



## Tesserae iuris

Journal homepage: <https://journals.uniurb.it/index.php/tesseraeiuris>  
ISSN: 2724-2013; e-ISSN: 3035-1146



### CITATION

Mehr, S. (2025). Themistius and Julian. Two pagan philosophers? *Tesserae iuris*, 6(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.14276/2724-2013.5432>

### DOI

10.14276/2724-2013.5432

### RECEIVED

2025-11-29

### ACCEPTED

2026-05-10

### PUBLISHED

2026-06-17

### PEER REVIEW HISTORY

double blind review

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## Themistius and Julian. Two pagan philosophers?

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show that, in his eulogies to Valens, the philosopher Themistius presents himself as the philosopher desired by the emperor and distances himself from the theurgical Neoplatonists associated with the late Emperor Julian.

Il presente articolo intende dimostrare che, nei suoi elogi funebri a Valente, il filosofo Temistio si presenta come il filosofo auspicato dall'imperatore e prende le distanze dai teurgici Neoplatonici legati al defunto imperatore Giuliano.

## THEMISTIUS AND JULIAN. TWO PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS?

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper aims to show that, in his eulogies to Valens, the philosopher Themistius presents himself as the philosopher desired by the emperor and distances himself from the theurgical Neoplatonists associated with the late Emperor Julian.

**KEYWORDS:** Themistius, panegyric, theurgic Neoplatonists, Valens, Julian, Constantius II.

**SOURCES:** CTh. 9.16.4; CTh. 9.16.6; *Demegoria Constantii*; Iambl. *De myst.* 233, 9-13; Jul. *Or.* 2; Jul. *Or.* 6; Jul. *Or.* 11; Jul. *Ep.* 12; Them. *Or.* 6 and *Or.* 26.

Themistius occupies a special position among the philosophers of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. He lived from around 317 to 379 or 380 AD and was a highly respected philosopher in the east of the empire and famous for his commentaries on Aristotle. Historians, however, analyse him less as a philosopher than as one of the most famous panegyrists of his time. He delivered panegyrics to four different emperors, namely Constantius II, Jovian, Valens and Theodosius. Until now, most scholars of antiquity have either studied Themistius' philosophical writings or his panegyrics.

My approach instead attempts to link the philosopher and the panegyrist Themistius. This resulted from my methodological approach of close reading and of looking first at the sources only. That prompted me to take the speeches as the product of a philosopher as the speaker consistently presents himself as such. However, the fact that Themistius actually speaks as a philosopher is denied by the majority of scholars of antiquity<sup>1</sup>. Peter Heather<sup>2</sup> for example considers him to be more of a skilful «spin doctor» – who in his speeches only pretended to speak as a philosopher.

1 E.g. GEFFKEN, *Heidentum*, 67; ALFÖLDI, *Ideas*, 109; SCHNEIDER, *Die* 34, 109; BROWN, *Persuasion* 68-69; ERRINGTON, *Themistius* 864-865; SCHORN, *Legitimation* 267; OMISSI, *Usurper* 236.

2 HEATHER - MONCUR, *Politics*, 38.

In order to demonstrate a fusion of the philosopher and the panegyrist in Themistius, the content of the panegyrics would need to prove consistent with his philosophical writings – something that is difficult to establish within the confines of a single article<sup>3</sup>. But there are political reasons that can be explained more quickly and which make it plausible that Themistius spoke as a philosopher in his panegyrics.

According to Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, speeches in praise of the emperor at great festivities served to proclaim the program of that emperor's reign<sup>4</sup>. These were designed to present the emperor's political program in such a way that it afforded maximal Akzeptanz among the elites. If Themistius was performing function for the emperor, his role as a philosopher could not have been limited to merely pretending to be a philosopher. A mere stylisation without any substance would probably have been recognised as such by the ancient audience. The addressees of the speech were not allowed to see any contradiction between Themistius' philosophical statements and his praise of the emperor. The fact that he delivered eulogies to four successive emperors makes it plausible that his philosophical identity, which formed the basis for his model for rule, was accepted by the elites as that of a philosopher and found favour.

But the modern verdict has tended to be that the panegyrist Themistius did not speak as a philosopher but merely as a political mouthpiece: how could this be? It seems plausible that it has to do with our knowledge of late antique philosophy. The scholarly conception of late antique philosophy is shaped by Neoplatonism, which was founded by Plotinus and subsequently expanded under Iamblichus to include the element of «theurgy»<sup>5</sup>. According to Shaw, Iamblichus emphasized even more than Plotinus the significance of nature for the soul's return to the divine:

Iamblichus emphasized even more than Plotinus that the way back to the gods is revealed in the hieroglyphs of nature: in minerals, plants, animals, seasonal

3 For this issue see: MEHR, *Themistius*, 27-78.

4 WIEMER, *Libanios*, 375-376.

5 On Iamblichus, cf. LEPPIN, *Heidentum*, 73: Iamblichus, who himself stood in the tradition of Plotinus, had given theurgic practice a prominent place within Neoplatonism; on the position of theurgy in Iamblichus and on the distinction between 'magic' and theurgy, cf. STÄCKER, *Theurgie*; SHAW, *Theurgy and Soul*, 45-97; VAN LIEFFERINGE, *La théurgie*; BUSANICH, *Jamblichus* 39-61; and SCHRAMM, *Freundschaft*, 126-181. In LEPPIN's view, the phenomenon of the connection between Neoplatonism and theurgy cannot simply be dismissed as a symptom of decline; see also SHAW, *Eros and Arithmos*, who, contra DODDS, regards theurgy not as an instance of 'failure of nerve' but as the Platonists' response to the social and philosophical challenges of the fourth century; cf. FOWDEN, *Egyptian Hermes*, 95-153.

changes, and in the traditional rites that celebrate them through song, prayer, dance, images, and finally in the subtlest of all hieroglyphs, the divine numbers that sustain all forms of life and allow the soul its most intimate participation in the One<sup>6</sup>.

Through the incorporation of these «hieroglyphs» into religious rituals<sup>7</sup>, it was to become possible for the human soul to transcend its mortality and elevate itself to a higher plane<sup>8</sup>. One of the principal differences between Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus in the context of this article does not lie in the use of theurgy as such. Rather, Iamblichus, unlike Plotinus and Porphyry, held that the soul is incapable of returning to the divine realm on its own and is therefore dependent on religious rituals – that is, theurgic practice – to do so<sup>9</sup>. Shaw has accordingly characterised theurgic practice, given its central significance within Iamblichus' philosophical concept, as a *via universalis*<sup>10</sup>.

The philosophical contemporaries of Themistius who appear in our sources are, in their overwhelming majority, followers of Iamblichus, and theurgic practice therefore played an equally significant role for them. Porphyry, by contrast, denied the existence of a *via universalis*, arguing instead that each soul must find its own path to the different celestial spheres. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser draws attention to the fact that Porphyry's critique of Iamblichus' *via universalis* closely parallels his critique of Christianity, which likewise claimed to offer a *via universalis*. According to Porphyry, it is the *verissima philosophia* alone, in the tradition of Plotinus, that truly frees the soul<sup>11</sup>.

One of the most prominent followers of Iamblichus was certainly Emperor Julian, who in one of his orations refers to Iamblichus as the «famous hero»

6 SHAW, *Eros and Arithmos*, 126.

7 «The theurgic art, recognising this principle [of *φιλία*], and generally, in accordance with the properties of each one of the gods, having discovered receptacles adapted to them, often brings together stones, plants, animals, aromatic substances, and other sacred, perfect, and godlike objects of a similar kind, and from all these produces an integrated and pure receptacle» (Iambl. *De myst.* 233, 9-13; tr. KNIPE, *Subjugation the Divine*, 96); Iambl. *De myst.* 233, 9-13: ταῦτα τοίνυν κατιδοῦσα ἡ θεωργικὴ τέχνη, κοινῶς τε οὕτως κατ' οἰκειότητα ἐκάστω τῶν θεῶν τὰς προσφόρους ὑποδοχὰς ἀνευρίσκουσα, συμπλέκει πολλάκις λίθους, βοτάνας, ξῶα, ἀρώματα, ἄλλα τοιαῦτα ἱερὰ καὶ τέλεια καὶ θεοειδῆ, κάπνεται ἀπὸ πάντων τούτων ὑποδοχὴν ὀλοτελῆ καὶ καθαρὰν ἀπεργάζεται.

8 KNIPE, *Subjugation the Divine*, 96; cf. LLOYD, *Anatomy of Neoplatonism*, 123; SAFFREY, *De Mysteriis*, 144-158.

9 DEPALMA DIGESER, *Religious Rituals*, 81.

10 SHAW, *Eros and Arithmos*, 124.

11 DEPALMA DIGESER, *Religious Rituals*, 88-89.

(ὁ κλεινὸς ἦρος)<sup>12</sup> and as the «truly divine one, third after Pythagoras and Plato» (ὁ θεῖος ἀληθῶς καὶ μετὰ Πυθαγόραν καὶ Πλάτωνα τρίτος Ἰάμβλιχος)<sup>13</sup>. According to Michael Schramm, there is no doubt that Julian's thought was shaped above all by the Neoplatonism of the Iamblichean school – his teachers, Maximus of Ephesus and Priscus, had both been pupils of Aedesius, who was himself a direct student of Iamblichus<sup>14</sup>.

In Jan Stenger's view, the situation was completely different with Themistius, whose declared philosophical goal was «den Menschen einen praktischen Dienst zu erweisen»<sup>15</sup>. According to Schramm «konvergieren für Themistios Platon und Aristoteles in der praktisch-politischen Ausrichtung ihrer Philosophie». He says, that Themistius has transferred «das platonische *summum bonum* der Homoiosis an Gott [...] von der Ethik auf die Politik»<sup>16</sup>.

As Schramm argues, Themistius assumes that, due to his maximum power, the emperor possesses the greatest philanthropy and is therefore most similar to God<sup>17</sup>.

The theurgic Neoplatonists reproached Themistius for his idea of philosophy, which we can summarise well in Themistius' 26th so-called private speech, in which he reproduces the accusations of his opponents:

Them. Or. 26, 113d-114a: «“He is committing an injustice”, they say in reference to me, “through his philosophical innovation and his introduction of new deities. For he does not sit quietly in his room and converse solely with his pupils; instead, he comes out into the public arena, does not hesitate to appear in the very heart of the city, and ventures to speak before all sorts of people. And as serious as this is, still it is not the worst of it: now he even gathers audiences, for three successive days summons people to court, lets himself be commended, and canvasses his applauders”»<sup>18</sup> (tr. Penella).

12 Jul. Or. 11, 26, 146b5

13 Jul. Ep. 12, 19, 8f. B.

14 SCHRAMM, *Freundschaft*, 303, with an overview of the scholarship on this aspect.

15 STENGER, *Identität*, 117.

16 SCHRAMM, *Freundschaft*, 200.

17 SCHRAMM, *Freundschaft*, 298-299.

18 Them. Or. 26, 313d-314a: ἀδικεῖ, φασὶν ἐμὲ λέγοντες, νεωτερίζων εἰς φιλοσοφίαν, καινὰ εἰσάγων δαιμόνια. οὐ γὰρ ἡσυχῇ κάθηται ἐν τῷ δωματίῳ οὐδὲ πρὸς μόνους τοὺς ὁμιλητὰς κοινολογεῖται, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς φῶς πρόεισι καὶ θαρρεῖ ἐν τῷ μέσῳ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ λέγειν ἐπιχειρεῖ ἐν παντοδαποῖς ἀνθρώποις. καὶ οὐ τοῦτό πω τὸ δεινόν, τηλικούτον ὄν, ἀλλὰ καὶ θέατρα ἤδη ἀγείρει καὶ πρότρυτα ἐπαγγέλλει εἰς τὸ δικαστήριον συιέναι καὶ ἀνέχεται ἐπαινούμενος καὶ περινοστεῖ τοὺς κεκραγόντας.

Julian, himself a follower of Iamblichus, likewise levelled harsh criticism at Themistius, his former teacher, most notably in his letter «To the Philosopher Themistius» (*Or.* 6). Schramm reads the letter as a «philosophische Programmschrift» in which Julian challenges Themistius' identity as philosopher, philosophical adviser, and panegyrist, as well as his conception of the relationship between theoretical philosophy and political practice<sup>19</sup>. Unlike Themistius, Julian not only privileges the life of philosophical contemplation over political action, but also differs from him fundamentally in his understanding of politics itself<sup>20</sup>.

As the title of this article suggests, Themistius and Julian were both pagans, yet this shared identity did not result in a shared philosophical stance. In order to interpret Themistius' panegyrics in a meaningful way, they will therefore be read against the background of two competing camps within pagan philosophy. Since Themistius as panegyrist sought to realise his ideal of a fusion of philosophical and political engagement in his role as imperial eulogist, the letter of appointment that Constantius sent to the Senate of Constantinople will now be examined in what follows.

*Dem. Const.* 20a: «Moreover this man, whom the present speech proclaims, does not practise a solitary philosophy, but he shares out the benefit which he has painstakingly assembled with even greater pains among those who are willing [to hear], having established himself as both a mouthpiece of the sages of the past and an acolyte (ἱεροφάντης) at philosophy's inner sanctuaries and shrines. He does not allow the ancient teachings to wither away, but [ensures] that they always flourish and are renewed»<sup>21</sup> (tr. Heather-Moncur).

What can be seen from Constantius' statements?

Dagron was already of the view that this letter constitutes the most valuable document for illustrating the role Themistius played for the emperor<sup>22</sup>. He interprets the words of Constantius II in the context of a dispute among intellectuals and philosophers of the period concerning the politics of rule, and detected in them polemical allusions to the Neoplatonists<sup>23</sup>.

19 SCHRAMM, *Freundschaft*, 308-309.

20 Cf. SCHRAMM, *Freundschaft*, 312.

21 *Dem. Const.* 20a: οὗτοσί δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὃν ὁ παρὼν λόγος κηρύττει, οὐ μέτεσι φιλοσοφίαν ἀκοινώνητον, ἀλλ' ὃ μετὰ πόνου συνήγαγεν ἀγαθόν, τούτου σὺν πλείονι πόνῳ τοῖς βουλομένοις μεταδίδωσι, προφήτης μὲν τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν καθεστηκώς, ἱεροφάντης δὲ τῶν ἀδύτων τε καὶ ἀνακτόρων φιλοσοφίας· μαραίνεισθαι δὲ οὐκ ἔῃ τὰς ἀρχαίας δόξας, ἀλλὰ ἀκμᾶζειν αἰεὶ καὶ γίνεσθαι νέας.

22 DAGRON, *Thémistios*, 59.

23 DAGRON, *Thémistios*, 60: «Quelques passages sur l'enseignement de Thémistios sem-

First of all, the emperor praises Themistius for not having devoted himself to a philosophy that cannot be communicated. The allusion to the theurgic Neoplatonists, who wanted to limit their knowledge to an exclusive, select circle, is hard to miss. Themistius on the other hand was a philosopher who was prepared to pass on what he had painstakingly acquired to everyone. The emperor thus indirectly refers to Themistius' great fame and to the fact that Themistius was of the opinion that philosophy should benefit everyone. In the following sentences, and this is particularly interesting, Constantius also gives Themistius cultural and even religious attributes: he was a prophet of the ancient saints and a hierophant (ιεροφάντης) of the «hidden spaces and temples of philosophy». It is striking that Themistius is described by Constantius with this term. In the fourth century, *hierophant* is a richly ambiguous concept, carrying both non-Christian and Christian sacral connotations. In its traditional sense, it denoted a high title for the initiation priests of the Eleusinian Mysteries, for Roman *pontifices*, or for the Jewish high priest<sup>24</sup>. Eusebius applied it to Constantine<sup>25</sup>, which suggests that a Christian reinterpretation of the term had either preceded Eusebius or was effected by him. By honouring Themistius with the word ιεροφάντης, Constantius applies to a non-Christian the very same term that the Christian Eusebius had attributed to Constantine. Alongside this Christian usage, however, the original meaning of ιεροφάντης continued to exist in contemporary literature, as attested, for instance, in Eunapius<sup>26</sup>. If Constantius was aware of this usage, he transformed the term in yet a further respect: in his eyes, Themistius occupies the rank of a hierophant within philosophy, inasmuch as he preserves the knowledge of the ancients (μαραίνεσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἔα τὰς ἀρχαίας δόξας) while at the same time allowing it to become something new (ἀλλὰ ἀκμάζειν αἰεὶ καὶ γίνεσθαι νέας). Constantius thus transferred a title associated with the highest cultic functionaries of the theurgic Neoplatonists – who practised a philosophy that excluded the uninitiated (φιλοσοφία ἀκοινώνητος) – to Themistius, whom he distinguishes favourably from the incomprehensible theurgic Neoplatonists. The passage cited from the letter of appointment strongly suggests that Themistius was chosen as senator precisely on account of his divergent

blent directement inspirés des thèmes polémiques que le philosophe développe à la même époque».

24 LSJ s.v. ὁ ιεροφάντης.

25 Eus. *LC* 3, 1.

26 Eun. *Vit.* 7, 3, 1 refers to a hierophant by whom Eunapius himself was initiated into the mysteries and whom Julian visited when he was in Gaul.

understanding of philosophy, and that the emperor used his letter to take an open stance against theurgic philosophy<sup>27</sup>.

In the following, I would like to show how dangerous Constantius' stance against theurgy could be for the Neoplatonists.

Hartmut Leppin shows in an essay «Zum Wandel des spätantiken Heidentums» how the understanding of the term *magicus* expanded under Constantius. *Codex Theodosianus* 9.16.4<sup>28</sup> in particular makes it clear that «magical practices» were not only condemned if they could be accused of aiming to cause harm. Instead, the law was directed against any person who sought to consult the gods through their acts of worship. The strongest reaction against those who could be accused of *divinandi curiositas* can be found in the form of constitution CTh. 9.16.6 (5 July 358)<sup>29</sup>. In this constitution, Constantius II placed all methods of researching the *arcanum summi dei* under the threat of death penalty. The 'criminal organisation' defined by Constantius II in CTh. 9.16.4 included haruspices, astrologers, harioli, augurs, diviners, Chaldeans, magicians and theother *malefici*. According to CTh. 9.16.6 they were all declared «enemies of the human race» (*humani generis inimici*). It does not take much imagination to visualise that these laws could also be used against the theurgic philosophers, who wanted to achieve precisely what was forbidden. The indictment of many Neoplatonic philosophers under Valens and Valentinian also fits into this context<sup>30</sup>.

27 BALLÉRIAUX - SCHAMP, *Thémistios*, LII-LXXXVI demonstrate with close reference to the sources how dangerous it was for a philosopher under Constantius II to be publicly associated with theurgy.

28 CTh. 9.16.4: Imp. Constantius A. et Iulianus C. ad populum. *Nemo haruspicem consulat aut mathematicum, nemo hariolum. Augurum et vatium prava confessio conticescat. Chaldaei ac magi et ceteri, quos maleficos ob facinorum magnitudinem vulgus appellat, nec ad hanc partem aliquid moliantur. Sileat omnibus perpetuo divinandi curiositas.* Dat. VIII kal. Febr. Mediolano, Constantio A. IX et Iuliano Caes. II coss. (25<sup>th</sup> January 357).

29 CTh. 9.16.6: Idem A. ad Taurum p(raefectum) p(raetori)o. *Etsi excepta tormentis sunt corpora honoribus praedictorum, praeter illa videlicet crimina, quae legibus demonstrantur, etsi omnes magi, in quacumque sint parte terrarum, humani generis inimici credendi sunt, tamen quoniam qui in comitatu nostro sunt ipsam pulsant propemodum maiestatem, si quis magus vel magicis contaminibus adsuetus, qui maleficus vulgi consuetudine nuncupatur, aut haruspex aut hariolus aut certe augur vel etiam mathematicus aut narrandis somniis occultans artem aliquam divinandi aut certe aliquid horum simile exercens in comitatu meo vel Caesaris fuerit deprehensus, praesidio dignitatis cruciatus et tormenta non fugiat. Si convictus ad proprium facinus detegentibus repugnauerit pernegando, sit eculeo deditus ungulisque sulcantibus latera perferat poenas proprio dignas facinore.* Dat. III non. Iul. Arimini Datiano et Cereale cons. (5<sup>th</sup> July 358, SEECK)

30 To the indictment at the beginnings of Valentinian's and Valens' reign s. LENSKI, *Valens* 25.

The legal historian Marie Theres Fögen sees the trials for magic under Constantius II as well as under Valentinian and Valens in the continuity of a policy that began with Diocletian. He was the first to have attempted, through imperial legislation, to exert influence over the thinking of his subjects, by seeking «die Einverleibung der Denk-oder Glaubensstrukturen der ‘menschlichen Natur’ in die Verfügungsmacht des Kaisers»<sup>31</sup>. According to Fögen, this development ended in the emperor’s «monopolisierten Definitionsmacht»<sup>32</sup>. If we adopt Shaw’s characterisation of Iamblichean theurgic practice as a universal path to salvation, the profound hostility of Constantius II towards the Neoplatonists might also be explained in religious terms. Both Christians and theurgic Neoplatonists aspired to the salvation of the soul, yet since the two «models» were mutually exclusive, it seems plausible that the path of the theurgists appeared, in the eyes of Constantius II as a Christian, as a direct challenge to his own faith. Themistius, by contrast, was free from religious conceptions in his speeches and above all from ritual practices that might have competed with those of Christianity.

The reflex of mistrust and hostility towards the theurgic Neoplatonists can also be found, in Themistius’ first encomium to Emperor Valens<sup>33</sup>:

Them. *Or.* 6, 72b: «Now in my opinion a principal indicator of your character is precisely the fact that you are fully aware of this relationship and do not sympathize with the many people who because of bogus practitioners of the business express disgust towards the genuine exponents too. How different you are! who think that poisoners have nothing in common with physicians, informers with orators, and in the case of any other profession people who misuse its real purposes. Thus you have not banished the philosopher’s cloak from the palace nor is it accorded less honour under you than the garb of a general or satrap»<sup>34</sup> (tr. Swain).

The decisive question for the interpretation of the passage is to whom Themistius refers with the word «philosopher’s cloak». Noel Lenski sees this

31 FÖGEN, *Wahrsager*, 31.

32 FÖGEN, *Wahrsager*, 320.

33 Cf. MEHR, *Themistios*, 54-62.

34 Them. *Or.* 6, 72b: τοῦτο τοίνυν αὐτὸ πρῶτον ποιοῦμαι τῆς ὑμετέρας φύσεως σημεῖον, ὅτι τὴν συγγένειαν ταύτην οὐκ ἡγνοήσατε οὐδὲ πεπόνθατε ταῦτόν τοις πολλοῖς, οἱ διὰ τοὺς νόθους τοῦ πράγματος δυσχεραίνουσι καὶ τοὺς γνησίους. ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὑμεῖς, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν οἶσθε προσήκειν τοῖς ἰατροῖς τοὺς φαρμακεύς οὐδὲ τοῖς ῥήτορσι τοὺς συκοφάντας, οὐδὲ ἄλλη τέχνη τοὺς ἃ μὴ πέφυκε τῇ τέχνῃ χρωμένους, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τῶν βασιλείων οὐκ ἀπεληλάκατε τὸ τριβώνιον, οὐδὲ ἥττον ἔντιμον παρ’ ὑμῖν στρατηγίας καὶ σατραπείας.

as an allusion to the fact that those philosophers who had been accused of poisoning the two emperors by «magic» shortly after Valentinian's appointment of Valens had not been convicted<sup>35</sup>. But if Themistius would have said that the Neoplatonists were still at the court of Valens, he would have made himself untrustworthy with this assertion. All listeners were aware that the philosophers who had previously been close to Julian had indeed been removed from the centre of power and that some had also been persecuted in various ways<sup>36</sup>.

However, if we take the philosopher's cloak that has not been banished as a metonymy for Themistius himself, the sentence makes sense. Since the emperor can distinguish between poisoners and doctors and between rhetors and sycophants, he also recognises the difference between Themistius, the philosopher, and the theurgic philosophers, the former friends of Julian, those who have been accused of magic in connection with the illness of the two emperors and thus, in Themistius' opinion, are using their art in a wrong way. On this assumption, Themistius says that the emperor did not banish him from the «court» as a philosopher. At the same time, Themistius' comparisons in his speech bring the banned philosophers very close to the poisoners, almost as if he wanted to describe the theurgic philosophers as poisoners, too. The accusation that philosophers were poisoners occurs also explicitly in Julian's speech «Against the uneducated dogs»<sup>37</sup>, which he delivered in 362. He writes there, that young people should be discouraged from pursuing philosophy by telling them that the students of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle were sorcerers, sophists, conceited and, indeed, poisoners (φαρμακεύς). If the interpretation is correct that Themistius uses the comparison with the poisoners to defame the 'incompetent' philosophers, Themistius is aiming at Julian's former friends, who had already been suspected of having poisoned the two imperial brothers at the beginning of Valentinian's and Valens' reign.

If we can assume that, according to CTh. 9.16.6, the practices of the theurgical Neoplatonists had the potential to cause charges of high treason, this may serve as an explanation for why Julian made his proximity to the theurgical Neoplatonists and his accompanying aversion to Christians official only after Constantius' death. Would Constantius, who had already shown with Julian's half-brother Gallus how quickly he could reclassify relatives as enemies, have

35 LENSKI, *Valens*, 25.

36 Cf. MEHR, *Themistius*, 50-51.

37 Jul. Or. 6, 197d: Οὐκ οἶσθα ὅπως τοὺς μὲν νέους τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀπάγουσιν ἄλλα ἐπ' ἄλλοις τῶν φιλοσόφων θρυλλοῦντες; Οἱ Πυθαγόρου καὶ Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους χορευταὶ γνήσιοι γόητες εἶναι λέγονται καὶ σοφισταὶ καὶ τετυφωμένοι καὶ φαρμακεῖς.

continued to tolerate Julian if he had known that Julian saw himself as a theurgical Neoplatonist? Since this seems highly unlikely, it is more conceivable that Julian publicly avoided anything that might reveal his true identity<sup>38</sup>.

Julian was calling on the emperor – in a source which is called the second/third panegyric on Constantius II – to worship the old gods for the sake of the empire<sup>39</sup>. After the opinion of Klaus Bringmann<sup>40</sup> this would have been dangerous because with this appeal Julian would have made himself appear to be a dynastic non-Christian alternative to Constantius. This would have led to the further assumption that Julian would also give rise to the assumption that he, who liked to style himself as a philosopher, belonged to the theurgic Neoplatonists. That was already dangerous – as I hope to have shown – for a man without office who was not a Caesar.

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38 Therefore, I doubt that Julian had delivered his second eulogy before Constantius, an issue which has been much discussed; e.g. BRINGMANN, *Julian*, 50, different: SCHORN, *Legitimation*, 246-247

39 Jul. Or. 2, 86 A.

40 BRINGMANN, *Julian*, 50-51.

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