



## **Festive Satire: Julian's Misopogon and the New Year at Antioch**

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## FESTIVE SATIRE: JULIAN'S *MISOPOGON* AND THE NEW YEAR AT ANTIOCH\*

By MAUD W. GLEASON

One morning early in the year 363, the citizens of Antioch awoke to find, prominently displayed outside the imperial palace, a lengthy and vehement communication from their emperor. He begins with an attack on his own beard, and we know the satire today as the *Misopogon*, or 'Beard-Hater'. But it also bore the title 'Oration on Antioch' (*Antiochikos*). The double title is indicative of a paradox in its rhetorical strategy. Normally an *Antiochikos* would be a panegyric,<sup>1</sup> and normally a rhetorical description of an emperor's person and achievements should conform to the encomiastic formulae of the *basilikos logos*.<sup>2</sup> But Julian in his satire turns the panegyric *topoi* upside down, and abuses the city by joining its citizens in abuse of himself.<sup>3</sup> In so doing he paints a vivid contrast between the emperor, breast shaggy like a lion, beard alive with vermin, fingers stained with ink, and the smooth-skinned Phaeacians of Antioch. Scholars have been embarrassed at the spectacle. Was Julian sufficiently conscious of the dignity of his position?

The social context of this document has not been thoroughly examined, although its content has never ceased to amaze. Glanville Downey called it 'one of the most incredible things that a Roman emperor, supposed to be in his right senses, ever did'.<sup>4</sup> But for many historians, to claim that a work is *sui generis* is to admit defeat: thus four pages after pronouncing the *Misopogon* incredible, Downey concludes that 'the satire was a reasoned (if unsuccessful) device, a planned and considered effort of propaganda'. Other scholars regard the *Misopogon* as a far from rational production, and seek its origins deep in Julian's unconscious mind. Festugière felt that the immediate circumstances of the satire did not suffice to explain it. He looked beyond to 'distant causes'; 'Julian, as we know, had a harsh and unhappy childhood'.<sup>5</sup> Robert Browning would have it both ways: 'It is an extraordinary exercise in public relations and a revelation of the complexity of Julian's mind'.<sup>6</sup> Since by definition the public only understands ordinary public relations, and revealed complexities remain complex, Browning's premises entail his conclusion: 'The *Misopogon* must have been an enigma to those who took the time to read it'.

It is legitimate to ask whether *any* imperial document can be so unusual that we cannot assimilate its composition and publication into existing patterns of social behaviour. We learn very little when we dismiss the *Misopogon* as an isolated aberration of an individual psyche. Of course the emperor had a psyche. But the emperor's psyche was not what his subjects saw. To his subjects, it has been argued, 'the emperor was what the emperor did'.<sup>7</sup> This approach can supply a helpful corrective to our study of Julian if it prompts us to consider what he wrote more as a part of 'what he did' than as evidence for what he felt. The composition and prominent display of the *Misopogon* constituted a form of public communication—a fact easy to lose sight of when we fall into talking about Julian's treatises as if they were emotional purgatives. It is sobering to remember that only by chance do we learn from Malalas that this satire was posted up on the Tetracylon of the Elephants for all to see.<sup>8</sup> Without this indication of its publication we might indeed be

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the *Antiochikos* of Libanius, *Or.* xi.

<sup>2</sup> See Menander Rhetor's paradigm for a *Basilikos Logos*: D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* (1981), 76–94.

<sup>3</sup> He is so confident of his own worth that criticism of himself in their terms amounts ultimately to an indictment of them.

<sup>4</sup> 'Julian the Apostate at Antioch', *Church History* 8 (1939), 310.

<sup>5</sup> A. J. Festugière, *Antioch païenne et chrétienne* (1959), 63–4. Festugière's approach may seem exaggerated, but the trend continues. A recent book compares Julian's behaviour with that of a wronged child: Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: an Intellectual Biography* (1981), 201–2.

<sup>6</sup> *The Emperor Julian* (1976), 158.

<sup>7</sup> F. G. B. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (1977), xi.

<sup>8</sup> *Chron.* 328. 3–4. Even the illiterate should not be excluded as a potential audience, since the literate often read out loud. For further discussion of publicly posted satire see below.

tempted to abandon all quests for the social context of the *Misopogon* and to regard it as a psychiatric or rhetorical exercise.

Did contemporaries think the *Misopogon* odd? Ammianus thought its criticisms harsher than the situation warranted,<sup>9</sup> but did not castigate the emperor for doing anything undignified—as he did not hesitate to do on other occasions.<sup>10</sup> After Julian's death Libanius praised him for resorting not to the punishments of the despot but to those of the orator.<sup>11</sup> In his correspondence with the emperor, Libanius never mentions the *Misopogon* explicitly, although in his sixteenth oration he tries to refute its arguments point by point.<sup>12</sup> We are not entitled to conclude, however, that Libanius passes over the incident in silence because he felt it embarrassed Julian rather than Antioch. Zosimus transmits the opinion (undoubtedly from Eunapius) that it was a most elegant speech (λόγον ἄσπειότατον).<sup>13</sup> Socrates and Sozomen both report favourable judgements on the *Misopogon*. As ecclesiastical apologists they knew how to appreciate invective. The former claims that the satire left 'an indelible stigma on the city and its inhabitants'.<sup>14</sup> The latter comments, 'he suppressed his feelings of indignation and repaid their ridicule by words alone; he composed and sent to them a most excellent and elegant work under the title of *Beard Hater*'.<sup>15</sup> Neither of these historians makes a practice of sparing Julian. If contemporary Antiochenes of any stripe felt (as modern readers do) that in publishing the *Misopogon* the emperor had committed a notorious *faux pas*, why did Julian's Christian enemies not even allude to that fact? Gregory of Nazianzus knew the *Misopogon* and wrote an uninhibited attack on Julian soon after he died. But the most he can claim is that the *Misopogon* is now an object of ridicule, conceding that this was not so during Julian's life.<sup>16</sup>

So the *Misopogon* seems not to have shocked Julian's contemporaries as it shocks us. The purpose of this paper is to investigate why it did not, by seeking to define a range of 'normal' or traditional behaviour within which the actions of both Julian and the Antiochenes can comfortably be contained.

It is clear from the *Misopogon* itself that the emperor is replying in prose to scurrilous jibes in verse that have been circulating about him in the city (338A, D; 345D *et passim*). Things had not been going well between Julian and Antioch,<sup>17</sup> but there must have been a last straw that provoked the *Misopogon*. Libanius provides a clue. After Julian left the city on 5 March, threatening never to return, Libanius wrote an oration in which he harangued his fellow-citizens about what went wrong. He imagines them making excuses for the widespread circulation of lampoons that exasperated the emperor. 'People will say, "We were afraid that we would be held responsible for abolishing the holiday if we forbade what was sanctioned by religious custom."' <sup>18</sup> There was a holiday, occurring shortly before the

<sup>9</sup> 'probra civitatis infensa mente dinumerans, addensque veritati complura' (XXII. 14. 2).

<sup>10</sup> e.g. XII. 7. 3 (Julian jumps up in the senate to greet Maximus); XXII. 14. 3 (Julian carries sacred emblems in place of the priests).

<sup>11</sup> See n. 92 below.

<sup>12</sup> He alludes to it indirectly in a private letter to Julian (802. 2), referring to the city's κακοπραγία, 'by which I mean not the scarcity of foodstuffs, but the fact that it has been judged wicked, evil, and ungracious (ὅτι πονηρὰ καὶ κακὴ καὶ ἀχάριστος κέριται)'. Here ἀχάριστος recalls εἰς ἀχάριστα καταθέμενος ἦθη τὰς χάριτας in the peroration of the *Misopogon* (371B).

<sup>13</sup> *Historia Nova* III. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Socr., *HE* III. 17. Although Socrates was able to quote from Julian's *Letter to the Alexandrians* (III. 3), we cannot be certain that he had access to the rest of Julian's works. He does, however, give details of the lampoons against Julian, which probably were not to be found in Eunapius' eulogistic account.

<sup>15</sup> Soz., *HE* v. 19. Sozomen records the contents of three more of Julian's public letters and quotes a fourth in its entirety (v. 16).

<sup>16</sup> '... though at the time your imperial rank made it important' (*Contra Julianum* II. 41, PG 35. 717). The conclusion of this piece shows that Gregory thought of himself as posting metaphorically a counter-*Misopogon*.

'Here is a pillar for you from me, higher and more visible than the Pillars of Heracles ... which will inevitably become known everywhere by everyone as it moves about ... pillorying you and your deeds', op. cit., ch. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Julian's religious and economic policies were the major points of friction. For a discussion of the latter see G. Downey, op. cit. (n. 4 above), and 'The Economic Crisis at Antioch under Julian the Apostate', in P. R. Coleman-Norton, ed., *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of A. C. Johnson* (1951), 312–21, and P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioch au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C.* (1955), 109–18.

<sup>18</sup> *Or.* xvi. 35. Compare *Misopogon* 355C, where Julian like Libanius puts words into the citizens' mouths: 'And yet you [Julian] think that even the charming youths in the city ought to keep quiet and, if possible, think what pleases you, but at least say what is agreeable for you to hear! But it is their independence that makes them hold revelling processions (κωμάζειν), which they're generally doing all the time, but during the festivals they're doing more than usual'. Compare also the scurrilous young men in Ammianus' excursus on lawyers who spend their time composing *mimiambi* and insulting their betters (xxx. 4. 14–17).

publication of the *Misopogon*, that featured satire as part of the ritual: the Kalends, which during the fourth century blossomed in popularity among Christians and pagans alike over the empire.<sup>19</sup> The *Misopogon* was written in late January or early February 363.<sup>20</sup> I suggest that it was provoked by the popular satire of the Kalends, and constitutes an answer in kind that appropriates some of the festive licence of the holiday. This social context helps us to see the satire less as an inexplicable lapse of imperial dignity than as a particular instance of the habitual outrageousness licensed by festivals of social inversion. In Sections III–V I further argue that, festival circumstances apart, the *Misopogon* is not without precedent as a method of imperial chastisement.

## I

Let us reconstruct the Kalends celebrations at Antioch in 363. The season's ceremonial presented many opportunities for crowd and emperor to meet face to face. We need to consider what people would have expected to happen and what might have gone wrong. The festivities of the late Roman New Year comprised public as well as private celebrations, and both provided opportunities for popular satire of an unpopular ruler. Public ceremonial focused on the inauguration of the new year's magistrates on 1 January and the games they gave on 3 January. Since the emperor was residing in the city and was himself to take up the consulship, everyone would have expected a particularly splendid procession. The year before at Constantinople Julian, out of ostentatious reverence for the consuls, had preceded them on foot.<sup>21</sup> But in 363 as consul he would have been borne aloft on a triumphal *sella curulis*, in a toga studded with precious stones, while at his side his friend Sallustius, the first private citizen to share the consulship with the emperor since the days of Diocletian,<sup>22</sup> wore the ancient *trabea*, a triumphal purple toga embroidered with astrological signs and effigies of emperors.<sup>23</sup> The consuls tossed coins to the crowd; the crowd roared back: 'Ave consul amplissime!'. As Meslin observes, 'by this triumphal procession a mere mortal could, for a moment all too brief, participate in the divinizing ceremonial which surrounded unceasingly the sacred person of the emperor'.<sup>24</sup>

But in order for such moments to work their magic, things have to go right. Thus it was most unfortunate that at the climax of the procession, as Julian ascended the steps of the temple of Tyche to offer sacrifice for the welfare of the state, one of the superannuated priests accompanying him fell down suddenly without apparent cause and died.<sup>25</sup> Temple wardens stood on either side of the entrance of the sacred enclosure to purify everyone who went in with a sprinkling of pagan holy water. Christians perceived this as enforced contamination.<sup>26</sup> There was discord on a deeper level too. Rituals of social communion in which 'the central authority of an orderly society . . . is acknowledged to be the avenue of communication with the realm of sacred values'<sup>27</sup> require a certain amount of consensus about what those sacred values are. In situations where values are ambiguous or inconsistent, a ruler may say little and still symbolize much. But tension and misunderstandings are likely to arise if, as in the case of Julian, the putative vessel of sacred values declines to accept gracefully whatever his society would pour into him and attempts to be selective about what he represents.

<sup>19</sup> M. Meslin, *La Fête des Kalendes de janvier dans l'empire romain* (Collections Latomus 115, 1970), 49.

<sup>20</sup> In the seventh month of the emperor's stay:  $\mu\eta\nu\alpha$   $\epsilon\beta\delta\omicron\mu\omicron\nu$   $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu\iota$ , 344A. He arrived on 18 July. Downey, in *A History of Antioch in Syria* (1961), 393 n. 4, and some others, forgetting perhaps about inclusive reckoning, mistakenly calculate late February or early March.

<sup>21</sup> Ammianus xxii. 7. 1, cf. *Pan. Lat.* xi. 28, 30.

<sup>22</sup> Ammianus xxiii. 1. 1.

<sup>23</sup> On consular dress and attributes (and the New Year ceremonies) see Averil Cameron on Corippus, *Iust.* iv. 90 ff., pp. 197–8.

<sup>24</sup> Meslin, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 56. One might compare the British coronation: 'The crowds who turned out to see the queen . . . were waiting to enter into contact with the mighty powers who were symbolically and, to some

extent, really responsible for the care and protection of their basic values and who on this day had been confirmed in these responsibilities' (Edward Shils and Michael Young, 'The Meaning of the British Coronation', in Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (1975), 147).

<sup>25</sup> Ammianus xxiii. 1. 6. Compare the sinister omens that marred Nero's last Kalends (Suetonius, *Nero* 46. 2).

<sup>26</sup> Valentinian, for example, walking before the Emperor, is said to have struck the attendant who sprinkled him (Theodoret, *HE* iii. 12). The procession to the temple of Tyche that Theodoret describes took place 'a year and a few months' before Valentinian became emperor. His accession took place on 26 February 364.

<sup>27</sup> Shils, *op. cit.* (n. 24), 151.

During the New Year's Day panegyrics, delivered before a very large audience, Libanius spoke by imperial invitation. He made a number of provocative and partisan remarks about the emperor's devotion to the pagan gods.<sup>28</sup> Julian was so enraptured by this performance that he lost control of himself, jumped up from his seat, and flung out his arms to unfurl his cloak.<sup>29</sup> The orator comments in his memoirs, 'loutish persons might claim that he became carried away and forgot the dignity of his position'.<sup>30</sup> Although Libanius found something truly regal in this enthusiasm for his own rhetoric, others may not have seen it that way. After all, people would remember Constantius, whose ceremonial demeanour was so august that he had never been seen to wipe his nose in public.<sup>31</sup> Yet even Constantius demonstrated *civilitas* in the hippodrome by enjoying popular jokes at his own expense.<sup>32</sup>

Official ceremonies continued on 3 January. The consul performed the *vota publica* with sacrifices at Antioch's magnificent gilded temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. A later antiquarian tells us that it was traditional for the crowd to ridicule the chief magistrates with impunity on this occasion, using comic impersonations as well as words.<sup>33</sup> The soldiers took an oath of loyalty on that day and expected an imperial gift in exchange.<sup>34</sup> Julian seems to have taken the unfestive stance of refusing the donative to Christians who would not sacrifice in his presence to the *Genius Augusti*.<sup>35</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, in his catalogue of Julian's atrocities against the Christians, tells of some unnamed Christian soldiers who sacrificed to obtain their donative, later regretted it in their cups, and rushed to Julian to turn themselves in. The worst that Gregory can say is that he deprived them of the martyrdom they deserved by sending them into exile.<sup>36</sup> Would such incidents have had much impact on Julian's relations with the civilian population? A long-lost martyr-act, rediscovered in a Burgundian monastery, would suggest that the local bishop and his flock did support the protest gestures of Christians in the army. This manuscript tells the story of two legionary standard-bearers who, in late December or early January, refused to remove the *labarum* from their standards and sacrifice to the pagan gods.<sup>37</sup> They were condemned in the city by Julian's uncle, the *comes orientis*, and a large procession under the leadership of Bishop Meletius escorted them across the river to their beheading. Such crowds did not hesitate to voice their discontent, as we know from the crowd that chanted polemical psalms against Julian while the bones of the martyr Babylas were removed from Daphne.<sup>38</sup> We might also remember the exploits of the intrepid Publia, an abbess who incited her virgins to taunt the emperor with psalms whenever he passed by.<sup>39</sup>

3 January came to a climax with the games of the New Year. They began with an elaborate procession, the *pompa circensis*, which the consuls conducted through the *agora*

<sup>28</sup> *Or.* XII. 69, 79–83.

<sup>29</sup> *Or.* I. 129. Shaking the toga was a traditional gesture by which persons of authority might demonstrate approval for an orator's performance: Philostratus, *V.S.* 626 (Caracalla); Eunapius, *V.S.* 484 (a proconsul). Julian's gesture may have seemed not so much ridiculous as offensively partisan.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.* For a hostile description of Julian's excitable and undignified deportment see Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Julianum* II. 23 (*PG* 35. 692).

<sup>31</sup> Ammianus XXI. 16. 7; cf. XVI. 10. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ammianus XVI. 10. 13 (in Rome). Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions* (1976), 157–83, offers a comprehensive discussion of the emperor's relations with his people at the games; see also *id.*, *Bread and Circuses: the Roman Emperor and his People* (1973); A. Wallace-Hadrill, *JRS* 72 (1982), 38.

<sup>33</sup> John Lydus, *De Mensibus* p. 74 Wunsch: καὶ ἀδεῶς τὸ πλῆθος ἀπέσκαπτεν εἰς τοὺς ἄρχοντας οὐ ῥήμασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ σχῆμασιν ἐπὶ τὸ γελοιῶδες ἔχουσι.

<sup>34</sup> Meslin, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 62–3.

<sup>35</sup> *Soz.*, *HE* v. 17. 2; Theodoret, *HE* III. 12, immediately following his description of the Kalends

procession of 363. For the date of this passage see above n. 26. Cassiodorus, *Historia Tripartita* VI. 30, mentions the Kalends; cf. *Greg. Naz.*, *Contra Julianum* I. 82–3; *Lib.*, *Or.* XVIII. 168.

<sup>36</sup> *Contra Julianum* I. 83–4; cf. *Lib.*, *Or.* XII. 84; xv. 43; XVIII. 199). Theodoret has them condemned to death and on their knees before, in a Brechtian touch, they are saved by a galloping messenger with a last-minute pardon (*HE* III. 17).

<sup>37</sup> SS. Bonosus and Maximilianus (*Acta Sanctorum*, 21 August, vol. 4, 430–2). The story contains an impressive number of circumstantial details, as its first editor pointed out: T. Ruinart, *Acta Primorum Martyrorum*, 2nd ed. (1713), 592. He also observed that the August date is incorrect, since Count Julian, who died soon after sentencing them, met his fate early in 363 (Ammianus XXIII. 1. 5–6).

<sup>38</sup> They sang: 'Confounded be all they who worship graven images, who boast themselves in idols', *Soz.*, *HE* v. 19; *Socr.*, *HE* III. 18.

<sup>39</sup> Julian allegedly sent for her and ordered his bodyguard to box her ears (Theodoret, *HE* III. 14).

to the circus.<sup>40</sup> It included a pageant in which men carried, or rather wore, images of the gods. Chrysostom saw Antioch besieged by demons parading in the market-place,<sup>41</sup> and urged his flock to remain at home when they heard 'tumults, disorders, diabolical processions, and the agora filled with evil licentious men'.<sup>42</sup> And at Ravenna the New Year's *pompa* featured satiric impersonations of gods and monsters, of beasts and women: 'They ridicule decency, they violate judicial authority, they laugh at public opinion, they make sport with the whole world watching, and they say that in so doing they *jest*'.<sup>43</sup>

One wonders how Julian and his gods fared in this procession. The situation invited anapaests. No impartial accounts remain, but when Julian berates the Antiochenes for abusing him publicly 'in the market place', he may be referring to the mockery of the *pompa circensis*. He claims that when he criticized their senators, he attacked them quasi-privately. 'But', he objects, 'you abused me in the *agora*, in the presence of the whole populace, with the help of those citizens who were capable of composing such charming witticisms as yours'.<sup>44</sup> The situation he describes presupposes some sort of formal gathering in which both emperor and citizens were present in the market-place.<sup>45</sup>

At last the procession surged into the hippodrome. The hippodrome and the theatre traditionally provided the people of a Roman city with an opportunity to express their opinions directly to their rulers. Their shouts might mingle praise and blame in various proportions, and Constantine had decreed in 331 that a written record of acclamations directed at imperial officials be sent for his perusal to the capital.<sup>46</sup> Now that the emperor was present in person, and in a time of famine and religious tension, the crowd gathered in the hippodrome at Antioch would have been particularly ripe for cathartic expressions of enthusiasm and hostility. On these occasions protocol was important; at the New Year's games of the previous year Julian had bungled protocol by formally manumitting the slaves assembled for that purpose when it was not his prerogative to do so, and then fining himself ten pounds of gold for his mistake.<sup>47</sup> Today, consul as well as emperor, he was expected to pay for a spectacle he abhorred and to remain throughout it the Antiochenes' captive audience. He did not stay long.<sup>48</sup> Keyed up for competition and looking forward to baths, banquets and dice, they seem not to have restrained themselves; for later in the spring we find Libanius apologizing to Julian: 'As for the audacious behaviour in the hippodrome, you mocked that long ago, but we will exact punishment for it; we haven't stopped searching for the scoundrels and are not far from arresting them'.<sup>49</sup> It is possible, but not certain, that the 'scoundrels' who led New Year's demonstrations against Julian had gained their experience as members of Antioch's theatrical *claque*, which became notorious

<sup>40</sup> Satire regularly enlivened the *pompa circensis* at Rome, where men dressed as Satyrs and Sileni 'ridiculed and mimicked the serious movements of the others, translating them into something ridiculous' (Dion. Hal. vii. 72. 10-11).

<sup>41</sup> δαιμόνων πομπευσάντων ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς (PG 48. 953); cf. Dion. Hal. vii. 72. 13.

<sup>42</sup> PG 48. 957.

<sup>43</sup> This homily of c. 430 gives a detailed description of the diabolical festivities: 'Ecce veniunt dies, ecce Kalendae veniunt, et tota demonum pompa procedit, idolorum tota producitur officina. . . . Figurant Saturnam, faciunt Jovem, formant Herculem, exponunt cum venantibus suis Dianam, circumducunt Vulcanum verbis anhelantem turpitudines suas, et plura quorum quia portenta sunt, nomina sunt tacenda; quorum deformitates quia natura non habet, creatura nescit, fingere ars laborat. Praeterea vestiuntur homines in pecudes, et in feminas viros vertunt, honestatem rident, violant iudicia, censuram publicam rident, illudunt saeculo teste, et dicunt se facientes ista iocari. Non sunt ioca, sed sunt crimina' (*Homilia de Pythonibus et Maleficiis*, PL 65. 27). Although included among the works of Severianus, this homily was actually written by Peter Chrysologus, according to R. Arbesmann, 'The "Cervuli" and "Anniculae" in Caesarius of Arles',

*Traditio* 35 (1979), 112 n. 100. I owe this reference to Bill Klingshirn.

<sup>44</sup> *Misopogon* 364A, cf. 366C.

<sup>45</sup> The account of Malalas is unfortunately not of much use (*Chron.* 327-8). He does describe a crowd scene in which people insulted the emperor, but subordinates everything to a jumbled account of the martyrdom of Juventinus and 'Maximianus'.

<sup>46</sup> *C.Th.* 1. 16. 6; see C. M. Roueché, *JRS* 74 (1984), 186.

<sup>47</sup> Ammianus xxii. 7. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Misopogon* 340A.

<sup>49</sup> *Or.* xv. 75, sent to Julian in Persia. σὺ μὲν πάσαι κατεγέλασας may be as close as Libanius could bring himself to mentioning the *Misopogon* (but see *Ep.* 802, quoted in n. 12 above). My conclusion that Libanius is referring to the New Year's races is based on a series of inferences. He is not referring to the shouts of πάντα γέμει, πάντα πολλοῦ that Julian mentions in *Misopogon* 368C, because that incident took place in the *theatre*, at the beginning of his stay. Julian tells us himself that he attended the races very rarely, only on festival days (*Misopogon* 340A), and we know that as consul Julian had to attend the games at New Year. Cf. Lib., *Or.* xv. 19 quoted below.

for its political activity in the 380s.<sup>50</sup> Yet 'audacious behaviour in the hippodrome' was not the end of the matter. 'Worst of all', wrote Libanius, 'we are held to have put on a shocking dance (ὠρχήσθαι κακῶς) and turned a religious festival into an excuse for a disreputable racing entertainment'.<sup>51</sup> It is easy to imagine what Libanius meant by 'disreputable racing entertainment', but one wonders what sort of dancing he had in mind. To answer this question we must consider the private or unofficial side of the traditional Kalends festivities.

Libanius describes these in an encomium of the holiday.<sup>52</sup> The whole empire celebrates; everywhere there is feasting and merriment. Everyone gives gifts. What people usually struggle to gain, they now consider it a gain to spend. Overeating and other normally forbidden activities are now entirely correct, and regret for them is out of place. Boys need not fear the pedagogue nor slaves their master, while they spend the day gambling and shirking work unpunished. All legal business shuts down; even prisoners look cheerful. The holiday can persuade a father in mourning for his son to take food and go to the baths. It reconciles citizen with citizen, housewife with housewife, and settles family feuds. And it teaches everyone, even the emperor, to give money away. In another speech Libanius gives us crucial details about New Year's Eve:<sup>53</sup>

Night falls, but no one sleeps. The common people engage in songs, wild dancing, and mocking jests. They do this even in the commercial district, barging in, pounding on doors, shouting in mockery. They make it impossible to sleep. And some people are angry with what they hear, but others consider it an occasion for laughter, and no one present is so sour and austere that he censures these goings-on: even he who is too self-controlled to laugh breaks out laughing.

Antioch's greatest Christian orator took a different view. In a New Year's homily he condemns 'the diabolical all-night festivities, the satiric jests, the abuse, the nocturnal dances, the whole ridiculous comedy'.<sup>54</sup> Asterius, the bishop of Pontus, deplors the rapacious trick-or-treating of the gangs of nocturnal revellers, who terrorized the houses of respectable people on New Year's Eve. Poor city-dwellers had to buy them off with coins saved to feed their families. Country people who ventured into the streets were forced to give up their money and assaulted with verbal and physical mockery.<sup>55</sup>

One might expect Christian homilists to disapprove of secular New Year's celebrations, but it is particularly unfortunate that in 363 the emperor was not amused. For the Kalends, with its collective feasting, its massive ritual of gift-giving both horizontally and vertically on the social scale,<sup>56</sup> was a time for healing social rifts and softening social tensions, when a reversal or temporary suspension of the familiar dichotomies that normally articulate the social structure (male and female, ruler and subject, slave and free) might open the way for the experience of community in a larger sense.<sup>57</sup> Even Christians

<sup>50</sup> On the claque at Antioch see J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch. City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (1972), 208–18, 278–80. Of course, Libanius has every reason to persuade Julian that only a few idlers were responsible for the disturbances. In his speech to the senate at Antioch he anticipates their objection that those involved were foreigners without explicitly endorsing it (*Or.* xvi. 31–4). The claque seems to have contained dissolute youth of good family as well as foreign desperadoes (*Lib., Or.* xli. 9). One might compare the organized misconduct of the student gangs at Athens university, the *eversores* of Augustine's Carthage (*Confessions* iii. 3), and the 'Abbeys of Youth', young men's organizations dedicated to misrule and satiric *charivari* in medieval and early modern France (N. Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (1965), 104 ff.). For the age of the offenders see also n. 18 above. It might be objected that the earliest explicit evidence for the claque's role in political acclamations comes from Libanius' speeches of the 380s, and that 363 is simply too early. But with the Christian reaction after Julian's death, Libanius went into semi-retirement. We have no letters from the period 365–88, and no public

orations until 378. It might also be objected that the claque could not have been operative in the hippodrome, since it had not yet become amalgamated with the circus factions. But *Misopogon* 339D implies that under Constantius the theatre and hippodrome had been under a joint imperial administrator (whose job Julian then eliminated), and it was precisely this sort of administrative change that promoted the consolidation of the claque and the factions (Cameron, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 214–29).

<sup>51</sup> *Or.* xv. 19, trans. Norman.

<sup>52</sup> *Or.* ix.

<sup>53</sup> *Descriptio* v. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Αἱ γὰρ διαβολικαὶ παννυχίδες αἱ γινόμεναι τήμερον, καὶ τὰ σκώματα, καὶ αἱ λοιδορίαι, καὶ χορεῖαι αἱ υψκτεριναὶ, καὶ ἡ καταγέλαστος αὐτῆ κωμωδία (John Chrysostom, *PG* 48. 954).

<sup>55</sup> ἐπιχλευάζονται, κωμωδοῦνται λόγοις καὶ ἔργοις (*PG* 40. 220, in a sermon of 1 January 400).

<sup>56</sup> *Lib., Or.* ix. 8–9; *Descr.* v. 5.

<sup>57</sup> See Victor Turner, 'Liminality and Communitas' in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969), *passim*.

were aware of the healing potential of the holiday. As Isaac of Antioch observed in the fifth century, it 'renews the ranks of the city'.<sup>58</sup>

But if we consider the Kalends to have been a celebration of a generalized social bond, we may wonder why mockery and ridicule should have been an appropriate part of it. Before *communitas* can have its day, the world of structure must be dissolved. In the hierarchical society of late Roman times, this involved thinking what was almost unthinkable. But the mockery and masquerades of New Year's Eve provided what a modern anthropologist would describe as an opportunity to 'play with the factors of sociocultural experience, to disengage what is mundanely connected, what . . . people may even believe to be naturally and inevitably connected, and to join the disarticulated parts in novel, even improbable ways'.<sup>59</sup> Even Asterius saw the Kalends *πρωπεία* of the army as a form of play. 'They practise the demeaning arts of the stage, a release and weakening of morals, a game (*παιδιά*) against the laws whose guards they have been appointed to be. They mock and ridicule the emperor, using a wagon as a stage, and elect him a bogus bodyguard'.<sup>60</sup> The show also involved the cross-dressing of soldiers as women. Reversal of roles was the essence of the game: 'The hand that once held the trophy now spins the yarn'. The soldier's role is defined by both his subordination to his commander and his antithetical relation, as the embodiment of virile values, to the world of women. The structure of hierarchical relationships finds its natural solvent in mockery and ritual insubordination, while the antithetical relationship of the sexes invites play-acting and ritual reversal. The civilian world presents a more varied assortment of statuses and consequently a greater number of potential foci of social tension. Thus one function of satire in this context, when its targets are fellow-citizens of every rank, is to expand one's sense of community. Asterius stresses how the traditional satire of the Kalends afflicts all orders of society: clergy and laity, rich and poor, children and peasants.<sup>61</sup>

And the emperor? Holiday abuse of the emperor was not unknown in fourth-century Syria. On one occasion the citizens of Edessa, 'resenting some treatment they had received', overturned a statue of Constantius and thrashed its bronze backside.<sup>62</sup> Constantius chose to ignore the incident. Such behaviour was a festival tradition at Edessa. According to Libanius it was

an old-established procedure, applied to all emperors alike. . . . They say that this practice was evolved by the understanding of wise men . . . when they sought to satisfy some of the gods in this way and feasted them with jocular abuse (*ταῖς μετὰ παιδιᾶς λοιδορίαις*), for them to be satisfied with that and to make no further demands of the people. Indeed this cannot be disbelieved, when you see them poking fun at themselves (*κωμωδοῦντας*), and the notables among them providing occasion for a comic race and horse-play (*τοῖς μετὰ δρόμου σκώμμασι*). They run this race every year, and have the immunity of the occasion and of the numbers of the participants, not just for what they say, but for absolutely everything that can make the festival more enjoyable. And if a governor becomes unjustifiably angry and engages on a campaign of punishment, then straightway he is thought to be a petty-minded dunce, unacquainted with religious customs.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Homily on the Night-Vigils at Antioch*, 30, available in the free German translation of P. Landensdorfer in *Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Dichter, Bibliothek der Kirchenväter* (1912). This homily has not previously been cited in discussions of the Kalends, perhaps because the author specifies simply 'the month of Canun', instead of First Canun (December) or Second Canun (January). But the occasion is unmistakable. Isaac was awakened, while visiting the city, by night-music in the streets: 'The whole city was like a banqueting hall; the night was changed as if into day by the singing and merry-making that resounded in it'. Groups of common people clustered with their instruments before the houses of the great and competitively improvised rustic songs. If the songs were improvised, their content was probably topical. I thank Peter Brown for showing me this homily and Michael Guinan,

Professor of Semitic Languages at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, for discussing the Syriac text with me.

<sup>59</sup> V. Turner, 'Images of Anti-Temporality: an Essay in the Anthropology of Experience', *HThR* 75 (1982), 253.

<sup>60</sup> *Sermo adversus Kalendarum Festum*, PG 40. 222A. Compare S. Weinstock, 'Saturnalien und Neujahrfest in den Märtyreracten' in *Mullus; Festschrift T. Klauser* (1964), 391-400.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Lib., Or.* XIX. 48.

<sup>63</sup> *Or.* XX. 27-8, trans. Norman. Libanius is writing to Theodosius on behalf of the Antiochenes after the infamous Riot of the Statues in 387, which by contrast had not taken place during a festival.

Julian had invited Antioch to take up with him a privileged relationship—the sort of relationship that for many reasons he would never cultivate with Constantinople. But hitherto the result of his presence in the city had been to make life distinctly less comfortable for its inhabitants. On the Kalends of January, perhaps in the belief that one demonstrates a privileged relation with a person of power by being rude and getting away with it, the rowdy citizens of Antioch gave vent to their apprehensions and hostilities at what was commonly considered to be a season of ritual impunity.

## II

Thus the festivities of the Kalends gave the Antiochenes multiple opportunities to jeer at their emperor. Their jibes fell into two categories: personal remarks and political-religious criticism. The *Misopogon* itself is not our only source for these—it is interesting to note that the taunts Ammianus records seem the cruellest, yet Julian does not respond to them at all.<sup>64</sup> First and foremost, the infamous beard. They told him to twist ropes from it.<sup>65</sup> They admonished him in witty anapaests to depilate his cheeks.<sup>66</sup> Because Julian wore his beard as a polemical statement, to show that he conceived of himself as a pagan philosopher and considered Marcus Aurelius his imperial prototype, the Antiochenes could poke fun at his physical peculiarities and his religious policy in one breath. Beard-watching was a traditional sport at Antioch. Verus, stationed there when beards were long, provoked Syrian wit by shaving his off to please a woman's whim.<sup>67</sup> And when Caracalla shaved at Antioch it was considered a noteworthy mark of decadence.<sup>68</sup> Julian, according to Ammianus, 'was ridiculed as a Cercops, a dwarf spreading out his narrow shoulders and wearing a goat's beard, taking huge steps as if he were the brother of Otus and Ephialtes, whose height Homer exalts as enormous'.<sup>69</sup> (This sounds like an insult that was particularly suited for dramatization in pantomime.) Various legends survive about the Cercopes; we cannot be certain which ones the fourth-century satirists at Antioch had in mind. Ovid says that Zeus created them from men who incorrigibly told lies, and made them horribly hirsute.<sup>70</sup> They were said to have stolen the arms of Heracles and attacked him while he was sleeping.<sup>71</sup> (Ammianus, in contrast, saw Julian as Heracles and his detractors as attacking Pygmies.<sup>72</sup>) A Κέρκωπες was attributed to Homer. Libanius, knowing this, and knowing Julian's fondness for Alexander, may be alluding very delicately to the Cercops lampoons in *Or.* xv. 42. He is trying to placate the emperor by citing historical examples of great men who showed leniency to their detractors: 'Alexander was much wronged by the orators at Athens. They stirred up trouble for him, they incited the democracies against him, they branded him "Margites" [another unattractive character from the fringe of the Homeric corpus], they insulted him and covered him with contempt'. Alexander could have massacred them, of course, but he listened to the orator Demades instead.

Another target for satire was Julian's coinage (*Misopogon* 355D). Socrates says, 'They added that the bull which he impressed upon his coin was a symbol of his having desolated

<sup>64</sup> The chronology of Ammianus' account is confusing, since he implies that Julian wrote the *Misopogon* first, in response to curial intransigence about price control, and that ridicule came later: 'volumen composuit invecitivum . . . post quae multa in se facete dicta comperiens, coactus dissimulare pro tempore, ira sufflabatur interna. Ridebatur enim ut Cercops . . .' (xxii. 14. 2-3). Rather than have Julian the victim of unprovoked remarks, Ammianus preferred to present him as having the first word and keeping his self-control afterward: 'et quamquam his paribusque de causis indignaretur, tacens tamen motumque in animi retinens potestate, sollempnia celebrabat'. This comment leads naturally into an account of Julian's sacrifice on Mt Casius during which he magnanimously pardons an old enemy (xxii. 14. 4-5).

<sup>65</sup> *Misopogon* 338D, 360D; Socr., *HE* III. 17. Julian's retort implies that they might not be tough enough to

handle such ropes (338D). Two words from Homer contain a note of menace for the erudite: it was Odysseus' bowstring that hurt the suitors' 'unworn and tender hands' (*Od.* 21. 151).

<sup>66</sup> *Misopogon* 345D.

<sup>67</sup> *H. A. Verus* VII. 10. The lady was the famous Panthea (Lucian, *Imagines* 10).

<sup>68</sup> Dio LXXVIII. 20.

<sup>69</sup> xxii. 14. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Metamorphoses* XIV. 91. The Cercopes had stubby legs; Julian's height was not impressive even to an admirer ('mediocris erat staturae', Ammianus xxv. 4. 22; 'exiguo corpore', xxii. 2. 5). Suetonius, *Peri Blasphematon* 89-91, stresses the Cercopes' bad character and mentions a popular etymology derived from κέρκος, tail or *membrum virile*.

<sup>71</sup> Nonnus *ap.* Westermann, *Mythogr.* 375.

<sup>72</sup> xxii. 12. 4.

the world. For the emperor . . . was continually sacrificing bulls on the altars of his idols and had ordered the impression of a bull and altar to be made upon his coins'.<sup>73</sup> Local wits tagged him 'bull-burner',<sup>74</sup> and in a similar vein, as we learn from Ammianus, 'he was called *victimarius*, slaughterer, instead of high priest, by many who mocked his frequent offerings; and in this he was appropriately criticized, since for the sake of display he took an exaggerated delight in carrying the sacred emblems in place of the priests, and in being surrounded by a company of women'.<sup>75</sup> This criticism reflects Ammianus' own judgement as a more conservative pagan. The Antiochenes criticized his religious behaviour from a Christian point of view. 'The Chi [meaning Christ] never harmed the city in any way, and neither did the Kappa [Constantius]' or, 'He wars against the Chi and we begin to regret the Kappa'.<sup>76</sup> They also accused him of trying to turn the world upside down (τὸν κόσμον ἀνατρέπειν).<sup>77</sup> A phrase from Sozomen illuminates what people meant by this: 'They remarked sarcastically that he upset the world in the same way as his priests, when offering sacrifice, threw down the victims'.<sup>78</sup> The imagery of this jibe associates the world with the sacrificial victim, recalling how, in Socrates' explanation, the sacrificial bull on Julian's coin types was a symbol of his having desolated the world.<sup>79</sup>

## III

How did emperors usually respond to popular attacks? When Constantius' statue was whipped in Edessa, 'He did not fly into a temper, he sought no punishment, nor did he humble the city in any way'.<sup>80</sup> There is a story that Constantine,

When the Roman populace assailed him with outrageous catcalls (βοαῖς ἀσελγεστέραις), asked his brothers what he ought to do. One of them answered that he should let loose an armed force upon them and cut them down . . . the other replied that it became his majesty to take not the slightest notice of such behaviour. Constantine told them that this advice was the correct one and the advice of the harsh brother was of little use to an emperor: it was proper for rulers to put up with such skittishness.<sup>81</sup>

During the revolt of Procopius, Valens was attacked in Constantinople with pasquinades (ὕβρισμένος ἐν γράμμασιν), but after the rebellion had been put down, he nursed no grievance (at least according to Libanius,<sup>82</sup> who was trying to encourage Theodosius to exercise clemency after the Riot of the Statues). Theodosius' preliminary punishments for the insults Antioch offered to his statues included closing the hippodrome, the baths, and the theatres.<sup>83</sup> He had the entire senate jailed pending judicial examination, and depriving the city of its status of *metropolis*, reduced it to a mere κώμη of its jealous rival Laodicea.<sup>84</sup> Septimius Severus had done the same thing to Antioch because the rebellious city had supported Pescennius Niger against him and had 'ridiculed him in his administration of the east'.<sup>85</sup> Worse things could happen. Sometimes an emperor might respond to criticism by putting into practice the advice that Constantine rejected. Caracalla, when ridiculed by the pungent lampoons of the Alexandrians for the murder of his brother, and for his pretensions as a man of small stature to imitate Alexander and Achilles, ordered his soldiers to conduct a massacre of the citizens and then abolished their spectacles and public banquets.<sup>86</sup> And Julian's brother Gallus, as Caesar in Antioch, initially ordered the

<sup>73</sup> *HE* III. 17; an example from the mint of Antioch: *RIC* VIII. 529–30.

<sup>74</sup> Κουσίταυρος: Greg. Naz., *Contra Julianum* I. 77.

<sup>75</sup> XXII. 14. 3. Compare Gregory's satirical description of the emperor making himself ridiculous by puffing out his cheeks like an old woman to kindle the sacrificial fire (*Contra Julianum* II. 22).

<sup>76</sup> *Misopogon* 357A; 360D.

<sup>77</sup> *Misopogon* 371A; 360D.

<sup>78</sup> *HE* V. 19. Panegyric tradition preferred to see the Emperor as lifting the world up (Lib., *Or.* XIII. 42).

<sup>79</sup> Of course, which way is 'up' depends on your point of view. Julian once wrote, 'through the folly of the Christians almost everything has been turned upside down (ἅπαντα ἀντερτάτη)', (*Ep.* 37, Wright).

<sup>80</sup> Lib., *Or.* XIX. 49.

<sup>81</sup> Lib., *Or.* XIX. 19, trans. Norman.

<sup>82</sup> *Or.* XX. 25. Ammianus XXVI. 10. 12 tells another story.

<sup>83</sup> Lib., *Or.* XX. 6.

<sup>84</sup> Lib., *Or.* XX. 6; XXIII. 27; Theodoret, *HE* V. 20.

<sup>85</sup> *H. A. Severus* IX. 4; Herodian III. 6. 9; Ulpien, *Dig. L.* 15. 1. 3. Julian punished the obstinately Christian Constantia in this fashion, by 'attaching' it to its pagan rival, Gaza.

<sup>86</sup> Dio LXXVIII. 22. 1; Herodian IV. 9. 1–3. Destruction of statues may have been part of the provocation. See F. G. B. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (1964), 157.

execution of the entire city council, when they resisted his proposal to control the price of food and answered him 'more forcefully than was reasonable'.<sup>87</sup>

These examples should give us some idea of the range of responses available to Julian. Libanius alludes to all these possibilities:<sup>88</sup> massacre, loss of metropolitan status,<sup>89</sup> executions, exile, and confiscations.<sup>90</sup> What Julian actually did was this: he insulted the city by removing his imperial presence and threatened to make Tarsus his headquarters upon his return from Persia. He left behind Alexander of Heliopolis as governor of Syria, 'who was violent and cruel; and he said that the man did not merit the post, but that a judge of this type was what the greedy and rebellious people of Antioch deserved'.<sup>91</sup> And he wrote and posted up the *Misopogon*. During the negotiations which followed its publication Libanius did not allude to it directly, but after Julian's death he adduced it as an example of the emperor's moderation. During the grain crisis, he says, he expected burnings and drownings, but saw only a brief imprisonment of the curia.

When a little later the city behaved with even greater insubordination . . . then he scorned the punishment that despots inflict and proceeded to apply that of an orator for, though he had it in his power to use torture or execution, he chose to avenge himself on our city by an oration (λόγῳ), as he had done previously, to be sure, to a Roman citizen who had behaved with an impudence rather similar.<sup>92</sup>

This was most likely the senator Nilus Dionysius, who had insulted Julian and received a savage broadside in exchange.<sup>93</sup> It resembles the *Misopogon* in a number of interesting ways: particularly in its attitude that abuse from a depraved antagonist amounts to praise,<sup>94</sup> and in its intent to punish through public humiliation. 'And indeed I have written this letter now, not for your perusal alone, since I knew it was needed by many besides yourself, and I will give it to all, since all, I am convinced, will be glad to receive it'.<sup>95</sup> We are not told how the letter was to be publicized, but the easiest option was to have it posted up in a public place. That was Constantine's method for dealing with Arius and his followers. He wrote letters against Arius 'that were rather like public orations, exposing him to ridicule, taunting him with irony, and sent them round to be everywhere published throughout the cities'.<sup>96</sup>

## IV

One would expect evidence for such a transitory, undignified, and often anonymous genre as posted satire to be sparse. But it can be found. First, some evidence for pasquinades composed by private persons. Suetonius, for example, quotes a number of couplets taunting Nero that were posted in Rome.<sup>97</sup> And in the east, the supporters of Procopius in Constantinople attacked Valens ἐν γράμμασιν—graffiti or placards.<sup>98</sup> After the executions of Fausta and Crispus, Ablabius adorned the palace door of Constantine with this caustic comment:

<sup>87</sup> 'gravius rationabili responderunt' (Ammianus xiv. 7. 2). Since Gallus allowed them all to be rescued by the intercession of the *comes orientis*, the death sentence may have been but a posture in a charade of intimidation.

<sup>88</sup> *Or.* xv. 55; xvi. 13–14.

<sup>89</sup> Soz., *HE* v. 4 shows that Julian inflicted this punishment on Caesarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia.

<sup>90</sup> Confiscations were used by Julian to punish Edessa for the factional excesses of its Arians. The sarcasm of this edict is worth comparing with the *Misopogon*: 'Therefore, since by their own most admirable law they are bidden to sell all they have and give to the poor so that they may attain more easily to the kingdom of the skies . . .' (*Ep.* 40, Wright).

<sup>91</sup> Ammianus xxiii. 2. 3.

<sup>92</sup> *Or.* xviii. 195–8, trans. Norman.

<sup>93</sup> *Ep.* 50, Wright.

<sup>94</sup> 'But among the living is there anyone so silly or small-spirited as to think he deserves your attention,

and would not prefer to be completely ignored by you, but if that were impossible, would rather be reviled by you—as I am now—than receive your praise? May I never have such poor judgement, may I never cease to prefer your insults to your praise!' (*Ep.* 50, Wright 446A).

<sup>95</sup> 446B. Note that Libanius knew all about it (*Or.* xviii. 198). τὸ Νείλου κακόν may have become quasi-proverbial (*Ep.* 758).

<sup>96</sup> ἐπιστολάς . . . πανηγυρικώτερον γράψας, πανταχοῦ κατὰ πόλεις προέθηκε διακωμωδῶν, καὶ τῆς εἰρωνείας τῷ ἦθει διαβάλλων αὐτόν. Soz., *HE* i. 9. Hadrian's letter attacking Heliodorus may have achieved notoriety by being published in the same way: 'litteris famosissimis lacesavit' (*H. A. Hadrian* xv. 5).

<sup>97</sup> *Nero* 39.

<sup>98</sup> *Lib.*, *Or.* xx. 25.

Who needs the Golden Age?  
Ours is bejewelled—but Neronian.<sup>99</sup>

In 306 the Council of Elvira condemned those who took such liberties with churches: 'Hi qui inventi fuerint libellos famosos in ecclesia ponere, anathematizantur'.<sup>100</sup> Basil of Caesarea had to deal with the case of a nun whose acquaintance with an unscrupulous man had ruined her reputation. 'He came to such a pitch of impiety and insolence', she wrote, 'that he filled the whole city with slanders against me, and pilloried me with a public placard that was affixed to the doors of the church'.<sup>101</sup> A century later, when Gothic troops billeted in Edessa maltreated the citizens, 'those who were ill-disposed among the Edessenes dared to do something unseemly; for they wrote down on sheets of paper (χάρτης) complaints against the Magister Militum, and fastened them up secretly in the customary places of the city'.<sup>102</sup> (The Magister responded by packing up his troops and leaving town.) Such practices continued in Byzantine times. John of Ephesus preserves the amusing story of how a monument under construction by Justin II unexpectedly acquired an unflattering inscription.<sup>103</sup>

Imperial edicts, criticizing the behaviour of individuals or entire populations, could provide an officially posted counterpart to the graffiti of private parties. For example, Marcus Aurelius did not massacre the supporters of Cassius, 'and even went so far as to pardon the citizens of Antioch, who had said many things in support of Cassius and in opposition to himself. But he did abolish their games and public meetings, including gatherings of every kind, and issued a very severe edict against the people themselves'.<sup>104</sup>

v

I suggest that Julian's posting of the *Misopogon* belongs to a traditional pattern of imperial public behaviour: the promulgation of what might be called 'edicts of chastisement'. Fronto considered it the emperor's duty to write such things. Emperors ought to 'repress by their edicts the faults of provincials, give praise to good actions, quell the seditious and terrify the fierce ones. All these are assuredly things to be achieved by words and letters'.<sup>105</sup> Edicts were technically expressions of the emperor's views, and unlike *libelli* and *subscriptions* were not written as replies to an initiative from below. From the time of Constantine imperial letters came to have the force of edicts and were often posted up (*proposita*) in the same way.<sup>106</sup> Edicts were initially published by posting them up at the emperor's current place of residence.<sup>107</sup> The *Misopogon*, according to Malalas,<sup>108</sup> was put up 'outside the palace, on the so-called Tetracylon of the Elephants near the royal street' that served as the propylaea of the palace.<sup>109</sup> It is pointless to ask whether those who craned their necks around the Tetracylon of the Elephants thought they were reading an edict or an imperial letter. By this time the generic distinction had blurred. Any attempt to decide the question on the basis of formal considerations will tend toward the conclusion that the *Misopogon* is a hybrid.<sup>110</sup> Though posted like an edict, it does not begin with λέγει or the equivalent, it is written in the first and not in the third person, and it ends with a

<sup>99</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* v. 8. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Canon 52. Compare the *famosa epistula* against Maxentius that got a Carthaginian deacon into trouble (Optatus 1. 17).

<sup>101</sup> Basil, *Letter* 289.

<sup>102</sup> W. Wright, *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* (1882, repr. 1968), 73. Contrast the discreet 'suggestion box' for informers' complaints set up outside his palace by the governor Alexander (ch. 29).

<sup>103</sup> *HE* III. 24.

<sup>104</sup> *H.A. Marcus* xxv.

<sup>105</sup> *Ad M. Antoninum de eloquentia* 2. 7, quoted in Millar, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 203.

<sup>106</sup> Millar, 319–21; 592; 598.

<sup>107</sup> Millar, 254, with references.

<sup>108</sup> 328. 3–4.

<sup>109</sup> *Lib.*, *Or.* xi. 205. It is not quite accurate to say, with Downey (*Antioch*, 394 n. 89), 'The Tetracylon of the Elephants is not mentioned elsewhere and it is not clear from this passage whether or not it stood at the crossing of the four main streets of the island'. Surely *Lib.*, *Or.* xi. 204 describes a monument at this intersection: 'From four arches which are joined to each other in the shape of a rectangle, four pairs of stoas proceed as from an omphalos'.

<sup>110</sup> Even in classical times non-judicial edicts varied in style and content. A recent treatment of the subject emphasizes the influence of rhetoric: M. Benner, *The Emperor says: Studies in the Rhetorical style in Edicts of the Early Empire*, *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* 33 (1975), 190–1.

sarcastic parody of the final greeting traditional in imperial letters.<sup>111</sup> Julian obviously did not consider it his obligation to keep letters and edicts distinct. For example, he wrote to the citizens of Bostra in the first person singular, combining pungent comments on the folly of their sectarian disputes with accusations of ingratitude, but called his message an edict.<sup>112</sup> The blurring of literary categories and the restructuring of the imperial role were equally Julian's legacy from Constantine. Compare another manifesto, both political and personal, written for a special occasion, personally delivered and widely published, that 'fits into no recognizable literary category, for it combines homily, philosophy, apologetic, and literary exegesis into an expression of the author's personality'.<sup>113</sup> Not another treatise of Julian's, but Constantine's *Speech to the Assembly of the Saints*.

Julian was by no means the first emperor to rebuke his subjects in writing for unruly demonstrations of opinion. Edicts of this type go back to the Julio-Claudians.<sup>114</sup> Provincials did not always go to the expense of making permanent copies of edicts addressed to them, particularly if the edict did not work to their direct advantage or was downright unflattering; so by and large the *ipsissima verba* of other angry emperors have not survived. If we had the full text of the imperial legislation excerpted for the Theodosian Code, we might be more accustomed to the spectacle of emperors indulging in vehement abuse of their wayward subjects.<sup>115</sup> But we do have snippets of information from historians and imperial biographies. Augustus replied to insolent popular jokes with an edict;<sup>116</sup> Vindex, in revolt against Nero, issued edicts that referred to the emperor as a private person and insulted his musicianship. Nero, characteristically, fought back with banquet epigrams, which he set to music with obscene gestures, and which are said to have entered the popular repertoire.<sup>117</sup> Vespasian answered anonymous lampoons 'such as are usually posted against emperors', with humorous counter-edicts.<sup>118</sup> A censorious letter from Hadrian stopped riots in Alexandria.<sup>119</sup> His spirited exchange of anacreontics with the poet Florus makes a good story.<sup>120</sup> It might even be true. Certainly the motif was worth recycling.<sup>121</sup> When the senators of Antioch expressed passive resistance to Caracalla, then resident among them, he took time out from dissipation to send them a list of his complaints. Annoyed by their lack-lustre performance and their unwillingness to assemble with an appropriate appearance of zeal, he concluded his letter with the comment, 'I know my behaviour does not please you; that is why I have weapons and soldiers, so that I do not have to pay attention to what people are saying about me'.<sup>122</sup>

Examples from the career of Marcus Aurelius are particularly useful because of Julian's well-known preference for him.<sup>123</sup> Julian did more than admire his role-model: he wore Marcus' old-fashioned beard. Macrinus' beard had made the same announcement. As Herodian said of him, 'he wasted his time in Antioch cultivating his beard and walking about with carriage more stately than was called for . . . in so doing he was imitating the

<sup>111</sup> Instead of εὐτυχεῖτε we find, 'In return for your good will and the honour with which you publicly honoured me, may the Gods pay you back what you deserve' (371C). On the persistence of the final greeting even in epigraphic copies of imperial letters that omit other formal elements, see W. Williams, *ZPE* 17 (1975), 41.

<sup>112</sup> διάταγμα (*Ep.* 41, Wright, 437D and C).

<sup>113</sup> T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981), 75. Anyone who thinks that passionate invective is a sign of an emperor who has lost his grip should compare some of the letters of Constantine, for example his letter to the bishops after the Council of Arles (Optatus, *App.* v) and, most spectacularly, his letter to Arius and the Arians (H.-G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* II. 1, 69-75).

<sup>114</sup> Augustus: Suet., *D.Aug.* 42, 53, 56. 1; Tacitus, *Ann.* I. 78; Tiberius: Tacitus, *Ann.* v. 5; Claudius: Tacitus, *Ann.* XI. 13; Nero: Tacitus, *Ann.* XIV. 45; cf. Galba: Suet., *Galba* 15. 2, Plutarch, *Galba* 17. 4.

<sup>115</sup> Some idea of what we have lost can be gleaned from Diocletian's edict on incestuous marriages, where the full text (preserved in the *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio* VI. 4) is fourteen times longer than what remains in the Theodosian Code and

contains some strongly emotive language. I owe this reference to Judith Evans-Grubbs.

<sup>116</sup> Suet. 56. 1.

<sup>117</sup> Suet., *Nero* 41-2.

<sup>118</sup> εἴ τί τινα γράμματα, οἷα εἶωθεν ἀνώνυμα ἐς τοὺς αὐτοκράτορας, προπηλακισμὸν αὐτῷ φέροντα, ἐξετέθη ποτέ, ἀντεξετίθει τὰ πρόσφορα μηδὲν ταραττόμενος (Dio LXV. 11).

<sup>119</sup> Dio LXIX. 8. 1.

<sup>120</sup> *H.A. Hadrian* XVI. 3-4.

<sup>121</sup> *H.A. Macrinus* XI. 3-7, XIV. 2-5; *Alexander Severus* XXXVIII. 3-6, with the comments of B. Baldwin, 'Verses in the *Historia Augusta*', *BICS* 25 (1978), 52-4.

<sup>122</sup> Dio LXXVIII. 20.

<sup>123</sup> Ammianus XVI. 1. 4, 'congruens Marco, ad cuius aemulationem actus suos effingebat et mores'. According to Eutropius, who accompanied him to Persia, Julian was 'Marco Antonino non absimilis, quem etiam aemulari studebat' (x. 16). Cf. Julian's *Letter to Themistius* 253A. Marcus wins the palm of imperial virtue in the *Caesars*.

habits of Marcus, but he did not achieve a resemblance in the rest of his life'.<sup>124</sup> Marcus, like Julian, made no secret of his contempt for the games, and his subjects resented it: 'It was Marcus' custom to read, listen to, and sign documents at the circus-games; because of this he was frequently attacked in popular jokes'.<sup>125</sup> Ammianus preserves a Greek couplet which shows that Marcus' massive sacrifices were attacked in popular verse.<sup>126</sup> The *Historia Augusta* discusses ridicule of Marcus in a number of contexts: 'Marcus was bitterly criticized because of the strict attitude that his philosophical training gave him towards military service and life in general, but he answered all who criticized him in speeches or in writing' ('sermone vel litteris respondebat').<sup>127</sup>

So Julian's decision to respond in writing to popular criticism was not entirely without precedent. The tense social situation in which he found himself had familiar features too. Things had gone wrong in Antioch before, and for similar reasons, when Julian's brother Gallus was mustering troops for a Persian campaign. But they had come to a very different conclusion. Grain was scarce then too, and prices and tempers were high. But Gallus' use of informers kept the senatorial class edgy and disunited.<sup>128</sup> Gallus loved the hippodrome and circus games; Julian stayed away. Gallus was an enthusiastic Christian and cultivated holy men.<sup>129</sup> Julian, who fattened his soldiers with ostentatious and expensive sacrifices,<sup>130</sup> surrounded himself with a closed circle of pagan holy men. Gallus buried the bones of Babylas at Daphne; Julian dug them up again. When a food crisis erupted, both responded to popular appeals by ordering price controls; both responded to curial protests by briefly incarcerating the senators. But Gallus did not get personally involved to the extent of procuring and distributing grain. He went around saying publicly that the governor was responsible and went off on campaign, while nature took its course and the citizens lynched the governor in the hippodrome.<sup>131</sup> In Julian's case, the scapegoat was his own beard.

During the New Year's festivities of 363, the citizens miscalculated, and instead of easing social tensions the holiday did the opposite. It is obvious in retrospect that the Antiochenes granted themselves more licence than the emperor was willing to overlook. They seem to have placed too much reliance on the traditional nature of the feast. 'We were afraid that if we sought to put a stop to something that was accepted religious practice, we should be blamed for abolishing the holiday.'<sup>132</sup> What they had not reckoned with was Julian's notion of paganism. Not for him the old-fashioned *panegyris*. Only the chaste celebrations of the few are pleasing to the gods. As he observed of himself with heavy irony,

Now who will put up with an emperor who goes to the temples so many times, when instead he could bother the gods only once or twice and celebrate the general festivals that are for all the people in common, those in which not only those men who have real knowledge of the gods can take part, but also all the people who have crowded into the city?<sup>133</sup>

In the eyes of this high pagan homilist the Kalends was no excuse.

To respond in kind to public invective was the emperor's choice from a variety of options. Because he was appropriating for himself the licence exercised by his subjects, his answer had the advantage of symbolic suitability. The emperor could be absolutely certain that he was speaking a language his detractors would understand. He could damage the

<sup>124</sup> v. 2. 3-4. The Antonines and the Severi had brought beards into fashion, but with Constantine they disappeared. Although in Lucian's time wearing a beard could be taken to mean 'cultivating philosophy' in a very general sense (*Epigram* 45), by the mid-fourth century beards were scarcer and more specific in their significance. After Constantine, an emperor with a beard was a walking polemic. The curious reader might wish to consult an entertaining disquisition on the history of western beards by G. Bagnani, 'Misopogon, The Beard Hater', *Classical News and Views* 12 (1968), 73-9.

<sup>125</sup> 'Iocis popularibus dicitur lacesitus', *H.A.* xv. 1.

<sup>126</sup> xxv. 17.

<sup>127</sup> xxii. 5. 6; see also 8. 1; 12. 3. Just how it was that Julian gained his rather idiosyncratic knowledge of his predecessors is still a matter of dispute. G. W. Bowersock, 'The Emperor Julian on his Predecessors', *YCS* 27 (1982), 170-2 emphasizes his ignorance of the Latin historical tradition.

<sup>128</sup> Ammianus xiv. 1. 6-9.

<sup>129</sup> *Soz.*, *HE* iii. 15.

<sup>130</sup> Ammianus xxii. 12. 6-7.

<sup>131</sup> *Lib.*, *Or.* xix. 47; Ammianus xiv. 7. 5.

<sup>132</sup> *Lib.*, *Or.* xvi. 35.

<sup>133</sup> *Misopogon* 346C, with particular reference to the festivals of the New Year.

city's prestige while preserving his own reputation for clemency. And his choice left open the possibility of continuing the dialogue. By sounding off in a highly visible way he could extort public penitential gestures from the Antiochene senate and bring into play the soothing ministrations of Libanius.<sup>134</sup> It was a personally characteristic but not an unprecedented or irrational decision: the *Misopogon* draws too richly on the traditions of public communication of its time and place to be explained by scholars of another age as the product of an infantile or unsound mind.

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<sup>134</sup> When Julian left for Persia, a large delegation from the senate followed him out of town on a very rough road. They were not received until the ninth hour (Julian, *Letter* 58, Wright; 399C). Libanius had interceded several times before Julian left Antioch (*Or.* 1. 126, xv. 12; *Epp.* 802, 815, 824). In situations such as these, the sophist's neutrality, carefully preserved by the scrupulous avoidance of curial duties on the one hand and imperial gifts on the other, might really pay off. At

the successful conclusion of the Persian campaign it was expected that he would journey out to meet the emperor and, graciously received, as one Hellene by another, beg Julian not to stay at Tarsus, but to lift up a once-flourishing city, now prostrate with mourning, by deigning to accept the triumphal welcome that awaited him at Antioch. Libanius' *Or.* xv is written as if it were being delivered on just such an occasion.

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