

WHAT CAME AFTER GIBBON

ANGLO-AMERICAN IMPRESSIONS OF THE EMPEROR
JULIAN

A bibliography by
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INTRODUCTION

It is in the nature of a work on the Emperor Julian, whether a novel or a scholarly work, to remark upon the many works about Julian that exist and then to make some suggestions about why that is. By doing this, the writer has a chance to talk about what personally fascinates himself about Julian. And certainly, there are a great many books about Julian in a variety of languages appearing as frequently as books about some more well-known historical figures. Each work seeks to capture what that author feels is most striking about Julian's personality or character. Soon one discovers that the world is full of passionate Julianophiles.

On to why that might be: Julian's personality is fascinating to scholars and novelists alike because we still have his own writings and several other contemporary or nearly contemporary sources. In these, we get an account of his own understanding of his motivations and struggle with his pagan religious convictions, which were at odds with his fourth century Roman society of birth that already been Christian for years. We know quite a bit about his early life and background, and these can shed light on his later religious and philosophical passions, which due to his early death never were subject to mature reflection. This makes him intriguing to scholars, who can work with a variety of sources to theorize about the historical context and import of Julian's actions. Novelists are just as well off, since Julian, like many mediocre philosophers, communicates his philosophical ideas in naïve bursts of expression. He brags about writing orations in a day or two, which gives writers a unique insight into what was most compelling to Julian and on his mind. They simply have to fill in the back story to have a believable and well-rounded character from ancient history, if one that can be incomprehensible to many sensible people.

Despite the abundance of material, writers have not reached anything like a consensus. The only agreement is to disagree, and for this reason, Julian's reception among communities of scholars is just as fascinating as Julian himself. This bibliography will describe British and American writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in chronological order. Rather than evaluate their arguments and scholarly or literary merit, it will describe the author's interest in Julian and his or her general attitude to him. When appropriate it will also include how authors commented on their place in the literature and their predecessors. The hope is to capture the scope and tone of the long literary conversation about Julian in Britain and America that began through the influence of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and that has continued thanks to an unabatement in Julianophilia.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCES

Several types of sources appear below; as above the main criteria were books with a first edition published in Britain or the United States between 1800 and the present. The second consideration was the type of coverage afforded Julian, which is to say that it includes only books in which he was the main subject, either as an object of scholarship or as a character in a fictional work. I included any book that met all of these criteria, even if its quality or influence was limited.

Because one intention of this bibliography is to describe the attitudes of modern British and American authors towards Julian I found it necessary to include selected fiction and poetry originally published in another language and country. I only included the most influential works with popular English translation; and then only if several of the books meeting the above criteria mentioned it. I have not included non-fiction translated into English, partly because little of it has been translated, and while non-fiction in other languages may enlighten (particularly Bidez, 1930), it does not appear to inspire devotion to Julian.

Not all the books were available for physical examination, particularly the older fiction, but in all cases, I have noted the edition examined in italics beneath the citation or if it was not available for inspection. I have preferred the earlier edition when available, whether British or American, or in case of doubt, the edition native to the writer. One website also appears in the bibliography, for reasons that will be obvious from the Julianophilic characteristics of the creator. I have chosen only to include one dissertation, again for reasons that will be obvious.

A particularly helpful source for this project, which is also a suggestion for further bibliographic reading is *Historische Romane über das alte Rom*, written by Stefan Cramme. This is an online bibliography of novels set in Ancient Rome, written in German. The section on Julian can be found on the web at this address: <http://www.hist-rom.de/themen/iulian.html> (last accessed 12/4/07).

1822

1. JULIAN THE APOSTATE: A DRAMATIC POEM

Sir Aubrey De Vere Hunt. London, John Warren. 203 pp.

Edition examined: First edition.

The motivations for writing this play are two-fold, first to rehabilitate Julian's character, and second to fill in some of the details of that character. De Vere Hunt is cautious: "I have not dared to detail in language the progress of impiety, or to array the arguments that seduced a Christian from his God." (iii) Despite this The main themes of the play are the love affair between Julian and his wife, and Julian's perversion away from Christianity thanks to his advisor Maximus whom he eventually kills. No historical evidence for either of those relationships exists; however, it does give De Vere Hunt a chance to include lines such as "He spoke to me of love; and as he spoke, young roses, born of love and modesty, fell on his cheek:-- I blushed to see his blushing." (163) One has a hard time picturing the stoical Julian doing any such thing, nor putting up with the song and dance routines in the play.

1823

2. JULIAN: A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

Mary Russell Mitford. G. and W.B. Whittaker. 83 pp.

Not available for physical inspection.

1831

3. JULIAN: A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

Charles Jared Ingersoll. Philadelphia : Carey & Lea. 87 pp.

Not available for physical inspection.

1857

4. PARTHENIA: OR THE LAST DAYS OF PAGANISM

Eliza Buckminster Lee. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 421 pp.

*Edition examined: digitization as part of the Wright American Fiction digital library;
<http://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/wright2/wright2-1525>*

Lee describes the time period of this book as one when "Paganism and Christianity were nearly balanced in their earthly forces" (v). She sees Julian as someone caught between these two forces, and someone who saw only the good in paganism and had a beautiful but foolish desire to see it restored. This novel seeks to fill in only the details of history as Christianity prevailed (vi). This book covers most of Julian's life, from his childhood to his death, and does so in an often melodramatic style.

1872

5. NONNA: A STORY OF THE DAYS OF JULIAN THE APOSTATE

Ellen Palmer. Edinburgh : W.P. Nimmo. 230 pp. Illustrated.

Not available for physical inspection.

1872

6. JULIAN'S DREAM : A STORY OF A.D. 362

Gerald Stanley Davies. London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. 247 pp.
Not available for physical inspection.

1876

7. EMPEROR AND GALILEAN: A WORLD-HISTORIC DRAMA

Henrik Ibsen, first translated into English by Catherine Ray. London: Tinsley. 326 pp.
Edition examined: Vol. 5 of the Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen. Translated by William Archer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907. 480 pp.

William Archer's introduction to this edition states that Ibsen's play was published October 13, 1873 after about a decade of thought and work on it, and the first English translation appeared in 1876. At the end of his life, Ibsen claimed that *Emperor and Galilean* was his greatest work, and Archer certainly thinks it can stand with his masterpieces. Later writers have varying opinions of this play, it certainly receives a mention in most of the works below; however, as time has passed the opinions have become worse. For instance, Murdoch (#27) agrees with Browning's (#27) assessment of the play as "bad history and bad theatre." It is certainly a very long play, and covers many years of Julian's life. The first part address his apostasy and activities before he became emperor, the second his deeds as Emperor and ending with his death. As such it is more of the most complete historical novelizations of Julian's life—its historical inaccuracies and all.

1879

8. THE EMPEROR JULIAN: PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY, BEING THE HULSEAN ESSAY FOR THE YEAR 1876

Gerald Henry Rendall. London: George Bell and Sons. 279 pp. Includes appendices.
Edition examined: xerographic reproduction of the first 1879 edition.

Rendall believes himself to be the first Englishman to work seriously on the subject of Julian since Gibbon. However, Julian had once upon a time been more popular. "Two hundred yeras ago the Apostate's career furnished English Pamphleteers with food for piquant and voluminous controversy." In the intervening time, however, Gibbon had so masterfully dealt with Julian that, "it seems to have scared competitors from the field. French brilliance, German thought, Danish imagination have all had their day, but Gibbon's countrymen have honored their greatest by silence." (x) Rendall does appear to be correct that no scholarly attempt had been made at Julian since Gibbon; however, as above there were numerous works of drama and fiction. His own book deals unsympathetically with the religious and philosophical life of Julian and barely mentions his life as general or statesman. A modern reader after serious scholarship might be disappointed in Rendall's work on Julian, since it seems to involve elements of the fictional as well, for instance, he concludes that "Julian was constantly haunted by that mysterious ever present power which though he revered it not, by the spell of its dominion frustrated all his most cherished hopes." (272) According to Rendall's view, Julian misinterpreted both Christianity and Hellenic religious traditions in creating his misguided war against Christianity, but that this ultimately did more good for Christianity than harm. The strife caused by Julian's reign made the difference between true believers and heretics plain, and "even at the cost of some irritations of susceptibilities, it was a lesson most needed to learn. Julian had not lived in vain."(278)

1895

9. JULIAN: PHILOSOPHER AND EMPEROR AND THE LAST STRUGGLE OF PAGANISM AGAINST CHRISTIANITY

Alice Gardner. New York and London: G.W. Putnam's Sons, 1895. 355 pp.

Edition examined: xerographic reproduction of 1895 and 1901 American edition which appears to be the same as the 1895 edition.

G.W. Putnam produced this delightful gingerbread volume as part of the Heroes of the Nations series, the aim of which is to present biographical studies of the people who “have been accepted, in many instances, as types of the several National ideals.” This series is associated with another series on the Story of the Nations, and seems to be an attempt to pigeonhole figures of history in “one duodecimo volume, handsomely printed in large type, provided with maps and adequately illustrated according to the special requirements of the several subjects.”

Gardner takes her mission seriously to introduce Julian to the reading public in her introduction, though unable to resist a backhanded compliment to previous work she writes, “Julian is not well known to reading public at the present day, though Mr. Rendall's able little book, written from a view somewhat different than mine, ought to have set him in a clearer light.”(v) Her view is, in fact, a straightforward and thorough account of the life and opinions of Julian written and illustrated in a manner appealing to the non-scholarly reader, though it does include complete citations.

1896

10. THE EMPEROR JULIAN'S RELATION TO THE NEW SOPHISTIC AND NEO-PLATONISM: WITH A STUDY OF HIS STYLE

Wright, Wilmer Cave France. London, Spottiswoode & Co. 107 pp. Includes appendices and footnotes.

Edition examined: 1980 facsimile by Garland Publishing, London and New York, from an original in the Yale University library.

This dissertation makes it into the list due to the importance of its writer to future Julianic scholars. Wright he translated and commented upon the Loeb edition of Julian's Works, which is the best edition available and became crucial for all later writers. They were published between 1913 and 1923. His dissertation, done at the University of Chicago, focuses on Julian's relation to the sophistic style of fourth century in terms of his actual words, as opposed to his literary style.

1901

11. CHRIST AND ANTI-CHRIST, VOLUME 1: THE DEATH OF THE GODS

Dmitri Merejkowski, translated by Herbert French (authorized translation). Westminster: Archibald Constable. 463 pp.

Edition examined: Second edition

The introduction describes Merejkowski's literary aim as an attempt to explore the conflict between the pagan and Christian in man's nature, and believed that both these elements were necessary for completeness. Not surprising then, that he would pick Julian as hero of this first of a trilogy, the later

books of which feature Leonardo da Vinci and Peter the Great. This first part of the trilogy describes how the Christian spirit eventually entered Julian, supplanting the Neo-Platonic Gods, who did not die, but rather laid in wait until the time was right; namely, the Renaissance. The story covers the period of Julian's last battle against the Persians the time immediately after his death.

1919

12. **THE EMPEROR JULIAN: AN ESSAY ON HIS RELATIONS WITH THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION**
Edward J. Martin. London: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and New York: Macmillan, 1919. 128 pp. Includes bibliography, chronology and index.

Edition examined: First British edition

This account covers solely the religious policies of Julian, and claims an attempt to be unbiased. Martin remarks in the preface on the numbers of former biographers who came out as pagan apologists in their attempt to not favor the Christian side (p. 5). He is referring to Gibbon, but despite that still thinks this is the most balanced account of Julian (p. 6). In his bibliography he suggests that Alice Gardner is "a pleasing account, rather too friendly to Julian." Wright is also friendly, but accurate. He approves more of Rendell, calling his book "an accurate and scholarly essay." (p. 122) Martin's own attitude towards Julian is one of psychological puzzlement and comedic possibility. "One half expects to find him somewhere parodied by Mr. G.B. Shaw." (p. 7)

1930

13. **JULIAN THE APOSTATE**

W. Douglas Simpson. Aberdeen: Milne & Hutchinson. 127 pp. Includes index.

Simpson, librarian of the University of Aberdeen, intended with this book to provide a straight-forward biography of Julian for the non-scholar, writing in his preface that but for Gardner (#9 above), "no book has hitherto existed in English giving within a brief compass an account of Julian in all his varied aspects and in relation to his times" (vi). Simpson is a Julianophilic whose aim is to rehabilitate Julian in the public imagination by showing that Julian's false religious beliefs were reasonable for his situation, despite how shocking they were. For instance, in response to Julian's invective against Christ is not so much about personal animosity towards Christ "as the Christianity of his own day, the eastern church, depraved and unashamed, as he knew her in the fourth century." (126) At less than half the length of Gardner's book, attractively printed and with photographic plates and illustrations this is meant for a learned but not overly scholarly audience.

14. **MEETING CURRENTS, JUPITER OR CHRIST : A TALE OF THE DAYS OF JULIAN THE APOSTATE**
Edmund Hamilton Sears. Boston: Cornhill. 479 pp. Illustrated.

Not available for physical inspection.

1937

15. JULIAN THE APOSTATE AND THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY: A STUDY IN CULTURAL HISTORY

F.A. Ridley. London: Watts & Co. 260 pp.

Edition examined: First edition

This is surely one of the strangest takes on Julian, and the most anachronistic historical attitude of all the books surveyed in this list. It is truly an example of how an author can adapt the historical Julian to fit his own personal dogma, in this case a love of Fascism and hatred of Catholicism. Ridley views Julian as the great proto-Fascist leader who, if he had only lived, would have killed off Christianity, which is the reason people fear him so much. "In this connection it is sought to establish that Julian was a cultural genius, the original founder of the propaganda technique now famous as 'cultural Bolshevism', and that he was, as such, the historic predecessor of its subsequent masters, Loyola and Lenin, and the forerunner in the cultural technique of Jesuitism, Bolshevism, and Fascism." (x) The book is full of head-scratcher anachronisms such as Mussolini to Pompey and Abraham Lincoln to Julius Caesar. In the latter half of the book Ridley makes some terrifying predictions about what Julian would have done to wipe out Christianity had he lived. Ridley sees in Julian's educational edicts, which forbade Christians to teach, the work of Lenin, along with "those excellent Leninist methodologists, M.M. Mussolini, Hitler, and Goebbels, who are today devoting the bulk of their energies to the rearing of the young generation." He adds to this that Julian, the good totalitarian dictator, would have used any force necessary to crush Christian revolts. (210-211). This is one of the oddballs of Julianophilia, and not surprisingly had no bearing whatsoever on future scholarship.

1950

16. IMPERIAL RENEGADE

Louis de Wohl. Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott. 311 pp.

Edition examined: First edition

This novel covers 348-363, and ends with Julian in death finally seeing the error of his pagan ways, something which seems certain since early in the book. Murdoch describes it as an attempt to rehabilitate the Vatican "and it reads that way too." This book contains a lot of soul-searching and long drawn out conversations and a very sweet romance between Julian and his wife.

1964

17. JULIAN: A NOVEL

Gore Vidal. Boston: Little Brown. 503 pp.

Edition examined: First American edition

Vidal's book on Julian is widely known, and he claims that it is as historically accurate as fictional narrative allows. He finds the events of the fourth century just as appealing as Julian's life (vii), and includes a bibliography at the end of the book to prove this. The narrative is written as a series of letters between Pricus and Libanius about the manuscript of Julian's secret diary, including their marginal comments, which is way to express Vidal's take on Julian's personality. The novel contains a believable relationship between Julian and his wife, not to mention a series of other women. As novels about Julian go, this one is the most readable and most prone to delight Julianophiles.

1972

18. C.P. CAVAFY: SELECTED POEMS

translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 97 pp.

Constantine Cavafy lived in Alexandria, England and Constantinople and wrote in several languages, among them English and Greek. He wrote seven stark and modern poems about Julian, and his own idiosyncrasies and troubled relations with his national identity gave him a unique perspective on Julian's situation. I have been told by a scholar of modern Greek poetry that this translation is a mockery of Cavafy, but the publication of this edition undoubtedly inspired a new group of scholars to re-investigate Julian now that his place in art was no longer trapped in Victorian novels.

1976

19. THE EMPEROR JULIAN

Robert Browning. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 256 pp. Illustrated. Includes note on sources, suggestions for further reading, Julian's Family Tree, dates, maps, and index.

Edition examined: First American edition

This is the first in a series of modern recent scholarly biographies of Julian, and as such is not concerned with whether Julian's personal religious beliefs were true, but rather how Julian's personality and ambitions fit in with his time. Browning says that his own personal view of Julian is as "a man of his time, sharing alike its superstition and its rationalist, its pragmatism and its concern for dogma... I have tried to depict Julian as a man of his age grappling with the problems of his age, and doing so with a knowledge which, though both wide and deep, owed more to tradition than experience" (xi). Browning also suggests that his book is unique because it is the first work on Julian that takes into account a new generation of scholars who do not share in Gibbon's view that fourth century Rome necessarily presented a decline from first century Rome (1-2). In the epilogue, Browning surmises on the various ways in which art has treated Julian, concluding with Vidal's take on Julian. In his "Suggestions for further reading" he dismisses all of the previous works on Julian as out of date or irrelevant and suggests that readers instead turn to the recent outpouring of scholarship on the state of Rome in the fourth century in general.

20. THE EMPEROR JULIAN

Constance Head. Boston: Twayne. 229 pp. Includes maps, endnotes, bibliography and index

This book shares something with Gardner's (#9) book in that it too is part of a series—Twayne's World Leaders Series—and that it is not trying to evaluate previous scholarly arguments, but rather to introduce Julian in his own words and historical context to the general reader. In her Note on Sources, Head surmises on the reasons for Julian's popularity in literature, mentioning particularly Merejkowski and Vidal as the main shapers of Julian in the public imagination. Her conclusion about Julian is that "he is a symbol of unrealized but ardent hope for those who, like himself, continue to believe even amid despair that the world can become a better place." (187)

1978

21. JULIAN THE APOSTATE

G.W. Bowersock. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978. 134 pp. Illustrated.

Includes bibliography and index.

Edition examined: First edition

This book is a compact but scholarly and stern biography of Julian, written by an important scholar of late antiquity—certainly authoritative, but again his personal feelings about Julian emerge. Bowersock asks the reader in the first chapter to dismiss impressions left by earlier writers. “One must...reject, firmly and dispassionately, the lonely hero struggling against the onslaught of corrupt Christianity, the apostate manipulated by the forces of evil, and the courageous friend of the Jews. Julian was none of these” (1-2). Rather, he was a “true ascetic revolutionary” in the vein of later figures such as Lenin and Mao-Tse-Tsung (20). Of his immediate scholarly predecessor Browning (#21) Bowersock is skeptical, describing his opinion of Julian’s character as “totally unilluminating.” (1) Bowersock’s inspiration comes from Gibbon and Cavafy’s “seven matchless poems” and prefaces his study with their words (vii).

1981

22. JULIAN AND HELLENISM: AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY

Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 245 pp. Includes footnotes, bibliography and index.

Edition examined: First edition

This is the first study of Julian’s emotional, intellectual and spiritual development, and in general Athanassiadi-Fowden’s conclusions are often convincing even though the overall tone is somewhat overawed with Julian to the point of gushing in some places. Her overall feeling is that Hellenism underlay Julian’s entire existence and informed all his state decisions as he attempted to create a sort of Mithraic monotheism as a philosopher-king. Athanassiadi-Fowden states that she tended to focus more on Julian’s own writing and contemporary sources rather than any modern scholars (though she does mention Bidez) (vi).

1995

23. JULIAN’S GODS: RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE THOUGHT AND ACTION OF JULIAN THE APOSTATE

Rowland Smith. London and New York: Routledge. 300 pp. Includes notes, bibliography and index.

Edition examined: First edition

Smith’s book is a look at Julian in his cultural mentality and not a biography; it follows #24 in chronological order, but Smith sets out right at the beginning that as to her book, “it will be plain to readers that I disagree on fundamentals”. He feels that Bowersock is astute in his assessments of Julian’s political and military accomplishments but ignores Julian’s philosophy and religion too much (xvi). He mentions these two again in his conclusion, disagreeing with Bowersock’s opinion about the ascetic revolutionary and Athanassiadi-Fowden’s of the philosopher-king (220). His own feeling is that Julian is a product of his education and upbringing whose philosophy was poor, whose rhetoric was better, and

whose beliefs were fervent. Overall, Smith takes a refreshingly realistic tone about Julian, neither too enthusiastic nor too harsh.

2000?

24. THE JULIAN SOCIETY (WEBSITE)

Site maintained by “Marcus Cassius Julianus”. Wells, Maine.

<http://www.juliansociety.org/index.htm> (last accessed November 29, 2007)

This society describes itself as “a non-denominational religious order dedicated to the advancement of Pagan religion.” Julian is held up as a model whose work to restore Hellenistic paganism to prominence ought to be continued. Anyone can pledge to continue this work by printing out a membership card available from the website and joining the Internet mailing list. The internet mailing list has been available since 2000 and is still active, but the website has not been updated since mid-2006.

2002

25. GODS AND LEGIONS: A NOVEL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Michael Curtis Ford. New York: St. Martin’s. 382 pp.

In many ways this is similar to Vidal’s book, since it is the secret journal of Gregory of Nazianzus’ brother Caesarius as it was presented to Pope Siricus including Gregory’s marginalia. The action centers mainly around Caesarius’ experience of being on campaign with Julian. It has the feel of a future theatrical release, which is the one type of artistic coverage of Julian lacking. Ford tried to base the book in history as much as possible; in his acknowledgements section he says that he used Julian’s own writings to shape the dialog, as well as various other contemporary sources. His modern sources are puzzling, he lists Gibbon as well as “lesser known” biographies such as Gary Bowerstock, which I can only imagine refers to Glen Bowersock.

2003

26. THE LAST PAGAN: JULIAN THE APOSTATE AND THE DEATH OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Adrian Murdoch. Gloustershire: Sutton Publishing. 260 pp. Illustrated. Includes notes, bibliography, and index.

Edition examined: 2005 paperback edition.

This book, aimed towards a more popular audience, is an attempt to separate the man from the myth. To that aim, Murdoch describes some of the events of Julian’s life, both personal and as military leader, and how myths about them were created and perpetuated. The most notable and fascinating aspect of the book is a description of Julian in European arts and literature, spanning middle ages to late 2000s, as well as a general consideration of Julianic reception.

2007

27. JULIAN THE APOSTATE

Shaun Tougher. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 201 pp. Illustrated. Includes a variety of appendices (described below).

Edition examined: First edition

One of the more unusual books on this list, this is written as a source book for Julian, and in fact could be a textbook. The first part is a series of essays written by Tougher on Julian, including why he is so fascinating (Tougher says that it was religion). The second part is selections from contemporary documents written by or about Julian and illustrations. Following this is a chronology, suggestions for further reading, essay questions and exercise topics, suggested websites, and a bibliography and index. The essay questions and exercise topics would be particularly useful for someone who made it through all the books in this listing and was eager to demonstrate a knowledge of Julian's military campaigns and strategic objectives or surmise about whether Julian's religious reforms were bound to fail.