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II

Rex E. Witt

IAMBLICHUS AS A FORERUNNER OF JULIAN

In the *Hymn to King Helios*, '*Le Roi Soleil*' of fourth century paganism's pantheon, Julian tells Sallust, as a friend who may need to study the subject more mystically, to read the writings of the inspired Iamblichus — revered as θεῖος by Julian and Sallust as afterwards by Proclus and Damascius. From other references we can see the regard the Emperor felt for the man whom he placed fourth in line with Plato, Plotinus and Porphyry. For Julian the Syrian Neoplatonist was indeed the glorious hero — ὁ κλεινὸς ἥρως — and the hierophant of metaphysical mysteries, born later than Plato but not inferior to him in philosophical genius. After this royal eulogy we may wonder about J. Bidez's verdict in the *Cambridge Ancient History* that Iamblichus was 'such a nincompoop' — which obviously Julian would have rejected.

Modern scholars have given thought to the theme of my choice today. Nearly seventy years ago Georg Mau found the direct source for Julian's transformation of philosophy into religion in the development of Neoplatonic speculation by Iamblichus. A decade afterwards R. Asmus argued that a lost *Commentary* by Iamblichus on the *First Alcibiades* was basically the main substance of the Apostate Emperor's thought, although as A. D. Nock shrewly remarked such a theory is incapable of ultimate proof.

The word *forerunner* in English may carry the overtones of *Praeparatio Evangelica* [1]. You may therefore believe (mistakenly) that I am exaggerating the historical role of that monarch whom the Christian Church has always assailed as 'the Apostate'. Let us however forget the Baptist *Prodromos* of the *New Testament* and concentrate our minds on the historical fact of a chronological succession, in which the known links were Aedesius, Maximus and Chrysanthius. Others here today are dealing with Iamblichus' place in late philosophy and with his religion. My concern is with what can be proved to have been derived by the Emperor from that predecessor whom he considered superior to every contemporary and who inspired him with the same reverence as did Aristotle and Plato, the man whose recent philosophical tracks Julian says he set out to follow in his exegesis of myth. In the pursuit of my theme I am but

[1] Julian, whose life and work are succinctly narrated by WRIGHT in the Introduction to Volume I, had no pretensions to metaphysical originality. So whatever our estimate of Iamblichus in the history of Neoplatonism, he is more important than his imperial successor. On the other hand, Julian, pilloried by the Christian Fathers who followed in his tracks and who hated him as a traitor to truth, the avowed pagan and therefore the 'Apostate', surely needs a more sympathetic treatment by historians of European culture, as indeed do those two other imperial figures of the fourth century, Diocletian and Galerius. To indulge in hypothetical dreams is not the business of the scientific historian. Were it so, we might ask what Julian would have achieved had he stayed on the throne of Byzantium, let us suppose, for as long as Justinian. Enthroned in his thirtieth year and less than eighteen months afterwards mortally wounded (like the Saxon King Harold) in the eye, the last pagan emperor had little time and experience of ruling a huge realm to carry out such religious reforms as he clearly had in mind. BROWN (p. 93) uses such phrases as 'proved wrong' and 'clarity bred of hatred', suggesting that Julian missed seeing that "Christianity was an essentially 'Cockney' religion." What developments might have come had Julian's reign lasted longer can but be guessed. BROWN surmises : "Had he lived, he intended that Christianity should sink out of the governing classes of the empire." Possibly he did. But a longer life and reign could have created a better *via media* between the Church and pagan religion and philosophy than can be seen soon after his death — as witness at Alexandria the sack of the Serapeum and the lynching of Hypatia. Loaded words such as 'apostate' and 'persecutions', the common currency of historians of the period during which Iamblichus flourished, need to be marked for their ambivalence.

trying to estimate the extent of a debt that Julian freely acknowledges, as when in naming the doctrine and theology of 'the Phoenicians' (*Or.* 4, 134 B and 150 B-C) and of their oracular sages (λόγιοι) he categorically owns that he has taken it all, a little out of much, from Iamblichus [1].

About the Syrian philosopher's relation to the Church, important as it is for the present inquiry, some boldly dogmatic statements have been made. Thus J. Geffcken roundly asserted that the Julianic polemic against Christianity was inspired rather by Iamblichus than by Porphyry. Iamblichus 'der Feind des Christentums' it was 'der in seiner Schrift de mysteriis... die ἄθεοι, d.h. die Christen, mit bitterstem Hasse trifft.' J. Bidez attributed to him the 'desire to found a pagan Catholic church.' More recently Peter Brown, in *The World of Late Antiquity*, has imaginatively portrayed two fourth century scenes — Christian courtiers crowding round their Emperor Constantine and in contrast contemporary Greek gentlemen imbibing pagan philosophy from Iamblichus. The tendency has been to see the Neoplatonist from Chalcis in the same light as the Apostate Emperor. On this view each is equally anti-Christian, and the verdict of A. von Gutschmid (called by G. Mau 'das feine Wort') is true of both: "Der Neuplatonismus ist eine Contrereligion gegen das Christentum [2]."

[1] Coele-Syria was the country in which Iamblichus was born and included Phoenician towns. As a native of Chalcis he would have been familiar with solar worship as it was practised at Emesa (cf. Julian's *Hymn to King Helios*, 150 C) and at Heliopolis (Baalbek). In the passage quoted Julian is thinking of Iamblichus himself as well as the Julian of the *Chaldaean Oracles* (cf. 156 B and 172 D), calling both of them 'oracular Phoenicians' and 'sages skilled in theology'. In the writings of Julian (if we ignore the spurious letters) Iamblichus is named eight times. DILLON (p. 358) should champion Iamblichus as Julian's source more emphatically.

[2] See J. GEFFCKEN, in *DLZ* 1916, 1641; J. BIDEZ, Le philosophe Jamblique et son école, in *REG* 32 (1919), 35, arguing that Iamblichus avoided an open attack on Christianity; BROWN, p. 73; MAU, p. 66. ASMUS derives *Or.* 7 from Iamblichus. On this view, Iamblichus (a contemporary of such Christians as Anthony and

Between the birth of Iamblichus and the death of Julian there exists a time span of a little over a century, and the death of the former and the birth of the latter in 331 were almost contemporaneous. Earlier — about halfway through the period — Constantine in 312 after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge had embraced the faith of Christ, which only a decade earlier had suffered setbacks in the days of Diocletian and Galerius. In all the cultural history of Europe there can surely be no more momentous era than what is covered by the two representatives of Neoplatonism — one conducting his school at Apamea as a professor of mathematical science and theurgy, the other eager to study the same disciplines but caught up in warfare and in administering a huge empire. These two men belong unmistakably to a world hovering on the brink of a new religious dispensation, and as surely as the two Augusti Diocletian and Galerius they adhere to the pagan tradition. They scorn those who reject the age-old gods (hence called ἄθεοι), those whom Julian habitually calls Galilaeans [1], and give the topmost place in their pantheon to the Sun God Helios, a divinity whom by *theocrasia* Julian certainly identifies with Mithras of Persia and Sarapis of Egypt.

During the period with which we are here concerned, religion and philosophy were deeply imbued with the theory and practice in the mysteries of opposition of light to darkness. The focal point of redemptive religion was the Sun [2]. Iamblichus located Asclepius, the Saviour God, in Helios —

Pachomius) had the same contempt as Julian for monks and hermits (ἀποτακτισταί). See *Or.* 7, 224 B, with which cf. *Ep. ad Sacerd.* 288 B. The tone of *Protr.* 8, p. 48, 29 Pistelli, may also reflect the Neoplatonist's view of Christianity.

[1] He also calls them δυσσεβεῖς (*Or.* 7, 224 B), as opposed to those who support traditional religion — εὐσεβεῖς and θεοσεβεῖς (*Ep.* 26 Hertlein).

[2] Julian (*Or.* 6, 188 A-B) makes clear that both for him and for 'the inspired Iamblichus' the founder of Greek philosophy is the King of Hellas, the God of Delphi (the overtones being Ἑλλάς and Ἥλιος).

'Ασκληπιὸν ἐν 'Ηλίῳ θετέον [1]. For Julian the salvation of the whole world was ensured by Helios begetting Asclepius, the Saviour who came down in human shape to heal men's bodies. Although such statements as that Apollo is co-ruler (συμβασιλεύων) with Helios may cause us to wonder about the paternity of Asclepius, yet Julian is not troubled by this. Following what he terms 'the principles of the finest intellectual syncretism' he identifies Helios with Apollo Musegetes, God of oracles and so of truth [2], enabling himself to accept what Greek mythology held about Asclepius as Apollo's offspring. Indeed, the aim of the *Hymn to Helios* is to reveal that all the chief gods not only of Greece (Apollo, Dionysus and even Oceanus), but also of Persia (Mithras), and of Egypt (Osiris and Sarapis) are manifestations of the one Supreme Solar God. For Julian Apollo was the incomparable Hellenizer of the Roman Empire, where belief in the gods was Greek from beginning to end. Such solar theology as this is in its main outline definitely Iamblichean [3].

According to G. Mau, Iamblichus must already have displayed a tendency to pit Helios against Christ. "Die Absicht des Kaisers, den Koenig Helios mit Christus in Parallele zu stellen, liegt klar zutage. Es muss schon in der von ihm benutzten Schrift des Iamblichos eine solche Tendenz gewaltet haben." I cannot see why this *must* be so, for we have no evidence about Iamblichus' view (if indeed he propounded any) on the subject of Christ. Julian in his gospel of a solar monotheism may even (as W. C. Wright suggests) have parted company with Iamblichus, whose 360 gods (if we knew more about

[1] Fragment 19 (*In Ti.*) Dillon. See also Macrobius, *Sat.* I 20, 11, where the Sun (like the God and Father of Christianity, in *Ep. Eph.* 4, 6) is 'in all and through all'.

[2] See LEWY, p. 49 n. 158 : ' Apollo, because of his being the god of the oracles, is often called the incarnation of Truth. '

[3] It also accords with the doctrine of the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Cf. LEWY, p. 6. Psyche-Hekate there also plays a considerable part.

the trinitarian system to which they belonged) would presumably be a considerable handicap to the all-important task of theological unification [1].

In Julian's thinking the Greek religious tradition was the source of light and salvation, in contrast with the darkness and ignorance of the Galilaeans, from whom he had won his emancipation. To their sneers he could retort that his so-called 'apostasy' was from the gloom in which he had spent his early days, seeking light both literally and metaphorically. To the spiritual darkness of his Christian upbringing he bids farewell: λήθη δὲ ἔστω τοῦ σκότους ἐκείνου [2]. The ἄθεοι it is who are really guilty of apostasy in having forsaken the everlasting saviour gods: ἀποστάντες ἀπὸ σωτήρων θεῶν. Julian's attitude towards the dark ignorance of those whom he labels Galilaeans in contrast with enlightened polytheism, the traditional form of worship from which there must not be any apostasy (οὐδὲ τῆς ἐννόμου θεραπείας ἀποστατέον, a pregnant aside in *Or.* 2) deserves to be compared with what is said in *De mysteriis* III 31, where the ἄθεοι, who are again unmistakably the Christians, are portrayed in all their philosophical ignorance as having been brought up from the beginning in a state of darkness: διὰ τὸ ἐν σκότῳ τὴν ἀρχὴν τετράφθαι. As Ed. des Places points out, elsewhere (*Myst.* X 2) Iamblichus alludes to these again, whom he crit-

[1] But both Iamblichus and Julian recognize the need for the theology summed up by Catholicism in the words πιστεύω εἰς ἕνα θεόν. The term ἕνωσις is common to each. For Iamblichus see *Myst.* I 9; II 11; IX 9 (cf. also σύνταξις καὶ διακόσμησις of *Comm. math.* 7, p. 29 Festa and MAU, p. 20). For Julian, *Or.* 4, 132 D and 149 B, and MAU, pp. 34 and 39. G. VIDAL (*Julian, a Novel* (New York 1965), 286) causes the Emperor, who has just affirmed his devotion to Isis and Hekate, to portray philosophy as "attempting to synthesize (as Iamblichos does so beautifully) all true religion in a single comprehensive system."

[2] *Or.* 4, 131 A. From wandering in this darkness Cybele rescued him (*Or.* 5, 174 C). See also Greg. Naz. *Contra Iulianum*, IV 1, 55, where the tables are turned: σκότῳ χαίρουσι μᾶλλον, ἐπεὶ καὶ εἰσὶ σκότος καὶ σκότους δημιουργοὶ τῆς κακίας. This is almost 'pot calling kettle black'.

icizes for reviling those who are faithful to polytheism: διασύρουσί τινες τοὺς τῶν θεῶν θεραπευτάς [1].

There can be little doubt that the Syrian Iamblichus, who was professor of Neoplatonic philosophy at Apamea, helped in the spread into Asia of what Peter Brown has called 'the long-enduring Hellenism of the Syriac-speaking clergy of Mesopotamia.' Though (like Plotinus, Amelius and Porphyry) Iamblichus had not been born a Hellene (unlike Julian, who had, and in the capital of the Hellenic East) [2], yet he taught Greeks as a Greek philosopher and was the acknowledged world master of Hellenism at the beginning of the fourth century. What the reactions of Iamblichus were to Constantine's conversion to Christianity the existing evidence does not allow us to know. Perhaps the philosopher's retirement to his native Syria was due, either wholly or in part, to his dislike of the growing influence of a religion which he found sprang from darkness and ignorance and which when sealed with state approval could only end up by strangling rival systems which drew their light and their inspiration from Hellenic polytheism. A Christian emperor must have seemed to the contemporary leader of the Neoplatonic School a threat to enlightenment and freedom of thought. Unluckily Iamblichus was living under Constantine, not under Julian. Although it is not evidence of Iamblichean *hellenismos*, the view expressed in one of the *Apocryphal Letters* of Julian to Iamblichus is obviously characteristic: "As you are the saviour of virtually the whole Hellenic world you ought to write to me abundantly"; "You ought not to shrink from abundantly showering on the Hellenic world the

[1] For the *Tu quoque* of Julian to his Christian assailant's charge of 'apostasy', see *Or.* 2, 70 D; 4, 153 B; *Ep. ad. Sacerd.* 288 B.

[2] In Julian's own estimate, Byzantium was inferior only to Rome itself (*Or.* 1, 8 B-C). A paper by Fergus MILLAR, referred to in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 20 (1973), 162, has as its title: "Constantine, Constantinople and the Greek World", and shows the importance of the city for the pagan intelligentsia of the Greek East.

light, as it were, of those goods you have to give it." To Julian is ascribed the thought that the man whose enlightening speculations can save Hellenism is Iamblichus.

Prayer and hope play an important part, both for the professional philosopher and for the emperor, in the attainment of the light here mentioned. It is the light of *hellenismos*, traditional faith in the Greek pantheon, for Christians the *darkness* of idolatry or 'paganism'. We can read about it in Julian's *Letter to the Galatian High Priest Arsacius*, preserved by Sozomenos. Here *hellenismos* is opposed to the ἀθεότης of the impious Galilaeans, i.e. their total rejection of polytheism, and significantly includes the worship of the Mother of the Gods, who is of course hymned by Julian in *Or.* 5 and whose worshippers — οἱ μητρίζοντες — are specified in *De mysteriis*. It is indeed the religion of the true Ἑλληνιστής, who practises it as of old. This polytheism, he knows, is splendid and grand, and goes beyond all our prayer and hope : τὰ τῶν θεῶν λαμπρὰ καὶ μεγάλα, κρείττονα πάσης μὲν εὐχῆς, πάσης δὲ ἐλπίδος. Although the point made by Iamblichus in *Myst.* V 26, is not exactly the same, the phraseology is worth comparison. Here we are told that hours spent in prayer bring to perfection a good hope and a faith centred in light: (scil. ἡ ἐν εὐχαῖς διατριβή) ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸ φῶς πίστιν τελειοῖ. Thereby we can hold conversation with the gods.

In this last passage, when we examine it closely, the Iamblichean conception of light is linked with that of the etherial and luminous pneumatic vehicle in which the soul is carried: τοῦ αἰθερώδους καὶ αὐγοειδοῦς πνεύματος. The germ of the idea that the soul is enclosed in a πνεῦμα-ὄχημα is found in Plotinus (*Enn.* II 2,2 and IV 7, 4) in whose system, however, it is inconspicuous and undeveloped. In Iamblichus, on the other hand, the presence of the soul's 'spiritual envelope' — αἰθέριον σῶμα, is of crucial importance [1]. The function of this material πνεῦμα,

[1] See *In Ti.* fr. 84 Dillon.

as E. R. Dodds has remarked, is that of ectoplasm [1], to use the jargon of modern spiritualism. This characteristically Iamblichean doctrine is adopted by Julian. The rays from the divine Helios provide a kind of vehicle for souls to come down from heaven in safety: τὸ λεπτὸν καὶ εὔτονον τῆς θείας αὐγῆς οἷον ὄχημα τῆς εἰς τὴν γένεσιν... ἀσφαλοῦς διδόμενον καθόδου ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμνείσθω τε ἄλλοις ἀξίως καὶ ὑφ' ἡμῶν πιστευτέον μᾶλλον ἢ δεικνύσθω. Significantly, the theory is dogma, not arrived at by logical proof but held as an article of faith. Obviously by the fourth century the gap has opened, even for paganism, between scientific demonstration and religious revelation [2].

This was indeed an age of deep credulity, of childish belief in fairy tale and miracle [3]. The disciples of Iamblichus, according to Eunapius, reported to him stories they had heard. To

[1] Relevant passages in Iamblichus are *Myst.* III 6 ; III 14 ; V 4 ; V 26. For Julian (*Or.* 5, 172 B-C), see MAU, p. 111. It should be noted that in the *NT* (*Luke* 3, 22) τὸ πνεῦμα descends σωματικῷ εἴδει.

[2] The key passage, of course, is *Or.* 4, 152 B. Cf. also *Or.* 5, 162 D. There Aristotle, we are told, must be supplemented by Plato, and the two of them by the Divine Oracles. For Julian's appeal to 'faith' cf. *Or.* 4, 135 A, and *Or.* 5, 172 A. See further *Ep.* 22 (Hertlein = 11 Wright), with which WRIGHT compares *Or.* 7, 235 A, a passage with a clear reference to Iamblichus as a man without an equal among Julian's contemporary philosophers. Other pertinent remarks are made by DODDS (p. xii) and LEWY (pp. 146, 148, 446).

[3] If 'a miracle is an act which creates faith' then ancient paganism was as well provided with miracles as is modern Catholicism, whether of the West or of the East. The destruction of the Temple of Sarapis in Alexandria by the Christians gave them the chance to see the inner working of the mighty deeds wrought in his name. As LEWY points out (p. 248) the 'vivification' of Hekate's statue was a wide-spread magical practice, and was performed by Maximus, the pupil of Iamblichus, in 'converting' Julian from Christianity to pagan theurgy. Julian's initiation was conducted according to the Chaldaean rite. A similar link between Chaldaean magic, Iamblichus and Julian can be found in the doctrine of 'the caller and the call' (LEWY, Excursus V, especially p. 468). On the ancient view, the magician was a prophet, in whose body the 'luminous pneuma' became a voice uttering Apollo's oracle. The pneuma descends about the recipient's head, is breathed in, and so goes into the belly. Then it ascends as breath to make a musical sound (LEWY, p. 43). Here are all the characteristics of ventriloquism—and luckily the wind which comes from the splendour of Phoebus on entering the belly follows an upper not a downward way.

say nothing about his making two youths rise out of the baths by touching the waters, Iamblichus had been stated to practise what is now called levitation [1], ascending several cubits from the ground. "A charming story" he said, with a smile. "You have been taken in, and it isn't true." As to Julian, it is recorded by Libanius how an earthquake ended after he had stood where he was till late afternoon, presumably wrapt in prayer [2].

Theurgy, sometimes defined as the magical science of the Neoplatonists, had never been included by Plotinus in his system, although by his date the term had been adopted as a neologism through the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Porphyry, according to Augustine, admits that theurgy has a value in bringing men into touch with spirits and angels, although he cannot make up his mind about its philosophical use. The soul, he holds, *per quasdam consecrationes theurgicas, quas teletas vocant, idoneam fieri atque aptam susceptioni spirituum et angelorum et ad videndos deos.* From the immaterial spirituality of Plotinus [3] Neoplatonism was moving under the authority of Porphyry towards the crude spiritualism of Iamblichus and Julian, each of them convinced that by theurgical art and ritual act the human soul could secure the salvation which for the Founder of Neoplatonism was a mystical union with the One, a flight of the alone to the Alone [4].

[1] LEWY, in Excursus VIII, terms ἀναγωγή 'Elevation'.

[2] As is observed by DODDS, Plotinus is never called a theurgist.

[3] Th. HOPFNER, in discussing theurgy, contrasts it (in *RE* VI A 258 ff.) with Plotinus' 'blosses Insichversenken' in *Enn.* IV 8, 1. As to theurgic union DODDS has some sound observations (p. xx).

[4] In *Enn.* II 9, 14 Plotinus has nothing but contempt for Gnosticism's ἐπαοιδαί, γοητεῖαι, θέλξεις, πείσεις. Augustine, when citing Porphyry (*Civ.* X 9), looks at theurgy from the Christian standpoint. At a later stage in Church history the Patriarch Cerularius conducted a séance according to the ritual prescribed by the *Chaldaean Oracles* (Psellus, *Scripta Minora* I (Milan 1936), 257). LEWY (p. 39) defines the secret cult of the Chaldaean theurgists as "a blend of sublime mysticism, centring in the noetic Fire, and of magical materialism." He regards the theurgical mystery as parallel to the mystery of Isis (p. 210).

As believers in the abiding value of Greek philosophy we who meet here today are unlikely to share the theurgic tastes of Iamblichus and Julian. Taught to see the world in the late twentieth century through the eyes of empirical science, with its reliance on telescope and microscope, its atomic fission and space probes, its search for primordial enzymes, its molecular theory of matter and knowledge of energy and electrons, we are far more obviously bound to the rationalist tradition of ancient Ionia and classical Greece than to the late antique theosophy and thaumaturgy which even Plato's ostensible followers incressingly accepted as articles of faith after the death of Plotinus. In the telling words of E. R. Dodds, "Iamblichus corrupted Plotinus' teaching by introducing theosophical fantasies from alien sources : *theourgia* for *theoria*."

To do so was easy enough for the Syrian from Chalcis, and for the apostate emperor to carry theurgy further was still easier. Iamblichus and Julian lived at a time when the rationalism of the old masters of Greek thought, such men as Heraclitus, Democritus and Anaxagoras, had given way often enough to an uncritical faith in the supernatural, seeking to convince by the performance of certain ritual acts. This was the prevailing mood of those who appeared as religious thinkers in the opening centuries of the Christian era. A good example was the Neopythagorean Apollonius of Tyana, to whom were credited the possession of miraculous powers. The name *theurgy* was apparently used in the second century A.D. for the first time by the two Julians to whom the authorship of the *Chaldaean Oracles* is ascribed by the Neoplatonists. Significantly, it was about the same time that Celsus, the Platonist, in his attack on the Christian religion found fault with Jesus for having gained certain magical powers whereon was based the claim to divinity through having stayed during early youth in Egypt. Celsus, however, does not use the word *theurgist* but instead compares the gospel miracles to the works of a wizard :

ἔργα τῶν γοήτων [1]. The same Celsus, we may further observe, with a rationalist's incredulity in what would have been acceptable to any pagan theurgist, rejects the materialistic descent of the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove : φάσμα ὄρνιθος ἐξ ἀέρος [2]. In Celsus we find a Platonist after the manner of Plotinus. Neither of them would have liked the spiritualistic innovations of their successors Iamblichus and Julian.

Iamblichus is known to have written a *Commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles* running to at least 28 books [3]. This *Commentary*, as is pointed out by H. Lewy, our leading authority, could well have inspired Julian's description already quoted of the newly created soul's safe descent in her vehicle of sunlight. Here certainly is one important aspect of theurgy as understood by Iamblichus. For him, as can be seen in *De mysteriis* III 6, the aetherial *pneuma* is visible to the trained eye of the theurgist, whether it is descending or ascending : ὁρᾶται τῷ θεαγωγοῦντι τὸ κατιὸν πνεῦμα — τοῖς θεωροῦσι πᾶσιν ἔκδηλον γίγνεται, ἤτοι κατιόντος ἢ ἀναχωροῦντος τοῦ θεοῦ. G. Mau in his Commentary on Julian's *Fourth Oration* seems to pay no attention (either at 152 B, the ὄχημα passage, or at *Or.* 5, 178 C-D, with its references to πνεῦμα and citation of an oracular verse numbered by Ed. des Places as Fragment 129 of the *Chaldaean Oracles*) to the Iamblichean *Commentary on the Oracles* as Julian's source.

Solar descent and ascent of the soul (εἰς τὸν Ἥλιον ἐπάνοδος in *De communi mathematica scientia*) is the mainspring of Iamblichean theurgy. We read of that part of it which elevates itself to the Unbegotten : ὅση πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον ἀνάγεται. Iamblichus implicitly believes in the sacred ritual, the theurgy whereby

[1] Cf. WITT, p. 185, as well as my remarks in *Class. Rev.* N.S. 24 (1974), 142.

[2] The text already cited from *Luke* in note 1, p. 43 is paralleled in the other three *Gospels*. In all four Jesus' baptism is marked by the descent of a dove.

[3] In the discussion H. J. Blumenthal pointed out that this figure has recently been queried by DILLON. Whatever the length of Iamblichus' *Commentary*, the fact of its composition is not in dispute.

gods commune with men: ἡ ἁγιστεία καὶ ἡ θεουργικὴ κοινωνία θεῶν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους. It is the Henosis which overrules the Universe (*Myst.* II 11), the religious performance of actions inexpressible in words and beyond all understanding: ἡ τῶν ἔργων τῶν ἀρρήτων καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν νόησιν θεοπρεπῶς ἐνεργουμένων τελεσιουργία [1].

It was Maximus, a pupil of Iamblichus, who initiated Julian into the theurgic mysteries according to the Chaldaean rites [2]. The effects of this initiation (roundly condemned by Gregory of Nazianzus as a kind of Black Mass in which the pagan priest made use of the sign of the cross) [3] seem to have been profound for the remainder of Julian's life. At the end of the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* (*Or.* 5, 180 B) he prays that the Roman Empire may be cleansed from the stain of Christianity (τῆς ἀθεότητος τὴν κηλῖδα) and that he may win perfection in theurgy (ἐν θεουργίᾳ τελειότητα). The Emperor Pope of paganism in a letter to one of his priests advises respect for the traditional polytheism which has come down from the theurgists of olden days: εἰς τὴν τῶν θεῶν φήμην, ἣ παραδέδοται διὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἡμῖν θεουργῶν. Further proof of Julian's fondness for the name is provided when we read that Dionysus, though born human, won deification through theurgic skill, and that Solomon also

[1] In the *Chaldaean Oracles* (LEWY, pp. 45, 60) the source of the prophetic πνεῦμα is Apollo-Helios. He draws the theurgist upwards with his rays, which are of sovereign potency for this purpose (*ibid.*, p. 469). The doctrine of the descent and ascent of the soul through the medium of the solar rays is probably derived by Julian directly from Iamblichus' *Commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles*—but the view taken in the *Oracles* themselves is that the vehicle consists of rays of fourfold quality—etherial, solar, lunar and aerial (LEWY, p. 183 n. 27).

[2] Cf. LEWY, pp. 248 and 254 n. 94; 270 n. 10.

[3] See *PG* XXXV 580, *Contra Iulianum*, IV 1, 55. The whole passage describing what is ostensibly the subterranean ceremony whereby Julian gained communion with the *chthonian daemones* reminds me of the Mithraic ritual. Mithras also seems evident in *Or.* 5, 169 A: τὰ διὰ τοὺς μυστικοὺς καὶ κρυφίους θεσμούς; and Cautes and Cautopates must be in Julian's mind at *Or.* 5, 179 C: λαμπάδας φασὶν ἀνάπτειν Ἄττιδι τῷ σοφῷ.

was reported by the Christian to possess it: καὶ περὶ θεουργίαν ἤσκητο [1].

According to Eunapius, in a tribute to Iamblichus Julian remarked to Maximus: ἐμοὶ ἐμήνυσας ὃν ἐζήτουν. Here one is at once struck with the echo (whether deliberate or not) of what Plotinus according to Porphyry said concerning Ammonius Saccas: τοῦτον ἐζήτουν. In either case we are left with the impression that the doctrine of the teacher was perfectly to the pupil's liking. We are meant to see continuity. But what then of Plotinus himself in relation to Julian? As the one whose school had after Porphyry passed to Iamblichus, he was (though at a distance of a few removes) the greatest of Julian's forerunners.

The one specific reference to Plotinus in Julian's writings has already been mentioned: his name is correctly inserted between Plato and Porphyry, the *inspired Iamblichus* being listed last and seemingly regarded as most important. Whether the *Enneads* ever seriously occupied the mind of Julian is exceedingly doubtful [2]. Indeed, his *Orations* (in particular the two *Hymns*), his *Letters*, and his polemic *Against the Galilaeans* seem not to contain any Neoplatonic doctrines which were derived directly from Plotinus rather than from Iamblichus. What characterizes the Plotinian system is its metaphysical unity. The One produces Universal Nous, which produces the Soul of the Whole, which without suffering lapse or descent produces all other existences. Whatever changes were afterwards made by Iamblichus in intro-

[1] Dionysus is portrayed (*Or.* 7, 219 A-B) as the human wonder-worker who like Heracles achieved an ascension into heaven. Julian in discussing Solomon (*Adv. Gal.* 224 C-D) puts into the mouths of the Christians the attribution to Solomon of theurgic skill and retorts that in fact he was essentially a polytheist like the pagans.

[2] Julian, as a man of affairs, lacked the leisure available to such a scholar as Iamblichus to study sources at first hand. Significantly in writing about Porphyry (*Or.* 5, 161 C) and a philosophical work of his, he remarks "I cannot be sure, for I have not read it, whether there is a chance of agreement with what I am saying."

ducing triadic ideas, whatever effect solar syncretism and superstitious reverence for polytheism ('Gewimmel von Goettern' is the apt phrase in the *Realencyclopaedie*) had upon the speculations of Julian, it cannot be doubted that the founder of Neoplatonism never swerved from his philosophical position that the ultimate explanation of human experience is the One as the ground of all Reality, a logical necessity for the mind but only seldom apprehended by it through *unio mystica*. For Julian, with his devotion to polytheism and solar cults, a less metaphysical approach than that of Plotinus was required. Acknowledging his debt to the treatise by Iamblichus *On the Gods*, the Emperor ecstatically exclaims "May mighty Helios grant me to possess as deep a knowledge of himself as had the inspired Iamblichus, beloved of the gods". Indeed, the *unio mystica* of Plotinus has given way to personal worship.

Sometimes this was demonstrated physically in a ritual act. Thus it is recorded that Iamblichus was careful to make sacrifice at Rome in one of his suburban villas to the Sun on the rising of Sirius [1]. Sometimes the tone of a prayer was that of family intimacy. Thus Julian, in his personal entreaty to the Phrygian Cybele, speaks to her as if she were his own mother — like Apuleius addressing Isis, or the *Akathist Hymn* writer extolling Theotokos. "Thou who dost love (ἀγαπῶσα) great Dionysus and didst save Attis when exposed at his birth... grant me truth in my polytheism (ἀλήθειαν ἐν τοῖς περὶ θεῶν δόγμασιν) perfection in theurgy, and virtue in all my political and military undertakings." We are no longer dealing with a Plotinian φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον. As G. Mau has pointed out, in the two *Hymns* (*Or.* 4 and 5) we find the central idea to be a monotheism focused in the Sun, "die herrschende Religion des sinkenden Heidentums".

Immaterialist Plotinus certainly was in comparison with some of the Neoplatonists who followed him. Yet even in

[1] DILLON, p. 17, gives the reference to Eunapius, *VS* V 1, 12, p. 12, 14-17 Giangrande.

him the seeds of the theurgy, the spiritualism of Iamblichus can be easily brought to light when we look for them. According to Porphyry a séance was arranged by an Egyptian priest 'with the ready compliance' (ἑτοίμως ὑπακούσαντος) of Plotinus. This is not surprising. For in one or two passages of the *Enneads* the 'matter' of *daemones* becomes a serious question, as for instance in III 5, 6 : πῶς καὶ τίνος ὕλης μετέχουσιν ; Furthermore, as already noted, Plotinus in two passages shows interest in the theory that the soul is encompassed by a *pneuma*. To this we may add a remark which Porphyry makes about the superhuman manifestation which reinforces apprehension of metaphysical truth, inspires faith, and ends perplexity. Such is the role of *daemones*. It is well known that Neoplatonic demonology and angelology originated with Porphyry [1]. So it is impossible to regard Iamblichus as a complete innovator when, in *Myst.* V 14, he describes the theurgic priests as having to begin their rites from those gods who embrace and regulate matter as inhering in it : ὑλαίους τῶν θεῶν. These Iamblichean gods are perhaps the direct forebears of the ἔνυλα εἴδη in Julian's *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*. But Iamblichus is not repeating Plotinus.

According to Plotinus, the necessity of evil results from matter, which is the 'privation of Good'. With the name of 'privation' Julian is familiar (*Or.* 5, 161 D). But whereas for Plotinus there can be no other principle of evil in the Universe than this, Julian follows Iamblichus in holding than a race of wicked spirits exists to which can be attributed evils. Iamblichus, in writing about ἀντίθεοι, δαίμονες πονηροί, is evidently convinced (*Myst.* III 31) that the 'Evil Demon' in whom the ἄθεοι (i.e. the Christians) believe, is of the same nature. Else-

[1] See LEWY, pp. 13-14. Angelology has no place in the system of Plotinus. According to Iamblichus, Plato did not consider archangels worth mention (fr. 210 Larsen). In Julian angels often appear: see LEWY, p. 261 n. 8, and the reference there to MAU, p. 71. See further *Myst.* III 18 (with the classification Overseers, Angels and Demons) and V 25. Cf. *ibid.*, II 2, and Ed. des PLACES, *ad loc.*

where (*ibid.*, IV 13) he mentions τὸ τῶν πονηρῶν δαιμόνων φῦλον, Julian, after telling that evils were banished from heaven by the King of the Gods, introduces the idea that humanity is subjected to its various ills by the activities of the race of base demons : τῶν φαύλων καὶ ἀνοήτων δαιμόνων τὸ φῦλον.

Plotinus had illustrated his metaphysical doctrine of Undiminished Giving by the theory of light emanating as an incorporeal energy from the Sun. After this, his problem was how to explain the existence of matter and the sensible world. Iamblichus, whom Julian clearly followed in his solar theology, took as his starting point the sunlight and its source in heaven : φιλοσόφει τὸν οὐρανὸν ὁρῶν καὶ τὸν Ἥλιον, φῶς τέ σοι τῆς ἀληθείας ἡγείσθω (*Protr.* 21, p. 115, 21 sq. Pistelli). Julian apparently repeated (*Or.* 4, 134 B) what Iamblichus himself wrote in Περὶ θεῶν, concordantly with Plotinus, τὸ φῶς ἀσώματον. But neither the one nor the other could maintain a consistently immaterial outlook on this question [1].

A comparison between Julian's *Hymns* (*Or.* 4 and 5) and Macrobius *Saturnalia* I 17-23 (attributable to Iamblichus) shows the emphasis all the time is on solar theology. A specially important role is played by Attis [2]. Clearly his function, when

[1] The philosophers of the third and fourth centuries would have been spared problems in their study of light and matter had they been granted the knowledge which empirical science has put into the hands of modern philosophy. The cause of lightning is electricity. Electrical action produces electric light. Things are said to be charged with electricity when an electric current (called even a 'fluid') is passed through them. And electricity itself? A peculiar condition of the molecules of a body or of the ether surrounding them ! All these statements are taken out of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Even if Plotinus, Iamblichus and Julian were fools in natural science and twentieth century molecular physics, they seem (like their Stoic forbears) to have been groping their way towards the concept, so vital today, of the 'electric current'.

[2] Attis is now νοερὸς θεός (*Or.* 5, 165 C), although because he has a mediatory role through his descent into matter he can be termed ἡμίθεος — he is not ἄτρεπτος (*ibid.*, 168 B). Through the agency of Attis human souls fly down from heaven and fall on earth (*ibid.*, 169 C) and by the same means are uplifted (*ibid.*, 172 A, where Attis is clearly identified with the solar rays, being afterwards 173 C called σωτήρ and ἀναγωγὸς θεός).

he has descended as sunlight from the stars to our earth, is to be a Demiurge on the pattern of the Stoic σπερματικὸς λόγος (indeed Attis in *Or.* 5, 179 C, 'having chosen matter presides over generation') and is to descend to matter's utmost limits [1]. Apparently following every detail in Iamblichus, Julian regards King Attis as θεὸς γόνιμος (Helios' life-generating power, as can be seen in *Or.* 4, 140 B-C) and so as Leader of the assembled Pantheon (ἔξαρχον τῶν θείων γενῶν) [2].

From Iamblichus is derived Julian's solar triad: first, the transcendental Helios ruling the κόσμος νοητός, then Helios as the supreme centre of the realm of θεοὶ νοεροί (the Iamblichean realm unknown to Plotinus) [3], and thirdly the visible sun governing the world of sense perception. As appears from *Or.* 4, 132 D-133 A, the prime creator of existence in the second realm is Helios, middle among the middle: πρωτουργὸν οὐσίαν

[1] *Ibid.*, 167 A-B. Julian recognizes mythological difficulties, theological 'squaring' such as meets us in *interpretatio Graeca* (*Romana*) of Egyptian religion. The Greeks, and indeed the Athenians, he tells us (*ibid.*, 159 A) borrowed the Phrygian religion. But we may feel that in showing how God has revealed Himself to man Julian finds his polytheistic collection recalcitrant—Attis, Helios, Magna Mater, Corybants, Lion. See also E. von Borries, in *RE* X 1, 26 ff.

[2] Julian's *Hymn* is ostensibly in honour of Cybele. But as Wright observes he devotes more attention to Attis. The very opening of the *Hymn* puts the question of Attis before that of Cybele. For any Christian critic the figure of Cybele's son and paramour as well, subject to suffering through castration, had neither godlike nor even heroic dimensions. Julian (*Or.* 5, 168 D) shows sensitivity as to what οἱ πολλοί gossiped on the subject, and is at pains to give the loss of virility a cosmological interpretation.

[3] The epithet νοερός added to θεός is demonstrably Iamblichean: τοῖς νοεροῖς θεοῖς συνάπτεσθαι (*Protr.* 21, p. 112, 4 Pistelli). See also *Myst.* I 19; I 21. Plotinus uses νοερός — II 9, 1; III 2, 14; IV 3, 1; IV 8, 4; VI 6, 17 — and νοερῶς — V 1, 3; V 3, 17; VI 8, 17. But 'intellectual gods' find no place in his system. They form the Intelligent World which is an image of the Intelligible (κόσμος νοητός) and which in its turn serves as a model of the Sensible (Naville, p. 102). Julian accepts this Iamblichean insertion of another cosmic principle into the Plotinian Trinity of Hypostases. See further for Iamblichus' use of νοερός Dillon, vocabulary, *s.v.* and for Julian Mau, notes on pp. 36, 37, and 43. For πῦρ νοερόν in *Chaldaean Oracles*, Lewy, p. 110.

μέσον ἐκ μέσων τῶν νοερῶν καὶ δημιουργικῶν αἰτιῶν Ἥλιον [1]. As G. Mau has pointed out, the doctrine is the Iamblichean, the Mean being the Perfect.

The solar theology of Iamblichus was apparently unaffected by Mithraism, although a reference to Ahriman has been suggested in *De mysteriis* III 30. That Iamblichus took account of the Egyptian triad, Isis, Sarapis and Horus, is clear from the passage of Macrobius. Greek mythology could also receive a solar twist : Ἀφροδίτην καὶ Ἑρμῆν, ἡλιακοὺς ὄντας καὶ συνδημιουργοῦντας αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς τὴν συντελεσιουργίαν τῶν ὅλων αὐτῷ συντελοῦντας. But the Persian cult in its Roman form, where admittedly Venus and Mercury fulfil special roles, seems not to have fascinated Iamblichus as it certainly did Julian.

Julian writes as a Mithraic initiate. Like Apuleius in the *Apologia*, guardedly mentioning the talismans, doubtless of his Isiac initiation, kept at his home (*quaedam sacrorum crepundia domi adseruare*), Julian at the very outset of the *Hymn to King Helios* alludes (as he does elsewhere) to his possessing among personal possessions at his home the tokens of his allegiance to the Sun Cult : τούτου ἔχω οἴκοι παρ' ἐμαυτῷ τὰς πίστεις ἀκριβεστέρας. The name and nature of the cult become clearer later on. The god is named as Mithras, and the games, established by Aurelian in 274, are specifically described as being 'somewhat new' — the *Heliaia* [2].

It seems then that in his devotion to the Persian Sun God the apostate emperor followed a line which Iamblichus himself did not take. It is worth noticing that the mediatory role of King Helios in Julian's *Hymn* exactly corresponds with the function which Mithras is held to fulfil, according to Plutarch : τὸν Μεσίτην ὀνομάζουσιν. Here, as Th. Hopfner suggests, spa-

[1] The pure Trinity's pure centre (*Or.* 4, 140 D), περὶ ὃν πάντα ἐστίν (*ibid.*, 132 C).

[2] At the time of Diocletian's accession, ten years later, there is epigraphical evidence that Mithras was named next to the Capitoline Triad in invocation. The note by WRIGHT (on *Or.* 4, 155 B) needs one slight addition. The use of ἀνίκητος (156 C) is a clear indication that Julian is thinking of Mithras.

tial position may be implied. In that case, the doctrine well accords with the cosmology of Iamblichus and Julian. Of the importance of Mithras mythologically as mediator between the Supreme God, Ahura Mazda, and mankind, as the hero god *par excellence*, there can be no doubt in the centuries that preceded Julian's initiation. The god who had presented him with the mystic tokens worn next to his person (τοῖς περιάπτοις φυλακτηρίοις) was a more obvious manifestation of *Sol Invictus* than even Asclepius, Herakles, Dionysus, Sarapis and Attis. The apostate emperor could satirically contrast Constantine's abandonment of polytheism in favour of the ἀθεότης of Jesus with his own devotion to Mithras, his heavenly Father, whose commandments he must keep as his divine Guide [1].

We may infer from Macrobius that Iamblichus in his Περὶ θεῶν treated Helios sometimes as Apollo, sometimes as Attis (*Solem sub nomine Attinis ornant fistula et virga*), and again as an All-powerful World Spirit (Ἥλιε παντοκράτορ, κόσμου πνεῦμα). The identification of Attis with Helios-Sol shows that Iamblichus was not out of step with the Mithraism of his times. Mithraic iconography, of course, commonly includes the two torchbearers, Cautes and Cautopates, and they can be portrayed with the cap and shepherd's staff characteristic of the Phrygian god. The syncretism of Julian's period is illuminating on this point. The emperor himself besides venerating Mithras and Attis was devoted (as Iamblichus may well have been) to Isis, Sarapis' Maiden Consort, Queen of all Egypt [2]. So too a certain Volusianus in Rome, perhaps *praefectus urbis* in 365, two years after Julian's death, a man well known as a follower of the Attis cult, could hold office in both the Persian and the Egyptian cult : *pater ierophanta*, *profeta Isidis*. Julian's religious conflation of Greek polytheism with oriental faiths was a sign

[1] *Or.* 10, 336. Notice that in the *Epistle to Priscus* (44 Hertlein), *ad init.*, 'the Providence of the All-Seeing One' could be either of Mithras or of Sarapis.

[2] See Nock, p. xlix, and Witt, p. 242.

of the times. His predecessors Porphyry and Iamblichus had shown him the way. Like them he believed absolutely in the efficacy of the pagan gods. In the same spirit as his Neoplatonic predecessors he discovered in solar theology the secret which the Galilaeans whom he so strongly attacked were sure could be found only in their twin doctrines of Incarnation and Resurrection. Following Iamblichus, he could answer Christianity with his own theory of a solar saviour, revealed in human form: Zeus ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Ἀσκληπιὸν ἐγέννησεν, εἰς δὲ τὴν γῆν διὰ τοῦ Ἡλίου γόνιμον ζωῆς ἐξέφηνεν· οὗτος ἐπὶ γῆς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ποιησάμενος τὴν πρόοδον, ἐνοειδῶς ἐν ἀνθρώπου μορφῇ περὶ τὴν Ἐπίδαυρον ἀνεφάνη [1]. Such utterances as this, naturally, would be interpreted by J. Geffcken as genuinely Iamblichean. They may be so in spirit. But to prove that they must be so according to the letter is impossible [2].

God incarnate in the shape of Jesus born a man — such was the continuing stumbling block in the fourth century. Whether Iamblichus anticipated Julian or not, he could hardly have remained ignorant of this problem or indifferent to it. Paganism, like the Church, took cognizance of the fierce theological debates of the times. The dispute between Arius and Athanasius, the Homoousian controversy, the formulation of the Nicene Creed in 325, were all events which fell during the last years of the Neoplatonic diadoch's life. Even at Apamea Iamblichus was living in the eastern part of the Empire where Church Councils were always to be held. What he made of the Arian schism nobody knows. It was certainly raging before his death, and according to the ecclesiastical writer Jerome it was world-wide. *Ingemuit totus orbis, et Arianum se esse miratus est* [3].

[1] Otherwise stated, the doctrine is adumbrated in *Or.* 5, 179 C, where Attis-Logos adorns and regulates matter.

[2] On the question of Attis in relation to Mithras cf. M. J. VERMASEREN, *CIMRM*, 466 and 202, and Leroy A. CAMPBELL, *Mithraic Iconography* (Leiden 1968), 33 *et al.*

[3] Jerome, in *PL* XXIII 181 C.

Recently L. W. Leadbeater has pertinently commented on this subject, as follows : "Julian witnessed during the reign of Constantius the continuing effects of the most destructive schism of the early church — the Athanasian-Arian dispute." Let us remember that Constantius himself was a semi-Arian. Other facts to be noted also are Julian's antagonism towards Athanasius [1] as polytheism's critic (τοῦ θεοῖς ἐχθροῦ Ἀθανασίου), his contempt for the sectarian madness of the Christians (ἕνεκεν τῆς τῶν Γαλιλαίων ἀπονοίας), and his refusal to accept the Incarnation, on the ground that Jesus was not deified either by Paul, Matthew, Luke or Mark [2].

If we adhere to J. Geffcken's theory, then these Julianic utterances are all in harmony with specifically Iamblichean criticism of Christianity. But in the present state of our knowledge how can this hypothesis be verified? All that can be usefully said is this. Obviously during the crucial first six decades of the fourth century the rivals for the allegiance of the intellectual element in society were Neoplatonism and Christianity. That the one failed and the other triumphed can be ascribed to a variety of causes. Among these, however, must be reckoned the metaphysical remoteness of the school then conducted by Iamblichus and its inability to answer life's routine problems. The Empire in those days faced sociological issues such as we ourselves know well — a prices and incomes policy, the state management of industry, and keeping out of war. What had the Triads of Iamblichus, and Julian's solar efflux, to do with day to day living in field and town? To the minds of those who were not professional philosophers (and even of some who were) the metaphysical trinitarianism and the theurgy characteristic of Neoplatonism at that time seemed hollow explanations of human experience. In the

[1] See especially *Ep.* 51 Hertlein. Athanasius was 'a meddlesome rascal'.

[2] *Adv. Gal.* 327 A, and cf. *Ep. ad Sacerd., passim ; Epp.* 27 (401 C) and 31 Hertlein ; LEADBEATER, pp. 89 ff.

words of L. W. Leadbeater: "No abstract concept of King Helios could ever complement the very human emotional requirements of the great mass of people." The transcendental heliolatry to which the last pagan emperor (as F. Cumont remarks) had been converted by Iamblichus turned out to be a barren faith for the masses throughout his empire.

Iamblichus, with his fondness for Pythagoreanism and numbers, found triadic groupings gave him a better metaphysical system than what he must have thought to be the less perfect (and less complicated) one of Plotinus. An illuminating passage has been preserved by Proclus: μετὰ τὰς νοητὰς τριάδας καὶ τὰς τῶν νοερῶν θεῶν τρεῖς τριάδας ἐν τῇ νοερᾷ ἑβδομάδι. Here we have a combination of the terms τριάς and νοεροὶ θεοί [1]. These are key words: Iamblichean, but not Plotinian, in their usage here. Iamblichus and Julian are equally pagan trinitarians and equally believers in νοεροὶ θεοί, 'intellectual gods' [2]. This intermediary (and un-Plotinian) realm of intellectual divinities is the kingdom of Helios-Zeus-Apollo. Its function is that of a metaphysical pantheon where all the claims of polytheism can be met. The denizens there are for Iamblichus (as we see, *Myst.* I 19) τὰ πρῶτα νοερά. Among the νοεροὶ θεοί Julian specifically names Sarapis, Apollo, Attis, and as the source of all, the Mother of the Gods.

In the epilogue to the Commentary on Julian's *Hymns*, G. Mau enthusiastically wrote: "Vortrefflich passte dieser Ἥλιος νοερός in den κόσμος νοερός, den der berühmte Jamblichos erschaffen und in die Mitte zwischen die höchste und sinnlich wahrnehmbare Welt gestellt hatte." This will strike some of us, perhaps, as a considerable overstatement, especially when we consider the Mother Cybele's partnership with King Helios [3]

[1] Procl. *In Ti.*, I p. 308, 21 Diehl.

[2] The explicit formulation of the νοερὸς κόσμος is tantamount to a defence of polytheism.

[3] She is identical with the obviously Iamblichean Aphrodite (*Or.* 4, 150 B) who blends together the heavenly gods, uniting them in love and harmony.

in comparison with the Christian (at least Catholic, if not Protestant) Christology and theory of Theotokos [1]. In the Julianic realm of the Intellectual Gods, is the ultimate authority patriarchal or matriarchal? Helios and Cybele as consorts resemble Sarapis and Isis. Which of the sexes gives way?

Julian is, of course, aware of this dilemma. His method of resolving it is that of closely linking Helios with Attis. For this treatment, as we have seen, the precedent is provided by Iamblichus. But whether the emperor's esteem for Cybele was shared by his predecessor is doubtful. Iamblichus was nearer in time to Plotinus, and Plotinus certainly did not rate the Phrygian goddess as highly as Julian was to do. On the contrary, just as Plutarch had earlier identified the χώρα-ὕλη which he had found in Plato's *Timaeus* with Isis, so Plotinus did with the Mother of the Gods. The Phrygian goddess is far from being in the *Enneads* the august figure she comes to be in Julian's *Hymn* [2]. As a fairly safe generalization we may state that traditional Greek mythology interested Iamblichus more than did cults that stemmed from Persia and Phrygia.

Nevertheless, *De mysteriis* does deal at length (from Book VII onwards) with aspects of Egyptian religion. Furthermore, we know that Iamblichus commented voluminously on the

[1] Julian's ἡ τεκοῦσα θεός (*Or.* 5, 166 A) is an obvious parallel to the Christian Θεοτόκος. Taken together with the close of the *Hymn* (179 D-180 C) strangely regarded as hearking back to the days when Julian was a Christian by A. BAUMSTARK, *Liturgie comparée* (Chevetogne 1940), 83, the portrayal of Cybele as Theotokos occurs in an unmistakably Iamblichean setting, where mention is made of 'intellectual and creative gods'. Julian, it must be noted, celebrates Hermes Epaphroditos ('beloved of Aphrodite') at 179 B, adding shortly afterwards that Hermes and Aphrodite exert the influence of the Logos Attis. Without attempting to decide whether Iamblichus was much interested in Attis-Cybele, we do know he regarded Aphrodite and Hermes as 'solar co-operators' (fr. 70 Dillon). The child of their union in Greek mythology was Hermaphroditus, with male and female sexual characteristics, and so like Attis.

[2] In the *Hymn* she shuns all inclination towards the material: φεύγουσα τὸ πρὸς τὴν ὕλην νεῦσαν. Here scholars have noted that the phraseology is ultimately derived from Plotinus, I 8, 4.

Chaldaean Oracles. His Syrian background doubtless disposed him to a general sympathy with oriental mystery cults and theosophy. Like Julian afterwards, he had religious flirtations with the East, whereas Plotinus clung unswervingly to Hellenism in the strictest sense, totally repudiating what lay on its fringe, the *Revelations of Zoroaster* [1] and the Platonically inspired and for him pernicious fantasies of the Gnostics. Julian, in accordance (no doubt) with Iamblichus, was to mention 'the divine Plato' in the same breath as 'the ineffable initiation into the mysteries' performed by the Chaldaean. This kind of outburst would have been regarded by Plotinus as *Schwärmerei*.

In the passage here discussed the secret knowledge which Julian's initiation is said to impart is intelligible to the happy theurgists — θεουργοῖς τοῖς μακαρίοις γνώριμα. As W. C. Wright suggests, such men as Iamblichus and Maximus of Ephesus are being described. But they in their turn were influenced by the *Chaldaean Oracles*. A little earlier we have found 'the uplifting rays of the Sun' (τὰς ἀναγωγοὺς ἀκτῖνας ἡλίου) help those who crave release from birth. This theological creed (πιστευτέον) is certainly Iamblichean: εἰς τὸν Ἥλιον ἐπάνοδος, θεῖα συνθήματα ἐπαγωγὰ ὄντα πρὸς τοὺς θεούς. But it can be traced back, as has been done by H. Lewy, to the theurgic Julians of the *Oracles*. Their Aion is a transmundane Helios. Like the αἰθήρ of Iamblichus [2] this is above the sphere of fixed stars. Thither the neophyte can make his way after death, and theurgists, being especially holy, can win salvation for their 'mortal wrapping of harsh matter' (πικρᾶς ὕλης περίβλημα βρότειον, fr. 129 of the *Oracles* in the edition of Ed. des Places) [3]. If we accept G. Mau's view, that the two *Hymns* represent Julian's use for

[1] Porphyry, who himself shows acquaintance with Mithraism, does tell us in his *Life of Plotinus* (Chap. 3) that his master was eager to gain experience of the philosophy in vogue among the Persians.

[2] Cf. MAU, pp. 24-25, and WRIGHT, note on *Or.* 4, 146 A.

[3] Attis, as the Logos, has brought this 'refuse' to order (*Or.* 5, 179 C). See also LEWY, p. 213 n. 144.

religious reasons of Iamblichean philosophy (*Umschwung* is Mau's word), the fact still remains that Iamblichus knew and used the *Chaldaean Oracles*, which we can regard in general as Julian's ultimate literary source as we look at *Or.* 4, 156 B and *Or.* 5, 172 D.

At 172 D occurs the pregnant phrase τὸν ἑπτάκτινα θεόν. The epithet is found in the *Oracles* (fr. 194) and H. Lewy, who points this out, mentions the obscurity of the language adopted throughout this passage. If we think of Mithras (as does W. C. Wright, the editor) then epigraphical evidence for the use of ἑπτάκτις is lacking. But in Mithraic iconography it is *Sol* who is regularly shown with *seven* rays. Mithras can be portrayed with four, or with five. So, when H. Lewy challenges the view of F. Cumont and A. Dieterich (with whom, as we see, W. C. Wright agrees) that the passage refers to the mysteries of Mithras, the use of ἑπτάκτις neither proves nor refutes a theory on which the last word has not been said. Pertinent to further inquiry is the possibility of Mithraic influence on the *Oracles* and in that way on Iamblichus. Whatever the outcome of this, we know straight from the mouth of the pagan emperor, that he possesses the closely guarded personal tokens of admission into the solar cult [1].

Diocletian, during whose reign Iamblichus spent 21 years of his career, and whose statesmanship Julian obviously appreciated (*Or.* 1, 7 B) was as deeply devoted to Mithras (*fautori imperii sui*) as was his eventual successor. The Christian martyrologists who soon afterwards dealt with him painted a very black picture of his behaviour as the Church's arch persecutor in 303 [2]. But if in his case (to quote N. H. Baynes) "states-

[1] For ἑπτάκτις see LEWY, pp. 186, 199, 150. The πίστεις are mentioned at the commencement of the *Hymn to the Sun.*

[2] As they also did of the Decian persecution: *CAH*, p. 202 : "The *acta* . . . do not afford, in general, trustworthy evidence" (these strike me as the important words in A. ALFÖLDI's remarks).

manship had over-ruled fanaticism" [1], then intellectuals such as the Neoplatonic diadoch under Diocletian as their Mithraic emperor enjoyed a religious freedom which within a century was to be swept wholly away. Possibly Galerius (again in the words of N. H. Baynes) brought anti-Christian pressure to bear and "at last, supported by Neoplatonist philosophers and by the oracle of Apollo, carried the day". To think of Iamblichus lending his name to a persecution of the ἄθεοι must appear to some of us rather far-fetched. On the other hand, we need not doubt that he would have listened as readily as did Galerius and afterwards Julian to the voice of the Delphic priestess, main source of pagan superstition.

It was an age of superstition and of substituting fairy tales for facts. In proof of this we need but open the *Lives of the Sophists* by Eunapius, who deals garrulously enough with the Neoplatonists of our period. But the Christian martyrologists like Eusebius are themselves surely not guiltless of the same gullibility. We might well speculate as to how many of the deaths which Diocletian is said to have caused to holy Christians would have been admitted as verifiable by Iamblichus, who was certainly alive in 303, when we learn the persecution was at its height, or by Julian, who was assuredly well informed on recent events. George of Cappadocia, according to Christian legend, was (like other saints of his day) a brave soldier who for religious reasons was killed by Diocletian, and afterwards worked miracles. And yet F. Cumont has conclusively shown that the stories about St. George and the Dragon are inspired by the myth of Mithras and the Bull. We are justified in considering that such hagiography is a Christian follow-up of pagan theurgy [2].

[1] *CAH*, p. 669.

[2] F. Cumont's penetrating criticism of the legend of St. George can be studied in *JRS* 27 (1937), 70 ff.

Enough has now been said, perhaps, to reveal the importance of further pursuit of various avenues which have revealed themselves during my all too brief discussion [1]. The main drawback to my accepting Iamblichus as an outstanding thinker is his nearness to his school's founder. In the continuous writings which have come down to us from his hand (and among these, as you will have observed, I include *De mysteriis*) [2] I do not find the subtlety of thinking, the powerful inspiration, and the crispness of style which characterize the *Enneads*. A. D. Nock was prepared to grant to Iamblichus 'sustained power of thought' but this verdict seems to me rather too favourable. After all, we have no work belonging to Iamblichus which is equal in bulk to the *Enneads*.

Julian's heritage from Iamblichus cannot be precisely defined. One of the stumbling blocks is that we are looking at a commentator, or copyist, of writings which are themselves commentaries : of the *First Alcibiades*, and of the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Again, the emperor is not setting out to build his own original system [3]. Instead, he acknowledges his readiness to borrow. His concern is much more with polytheistic reli-

[1] A detailed investigation might well be attempted of the dogmatic statements in Christian theology in their relation to the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus. To give but two examples from the 'Liturgy of St. Chrysostom', the γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα of the Creed conforms to Iamblichean doctrine (Julian, in *Or.* 4, 146) where 'Iamblichus, the glorious hero, thought even the bare assumption dangerous of a temporal creation of the world' (χρονικὴ ποίησις as distinct from γεννητὸς κόσμος) ; and the terms used in the hymn at the moment of Communion have a similar Neoplatonic ring : τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, Πνεῦμα ἐπουράνιον, ἀδιαίρετον Τριάδα. Attention should at the same time be given to the more remote origins: Synesius could identify the Christian Trinity with the Chaldaean : LEWY, p. 193 n. 144.

[2] After what has been said by Ed. des PLACES in his edition, and by DODDS (p. xix, n. 1), the case for authenticity hardly needs arguing. A stylistic device, the use of δὴ οὖν as an illative particle (found elsewhere, as in Plato's *Symposium*) is frequent in *Myst.* — I have counted nearly 40 examples. One almost similar example appears in *Protr.* 16, p. 83, 20 Pistelli : νῦν δὴ οὖν.

[3] Notice how pragmatical is his approach to knowledge : αὐτῇ πείρᾳ τοῦτο ἐκμαθὼν οἶδα (*Or.* 2, 56 B).

gion [1] and with the ritual act than with abstract metaphysical speculation. According to J. Bidez, Iamblichus was 'a director of conscience'. The last pagan emperor, like Marcus Aurelius, was a man who handled a book in his spare time, but more often than not a sword. We have hints enough in the *Letters* that philosophizing was not as easy in camp as it would have been in the study [2].

Julian distinctly tells us that Iamblichus through his writings 'initiated' (ἐμύησεν) him into philosophical truth. Here, of course, the language is figurative and there is no suggestion of an initiation ceremony undergone by the master himself. Whether this ever happened is an absorbing question; but there is apparently no way of answering it.

Julian's rearguard fight against Christianity was stubborn [3], and this may have been inspired by a similar (but less overt) invective by Iamblichus, as Porphyry's successor. But some scholars who have considered the problem have drawn positive conclusions on insufficient evidence. Here, therefore, is a field for plenty of research, especially on the part of those with expert knowledge of Iamblichus.

[1] Libanius mentions his compilations βιβλίων βοηθούντων θεοῖς. Julian was in general a believer in omens: *Or.* 4, 131 A; *Ad Ath.* 11, 284 C. He could even write approvingly of Abraham's use of augury from birds (*Adv. Gal.* 356 C), and condemn the Cynic Oenomaus (*Or.* 7, 209 B) for attacking oracles and so brutalizing mankind and doing away with all that was lovely, fair and of good report. The opposite attitude, however, is evident when he writes to Sallust (*Or.* 8, 252 B) that the Greeks forbid the acceptance of irrational marvels (this from one who accepted Iamblichean theurgy!).

[2] We may also remark his modest under-rating of his philosophical achievements under Maximus of Ephesus (*Or.* 7, 235): σμικρά, διὰ τὰς ἔξωθεν ἡμῖν προσπεσούσας ἀσχολίας.

[3] For him the Cynics and pseudo-Cynics were pretty certainly identified with Christians or lumped together with them.

Titles:

ASMUS	=	R. ASMUS, *Der Alkibiades-Kommentar des Jamblichos als Hauptquelle für Kaiser Julian* (Heidelberg 1917).
BROWN	=	P. BROWN, *The World of Late Antiquity*... (London 1971).
CAH	=	*The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. XII (Cambridge 1956).
CIMRM	=	*Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* (The Hague 1956).
DILLON	=	*Iamblichi Chalcidensis In Platonis dialogos commentariorum fragmenta*, ed. by J. M. DILLON (Leiden 1973).
DODDS	=	Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, ed. by E. R. DODDS (Oxford 1963 [2]).
LARSEN	=	B. DALSGAARD LARSEN, *Jamblique de Chalcis, exégète et philosophe* (Aarhus 1972).
* LEADBEATER	=	L. W. LEADBEATER, Aspects of the Philosophical Priesthood in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*, in *Classical Bulletin* 47 (1971), 89-92.
LEWY	=	H. LEWY, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo 1956).
MAU	=	G. MAU, *Die Religionsphilosophie Kaiser Julians*... (Leipzig 1908).
NAVILLE	=	H. A. NAVILLE, *Julien l'Apostat et sa philosophie du polythéisme* (Neuchâtel 1877).
NOCK	=	Sallustius, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe*, ed. by A. D. NOCK (Cambridge 1926).
WITT	=	R. E. WITT, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (London 1971).
WRIGHT	=	*The Works of the Emperor Julian*, with an English translation by W. C. WRIGHT, in three volumes, The Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1962 and 1969).

* Wrongly ascribed in *L'Année Philologique* of J. Marouzeau to the author of the subsequent article, R. M. Krill.

DISCUSSION

M. Whittaker: I should like to put to you a question which I might equally well have directed to M. Dalsgaard Larsen. In your contribution you have emphasized the religious aspect of Iamblichus' personality rather than the extent of his debt to the Neoplatonism of Plotinus. Similarly M. Larsen has been at pains to point out the influences upon Iamblichus which do not derive from Plotinus—the influence of the Aristotelian tradition, of Middle Platonism, of the milieu of the *Chaldaean Oracles* and the Hermetic writings. The question I should like to ask is whether the career of Iamblichus is not explicable simply as a phenomenon of the third and fourth centuries without Plotinus as a necessary presupposition?

M. Witt: The question is interesting, but of course purely hypothetical: What would the work of such men as Iamblichus and Julian have been like, without Plotinus or for that matter without such Middle Platonists as Albinus? I cannot myself imagine Iamblichus without Plotinus (and Porphyry) or Julian without Iamblichus.

M. Dalsgaard Larsen: Jamblique est impensable sans Porphyre, élève de Plotin. Vous n'en avez pas moins raison d'affirmer que Jamblique et le néoplatonisme après lui ne sauraient être compris sans le contexte du platonisme moyen et du néopythagorisme, pour ne pas parler de l'hermétisme.

M. Witt: We are here thinking of Iamblichus rather in relation to his own predecessors than as a forerunner of Julian. In an age of increasing syncretism it becomes even harder clearly to unravel each strand from which the total composition is made up.

M. Whittaker: I have raised the question of the role of Plotinus because I believe that his historical importance may have been

exaggerated. Conceivably his influence was greater during the Renaissance than it was in the third and following centuries. As long as one regards Neoplatonism as a movement issuing from Plotinus all is straightforward, but if one treats Plotinus not only as one influence among many but also as a child of his age, then the matter becomes more complicated. There has been much discussion as to whether *Gnosis* can be defined doctrinally or whether one must be content to regard it simply as a historical phenomenon belonging primarily to the early centuries of our era. If the role of Plotinus was not as great as has been supposed, then perhaps we should be satisfied to regard Neoplatonism simply as a mode of philosophizing characteristic of the third and following centuries of our era.

M. Witt: My acquaintance with the influence of Plotinus upon the Renaissance is slight. The question raised is indeed complicated. The salient fact is that the system which Plotinus is acknowledged to have founded did not die, but endured, and for a long time.

M. Beierwaltes: Plotin wird durch Kontakt mit der Magie noch nicht selbst zum Magier (Porph. *Vita Plot.* 10, 14 ff.). Für sein gesamtes Denken gilt der Satz — als Kontrast zu späteren Praktiken —: ἡ θεωρία ἀγοήτευτος ... ὅτι μηδεὶς πρὸς αὐτὸν γεγοήτευται (IV 4, 44, 1). θεωρία ist ebensowenig durch Magie affizierbar, wie die ἕνωσις durch « Liturgie » erzwingbar ist (ich akzeptiere E. R. Dodds' Interpretation dieses Problems, nicht aber Ph. Merlans Versuch, einen schizoiden Plotin "à la Strindberg" zu konstruieren). Diese Überzeugung und Haltung Plotins kann Jamblich nicht als entwicklungsfähiges Feld betrachten, d.h. Theurgie hat bei ihm keine unmittelbar philosophischen (= plotinischen) Wurzeln. Woraus ist sie sachlich motiviert?

M. Witt: I agree with the view of E. R. Dodds, against Ph. Merlan, that theurgic ritual, so important for Iamblichus, was quite foreign to the Plotinian doctrine of θεωρία. Iamblichus, born in

Syria, may well have learnt there about theurgy and indeed about the *Chaldaean Oracles*.

M. Rist: One of the problems arising out of the relationship between Iamblichus and Julian concerns the difficulty of identifying the person who first took the decisive step of regarding popular religion as potentially the Neoplatonism of the masses. Was it Julian's own idea? I am inclined to think we should look at Porphyry here, particularly if we accept T. D. Barnes' dating of the Κατὰ χριστιανῶν (*JThS* 1973) to some time after A.D. 300, that is, to a time when the Great Persecution was at its height. Should we therefore look at Porphyry's more sympathetic attitude to popular cult (it is no good here adapting the high-minded Plotinian attitude of "Let them come to me"); or should we perhaps assume that *Julian* looked to Porphyry (rather than to Iamblichus) and made the relevant deductions about the "philosophical" as well as the socially cohesive material in popular religion? After all, the Christians regarded Porphyry, not Iamblichus, as their major enemy. Is it possible that Julian might similarly have regarded Porphyry as at least a major inspiration, perhaps even for harnessing popular religion in the service of both Neoplatonism and of the State.

M. Witt: The Christians did indeed regard Porphyry as their great enemy and on the evidence which has come down to us were not interested in Iamblichus, apparently never naming him. As to Julian, the *Hymn to Helios* (the Hellenic counterpart to the revealed religion of Christianity) is clearly written under the direct inspiration of Iamblichus (150 D: παρ' οὗ καὶ τἆλλα πάντα ἐκ πολλῶν μικρὰ ἐλάβομεν).