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# Iamblichus and Julian's "Third Demiurge": A Proposition\*

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**ABSTRACT.** In the Emperor Julian's Oration *To the Mother of the Gods*, a philosophical interpretation of the myth of Cybele and Attis, reference is made to an enigmatic "third Demiurge". Contrary to a common opinion identifying him to the visible Helios (the Sun), or to tempting identifications to Amelius' and Theodorus of Asine's three Demiurges, I suggest that a better idea would be to compare Julian's text to Proclus' system of Demiurges (as exposed and explained in a Jan Opsomer article, "La démiurgie des jeunes dieux selon Proclus", *Les Etudes Classiques*, 71, 2003, pp. 5-49). In this system, liable to be inherited from another source, three demiurgic entities are forced into hierarchy: Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis. The close parallels between Julian, Proclus and some texts by Damascius suggest that the Apostate had a construction of this sort in mind while writing his work: attempts are then made at describing the philosophical patterns shared by the two authors, as well as the archetypal Iamblichean system of Demiurges and some of the concepts that rule it: in particular, the need to distinguish hypostases so that the highest classes of gods may not receive alteration from contact with matter is emphasized, as is its corollary: the introduction into Neoplatonic philosophy of gods closely associated with generation. It is suggested that the Iamblichean concepts of Limit and the Unlimited, as well as the strive towards the distinction of several levels of Forms (among which the "enmattered Forms" or *ἐνυλα εἶδη*), form the philosophical background to Julian's *Oration*.

While the lack of numerous Iamblichean sources must lead us to circumspection when it comes to drawing clear and irrefutable conclusions, there is hope that this study may help understand some aspects of the revolution which Iamblichus must be held accountable for, in the field of Neoplatonic theology.

Keywords: iamblichus – julian the apostate – mother of gods – demiurge – theology – neoplatonism

## One Demiurge, Many Demiurges

In a chapter of the great book he devoted to the work of Julian the Apostate, Jean Bouffartigue enumerates some of the Emperor's philosophical doctrines that he thinks can be traced back to Iamblichean influence<sup>1</sup>. One of those is the notion of a "third Demiurge", appearing three times in the Oration *To the Mother of the Gods* (Oration VIII in the *Belles Lettres* edition began by Joseph Bidez, Oration V in Wilmer Cave Wright's translation in the Loeb collection). This enigmatic deity is intimately tied with Attis, the main protagonist of Julian's *Oration*. The following texts contain all the references that are made to it:

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\* I wish to thank Prof. Constantinos Macris for allowing me to take part in his place to the colloquium – without his kind proposal nothing would have been possible.

<sup>1</sup> J. Bouffartigue (1992) 356-7.

Text n° 1: τοῦ τρίτου δημιουργοῦ, ὃς τῶν ἐνύλων εἰδῶν τοὺς λόγους ἐξηρημένους ἔχει καὶ συνεχεῖς τὰς αἰτίας, ἢ τελευταία καὶ μέχρι γῆς ὑπὸ περιουσίας τοῦ γονίμου διὰ τῶν ἄνωθεν παρὰ τῶν ἄστρον καθήκουσα, "φύσις" ὁ ζητούμενός ἐστιν Ἄττις.

The nature of *the third creator, who contains in himself the separate concepts of the forms that are embodied in matter and also the connected chain of causes*, I mean that nature which is last in order, and through its superabundance of generative power descends even unto our earth through the upper region from the stars – this is he whom we seek, even Attis<sup>2</sup>.

Text n° 2: Οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ δέδοται τις καὶ τῶν ἐνύλων εἰδῶν αἰτία προηγουμένη παντελῶς ἄυλος ὑπὸ τὸν τρίτον δημιουργόν, ὃς ἡμῖν οὐ τούτων μόνον ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ φαινομένου καὶ πέμπτου σώματος πατήρ καὶ δεσπότης, ἀποδιελόντες ἐκείνου τὸν Ἄττιν, τὴν ἄχρι τῆς ὕλης καταβαίνουσαν αἰτίαν, καὶ θεὸν γόνιμον Ἄττιν εἶναι καὶ Γάλλον πεπιστεύκαμεν [...]

Accordingly, since for the forms embodied in matter a wholly immaterial cause has been assigned, which leads these forms under the hand of *the third creator – who for us is the lord and father not only of these forms but also of the visible fifth substance – from that creator* we distinguish Attis, the cause which descends even unto matter, and we believe Attis or Gallus is a god of generative powers<sup>3</sup>.

Text n° 3: Οὐκ ἄτοπον οὖν καὶ τὸν Ἄττιν τοῦτον ἡμίθεόν τινα εἶναι, βούλεται γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὁ μῦθος τοῦτο, μᾶλλον δὲ θεὸν μὲν τῷ παντί· πρόεισί τε γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ τρίτου δημιουργοῦ καὶ ἐπισυνάγεται<sup>4</sup> πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν Μητέρα τῶν θεῶν μετὰ τὴν ἐκτομήν· ἐπεὶ δὲ ὄλως ῥέπειν καὶ νεύειν εἰς τὴν ὕλην δοκεῖ, θεῶν μὲν ἔσχατον, ἔξαρχον δὲ τῶν θείων γενῶν ἀπάντων οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτοι τις αὐτὸν ὑπολαβόν.

Therefore it is not contradictory to suppose that our Attis also is a sort of demigod – for that is actually the meaning of the myth – or rather for the universe he is wholly god, for *he proceeds from the third creator*, and after his castration is collected again and reunited to the Mother of the Gods. But though he seems to lean and incline

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<sup>2</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 161d-162a. English translations of Julian's *To the Mother of the Gods* are taken from Wilmer Cave Wright's edition in the Loeb collection (as are those of *To King Helios*). The text is that of the Belles Lettres edition by G. Rochefort (Paris, 1963) and does not differ substantially from Wright's for the passages I quote.

<sup>3</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 165a-b.

<sup>4</sup> Wright has ἐπισυνάγεται here: therefore I had to modify her translation ("is led upwards again to the Mother of the Gods").

towards matter, one would not be mistaken in supposing that, though he is the lowest in order of the gods, nevertheless he is the leader of all the tribes of divine beings<sup>5</sup>.

Some context is provided so as to make the general meaning clearer. The myth of Attis, as exposed and interpreted by Julian, introduces this god as a young boy, playing innocently on the banks of the river Gallos, under vigilant protection of the Mother of the Gods. Eventually, however, he leaves the Mother in order to rejoin the Nymph, whom Julian defines as the cause presiding over matter. It is then made clear that the myth is an allegory of a demiurgic power endangering itself while getting closer of the matter it must inform.

Three points seem of interest in the depiction of the third Demiurge: 1) Attis depends on him, “proceeds” from him (πρόεισι, T3) and he is his “subordinate” (ὑπὸ τὸν τρίτον δημιουργόν, T1); 2) he possesses dominion over enmattered Forms (T1, T2); 3) he possesses dominion over the “visible fifth body” (T2). This last point would require a detailed analysis that would extend beyond the scope of the present paper, and this is why I shall not deal with it within these pages.

How is the presence of this odd entity in Julian’s *Oration* to be accounted for? that it was created out of nothing by the Emperor must certainly be ruled out: why would he have, then, spoken about a third Demiurge, without explaining who were the first and second? it remains, then, that the justification of this entity’s presence lies in a philosophical teaching.

While trying to discover the meaning of the notion, Bouffartigue<sup>6</sup> mentions the doctrine of Amelius and Theodorus of Asine; but, as he himself points out, these authors maintain that there are three Demiurges<sup>7</sup> (He who Is, He who Has, He who Sees for Amelius; the Essential

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<sup>5</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 168a.

<sup>6</sup> J. Bouffartigue (1992) 357.

<sup>7</sup> Amelius: Proclus, *In Timaeum* I, 306.1-3 (all references given in Diehl’s edition); Theodorus: *In Tim.* I, 309.14-20.

Intellect, the Intellective Substance and the Source of Souls for Theodorus). Their position was fought and refuted in chap. 14, Book V of Proclus' *Platonic Theology*: there aren't three Demiurges in the *Timaeus*, only one.

Iamblichus, on the contrary, taught the unicity of the Demiurge, whom he allotted "the third place among the Fathers in the Intellective Hebdomad"<sup>8</sup>. We know, from at least three different references, that the Demiurge was for him Zeus<sup>9</sup>. It is actually no wonder at all: if one is right to accept the Iamblichean authenticity of Proclus' extract attributing to Iamblichus the intellectual Hebdomad (the belief in which Proclus actually expressed throughout his whole work, see in particular *Platonic Theology* Book V), then it becomes highly probable that the names of the members of this Hebdomad (Zeus being the third god of the first intellectual Triad, Kronos – Rhea – Zeus, as explained in length in this same text) were inherited from Iamblichus by Proclus as well<sup>10</sup>.

Iamblichus' tenets on the one part, Amelius' and Theodorus' on the other, are clearly irreconcilable: for Proclus says: "after Iamblichus, Theodorus, following Amelius, says that there are three Demiurges"<sup>11</sup>. Iamblichus' position on the subject of the Demiurge is fundamentally a monistic one. And nothing, except a biased reading of the Greek text, enables us to say that Iamblichus' Demiurge, who has received *third* place among the intellectual Fathers, could be identical with Julian's "third Demiurge" (as if the phrase meant "the Demiurge, which is the third", which it does not). Bouffartigue's own conclusion, suggesting that the "third Demiurge" could be the result of a syncretistic Iamblichean-Theodorean

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<sup>8</sup> Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 308.22-3.

<sup>9</sup> Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 308.19-20 (a quotation of the title *On the Speech of Zeus in the Timaeus* – which obviously refers to the speech of the Demiurge); Olympiodorus, *In Alcibiadem* 2.1-5 Westerink (confirming the title); Fr. 3 *In Phaedrum* Dillon (= Hermias, *In Phaedr.* 136.17-9 Couvreur) and, indirectly, the Fr. 1 *In Sophistam* in which the "Jovian" Socrates is compared to the "demiurgic thoughts" (which are therefore probably the thoughts of Zeus).

<sup>10</sup> @@@ On this question, I cannot but refer the reader to my article "La 'triade paternelle' et la théologie de Proclus", which is due to appear in the proceedings of the colloquium "Damascius et le parcours syrien du néoplatonisme", held at the Institut Français du Proche-Orient in last October.

<sup>11</sup> Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 309.14-5: μετὰ τοῦτον τρεῖς μὲν Ἀμελίῳ συνεπόμενος εἶναι φησι δημιουργούς.

teaching improvised by Julian's professors (most notably Maximus of Ephesus), is tempting but, in my opinion, ultimately untrue.

Indeed, the characterization of Iamblichus' thought of the Demiurge as pure monism is itself not true, as we will see. As for Julian, his position on the matter is best summed up by two sentences of his theological *Orations*: "Again, to take another point of view, the creator of the whole is one, but many are the creative gods"<sup>12</sup>; and "now there are many substances and very many creative gods [...]"<sup>13</sup>. Julian, then, maintains simultaneously the unicity of the Demiurge (which is Iamblichean dogma), that is king Helios, and a plurality of Demiurges.

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<sup>12</sup> *King Helios*, 140a: εἷς μὲν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός, πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ κατ' οὐρανὸν περιπολοῦντες δημιουργικοὶ θεοί. The very same idea is expressed by Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 12.6-7: εἷς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός· κατενεύμαντο δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ὅλην δημιουργίαν μερικότεροι δυνάμεις (while rejecting Amelius' and Theodorus' views) and therefore constitutes a strong link between Julian / Iamblichus and Proclus. Julian's sole Demiurge here is obviously a central figure in his system and cannot but be the "first" Demiurge: there is an apparent contradiction between Julian's two statements, that, on the one part, the Demiurge is "one", and, on the other, that there exists some entity such as a "third Demiurge" (and therefore a first and a second). Therefore, we cannot easily use these texts and explain one by the other, as does A. Penati (1983) 552.

Julian's words deserve careful attention: Πάλιν δὲ κατ' ἄλλο σκοποῦντι εἷς μὲν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός, πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ κατ' οὐρανὸν περιπολοῦντες δημιουργικοὶ θεοί. Μέσην ἄρα καὶ τούτων τὴν ἄφ' Ἡλίου καθήκουσαν εἰς τὸν κόσμον δημιουργίαν θετέον. W. Cave Wright translates: "Again, to take another point of view, the creator of the whole is one, but many are the creative gods who revolve in the heavens. Midmost therefore of these also we must place the creative activity which descends into the world from Helios". From this we may understand that Helios serves as intermediary between an absolute Demiurge and all the partial Demiurges in the world: since, from 138c on, Julian has consistently explained Helios' median character (μεσότης) by referring to his three-layered conception of reality (the "intelligible" world, dominated by the One-Good; the "visible" world, ruled by the visible Sun; and, as intermediary, the "intellectual" world of which Helios is the centre), Penati's interpretation – identifying here ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός to *il Principio ineffabile* (on the first level), and seeing in the intellectual Helios and the visible Sun respectively the second and third Demiurges – is clearly possible. However, it does not seem wholly impossible to think that Julian is here reasoning analogically and intends to show the necessity of means *in general*: the means would then be, in strict accordance with Julian's text, Helios' *creative activity* (τὴν ἄφ' Ἡλίου καθήκουσαν εἰς τὸν κόσμον δημιουργίαν) and not Helios himself: and then, it is no more impossible to identify Helios and ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός. What incites us to promote such an interpretation is the fact that the assimilation of the First Cause to the Demiurge – even a *primo Demiurgo* – is unheard of in mainstream Neoplatonism (specifically in Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, the sole authors whose influence Julian may have been profoundly subject to), this passage being the only one in Julian which may be taken as a reference; whereas the demiurgic attributions of Helios (who rules amongst the "intellectual and demiurgic causes", νοεραὶ καὶ δημιουργικαὶ αἰτίαι, 133a) are frequently referred to by Julian (see also 141c). Let us also point out that Penati's interpretation blurs the boundaries between the intellectual Helios and the visible Sun: this fact, acknowledged on p. 552 (*rimane tuttavia difficile comprendere se si tratti di Helios invisibile o del pianeta solare, sua epifania*), leads her to identify Julian's Helios in 140a with the visible Sun (*il Demiurgo del mondo sensibile è il Sole visibile o, più precisamente, la demiurgia che da lui discende*, p. 553) – although this Helios, as a mediator, cannot be but the intellectual or second Helios, from which the demiurgy "descends into the world" (as a matter of fact, the demiurgy could not *descend* if it did not proceed from an entity superior to the world, and the visible Sun obviously does not meet this requirement: it is even doubtful that a celestial object could possess a demiurgic function at all, and, at any rate, Julian merely ascribes to it a soteriological role: *King Helios*, 133c5-6: ἐναργῶς αἰτιός τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τῆς σωτηρίας).

<sup>13</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 161d: Οὐσῶν δὴ πολλῶν οὐσιῶν καὶ πολλῶν πάνυ δημιουργῶν.

His position, then, is to be described as a system of Demiurgic uni-plurality. As we will see, it is both Proclus' position and Iamblichus'.

## Julian, Iamblichus and Proclus: Comparison

Following a principle set out by Bouffartigue<sup>14</sup>, we may consider substantially Iamblichean any passage of Julian's *Orationes* that bears parallels with Proclean texts. In effect, Julian himself did not influence the Athenian school, nor did his teachers of the school of Pergamum: whereas it is known for certain that both Julian and Proclus were enormously influenced by the writings of Iamblichus. Neither Julian's own masters of the School of Pergamum, who have left almost no trace in Athenian Neoplatonism, nor other representatives of the first post-Plotinian generations (Amelius, Porphyry, Theodorus of Asine), who are for the most part ignored or despised by Julian seem to be likely candidates for influencing both authors.

With this principle in mind, the publication of a brilliant article by Jan Opsomer<sup>15</sup> helps us greatly to understand the characteristics and tenets of the Diadochus' theological system. Proclus believes in the existence of an "universal Demiurge" (ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός, the very same expression employed by Julian<sup>16</sup>), and in a multiplicity of partial Demiurges who split his demiurgic powers and attributions. The universal Demiurge (that is Zeus, third intellectual God) is then most often characterized as a demiurgic Monad.

According to Opsomer, at least three presentations of the system of Demiurges coexist in Proclus' work: one two-termed (the Demiurge as opposed to the "young gods" of the

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<sup>14</sup> J. Bouffartigue (1992) 355.

<sup>15</sup> J. Opsomer (2003).

<sup>16</sup> See *supra*, n. 12. It is also to be found after the quotation of Iamblichus' work *On the Speech of Zeus in the Timaeus*, *In Tim.* I, 309.8, and in Fr. 3 *In Phaedr.*, although we cannot know for sure if the phrase was used in the original Iamblichean text. In an extract of Johannes Lydus' *De Mensibus*, the god of the Old Testament is first identified by Porphyry to the lone Demiurge of the Universe (ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός), before being assimilated to the Demiurge of the sensible world (δημιουργός τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ κόσμου) by Iamblichus, Syrianus and Proclus (*De Mensibus* IV, 53.31-8 (p. 110.18-25 Wuensch)). See also *De Myst.* I, 21.12-3: τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων.

*Timaeus*)<sup>17</sup>, one four-termed (creating, respectively, “the whole (of the World) wholly”, “the parts wholly”, “the whole partially” and “the parts partially”), and one three-termed<sup>18</sup>, that we will use as a piece of comparison. These are the gods Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis. Our hypothesis is simple: this is the fundamentally Iamblichean hierarchy that Julian bases himself upon in his theological *Orations*.

### *Zeus*

The first god, then: Zeus<sup>19</sup>. The teaching about him is summed up in the *Platonic Theology*, Book V<sup>20</sup>. He is the demiurgic Monad, originator of the demiurgic series (σειρά), the lone Demiurge of the *Timaeus*.

Julian similarly tells us about the “great Demiurge”<sup>21</sup>, the “universal God”<sup>22</sup>, the “Demiurge of all things”<sup>23</sup>, the “universal Demiurge”<sup>24</sup>, and cites the *Timaeus* on this occasion (the

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<sup>17</sup> Julian knew this opposition, which he mentioned in the *Contra Galilaeos*: see J. F. Finamore (1988).

<sup>18</sup> It appears in at least five texts: *In Rempublicam* II, 8.15-23; *In Tim.* I, 29.6-11; 30.25-30; 446.1-8 and a scholion to *Marcianus gr.* 195 reproduced by Diehl on p. 460 of his edition. The two most detailed references are the following (translations are my own, for the most part adapted from Festugière’s French translation (1966-1968)): Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 446.1-8: “Of the Demiurgies, the first is total, one and indivisible; the second is divisible, pluralized and proceeds by fragmentation; the third is not only divisible, as is the one before it, but it is also in contact with things that come to be and the Forms contained in them. And in his work [Plato’s] you may also find the Monads of these three Demiurgies, that of Zeus, that of Dionysus, that of Adonis, according to which he also distinguished between the three Constitutions, as we have said elsewhere [*sc.* in the following text]” (τῆς γὰρ δημιουργίας ἡ μὲν ἐστὶν ὅλη καὶ μία καὶ ἀμέριστος, ἡ δὲ μερικὴ καὶ πεπληθυσμένη καὶ προϊούσα κατὰ μερισμόν, ἡ δὲ οὐ μόνον οὕσα μεριστή, καθάπερ ἢ πρὸ αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν γενητῶν ἐφαπτομένη καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις εἰδῶν. Καὶ ἔχει τῶν τριῶν τούτων δημιουργιῶν καὶ παρ’ αὐτῶ τὰς μονάδας, τὴν Δίον, τὴν Διονυσιακὴν, τὴν Ἀδωναικὴν, αἷς καὶ τὰς τρεῖς πολιτείας συνδιείλεν, ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις εἶπομεν); Proclus, *In Remp.* II, 8.15-21 Kroll: “Since the three constitutions bear a relation to the three Demiurgies, that of Zeus, that of Dionysus, that of Adonis (for every statesman wants to copy some Demiurge, the one promoting the community of all things, the Demiurge who makes the Whole, the one dividing and distributing, the Demiurge who separates parts and wholes, the one who straightens that which is twisted, the Demiurge who renews the things that come to be and come to pass) [...]” (τῶν τριῶν πολιτειῶν εἰς τὰς τρεῖς δημιουργίας ἀναφερομένων, εἰς τὴν Δίον, εἰς τὴν Διονυσιακὴν, εἰς τὴν Ἀδωναικὴν (πᾶς γὰρ πολιτικὸς ἀπεικονίζεσθαι βούλεται τινὰ δημιουργόν, ὁ μὲν πάντα κοινὰ ποιῶν τὸν τὰ ὅλα ποιῶντα, ὁ δὲ νέμων καὶ διαιρῶν τὸν διελόντα ἀπὸ τῶν ὅλων τὰ μέρη, ὁ δὲ ἐπανορθῶν τὸ διάστροφον εἶδος τὸν τὰ γιγνώμενα καὶ φθειρόμενα ἀνυφαίνοντα) [...]).

<sup>19</sup> J. Opsomer (2003) 11-3, rightly calling him “la monade de la démiurgie universelle”; see also C. Van Liefferinge (2003).

<sup>20</sup> See, in particular, 41.21-2 (references given in Saffrey and Westerink’s *Belles Lettres* edition): καὶ τοῦτον (ὁ τρίτος πατήρ, ἰ. e. Zeus, third intellectual God) εἶναι τὸν ὅλων δημιουργόν; 43.18 sqq. (the Demiurge is neither an intelligible nor an hypercosmic deity and is rather an intellectual God). He is unique: see *In Tim.* I, 12.6: εἷς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός.

<sup>21</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 69d: μέγας δημιουργός.

<sup>22</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 148c: ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεός.

<sup>23</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 148c: ὁ πάντων δημιουργός.



speech of the Demiurge, from 41a7 onwards). Following Iamblichus (and opposing Porphyry<sup>25</sup>), he does not assign to the Christian God more than a small part: he is a “partial” God<sup>26</sup>, the “immediate creator of this Universe”<sup>27</sup>, a mention explained some time later: “it follows that, according to Moses [i. e. the most important Christian “theologian”, according to Julian], God is the creator of nothing that is incorporeal, but is only the disposer of matter that already existed”<sup>28</sup>. In *Against the Galilaeans*, then, it is Zeus who receives the title of Demiurge: he is “our lord and father Zeus”<sup>29</sup>.

The fact that the central figure, endowed with demiurgic attributions, is in the *Oration To King Helios* not Zeus but Helios does not speak, I think, against our hypothesis. In this *Oration*, indeed, Zeus and Helios are perfectly inseparable. In a great thrust of syncretism, an equivalence is made between “Zeus, Hades, Helios, Sarapis”<sup>30</sup>. The identity of the two gods is hinted at in several other works authored by the Emperor. In *Against the Galilaeans*, Zeus and Helios jointly give birth to Asclepius<sup>31</sup>; in *To the Mother of the Gods*, Cybele’s consort and co-ruler is at times Zeus<sup>32</sup>, at times Helios<sup>33</sup>; and in *Against Heracleios*, when asked by Julian about the way leading to him, Zeus simply designates Helios<sup>34</sup>. Even in a political *encomium* such as is the second *Panegyric of Constantius* (or *On Kingship*), Zeus appears as the Demiurge: “However it is not to bees that we must look for our analogy, but in my opinion to

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<sup>24</sup> *Against the Galilaeans* 58b: ὁ τῶν ὄλων δημιουργός.

<sup>25</sup> See *supra*, n. 16.

<sup>26</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 148c: μερικός.

<sup>27</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 96c: ὁ προσεχῆς τοῦ κόσμου τούτου δημιουργός.

<sup>28</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 49e.

<sup>29</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 198c: ἡμῶν δεσπότης καὶ πατὴρ Ζεὺς.

<sup>30</sup> *King Helios*, 136a: “Let us then assume that, among the intellectual gods, Helios and Zeus have a joint or rather a single sovereignty”. See also 143d7: “creative virtue of Zeus”; 153d7: Zeus is ὁ πάντων πατήρ. In 149c7, there is little Julian could do to make himself clearer: ὑπὸ Διὸς δῆπουθεν, ὅσπερ ἐστὶν ὁ αὐτὸς Ἥλιος; similarly, in 149b6: οὐδὲν διαφέρειν Ἥλιου Δία νομίζοντες. See J. Bouffartigue (1992) 334, well summing up Julian’s position: “par rapport à Hélios, les autres dieux sont mi-parèdres, mi-puissances hypostasiées, et leur relation avec lui est saisie tantôt comme dépendance, tantôt comme identité. Ainsi, Hélios et Zeus sont d’abord présentés comme associés, puis Julien rappelle le vers qui les désigne comme une seule et même personne”; J. F. Finamore (1985) 137; P. Athanassiadi (1977) 368 n. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Against the Galilaeans*, 200a.

<sup>32</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 166a3; b1; 170d3-4; 179d5-6.

<sup>33</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 167b4.

<sup>34</sup> *Against Heracleios*, 231b5: ὁ δὲ [Zeus] αὐτῷ [Julian] δείκνυσιν αὐτὸν τὸν Ἥλιον.

the king of the Gods himself [*sc.* Zeus], whose prophet and vice-regent the genuine ruler ought to be. For wherever good exists wholly untainted by its opposite, and for the benefit of mankind in common and the whole universe, of this good God was and is the only creator (δημιουργός)<sup>35</sup>.

Julian, therefore, while identifying him to Helios, remains consistent with Iamblichus' views on the identity of Zeus and the Demiurge. This entity (Zeus-Helios) is, for him as for Proclus, the summit of the demiurgic chain, lone Demiurge preceding other demiurgic deities. Out of our present enquiry, but a very interesting subject indeed, is the question of the Iamblican basis of Julian's heliolatry: was a worship of the Sun central in Iamblichus' creed also?<sup>36</sup>

### *Dionysus*

Leaving this matter and Zeus aside, we will now turn to Dionysus. A thorough exposition of all parallels existing between Proclus and Julian would extend beyond the scope of this article. Let us simply show briefly that Julian's depiction of Dionysus as solely responsible for a "divided Demiurgy" (μερική δημιουργία)<sup>37</sup>, strictly parallels Proclus' doctrine of the

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<sup>35</sup> *Oration II*, 90a (transl. Wright).

<sup>36</sup> Let it suffice to remark two things on the subject of Julian's originality: a) pertaining to his life: Julian says he is "king Helios' adept" (130c1) and devotes some forty lines to explain his personal relationship with the god, dating back to his childhood – when he certainly wasn't Iamblichus' follower!; b) pertaining to his politics: Julian considers that the foundation of Rome is due to Helios' intervention (ἡμῖν δέ ἐστιν ἀρχηγός καὶ τῆς πόλεως, 153d5) and he carefully relates him to the City's foundation myths (the birth of Remus and Romulus, the latter's manifestation as Quirinus, the legislative work of Numa Pompilius; Julian also mentions the "official title" (κοινὸν ὄνομα, 153d9) under which Helios is known in Rome, i. e. *Sol invictus exsuperantissimus*. Some fifty more lines are devoted to this. At the crossroads of the personal and political dimensions lies also the question of Julian's Mithraism, another extra-Iamblican influence that may have led Julian to become a Sun-worshipper. What seems to me to be most important is the fact that the Sun, in Iamblichus' extant works or *testimonia*, is almost nowhere to be found (which is also the case in Proclus and Damascius, where Helios nowhere has near the central role he plays in Julian's *Orations*). Let us therefore warn our reader against an overly Iamblican reading of Julian, as appears in F. Cumont (1909) 31: "un penseur oriental, un Syrien comme Posidonius, Iamblique de Chalcis, accommoda à ces théories nouvelles le système de son compatriote et convertit encore le dernier empereur païen à son héliolâtrie transcendante".

<sup>37</sup> *King Helios* 144a: "But Apollo too in no case appears to separate the dividing creative function of Dionysus (τὴν Διονύσου μεριστὴν δημιουργίαν) from Helios"; 144c: "the dividing part of his [Apollo's] function which he shares with Dionysus who controls divided substance (μετὰ τοῦ τὴν μεριστὴν ἐπιτροπεύοντος οὐσίαν Διονύσου)"; *Mother of Gods*, 179b: "and I discern also the divided creative function of Dionysus (τὴν Διονύσου μεριστὴν δημιουργίαν), which great Dionysus received from the single and abiding principle of life that is in mighty Zeus" – a passage in which the demiurgic function of Dionysus is attributed to him alone, apart from any association with Zeus, Helios or Apollo; his subordination to Zeus is also asserted. See also Rochefort's good

God<sup>38</sup>, for example in the *Cratylus* commentary: “all particular creation depends on the Dionysiac monad” (§182, ll. 25-6: ἡ μεριστὴ δημιουργία πᾶσα τῆς Διονυσιακῆς ἐξήρτηται μονάδος).

There is even a striking parallel between Julian: “the essential nature of Dionysus, uniform and wholly indivisible as it is in the divisible world and preexisting whole and unmixed in all things”<sup>39</sup>, and the Iamblichean extract preserved in Psellus, entitled *On Ethical and Theological Arithmetic* (edited by Dominic O’Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, pp. 222-9), which describes “the earthly [aspect of the monad], *indivisible in the divided*, full in the lacking” (ll. 74-5: καὶ τὸ περίγειον [*sc.* τῆς μονάδος] ἀδιαίρετον ἐν τοῖς διηρημένοις, πλήρες ἐν τοῖς <ἐν>δεέσιν).

The “dismemberment” (σπαραγμός) of Dionysus, which is almost certainly the basis for the doctrine of the “divided demiurgy” is mentioned in *Against the Galilaeans*, 49a.

We therefore think that Julian’s second Demiurge, left unmentioned but necessarily preceding the third, must be Dionysus, who must have become known to Julian through the reading of Iamblichus or the Iamblichean teachings of his masters (i. e. Maximus of Ephesus). It is hard to explain, otherwise, the strong parallels existing between Proclus and Julian. As it seems to me, this hypothesis rests on more solid grounds than the common opinion<sup>40</sup> making the visible Sun the “third Demiurge”.

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note on *Against Heracleios* 220c in the Belles Lettres edition: “le rôle imparté par l’Empereur à Cybèle s’explique par le fait que la même divinité supérieure devait apporter le salut à la suite de leur folie passagère à la fois au ‘créateur immédiat du monde matériel’ – Attis – et à son tuteur – Dionysos”.

<sup>38</sup> See J. Opsomer (2003) 17-27 and also 9-11, citing *In Tim.* I, 310.15-24. The “monad of divided Demiurgy” also appears in Damascius, *In Phaedonem* I, § 3 (quotation in Opsomer p. 17): this, then, was common philosophical ground for the school of Athens.

<sup>39</sup> *Against Heracleios*, 222a3-5 (transl. Wright): τῆς ἐνοειδοῦς καὶ ἐν τῷ μεριστῷ παντελῶς ἀδιαίρετου ὅλης τε ἐν πᾶσιν ἀμιγοῦς προϋπαρχούσης τοῦ Διονύσου οὐσίας.

<sup>40</sup> A. Penati, see *supra*, n. 12; G. Mau (1908); n. 2 p. 107 of Rochefort’s Belles Lettres edition of the *Mother of Gods*; J.-C. Foussard (1978) 207 also seems to accept this idea.

### *Adonis or Attis?*

If this is correct, then, the consequence must be that Julian's "third Demiurge" is an equivalent to Adonis, the third term of Proclus' demiurgic Triad that acts, for us, as a piece of comparison. But this is obviously more difficult, as nowhere in Julian's works is Adonis to be found<sup>41</sup>. We then have to take into account the functional analogies between the two gods.

"Generation":

### *Attis and Adonis associated; the Problem of Fr. 1 In Sophistam*

According to Proclus, Adonis, who is responsible for the third Demiurgy, is the "Demiurge who renews what is submitted to birth and death" (τὸν τὰ γινόμενα καὶ φθειρόμενα ἀνυφαίνοντα (δημιουργόν))<sup>42</sup>. We have an exact parallel for this phrase in Sallustius' *Concerning the Gods and the Universe*: ὁ δὲ Ἄττις τῶν γινομένων καὶ φθειρομένων δημιουργός<sup>43</sup>. Sallustius does not mention the third Demiurge, which we take as hint of the fact that the distinction made by Julian between him and Attis was a bit far-fetched (suggesting that the third Demiurge and Attis may have been quite comparable deities, as are Adonis and Attis). He indeed mentions Adonis<sup>44</sup>, but as a physical allegory standing for fruit, an association already made by Porphyry (and totally forgotten by Proclus), who mentioned Attis in the process<sup>45</sup>: there is no need to think that this was the standard interpretation by Julian's time, as Sallustius explicitly mentions it as an example of the "material" type of myths. By the end of the fourth century, another types of exegesis had been developed,

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<sup>41</sup> The only exception is *Caesars* 329c, a reference to the Gardens of Adonis, in which we are not entitled to see anything more than the quotation of a proverb.

<sup>42</sup> *In Remp.* II, 8.20-1, quoted *supra*, n. 18.

<sup>43</sup> *De Diis et Mundo*, IV, 8.

<sup>44</sup> *De Diis et Mundo*, IV, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *On Statues*, p. 10.1-7 of Bidez' edition (Bidez (1913)) = Fr. 358, ll. 22-9 in A. Smith's Teubner edition of Porphyry's *Fragmenta* (Smith (1993)).

particularly the theological kind, as Julian himself testifies in *Against Heracleios* – where he strongly suggests that Iamblichus himself was responsible for it<sup>46</sup>.

Julian himself maintained a slight distinction between the third Demiurge and his Attis. This slight difference may be the consequence of the similarities that Adonis and Attis themselves share. They are both divinized mortals, known for being in love with goddesses (Aphrodite and Cybele respectively), and are subjected to tribulations ultimately leading to their death: thence the name of “dying gods” that Frazer famously gave them. An interesting point to note here is the association of these two gods in philosophical and theological texts of late Antiquity: Porphyry, as we mentioned, but also the hymns of the Naassene Gnostic sect (preserved in Hippolytus<sup>47</sup>) or the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius (where they are both assimilated with the Sun<sup>48</sup>). The rise of Neoplatonism, especially in its theological bend that I think may be traced back to Iamblichus, coincides very closely with the transformation of the cult of these gods, who become cosmic entities (this is particularly visible in the Naassene hymn<sup>49</sup>).

The proximity between these two gods, then, would tentatively account for the substitution of Attis in place of Adonis (or, rather, the former’s subjection to the latter, if he really is the “third Demiurge”). That it made more sense, on an Iamblican point of view, to include Adonis was well seen by Opsomer<sup>50</sup>, who convincingly asserts that the theologization of Adonis in Neoplatonism rose from an interpretation of *Phaedrus* 276b: the “gardens of Adonis”, which, growing and decaying soon after, can easily be interpreted as symbols of generation and corruption. That Adonis was indeed “seen” by Iamblichus in the text of the

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<sup>46</sup> When Julian says, 217b-c, that “we will follow in the fresh footprints of one whom next to the gods I revere and admire, yes, equally with Aristotle and Plato”, on the subject of the “myths suited to initiation” (οἱ τελεστικὸι μῦθοι, that is, myths containing secret teachings on metaphysical subjects and able to help the soul in her ascension towards the divine; these should not be confused with physical allegories as commented upon by the Stoics and Porphyry; on the subject, the reader may consult the fourth part of F. Buffière’s classic book (Buffière (1956)), and, for Julian’s position, J. Bouffartigue (1992) 337 sqq.), the allusion can hardly be taken as referring to a philosopher other than Iamblichus.

<sup>47</sup> *Refutation of all Heresies*, V, 9, §§ 8-9.

<sup>48</sup> *Saturnalia*, I, chap. XXI.

<sup>49</sup> See in particular M. G. Lancellotti (2002) chap. 3.7: “The astralization of Attis”, 115-118, for the general context, and the following pages for an analysis of the hymn.

<sup>50</sup> J. Opsomer (2003) 40-2.

*Phaedrus* and consequently adduced into a theological system is not something that could be proven with certainty: nevertheless, this is what J. Opsomer believes, after comparison of the Proclean system and a most interesting testimonium of Iamblichus, the extraordinary Fr. 1 *In Sophistam* Dillon.

Indeed, it is very tempting to draw a parallel between these two phenomena: the theologization of the divinities appearing in Plato's dialogues (most notably in the *Cratylus* – a simple glance at Proclus' commentary on the dialogue teaches that he considered it to be primarily a catalogue and exemplification of divine names) on the one hand, and a new attention paid to the organic unity of Plato's dialogues on the other. These two phenomena lead to one of Proclus' major works, the *Platonic Theology*, which is at the same time a sum of theology and a thorough, systematic reading of Plato. That Iamblichus was the first to promote a philosophical curriculum consisting of twelve Platonic dialogues is known for fact<sup>51</sup>; that he included in it the *Phaedrus*, and deemed this dialogue to be concerned with “theology” (although the simplest interpretation will assume – rightly, I think – this theology to be primarily concentrated in the central Myth of the *Phaedrus*), is very intriguing.

It is not utter nonsense, then, to assume Iamblichus to have “theologized” Adonis out of the *Phaedrus*. However, I would seriously doubt the plausibility of Opsomer's hypothesis in his article, tentatively identifying Adonis with the sublunar Demiurge of Iamblichus' Fr. 1 *In Sophistam*. I would rather see in him the god Hades, because of his association to soul *katharsis* (a prerogative of Hades, according to Proclus' *In Cratylum*<sup>52</sup>), and above all because the sublunar Demiurge is described as a Sophist. Hades is described as a Sophist in Plato's dialogues<sup>53</sup>; Adonis is not<sup>54</sup>. With this identification in mind, I would rather read this

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<sup>51</sup> See the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic philosophy*, § 26.13-44.

<sup>52</sup> *In Crat.* § 153 8-9: τὰς ψυχὰς μετὰ θάνατον καθαιρῶν ἐλευθεροῖ τῆς γενέσεως.

<sup>53</sup> *Cratylus*, 403e3-5: “this god is a perfect sophist (τέλειος σοφιστής) and a great benefactor to those near him”.

<sup>54</sup> Adonis' presence in Plato's work (παρ' αὐτῷ, says the text of *In Rempublicam* quoted in n. 18), contrasted with Attis' absence, could similarly explain why Julian maintains a formal distinction between the third Demiurge and his Attis, whereas Attis clearly assumes the functions ascribed to this Demiurge, as is shown by

testimonium as the first occurrence of yet another Demiurgic triad, that constituted of Zeus, Poseidon and Hades (most notably appearing in the *Platonic Theology*, Book VI). This would be further accredited by the association, in the text, of Socrates and Zeus.

This triad, anyway, cannot possibly be detected in Julian's *Oration*s. Poseidon is almost entirely absent; Hades too, while in his case we may notice a short passage of *To King Helios* "rehabilitating" him and attributing him a role in delivering souls from the bonds of generation<sup>55</sup>: this notation may have sprung from a mere reading of the *Cratylus*<sup>56</sup>, but may also reflect Iamblichean teachings on the importance of this god.

We would then refrain from identifying Adonis, Julian's "third Demiurge" and Iamblichus' sublunar Demiurge. However, it is clear that all these divinities share common traits: notably, the association with generation (the sublunar Demiurge κατασκευάζει τὴν ποικίλιαν τῆς γενέσεως), with matter (he creates the material beings, τὰ ἔνυλα δημιουργῶν), with change (he is μεταβλητικός, adjective which, in Plato's original text, referred to the Sophist as a "trafficker", but, in Iamblichus' exegesis, relates to its ability to produce "change" (μεταβολή) – Dillon's translation – or maybe to himself change). Neoplatonic triads of this type are interchangeable and seem to be motivated by the necessities of exegesis and by the text itself (be it the myth of Attis and Cybele, a Platonic dialogue or, in other instances, a Chaldaean Oracle or Orphic verse), rather than by philosophical and conceptual originality.

### *The Evidence of Damascius*

Attis and Adonis are associated in at least two Neoplatonic texts: Proclus' *Hymn I* (which I will not discuss<sup>57</sup>) and an extract from Damascius' *In Parmenidem*:

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the parallel drawn on p. 11: both are τῶν γινομένων καὶ φθειρομένων δημιουργοί: but only Adonis appears in this role in Plato's work, and this might have embarrassed Julian if he really inherited from Iamblichus a demiurgic triad extracted out of Plato.

<sup>55</sup> *King Helios*, 136a3-b5.

<sup>56</sup> See the text quoted above, n. 53, describing Hades as a "benefactor".

<sup>57</sup> Let it suffice to refer our reader to J. Opsomer (2003) 40 n. 132.

Αὐτίκα πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἔχωμεν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς θεολόγοις ὅτι εἰσὶν θεοὶ ἐν ὑπερτέρῳ μὲν τάξει τὴν λήξιν ἰδρυσάμενοι, τοῦ δὲ ἐξῆς διακόσμου προϊστάμενοι κατ' ἰδιότητα· οἷον ὁ Ἄττις ἐν τῇ σεληναίᾳ καθήμενος λήξει δημιουργεῖ τὸ γενητόν. Οὕτως ἔχοντα καὶ τὸν Ἄδωνιν εὐρίσκομεν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις, οὕτω πολλοὺς θεοὺς παρ' Ὀρφεῖ τε καὶ τοῖς θεουργοῖς. Οὕτω τοίνυν νοητέον καὶ τοὺς ἀπολύτους ἐσχάτους μὲν ὄντας τῶν ὑπερκοσμίων, προνοοῦντας δὲ τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου.

As regards the first [question], we hold it to be fact that, in the writings of theologians also, there are gods who, while they have established their domain in some higher class, nevertheless preside, by means of their peculiar propriety, over the diacosm coming after them: for instance, Attis, while he has established himself in the domain of the Moon, nevertheless creates what is submitted to coming to be. The Mysteries represent Adonis also in a similar situation: and the same goes for many gods that Orpheus and the Theurgists deal with. Here is, then, the way one should conceive the fact that, while the Detached order is the last among the hypercosmic gods, it nevertheless exercises Providence over this world<sup>58</sup>.

Four points, I think, are worth mentioning in connection with Julian: first, the association with generation: δημιουργεῖ τὸ γενητόν<sup>59</sup>; second, Providence (προνοοῦντας δὲ τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου), a theme recurrent in *To the Mother of the Gods*, where it is considered an attribution of Cybele<sup>60</sup>; third, an intermediary position: Attis is the last of the superior gods (“hypercosmic”) and he exercises his activity over the inferior: a theme paralleled in Julian, in his words: “though he seems to lean and incline towards matter, one would not be mistaken in supposing that, though he is the lowest in order of the gods, nevertheless he is the leader of all the tribes of divine beings<sup>61</sup>. But the myth calls him a demigod to indicate the difference

<sup>58</sup> Damascius, *In Parmenidem* T. III 146.22-147.8 Combès-Westerink (214.4-10 Ruelle; my transl.).

<sup>59</sup> See 161c: τὴν ἄχρι τῆς ἐσχάτης ὕλης ἅπαντα γεννῶσαν οὐσίαν; 171d: αἰεὶ δὲ ὀργᾶ εἰς τὴν γένεσιν; and Sallustius' text, *supra*, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> See 166b: τὰ γινόμενα καὶ φθειρόμενα σώζουσα Προμήθεια; 167c-d: δημιουργικὴ προμήθεια; 170d: ἡ τῶν ὄντων Προμήθεια; 166b and 180a: πρόνοια.

<sup>61</sup> Note the Iamblichean terminology here: θεῖα γένη, probably identical with the κρεῖττονα γένη of the *De Mysteriis* (all the classes of beings situated below the gods and above the souls – in Julian's text, precisely, those beings are situated just below the “lowest of the gods”), which Iamblichus made to correspond with the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* (see, for instance, C. G. Steel (1997) 15-6).

“The three leading personalities” translates αἱ τρεῖς ἀρχικαὶ [...] ὑποστάσεις and is probably misleading. One cannot but see the striking parallel with the title of Plotinus' tenth *Treatise* (V, 1), as given by Porphyry – but Julian's hypostases cannot possibly refer to the same theological levels as Plotinus', since they are not meant to cover all the field of the Divine (the One, the Intellect and the Soul, after which the divine ends (7.48-9: καὶ μέχρι τούτων τὰ θεῖα)), rather its lower end, beginning from the “higher beings”. The only parallel I could gather for ἀρχικαὶ ὑποστάσεις in this sense is Damascius, *In Parm.* III, 130.16-7 Combès-Westerink (see the good note *ad loc.*): it points to a common Iamblichean source for both passages. The three kinds of higher beings (three is also the number given by *King Helios* 151c: τῶν τριῶν κρεῖττόνων [...] γενῶν) may – or may not – be Iamblichus' angels, daemons and heroes.



between him and the unchanging gods. He is attended by the Corybants who are assigned to him by the Mother: they are the three leading personalities of the higher races that are next in order to the gods”<sup>62</sup>. Fourth, the association with the Moon, present in Julian also<sup>63</sup>.

In consideration of these four points, the doctrine explained (or rather alluded to) by Damascius in this text and Julian’s *Oration* appear to be strictly convergent. The association of Attis and Adonis in a Neoplatonic text of the School of Athens (which, for this reason, may derive inspiration from the works of Iamblichus) gives weight to the hypothesis that Julian may have had Adonis in mind while alluding to the “third Demiurge”. The fact that he also makes Zeus the Demiurge of the Universe and speaks of Dionysus as an entity responsible for a “divided Demiurgy” gives further confirmation and allows us to assume that Iamblichus is the author of the grouping, in form of a demiurgic Triad, of the gods Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis, that appears in Proclus’ commentaries. At all events, the pattern followed by Julian when writing about three Demiurges appears not to have been that of a triad first Helios (the One) – second Helios (intellective God) – third Helios (visible Sun), as is generally believed (and as Julian’s *Oration*, which indeed describes such a triad in 132c-133c, seems to prompt us); rather, Julian seems to have believed in the existence of a first, principal Demiurge of the Universe as a whole, that is Zeus (who, in accordance with Iamblichus and subsequent Neoplatonic developments, is not to be confused with the first Principle), followed by entities more and more “partial” (μερικοί), standing closer and closer to Matter. This, in turn, will prove to be the mainstream late Neoplatonic solution to the philosophical problem of demiurgy, with various tentative identifications of the demiurgic Triad, as we have seen (Zeus

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<sup>62</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 168a7-b5.

<sup>63</sup> See 165d: Attis is “the intellectual god, the connecting link between forms embodied in matter beneath the region of the Moon”; 167d-168a, which establishes a parallel between Attis’ “madness” and the *ἀλλοίωσις* of the fifth body in the region of the Moon (phases of the Moon are associated to earthly changes also in Fr. 70 *In Tim.*, ll. 13-6: “the Moon has the first rank, in the area round the Earth, as having the relationship of generating power and mother to the realm of Generation (for everything turns with her, growing when she grows and declining when she declines)” (transl. Dillon)).

– Dionysus – Adonis; Zeus – Poseidon – Hades; or, considering as “demiurgic” too the gods constituting with Zeus the first triad of intellectual Gods, Kronos – Rhea – Zeus); our claim, that on this particular instance an influence of a triad constituted by Zeus, Dionysus and Adonis is likely to have been the *right* one, stands on ever fragile grounds and is simply a provisional conclusion, based on the reading of an allusive text, and not susceptible of ultimate proof: it may be considered successful, if it solves more problems than it creates.

Julian must have based himself (be it solely by recourse to memory) on Iamblichean teachings on Demiurgic hierarchies. These teachings were passed down to the School of Athens and became common philosophical material there. It is, however, quite difficult to determine what texts may have been in cause. A fairly sound assumption would be to suppose an influence of the treatise *On Gods*, quoted by Iamblichus himself<sup>64</sup> as containing precise definitions of hypercosmic and encosmic gods – and therefore quite liable to have contained a developed Demiurgic hierarchy. We should also keep in mind that Damascius refers to the doctrines of Orpheus and the Theurgists: an influence of the *Chaldaean Theology* (which we know was not unknown to Julian<sup>65</sup>) cannot be excluded. There remains a third possibility, that of a book by Iamblichus on the mysteries of Cybele: it would be uneasy to suppose such a commentary on the sole basis of Julian’s work (Iamblichus, frequently quoted in *To King Helios*, is not even quoted once in *To the Mother of the Gods* – at least by name), but such a text as Damascius’ *In Parmenidem* puzzles me: “Rhea, according to Socrates in the *Cratylus*, represents the “flowing” of all beings, and, as we are told by the Phrygian discourses [i. e. the

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<sup>64</sup> *De Mysteriis*, VIII, 8, 10-17 = p. 271.10-17. This lost text may – or may not – have been a full-length *exposé* of theological traditions as well as an attempt to systematize them. This would explain Julian’s many references to quite obscure traditions in *To King Helios*: the most important of which, for our purpose, are 150c-d, ascribing to Iamblichus developments on a “Phoenician theology” (Adonis was himself a Phoenician god, see ps.-Apollodorus, 3.183: “Hesiodos says the he was the son of Phoinix and Alpheisiboia”; the Naassene hymn referenced in n. 47 mentions Ἀσσύριοι); and 143d-144a, a mention of Zeus’ and Helios’ common worship in the island of Cyprus (but Iamblichus is not quoted – at least explicitly – here): this allusion to Cyprus may shed some light on *In Crat.* § 180: “He has ranked the encosmic Dionysus with the encosmic Aphrodite because she loves him and forms a likeness of him, Adonis, who was much honoured along the Cilicians and Cypriotes” (transl. Duvick (2007)). If these two texts are to be traced back to a common Iamblichean source – but of course this is very fragile –, we would then have our triad Zeus – Dionysos – Adonis, and a common location.

<sup>65</sup> See *Letter 12* Bidez; J. Bouffartigue (1992) esp. 306 sqq. and 345 sqq.

cult of the Mother], she stabilizes all beings in herself and calls them back to her”<sup>66</sup> – which is exactly the role played by Cybele in Julian’s *Oration*. Is it really possible to believe in Julian’s originality while coming upon such a text? Lack of sources forces us to remain cautious, but this strong parallel between Damascius (indebted to the traditions of the School of Athens) and Julian, in virtue of the principle formulated by Bouffartigue<sup>67</sup>, leads to the hypothesis of a common Iamblichean doctrine or text, such as may have provided a model for Proclus’ *monobiblon* on the Mother of the Gods<sup>68</sup>.

### The Functioning of the Triad: Levels of Forms and Levels of the Divine:

In *To King Helios* (150a), Julian affirms that the Moon<sup>69</sup> “adorns with its Forms the realm of Matter”. Iamblichus himself attributes to the Moon τὸ πολυειδὲς καὶ διάφορον τῆς γενέσεως<sup>70</sup>. It is troubling, then, to see that one of the major themes of Julian’s *To the Mother of the Gods* is that of the information of matter by form. As we have seen (cf. *supra*, T1 and T2), the third Demiurge is himself associated with the causes of enmattered Forms, while Attis “comprehends in [himself] all the concepts and causes of the forms that are embodied in matter”<sup>71</sup>. He is an “intellectual God”, “the connective link between forms embodied in matter beneath the region of the Moon”<sup>72</sup>. Pages 161c to 165a of Julian’s *Oration* are devoted to a philosophical demonstration of the necessity of transcendent causes of the enmattered Forms,

<sup>66</sup> Damascius, *In Parm.* III 42.13-6 Combès-Westerink = 154.15-7 Ruelle: ἡ τε γὰρ Ἦρα πάντων ἐστὶ ροὴ κατὰ τὸν ἐν Κρατύλῳ Σωκράτην, καὶ πάντα ἴστησιν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἀνακαλεῖται πρὸς ἑαυτήν, ὡς καὶ οἱ Φρύγιοι διδάσκουσι λόγοι. See Combès’ note *ad loc.* and, for Julian, *Mother of Gods* 171c5-6: ἐπανάγει πρὸς ἑαυτήν ἢ θεὸς ἀσμένως, μᾶλλον δὲ ἔχει παρ’ ἑαυτῆς.

<sup>67</sup> See *supra*, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Mentioned by Marinus, *Proclus* § 33.

<sup>69</sup> See *supra*, n. 63 for the relationship between the Moon and Attis.

<sup>70</sup> Fr. 153 Dalsgaard Larsen (*In De Caelo*). On the Moon, see also Fr. 21 *In Tim.* and Dillon’s good commentary; the texts he quotes should be compared to *King Helios*, 150a, which probably shows traces of Iamblichean influence; see also for her demiurgic function Julian’s *Letter* 111, ll. 50-2 Bidez: τὴν δὲ ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῦ δημιουργὸν τῶν ὄλων Σελήνην οὐσαν οὐκ αἰσθάνεσθε πόσων ἀγαθῶν αἰτία τῇ πόλει γίνεται.

<sup>71</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 161c7-9.

<sup>72</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 165d: τὸν τῶν ἐνύλων καὶ ὑπὸ σελήνην εἰδῶν συνοχέα.

lest they associate with matter only by pure chance, as the Epicureans think<sup>73</sup>: by doing so, Julian explains the terms of the philosophical problem that the exposition of the myth and the revelation of Attis' identity are due to resolve.

Bouffartigue has drawn a parallel between Proclus' report on Iamblichus' Demiurge and Julian's own words: Julian, *Mother of Gods*, 161d (= our T1): τοῦ τρίτου δημιουργοῦ, ὃς τῶν ἐνύλων εἰδῶν τοὺς λόγους ἐξηρημένους ἔχει καὶ συνεχεῖς τὰς αἰτίας; and Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 309.2-5: τοῦ δὲ τρίτου καὶ δημιουργοῦντος τὰ ὅλα τὰς μονίμους προόδους καὶ τὰς τῶν αἰτίων ὄλων ποιήσεις καὶ συνοχὰς τὰς τε ἀφορισμένας ὄλας τοῖς εἶδεσιν αἰτίας καὶ τὰς προϊούσας πάσας δημιουργίας<sup>74</sup>. Both Demiurges, then, possess in themselves causes of Forms, and this fact constitutes a strong parallel between Julian and Iamblichus. There is a slight difference however: while Iamblichus' universal Demiurge that Proclus describes possesses "universal" causes and forms (ὅλα), it is only in Julian's text that we find mention of the enmattered Forms.

This is probably not due to semi-automatic word-dropping: we think that in both texts, the vocabulary is precise and perfectly correct. If so, there must be some distinction to make between different levels of Forms, in relation to divine levels: while the universal Demiurge possesses universal causes<sup>75</sup>, the third Demiurge concerns himself with enmattered Forms, which are directly used in the production of mortal beings<sup>76</sup>. Using this hypothesis as a starting point, we may try to complete the hierarchy with respect to higher and lower entities.

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<sup>73</sup> See J.-C. Foussard (1978) 197-8.

<sup>74</sup> "To the third Intellect, who creates the Universe, belong as attributes stability in processions, production and continuity of the universal causes, universal causes assigned to species and all proceeding Demiurgies".

<sup>75</sup> For instance, Proclus mentions τὰ πληρώματα τῶν εἰδῶν, contained by the Demiurge's διάνοια (*In Tim.* I, 224.2-3).

<sup>76</sup> In the text of *In Rempublicam* quoted above, n. 18, the demiurgy of Adonis is "in contact with things that come to be and the Forms contained in them", that is, since the fact is taken as a symptom of inferiority, the Forms-in-matter.

Julian, for his part, takes good care not to associate matter and "form", but rather matter and "enmattered form" (ἐνυλον εἶδος): see *Mother of Gods* 162a. Iamblichus may have had a distinction of this sort while describing, inside the "physical" kind of celestial gods' powers, a part "being inherent in seminal reasons and, before these seminal reasons, in unmovable ones: it essentially precedes generation" (τούτου δὲ αὐθις τὸ μὲν ἐν λόγοις σπερματικοῖς τε καὶ πρὸ τῶν σπερματικῶν τοῖς ἀκινήτοις ἰδρυμένον προηγείται καθ' ἑαυτὸ πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως, *De Myst.* III 28, ll. 37-9 = 169.7-9).

### *Forms in the Higher Gods*

Damascius provides us with a very interesting testimonium on an Iamblichean triad (yet again!): it is Fr. 4 *In Philebum* Dillon.

Ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ διακόσμῳ ἢ πάντα διάκρισις. Ἡ γὰρ περιγεγραμμένη εἰδοποιΐα νοῦ πρώτου ἐστίν, νοῦς δὲ πρώτος ὁ καθαρὸς νοῦς· διὸ καὶ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐν τούτῳ ὑφίστασθαι λέγει τὰς τῶν εἰδῶν μονάδας, <μονάδας><sup>77</sup> τὸ ἐκάστου λέγων ἀδιάκριτον· διὸ νοητὸν ὡς ἐν νοεροῖς καὶ οὐσίας αἴτιος εἰδητικῆς, ὡς ὁ δεύτερος ζῶης, ὡς ὁ τρίτος εἰδοποιΐας ἐν νοεροῖς.

Not even in the second realm is there separation properly so called. For the creation of distinct forms is a function of Intelligence in the first place, and the first Intelligence is the pure Intelligence; for which reason Iamblichus declares that on this level one may place the monads of the Forms, meaning by “monads” the undifferentiated element in each. Wherefore it is the object of intellection for the intellectual realm, and the cause of Being for the Forms, even as the second element is the cause of Life in the intellectual realm, and the third the cause of their creation *as Forms*<sup>78</sup>.

I suspect this diacosm to be the “intellective” one: coming after the second, it must be the third, that is the intellectual diacosm (after the intelligible and intelligible-intellectual, in Proclus’ terminology<sup>79</sup>). If this is correct, the first Intellect is the god Kronos (described as *katharos nous*, an etymology attributed to him in the *Cratylus*<sup>80</sup>, and therefore confirming my hypothesis<sup>81</sup>), first intellectual God, that is, a god preceding Zeus (the Demiurge) in the great chain of supernatural entities. He then contains the “monads of the Forms” or the “undifferentiated” element of the Forms. The third Intellect (Zeus) is responsible for

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<sup>77</sup> Add. Westerink.

<sup>78</sup> Iamblichus, Fr. 4 *In Philebum* Dillon = Damascius, *In Phil.* § 105 (transl. Dillon).

<sup>79</sup> For convenient figures summing up the Neoplatonic system of gods as exposed by Proclus, see for instance the Introduction provided to Combès’ and Westerink’s edition of Damascius’ *In Parmenidem* in the Budé collection, vol. I, pp. XXXIII-VII, or the Appendix to Opsomer’s article.

<sup>80</sup> *Crat.* 396c.

<sup>81</sup> An elaborated demonstration would, I fear, lead us too far. Let us simply quote Syrianus, whose doctrines are thus summed up by Proclus in the *In Timaeum*: the Demiurge is “himself producer of Substance, himself provider of Life, himself producer of Form” (III 248.1-2: αὐτὸς οὐσιοποιός, αὐτὸς ζωογόνος, αὐτὸς εἰδοποιός), i. e. he gathers in his own being the attributions of the whole Triad to which he belongs (first intellectual triad; Zeus, the Demiurge, is its third member, while Rhea-Hecate, mentioned in the context of the passage, is its second).

εἰδοποιΐα, that is, as I conceive it, the creation of Forms in such differentiated state as to be ready to be used in the creation of the World. In any case, the state of the Forms in the third Intellect is clearly more differentiated than in Kronos. Therefore it seems that Iamblichus indeed possessed the concept of several levels of Forms and was able to make them correspond to several godly orders. Damascius' testimony makes it plain that, for him, the philosophical question of the relationship of Form and Matter was to be asked at the level of the "intellective" gods, since this order contains the god or Intellect otherwise known as the Demiurge. It is he who is chiefly responsible for εἰδοποιΐα; however, since he is not the highest god in its own order (let alone in the whole of reality), he must look higher up, to his father Kronos who contains the "monads of the Forms", before looking down towards Matter which he is about to inform, thus breaking the undifferentiated state of Kronos' εἶδη. As such, he probably acted as the principal intermediary of Iamblichus' theological system, putting in the sensible world as much intelligible fixity as there could be: and then Julian's identification of his all-powerful mediator Helios<sup>82</sup> with Zeus becomes all the more comprehensible.

### *Forms in the Lower Gods*

In Julian's *Oration*, Attis himself symbolizes the metaphysical tension that appears as the Form approaches matter. This is the meaning of the myth: Attis, possessing the causes of enmattered Forms, becomes mad and approaches the cave of the Nymph, i. e. the cause presiding over matter. Using metaphorical language, the myth describes this as madness and as a fall: Attis' "inclination" (νεῦσις, 166d) towards matter represents the danger of unlimitedness. Fortunately, the Mother saves him, at the expense of his castration. "What is the meaning of this castration?" Julian asks: "it is the checking of the unlimited: for now was

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<sup>82</sup> The Greek root μεσ- (μέσον, μεσότης...) occurs thirty-five times in *To King Helios*, mostly in association with Helios: see in particular 141d-142a: τῶν νοερῶν θεῶν μέσος ἐν μέσοις τεταγμένος κατὰ παντοίαν μεσότητα, and 156d1: μέσος ἐν μέσοις τοῖς νοεροῖς θεοῖς (i. e. the intellective Gods: Julian alludes quite probably to an Iamblichean doctrine of the intellective Order as intermediary between the intelligible and sensible realms, such as that which is behind Fr. 4 *In Phil.*).

generation confined within definite Forms checked by creative Providence”<sup>83</sup>. “This castration, so much discussed by the crowd, is really the halting of his unlimited course”<sup>84</sup>. We must above all notice the opposition between Form and unlimitedness here: “forever [Attis] cuts short his unlimited course through the cause whose limits are fixed, even the cause of the Forms” (ἀεὶ δὲ ἀποτέμνεται τὴν ἀπειρίαν διὰ τῆς ὀρισμένης τῶν εἰδῶν αἰτίας)<sup>85</sup>. Then the justification of the existence of Attis given by Julian becomes clearer: “for truly the forms of all things are not in all things, and in the highest and first causes we do not find the forms of the lowest and last, after which there is nothing but privation”<sup>86</sup>. The Iamblican tenets of Julian’s *Oration* now appear in full light: while the highest divine levels preserve undefiled the Forms of higher beings, the lowest gods (and in particular Attis, often described by Julian as the “last of the Gods”) take charge of the enmattered Forms, i. e. Forms that mingle with matter and accomplish a descent of sorts on their own. Attis’ final victory, at the expense of castration, is a symbol of the Forms’ eternal victory over Matter, and of Limit dominating the Unlimited. Thus all beings partake of Providence and are saved: but on the other hand, “the creation of distinct forms” (περιγεγραμμένη εἰδοποιΐα, see, *supra*, Damascius’ testimony from the *In Philebum*) belongs exclusively to the intellectual Gods; and this world, our world, is forever deficient and strives towards unlimitedness<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> 167c6-d1.

<sup>84</sup> 168d4-5.

<sup>85</sup> 171d2-3.

<sup>86</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 161c9-d3. Julian here clearly seems to stand in opposition to Plotinian metaphysics: the Intellect, that is the highest degree of Being, does not contain the forms of the inferior degrees. This in turn is a good example of the reinterpretation of the system of reality made by Plotinus’ successors: in order to copy reality’s hierarchy, the system itself had to be broken into several levels, the higher ones communicating with the lower not immediately, but only through intermediaries (the image used to represent this succession being that of the “chain”, σείρά).

<sup>87</sup> On the opposition of Limit and Unlimitedness in Iamblichus’ philosophy, see D. P. Taormina (1999) chap. 1. This theory of differentiated levels of Forms (on which see also J. F. Finamore (1985) 141), among which the lowest are the “enmattered Forms”, whose ontological status is ambiguous, seems to have been quite fecund, judging by its application in different fields and its apparition in Iamblichus’ commentaries on Aristotle. See Frs. 38 (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 130.14-19) and 53 (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 145.15-9) Dalsgaard Larsen of Iamblichus (transl. taken from F. A. J. de Haas and B. Fleet (2001)): “But Iamblichus says: ‘Like the other enmattered forms, number is present in, and co-exists with, things that are enumerated; but it does not have its being in them in an unqualified sense, nor is its being supervenient on them by concurrence, nor does it arrive with the status of an accident, but it has some substance of its own along with the things <that it is in>, according to which it

## Conclusion:

It is now time to draw some general conclusions from the preceding developments.

First, Iamblichus influenced Proclean theology, and in no small way (this, arguably, was already known for a fact: let us remind the reader of Sallustius' hierarchy of encosmic gods, which Proclus also used, without a single change, in *Platonic Theology* Book VI<sup>88</sup>). Iamblichus himself, no doubt about this, has been influenced by his contemporaries: Amelius' and Theodorus' three Demiurges announce Iamblichus' demiurgic triads<sup>89</sup>: but he remained a convinced monist, and thus stressed the role played by Zeus, the Demiurge he detected in the *Timaeus*, and which Julian had no great difficulty to convert into king Helios.

The presence, in Iamblichus' theological system, of Zeus and Dionysus, seems to me to be beyond doubt. That of Attis and Adonis is clearly more difficult to determine: while they seem to be part of the common Iamblichean heritage of the school of Athens<sup>90</sup>, and their

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determines the things that participate and arranges them according to the appropriate measure” (ὁ δὲ Ἰάμβλιχος φησιν ὅτι “ὡσπερ τὰ ἄλλα ἐνυλα εἶδη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς πάρεστι μὲν καὶ συνυπάρχει τοῖς διαριθμουμένοις πράγμασιν, οὐ μέντοι ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπλῶς ἔχει τὴν ὑπόστασιν, οὐδὲ ἐπιγινωμένην αὐτοῖς καθ’ ἐπακολούθησιν οὐδὲ ἐν συμβεβηκότος τάξει παραγινωμένην, ἔχουσιν δὲ τινα ἰδίαν μετὰ τῶν πραγμάτων οὐσίαν, καθ’ ἣν ἀφορίζει καὶ πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον συντάττει τὰ μετέχοντα); “As the form approaches matter a certain power, a mixture of the two, comes-to-be; for in so far as this power partakes of the form, what is enmattered is likened to it and becomes great and small; but according to its own indeterminacy it partakes of the more and less, relationship to something and change to contraries” (προσιόντος γὰρ τοῦ εἶδους τῇ ὕλῃ σύμμικτός τις ἀπ’ ἀμοφοῖν γίνεται δύναμις· καθ’ ὅσον μὲν γὰρ μεταλαμβάνει τοῦ εἶδους, ὁμοιοῦται πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ γίνεται πολλὸν καὶ μέγα τὸ ἐνυλον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν οἰκειαν ἀπειρίαν τοῦ μᾶλλον καὶ ἧττον καὶ τῆς πρὸς τι σχέσεως καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐναντία μεταβολῆς μεταλαμβάνει).

<sup>88</sup> Sallustius' development is to be found in *On the Gods and the Universe*, VI, 3: Proclus', in *Platonic Theology* VI, chap. 22. The texts strictly parallel each other and render necessary the hypothesis of huge advances made by Iamblichus (only possible common influence between Julian, Sallustius and Proclus) in the theological domain. This paper represents an endeavour to look into this in some depth, as far as is permitted by the paucity of our sources.

<sup>89</sup> This becomes rather clear if one quotes Proclus (*In Tim.* I, 309.18-20) on the characteristics of Theodorus' three Demiurges: τὸν μὲν ἀδιαίρετον, τὸν δὲ εἰς ὅλα διηρημένον, τὸν δὲ καὶ τὴν εἰς τὰ καθ’ ἕκαστα διαίρεσιν πεποιημένον, and recalls what we have said about the god Dionysus and the “partial Demiurgy” of which he is responsible, as well as Damascius' testimony from *In Philebum*, which made use of a similar vocabulary. Theodorus' triad is already laid out so as to favour undividedness over fragmentation, and if we had access to more sources, we would probably find Theodorus to be quite close to Iamblichus.

As for Amelius (on whom see J. M. Dillon (1969)), his exegetical method, which enabled him to “discover” his three Demiurges in Plato's text, has probably strongly influenced Iamblichus.

<sup>90</sup> Adonis is mentioned by Hermias *In Phaedr.* (cf. J. Opsomer (2003) 41-2), and thus appears to have been known by Syrianus, before Proclus; Damascius describes the statue of a god who, he says, is at the same time Osiris and Adonis (Fr. 76E in P. Athanassiadi's edition of the *Life of Isidore* (1999)); as for Attis, traces of his importance to Neoplatonic exegetes include, apart from Damascius' text quoted above p. 15, his relation of a



subtle presence could also mean that they were inherited and therefore not worth of thorough examination, it is also true that Julian claims originality twice in his *Oration*<sup>91</sup>. At the current state of research, I would tentatively conclude that Iamblichus had included Adonis (from the *Phaedrus*) in his theological system, that he may have made some references to Attis, for instance in *On Gods* (that he bore interest to the cult of Cybele is made certain by some references to it in the *De Mysteriis*<sup>92</sup>) but that Julian himself arranged the whole myth, gave it proper (that is, exhaustive) exegesis and endowed Attis with Adonis' attributes. This is a conjecture, and explains the title of this paper, which is a mere "proposition".

Second, Iamblichus decisively influenced Neoplatonism by establishing strict hierarchies (most often presented in the form of triads). His distinction of several levels of Forms, paralleling as many divine orders, was the starting point leading ultimately to Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, and parallels the theological interpretation of the *Parmenides* as a dialog describing the whole of reality, from the One to matter. The fundamental opposition in reality is that of Limit and the Unlimited: the divine is limited, matter is unlimited, and the ontological shock of these two spheres colliding is the subject of Julian's *Oration*.

Third: with Iamblichus also seems to appear a newfound philosophical interest for gods whose cults are associated with soteriology (we may have mentioned Asclepius in this

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festival celebrated at Hierapolis in honor of the god (Fr. 87A Athanassiadi). The moral message gathered by Damascius from this experience: "I celebrated the feast of [...] the Hilaria, which signified my salvation from death" (καί μοι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι [...] τὴν τῶν Ἰλαρίων [...] ἑορτήν· ὅπερ ἐδήλου τὴν ἐξ Ἄιδου γεγонуῖαν ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν, transl. Athanassiadi), is similar to Julian's own soteriological interpretation of the same festival: οὐπὲρ γενομένου, πάντως ἔπεσθαι χρὴ τὰ Ἰλάρια. Τί γὰρ εὐθυμότερον, τί δὲ ἰλαρώτερον γένοιτο ἂν ψυχῆς ἀπειρίαν μὲν καὶ γένεσιν καὶ τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ κλύδωνα διαφυγούσης, ἐπὶ δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀναχθείσης; (*Mother of Gods*, 169c-d).

<sup>91</sup> See *Mother of Gods* 161c (ἐγὼ... αὐτὸς οἴκοθεν ἐπινοῶ), 178d-179a: "it was granted me to compose this hymn at a breath, in the short space of one night, without having read anything on the subject beforehand, or thought it over". The exact scope of this "originality", of course, is impossible to determine with certainty.

<sup>92</sup> *De Mysteriis*, III, 9.4-5 = 117.16-7: οἱ μητρίζοντες, cf. III, 10.19-20 = 121.14-5: τῆς δὲ μητρὸς τῶν θεῶν... τοὺς κατόχους; III, 10.14-5 = 121.9-10: τῶν μὲν Κορυβάντων φρουρητικὴ πῶς ἔστιν ἡ δύναμις, which parallels Julian's text quoted on pp. 15-16, even if, of course, there is no wonder as to the fact that the Corybants act as δορυφόροι or as φρουρητικοί (they were often confused with the Couretes, who were the protectors of young Zeus).

connection<sup>93</sup>). In this, Iamblichus was no more than a product of his time, an “age of anxiety” as Dodds famously called it: but turning away from Plotinus’ teachings, he was, together with Amelius and Theodorus, a good representative of the post-Plotinian generation that multiplied its inquiries in the field of theological and mystical traditions – and this leads us to Proclus’ characterization by Marinus as “the hierophant of the whole world”, a title that would probably suit Iamblichus well. The diversity of the divine parallels the diversity of reality: its highest degrees are forever preserved, its lowest are forever threatened by unlimitedness and non-being, but they are also susceptible of “salvation” (of which the highest degrees would not be in need anyway). This salvation is provided by gods who themselves undergo suffering and passion, and thus are themselves “saved” (as is Attis in Julian’s *Oration*). In Julian’s mind (and Iamblichus’), to create and care for the “last beings” (τελευταία)<sup>94</sup>, there had to be a divine cause<sup>95</sup> that would itself be “the last”. But this, in turn, was already Plato’s idea in the *Timaeus*, when he set apart the Demiurge and the “young gods”: as the *Republic* has it: *theos anaitios*: to this, neither Iamblichus nor Julian would have disagreed.

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<sup>93</sup> On this subject, see J. F. Finamore (1998) (I am indebted to Prof. Finamore for having kindly given me access to this article). The main texts are *Contra Galilaeos* 200a-b, quoted p. 74, and, for Iamblichus, Fr. 19 *In Tim.* Dillon, quoted on p. 83. For traces of an Iamblichean exegesis of the god Asclepius, one should also keep in mind Marinus’ reference to an hymn dedicated by Iamblichus to Machaon and Podaleirios (*Proclus*, § 32), Asclepius’ sons, and the letters of the ps.-Julian to Iamblichus, which, even if they were not authored by Julian, are nevertheless precious documents on the life of the philosopher’s school and on his interests (see on the subject Barnes (1978)).

<sup>94</sup> *Mother of Gods*, 164a8.

<sup>95</sup> Attis is ἡ τελευταία καὶ μέχρι γῆς ὑπὸ περιουσίας τοῦ γονίμου διὰ τῶν ἄνωθεν παρὰ τῶν ἄστρον καθήκουσα (αἰτία) (= our T1); see also 167d4-5: τὴν τελευταίαν τῶν θεῶν αἰτίαν and 170d6-7: τῆς τελευταίας <αἰτίας> τῶν θεῶν (where αἰτία is the result of a correction by Hertlein).

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