

HIMERIUS AND THE PRAETORIAN PREFECT SECUNDUS SALUTIUS

After the emperor Julian entered Constantinople, where he ruled from December 11, 361 through the middle of June 362, he invited the Athenian sophist Himerius to join him. Himerius accepted the invitation, stopping at Thessalonica and Philippi on his way to Constantinople. Orations that he delivered in each of those three cities are extant (39-41 Colonna)¹. The oration he delivered in Constantinople (41) includes praise of the emperor Julian. Julian was not present to hear this oration: Himerius takes leave of his audience by asking them to “let me now... set my eyes on the emperor” (41.16 βασιλέως θέαν ποιήσασθαι), which means that the emperor was not there to be seen. This oration was aimed primarily at a group of fellow Mithraic initiates, on an occasion when Himerius himself was initiated in the Mithraic mysteries². But Himerius had reached Constantinople while Julian was still there: in the opening words of the oration Himerius says that “I have cleansed my soul through Mithra the Sun, and through the gods I have spent time with (συγγενόμενοι) an emperor who is a friend of the gods”³.

Having left Athens and his teaching career there and gone east, Himerius would not return until after the death of his Athenian rival, the sophist Prohaeresius, in 366⁴. We know essentially nothing about what he did during

¹ Date of Julian’s arrival in Constantinople: Amm. Marc. 22.2.4. For the time of his departure, see J. Bidez, *La Vie de l’empereur Julien*, Paris 1930, 274; G. W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate*, Cambridge Mass. 1978, 83-85. For Julian’s summons of Himerius, see the opening scholia to Him. *Orats.* 39, 40, and 41; Eunap. *Vitae phil. et soph.* 14.1 [494] Giangrande. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

² Note Him. *Or.* 41.1: “But for our [fellow Mithraic] initiates let me propose an oration as a thank-offering since Apollo and the Sun [= Mithra], I think, are one and the same, and words are children of Apollo”. For Himerius’ initiation, see the opening scholion to *Or.* 41. There is no evidence that Julian himself initiated Himerius (*pace* T. D. Barnes, *Himerius and the Fourth Century*, “CPh” 82, 1987, 222 and T. Brauch, *The Prefect of Constantinople for 362 A.D.: Themistius*, “Byzantion” 63, 1993, 66-67).

³ If, on the other hand, συγγενόμενοι here should happen to mean only “I have now become a [religious] comrade [i.e., a fellow Mithraic initiate]” of Julian (see *LSJ* s.v. συγγίγνομαι II.5), then the possibility is open that Julian had already left Constantinople by the time that Himerius arrived there.

⁴ Eunap. *Vitae phil. et soph.* 14.1 [494]; and for the date of Prohaeresius’ death, linked to the problematic chronology of Eunapius’ life, see R. J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A. D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis*, Leeds 1990, 83. R. Goulet’s Eunapiian chronology would put Prohaeresius’ death in 369 (*Sur la chronologie de la vie et des oeuvres d’Eunape de Sardes*, “JHS” 100, 1980, 63; cf. id., *Prohérésios le païen et quelques remarques sur la chronologie d’Eunape de Sardes*, “Antiquité tardive” 8, 2000,

or in the years immediately after Julian's reign, which ended in 363. John Tzetzes' assertion that Himerius served as Julian's *grammateus* (*Hist.* VI 46.322) is not helpful; it is not clear precisely what Tzetzes means by this⁵ nor what the pedigree of this piece of information is. I want to suggest here, though, that some light, limited as it is, can be shed on Himerius' activity after Julian's death if the remains of a Himerian oration are understood as I am about to propose.

The oration in question is 42 Colonna, and here is my translation of what is left of it:

42. A DISCOURSE ADDRESSED TO THE PREFECT SALUTIUS

[1] Who after Themistocles is wise, and who after Miltiades is earnest, and who after Aristides can resist a temptation of gain? Who outdoes Pericles in eloquence, who is more fervent in action than Alcibiades? Who is as fortunate in generalship as Nicias? Who has the mark of Phocion, an excellent judgment? Who is as untouched by accusers as was Cephalus, something he always boasted about? Who, with the same disposition as the Laconian, is so good to his friends? ...

[2] If I had the excess of gold that everyone says Croesus the Lydian, Midas the Phrygian, and Cinyras the Cyprian had ...

[3] They say that such was the friendship of Heracles and Theseus, who breathed one breath on behalf of the whole of humanity and, by their virtue, cleansed the whole earth and sea ...

[4] King Agesilaus, too, who was lucky to have Antandrus as an *epistoleus* and adviser, was once so exalted among the Ionians that Agesilaus himself seemed to be [their] king, while all of the Ionians loved him, for they knew that in times of need he would speak out against [their enemies]. Likewise, we see the great sun move in conjunction with the change of seasons so that, by its light, it may sustain each season as the latter peaks in its moments; yet the sun still remains unmoved in its nature. Likewise again, I think, they say that Themistocles yielded command of the fleet to Eurybiades, yet seemed to actually remain its commander throughout.

What we have here is a cluster of fragments that survive only in the so-called *Excerpta Neapolitana*, a collection of Himerian excerpts transmitted in Codex Neapolitanus bibl. nat. gr. II C 32. This cluster was first published in 1911 by Heinrich Schenkl and did not find its current place in the Himerian corpus until the publication of Aristide Colonna's critical edition of 1951. In the *Excerpta Neapolitana* the fragments have no title. The title "A Discourse Addressed to the Prefect Salutius", already proposed by Schenkl ("Hermes" 46, 1911, 428) and adopted by Colonna, comes from Photius' Himerian bibliography (*Bibl. cod.* 165.108a): the title of a lost oration, except for the above excerpts that have been conjecturally assigned to it. My discussion of these excerpts below will show the high plausibility of that assignment. One

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⁵ He also describes Themistius as Theodosius' *grammateus* (VI 46.323).

final point on the title: Photius actually has “Saloustios”. This is a form in which Salutius’ name occurs: especially troublesome because a contemporary of Salutius, also a praetorian prefect, was named Flavius Sallustius⁶. Salutius was elevated to the praetorian prefecture of the East by Julian in Constantinople, shortly after (*brevi deinde*) the emperor entered the city (Amm. Marc. 22.3.1-2). He retained the office, in Julian’s company, until the end of his reign. He remained a prefect through the reign of Jovian, from June of 363 to February of 364, and continued to serve in that office for several more years, although with a brief period of dismissal, under Valentinian and Valens⁷.

Let us turn now to the meager remains of the text of Himerius’ *Oration* 42. In section one Himerius refers to a number of figures from the Greek past who were distinguished for various qualities, wondering whether anyone after them could equal or surpass them⁸. The answer must have been that Salutius equaled or surpassed them. The qualities highlighted here are also ascribed to various other officials in encomiastic orations that Himerius delivered in their honor⁹. Salutius had had more than enough experience in public life to be plausibly assigned these qualities. Before reaching the prefecture, he had been, to quote *ILS* 1255, *praesidi provinciae Aquitanicae, magistro memoriae, comiti ordinis primi, proconsuli Africae, item comiti ordinis primi intra consistorium et quaestori*. The emperor Constantius assumed that Salutius was giving his Caesar Julian military as well as administrative advice in Gaul (Zos. 3.5.3). As praetorian prefect *praesens* during Julian’s Persian campaign, Salutius tended to supplies and was present at Julian’s death (Liban. *Or.* 18.214; Amm. Marc. 23.5.6, 25.3.21); he surely must have given the emperor general military advice as well. One of the qualities assigned to Salutius by Himerius is also ascribed to him by Libanius, in his reference to Julian’s “incorruptible prefects” (*Or.* 18.182).

In section three of *Oration* 42 Himerius refers to the close friendship of

⁶ O. Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius*, Leipzig 1906, 263-6; *PLRE* I s.v. “Sallustius 5”.

⁷ See O. Seeck, “Salutius”, *RE* 1A:2, 1920, 2074; F. Paschoud (ed.), *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle*, tome II, 2 vols., Paris 1979, 334; and N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A. D.*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 2002, 25 (against *PLRE* I s.v. “Secundus 3” and G. Rinaldi, *Sull’identificazione dell’autore del Περὶ θεῶν καὶ κόσμου*, “Κοινωνία” 2, 1978, 128-29, who see two periods of dismissal following Jovian’s death).

⁸ I do not know who “the Laconian” is. I see no compelling reason to assume, as does A. Colonna (ed.), *Himerii Declamationes et Orationes cum deperditarum fragmentis*, Rome 1951, 177, that he is Agesilaus, who appears in section 4.

⁹ E.g., wisdom: *Orats.* 12.23, 25 [101], 48.15; incorruptibility: 12.23, 31.8, 32.14; eloquence: 12.23, 24 [53-54], 28.5; fervor: 28.6.

Heracles and Theseus. He must be comparing their friendship with that of Julian and Salutius. Julian has much to say about his close relationship with Salutius in his *Oration* 4 [8] Bidez, a consolation that he wrote to himself when, as Caesar in Gaul, he was deprived of Salutius's company in 359 by the emperor Constantius. Neither of them, says Julian, had ever put the other's interests second to his own (*Or.* 4 [8] 242b). If Himerius compares them to Heracles and Theseus, Julian himself thinks of two other classic friendships, those of Theseus and Pirithous and of Scipio and Laelius (*Or.* 4 [8] 242d, 244c-45c).

Section four presents three *exempla*, two from history and one from nature. In the first historical *exemplum* Himerius is referring to the assistance provided by the Spartan king Agesilaus to the Ionians against the Persians. The second historical *exemplum*, involving Themistocles and Eurybiades, is concerned with the Battle of Salamis (Hdt. 8.57-64). In each of the three *exempla* something seems to be the case but is not: Agesilaus seemed to be king of the Ionians but was not¹⁰; the sun seems to move but is unmoved in its nature or essence; Themistocles seemed to be commander but was not. And in each of the *exempla* someone or something is advising, enabling, or influencing someone or something else: Antandrus¹¹ advised Agesilaus, the sun enables the seasons, and Themistocles influenced the commander Eurybiades. It seems clear that what Himerius was saying in this part of the oration was that Salutius advised, enabled, and influenced Julian. Like Antandrus, the sun, and Themistocles, Salutius was the man behind the apparent doer; he seemed to be the emperor but was not. Or, as *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, commenting on this Himerian passage, puts it, he was "the real power in the state" (*PLRE* I s.v. "Secundus 3"). For Libanius, Salutius played Phoenix to Julian's Achilles (*Or.* 12.43; cf. *Ep.* 694.5 on the philosopher Maximus and Julian).

Now Timothy Barnes would date *Oration* 42 to the very beginning of Julian's reign, assuming that Himerius delivered it before Salutius in Constantinople, shortly after Julian had appointed him praetorian prefect.¹² While I cannot definitively exclude this dating, I have a difficulty with it. In his consolation to himself upon the departure of Salutius, Julian, comparing

¹⁰ H. Völker (trans.), *Himerios. Reden und Fragmente: Einführung, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Wiesbaden 2003, 277, wrongly understands "that Agesilaus himself seemed to be king [of the Lacedaemonians]".

¹¹ Antandrus is apparently otherwise unattested, and it is not clear what to make of *epistoleus* ("secretary"? "vice-admiral"?). See Völker, above n. 10, p. 277. The problem does not affect my point.

¹² Barnes, above n. 2, 216-17. *PLRE* I s.v. "Secundus 3" has no view on the date of *Oration* 42.

his friendship with Salutius to that of Scipio and Laelius, remarks that Scipio never did anything without first consulting Laelius. This caused maligners to say that Laelius was the real “doer” and Scipio only an “actor”. Julian remarks that people say the same thing about himself and Salutius, and “I rather rejoice at it. For to accept another’s good advice Zeno held to be a sign of greater virtue than independently to decide oneself what one ought to do”. In any case, Julian continues, friends have all things in common; “[s]o all that you [Salutius] suggested belongs just as much to me who adopted it, and whenever I was the actor who carried out your plans you naturally have an equal share in the performance” (*Or.* 4 [8] 244c-45b, trans. W. C. Wright). Here Julian says of himself and Salutius, in 359, precisely what Himerius apparently says of them in his *Oration* 42. It is one thing, though, for Julian, in a generous and somewhat self-deprecatory gesture, shaped by friendship theory, to concede such an important role to Salutius; it would have been another thing for Himerius publicly to put Salutius on such a pedestal during Julian’s lifetime. Coming from another rather than from himself, such remarks might be construed by the emperor as impertinent. I would suggest, then, that Himerius’ *Oration* 42 was not delivered until after Julian’s death.

Salutius was offered the imperial throne after Julian’s death and probably again after Jovian’s death. He declined on both occasions, offering his advanced age as the excuse¹³. In the pro-Julianic tradition he is lauded as “a man better than all his contemporaries” (Zos. 3.36.2). He was a man of learning. Julian praised him for both his command of rhetoric and his philosophical learning (*Or.* 4 [8] 252a-b). He dedicated to Salutius, who is probably the author of the extant treatise *On the Gods and the Universe*¹⁴, his own *Hymn to King Helios* and valued Salutius’ opinion of his *Caesares* (*Or.* 11 [4] 157b-c Lacombrade). In old age Salutius was attracted to the study of history (Eunap., *Vitae phil. et soph.* 7.5.4 [479]). He was a pagan, but not a religious fanatic like Julian. He had tried to bridle Julian’s anti-Christian fervor. The Christian historian Sozomen calls him a man of noble character; Gregory of Nazianzus asserts that that character put him on par with “the best of those praised in the past and in the present”¹⁵.

¹³ Ammianus Marcellinus 25.5.3 reports an offer after Julian’s death, Zosimus 3.36 after Jovian’s death. We must assume either that each historian reports only one offer, or that there was only one offer and one of the historians (presumably Zosimus) has misdated it. See Paschoud, above n. 7, 238-39. Zosimus adds that Salutius also blocked an offer of the throne to his son.

¹⁴ For the authorship of this treatise, see, e.g., A. D. Nock (ed.), *Sallustius. Concerning the Gods and the Universe*, Cambridge 1926, pp. ci-ii; G. Rochefort (ed.), *Saloustios. Des dieux et du monde*, Paris 1960, pp. x-xxi; Rinaldi above, n. 7, 117-52.

¹⁵ Sozom. 5.10.13, 5.20.1; Theodoret. *Hist. eccles.* 3.11.1 Parmentier; Greg. Naz., *Or.*

The learned pagan prefect will have appealed to the pagan sophist Himerius. Let it be proposed that his *Oration* 42 was a tribute to Julian's old friend, delivered in his presence or sent to him in written form from somewhere in the east, perhaps after one of the prefect's refusals of the throne, before Himerius returned to his academic routine in Athens.

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