Iliad* 19. 56.

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εἶτα ἐπαρώμενον τῇ προφάσει τῆς ἀπεχθείας καὶ B
ἀπαριθμούμενον τὰς ἐκ τῆς μήνιδος ξυμφοράς, τὸν
βασιλέα δὲ αἰτιώμενον Δία καὶ Μοῖραν¹ καὶ
Ἐρινύν, δοκεῖ μοι διδάσκειν, ὥσπερ ἐν δράματι
τοῖς προκειμένοις ἀνδράσιν οἷον εἰκόσι χρώμενος,
ὅτι χρὴ τοὺς μὲν βασιλέας μηδὲν ὕβρει πρᾶττειν
μηδὲ τῇ δυνάμει πρὸς ἅπαν χρῆσθαι μηδὲ ἐφίεναι
τῷ θυμῷ, καθάπερ ἵππῳ θρασεῖ χήτει χαλινῶ
καὶ ἠνιόχου φερομένῳ, παραινεῖν δὲ αὐ τοῖς
στρατηγοῖς ὑπεροψίαν βασιλικὴν μὴ δυσχεραίνειν, C
φέρειν δὲ ἐγκρατῶς καὶ πράως τὰς ἐπιτιμήσεις,
ἵνα μὴ μεταμελείας αὐτοῖς ὁ βίος μεστὸς ᾗ.

Ταῦτα κατ' ἐμαυτὸν ἐννοῶν, ὦ φίλε βασιλεῦ, καὶ
σὲ μὲν ὁρῶν ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν παιδείαν
ἐπιδεικνύμενον καὶ ἐθέλοντα πάντως κοινῇ μὲν²
ἅπαντας ἀγαθὸν τι δρᾶν, ἡμῖν δὲ ἰδίᾳ τιμὰς καὶ
γέρα ἄλλα ἐπ' ἄλλοις παρασκευάζοντα, τοσοῦτῳ δὲ
οἶμαι κρείττονα τοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων βασιλέως εἶναι
ἐθέλοντα, ὥστε ὁ μὲν ἠτίμαζε τοὺς ἀρίστους, σὺ
δὲ οἶμαι καὶ τῶν φαύλων πολλοῖς τὴν συγγνώμην
νέμεις, τὸν Πιπτακὸν ἐπαινῶν τοῦ λόγου, ὃς τὴν
συγγνώμην τῆς τιμωρίας προτίθει, αἰσχυνοίμην D
ἂν, εἰ μὴ τοῦ Πηλέως φαινοίμην εὐγνωμονέστερος
μηδὲ³ ἐπαινοῖν εἰς δύναμιν τὰ προσόντα σοί, οὔτι
φημὶ χρυσὸν καὶ ἀλουργῇ χλαῖναν, οὐδὲ μὰ Δία
πέπλους παμποικίλους, γυναικῶν ἔργα Σιδωνίων,
οὐδὲ ἵππων Νισαίων κάλλη καὶ χρυσοκολλητῶν
ἀρμάτων ἀστράπτουσιν αἴγλην, οὐδὲ τὴν Ἰνδῶν 51

¹ Μοῖραν Hertlein suggests, Μοῖρας MSS.

² κοινῇ μὲν Hertlein suggests, κοινῇ τε MSS, cf. 43 D, 51 D.

³ μηδὲ Hertlein suggests, καὶ MSS.

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Later on he makes him curse the cause of their quarrel, and recount the disasters due to his own wrath, and we see the king blaming Zeus and Fate and Erinys. And here, I think, he is pointing a moral, using those heroes whom he sets before us, like types in a tragedy, and the moral is that kings ought never to behave insolently, nor use their power without reserve, nor be carried away by their anger like a spirited horse that runs away for lack of the bit and the driver; and then again he is warning generals not to resent the insolence of kings but to endure their censure with self-control and serenely, so that their whole life may not be filled with remorse.¹

When I reflect on this, my beloved Emperor, and behold you displaying in all that you do the result of your study of Homer, and see you so eager to benefit every citizen in the community in every way, and devising for me individually such honours and privileges one after another, then I think that you desire to be nobler than the king of the Greeks, to such a degree, that, whereas he insulted his bravest men, you, I believe, grant forgiveness to many even of the undeserving, since you approve the maxim of Pittacus which set mercy before vengeance. And so I should be ashamed not to appear more reasonable than the son of Peleus, or to fail to praise, as far as in me lies, what appertains to you, I do not mean gold, or a robe of purple, nay by Zeus, nor raiment embroidered all over, the work of Sidonian women,² nor beautiful Nisaeon horses,³ nor the gleam and glitter of gold-mounted chariots,

¹ *Republic* 577 E.

² *Iliad* 6. 289.

³ Herodotus 7. 40; horses from the plain of Nisaea drew the chariot of Xerxes when he invaded Greece.

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