

Summary

The writings of the emperor Julian (331–363) reveal an author who was familiar with Greek literature in all its forms, including fictional narratives. He defended Greek myths, such as the story of Attis and Cybele, from the attacks of Christian authors in his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*. He also composed a fictional narrative featuring his imperial predecessors in the satirical spirit of Lucian (*Caesars*), an allegorical autobiography (*Against the Cynic Heraclius*), and a sanitised version of the love of Antiochus for his mother-in-law Stratonice (*Misopogon*, 347A to 348A). This article discusses these short fictional narratives in the context of the polemical use of fiction in the ideological struggle between Julian and Christian writers in the fourth to sixth centuries of our era.

Keywords: Julian; myth; narrative; Christianity; paganism; sacrifice

JOHN HILTON, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, 4041 South Africa, hilton@ukzn.ac.za.