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The Emperor Julian (A.D. 331-363): His Life and His Neoplatonic Philosophy

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THE EMPEROR JULIAN (A.D. 331-363):
HIS LIFE AND HIS NEOPATONIC PHILOSOPHY

by

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B.S. June 1992, Old Dominion University

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ABSTRACT

THE EMPEROR JULIAN (A.D. 331-363):
HIS LIFE AND HIS NEOPLATONIC PHILOSOPHY

Anthony W. Nattania
Old Dominion University, 1996
Director: Dr. R. Baine Harris

The Neoplatonism of the Emperor Julian (A.D. 331-363) is critically compared to the Neoplatonism of Plotinus (A.D. 205-270). This is done by analyzing their concepts of First Principles, Fate and Destiny, Existence of the Divine Being, the Human Soul, Matter, Time and Eternity, the Contemplation of "The One," and "The One" itself. Julian's psychology is analyzed in light of his Neoplatonism, Mithrasism, and tragic life history. The historical aspects of the attempted pagan reformation during the reign of Julian (A.D. 360-363) is assessed for its historical effects on the Later Roman Empire and its successive generations, while the history of Neoplatonism between the death of Plotinus and the birth of Julian is explored for its effects on the philosophy itself. Julian was a very important transitional figure in Neoplatonic philosophy, not for his originality in thought, but for his widespread transmission of Neoplatonic doctrines through his and his associates writings.
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CHAPTER 1
THE LIFE OF JULIAN

Born Flavius Claudius Julianus at Constantinople on November 6, A.D. 331,¹ he became known through history as "Julian the Apostate." He was the son of Julius Constantius (d. A.D. 337), the half-brother of Emperor Constantine "The Great" (c. A.D. 272-337), and Basilina (d. A.D. 331). Julian, the last of the pagan Roman Emperors, came at the end and the beginning of two fascinating periods in human history. These periods marked the end of pagan rule of the Western world and beginning of Christian societal domination.

Julian’s life was a tragedy of monumental proportions. The life of Julian was almost cut short during the killings of A.D. 337 after the death of Constantine. His father, eldest brother and cousins were murdered by Constantius (A.D. 324-361), Constans (c. A.D. 323-350), and Constantine II (A.D. 317-340) to secure the throne. It is certain that Constantius was the driving force behind the killings of his relatives² while Constans and Constantine were non-active participants in other parts of the Empire. The two youngest sons of Julius Constantius, Gallus (A.D. 328-355) and Julian, were spared death because of Julian’s age, six, and Gallus’ illness.³ The two children were held in close confinement or a form of house
arrest for six years, A.D. 342-348, in the remote fortress of Macellum at Cappadocia. For the years A.D. 342-350, Julian was raised with a well rounded Christian and Classical education.

In the year 350, Julian privately renounced Christianity at the age of nineteen for the pagan ways of the ancients in the form of the Cult of Mithras. Gallus was elevated to the Caesarship by Constantius, now sole ruler, upon the violent deaths of his brothers Constantine II (d. A.D. 340) and Constans (d. A.D. 350). Julian was allowed to continue his Greek philosophical studies in Nicomedia, Phrygia, Pergamum, Ephesus, and Athens. He was drawn to Pergamum by the fame of the great Neoplatonic teacher Aedesius (c. A.D. 280-c.362) who was the disciple of Iamblichus (c. A.D. 250-325). Aedesius, because of his old age, counseled Julian to take up study with two of his disciples, Chrysanthius (c. A.D. 320-c.405) and Eusebius of Myndus (c. A.D. 320-400). Julian then went against the advice of Eusebius and studied Neoplatonic thought with Maximus of Ephesus (c. A.D. 310-370), also known as "The Theurgist," and associated with him until his death in A.D. 363.

In 355 Constantius ordered Julian's brother, Gallus Caesar, killed. Thus Julian was thrown into Imperial affairs, summoned from Athens to the Imperial court in Milan by Constantius in A.D. 355. Upon arrival, the Empress Eusebia protected Julian from the suspicions and intrigues of the
Imperial court. Constantius feared court intrigue would inspire his revolt. The Prince was also under house arrest while in Milan. Since Constantius had no other heirs of the Constantinian family, Julian was named Caesar. Julian married Constantius' sister Helena and was dispatched to Gaul to pacify the Gallic Tribes. Much to Constantius' surprise, Julian pacified the Franks and Alamanni in four successive campaigns over a five year period. He was not only a skillful soldier, but a popular general who posed a threat to Constantius' peace of mind.

Therefore, Constantius requested the best of Julian's Gallic Legion to be sent for his own use against the Persians in A.D. 360. When Constantius' order was announced, the army mutinied proclaiming Julian as Emperor or Augustus in 360. Julian reluctantly accepted this elevation of status from his troops and dispatched a letter to Constantius to explain the situation. Enraged, Constantius prepared to make war with Julian for sole control of the Empire. Although both forces marched against each other in A.D. 361, no civil war occurred because Constantius died in route near Tarsus and peacefully bequeathed the throne to Julian in his will.

Flavius Claudius Julianus became sole Emperor of the Roman Empire on October 5, A.D. 361. The East and West were united again as Julian made a lightning march through Thrace, Philippopolis, and Heraclea towards his triumphal entry into Constantinople on December 11, A.D. 361. Julian's first
Imperial act set up the Council of Chalcedon, manned by Neoplatonists, to try the criminals from Constantius' court. He then purged the Imperial household of those he perceived as morally corrupt individuals, including some who earned extravagant amounts in the services provided for maintenance or personal services. Julian replaced them with individuals he considered virtuous and who valued the ideals of the Greco-Roman tradition. Julian then took the step that has given him historical immortality by re-establishing religious freedom and promoting the worship of the ancient Gods. Even though Julian promoted pagan worship, he allowed Christians to still practice their faith.

At the Imperial Court of Julian we find the influence of the Neoplatonists Iamblichus, Aedesius, Maximus of Ephesus, Priscus, Chrysanthius, and Sallustius. Although all were not there in person, they were consulted on various occasions in Julian's restoration of the ancient traditions and religion. According to Julian and Sallustius' ideals, the Iamblichan brand of Neoplatonic thought was the blueprint for the restoration of the ancient traditions.

Having reigned for only three years, Julian was struck down in Phrygia while on his Persian campaign. He died there content because "he had heard (in one of his dreams) that it was fate's decree that he should die there."
CHAPTER 2
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF JULIAN

The family unit of Ancient Rome was very important in the administering of societal rules and family codes of decency. Within the family offspring learned what was expected of them and what they could get away with as children or adults. The oldest living male, usually the father or grandfather, had Patria Potestas as the Pater Familias, which was power over the whole family as the head of the household. This included decisions made for the wife, sons, daughters, and slaves about issues such as personal property, land, finances, dowry, life, and death. This was a power that was established by the Roman Constitution, the Twelve Tables, and was honored as sacred through time. This power was usually tempered by the Mater Filia.

The mother of the family had the power and respect of Mater Filia over the household. This was the loyalty to the mother owed by offspring and slaves as the female head of the household and wife to the Pater Familias. If the Pater Familias died and she remained a widow her status and prestige increased. We see this with the mother of the Gracchi, Livia, and Julia, the mother of Caesar.¹

The Pater Familias and the Mater Filia helped to form
the bond of Filial Piety. Filial Piety was loyalty to the family as a whole unit, to which all of the extended household belong. The decisions of the family were still under the power of the Pater Familias, but all family members could be included into the decision making process if he believed it important.

In this family structure we see a system of checks and balances that are used to keep the family moving in the right direction with the morals and ethics of the older generation. Although some of the Imperial families abused this system, it worked reasonably well for families of the Equestrian and Senatorial ranks.

The power of the Pater Familias was not only a control over males, but also females within Roman society. Females were traded as a commodity from family to family for dowries and control of their potential offspring. We see this employed by Constantius in giving his sister Helena (d. A.D. 360) to Julian in marriage. Although this was a rough position to be placed in, Roman women managed to use the tactics of deception, lying, and secrecy used by Ancient Greek women to survive.

Julian’s family was a reasonably ordinary senatorial family at the time of his birth. He was born in A.D. 331, son to Julius Constantius and Basilina. Julian spoke, in his Misopogon, of how tragedy struck his life early:

After giving birth to me her first and only child, [she] died a few months later, snatched away while she was still
a young girl. At the tender age of a few months Julian lost his mother and was to be cared for by an Imperial Nutrix until the age of seven. In modern terms a Nutrix is a nursemaid or nanny.

Julian's father, eldest brother, and cousins were all killed when he was the age of six in A.D. 337. This latest round of Imperial purging, which Constantine "the Great" employed on a few occasions during his reign, left Julian with only his elder brother Gallus. The family unit of the Pater Familias and the Mater Filia was no longer in Julian's life. The young prince was then, as Julian states, "handed over to him after my seventh year". The him that Julian refers to is a man named Mardonius (c. A.D. 305-c.370).

From this point on for the next five years, Mardonius was entrusted with the total care of Julian. Mardonius was an hereditary slave to the family of Julian's mother. He had been brought up and educated by Basilina's father to teach her classical literature and the works of the ancient poets. Julian and Mardonius would become very close and Julian mentioned him throughout his works in endearing remembrances. Mardonius suckled Julian on the ancients and the ancients thus pulsed through his veins until his dying breath. Julian revealed his early natural inclination towards the pagan ideals in his Hymn to King Helios:

From my childhood an extraordinary longing for the rays of the god penetrated deep into my soul; and from my earliest years my mind was so completely swayed by the light that illumines the heavens that not only did I
desire to gaze intently at the sun, but whenever I walked abroad in the night season, when the firmament was clear and cloudless, I abandoned all else without exception and gave myself up to the beauties of the heavens; nor did I understand what anyone might say to me, nor heed what I was doing myself. I was considered to be over-curious about these matters and to pay too much attention to them, and people went so far as to regard me as an astrologer when my beard had only just begun to grow.6

This respect and admiration for the ancients gave Julian an inner peace and power that he was destined to be a man of greatness in much the same manner as his ancient heroes. The support system of the Imperial army, within the brotherhood of the cult of Mithras beginning in A.D. 355 that he was initiated into in 350/351 in Ephesus, allowed Julian to psychologically and philosophically intertwine the Mithraic and Neoplatonic traditions into one within his everyday life and actions.

The deaths and isolation in the formative years of Julian's life also play a major impact on his character. He bonded emotionally and intellectually to Mardonius and the ways of the ancients. This was contrary to many of the upper class families of the period who had taken the road of Christianity. The basic education of Saint Basil (c. A.D. 330-379) and Saint Gregory of Nazianus (A.D. 329-389) were the same as that of Julian - in fact they studied together briefly in Athens prior to A.D. 355 - but there was no outside reinforcement of the changing culture given to Julian during his years at Macellum (342-348). Not only that, but the only Christians that Julian had social intercourse on a continuous
basis with were the family of the Emperor Constantius. Constantine "the Great" and his offspring were not very virtuous by any Christian or ancient standard. The family, as a whole, lied, cheated, and killed not only others, but their own family members. Julian viewed Constantine as a greedy, non-pious, lowly educated man of extravagance and excesses. The sons of Constantine were equally as contemptible.

The form of Neoplatonism propounded by the Emperor Julian was a combination of many different lines of thought. We can see that Julian was not only a product of his time, but a man searching for structure and security in the traditions of the Greek and Roman past. His revival of Platonic and Neoplatonic thought came at a crucial time not only for the pagans, who had been out of power essentially since the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313, but also to the Christians because of the Arian controversy. The Nicean Creed of A.D. 325, whose council was called and presided over by the Emperor Constantine, established the Christian "Trinity" as having three equal parts of the whole while being "one godhead." In A.D. 381 the re-promulgation of an official version of the Christian "Trinity" was needed because the Emperor Constantius (Constantine's son) and Valens supported the Arian point of view that Christ was a created being and therefore not divine. The official Christian trinity views the equality of God the Father, God the Son (Christ), and God the Holy Spirit being
equal and part of one substance.

The Emperor Julian, in his Neoplatonic thought, asserted that there were "three gods in one godhead." All three gods were equal (Zeus, Hades, and Helios-Serapis) and performed on the same level (the Intelligible or Intellectual world) while the Christian trinity operated on three different levels while simultaneously being the same substance. Julian may have been drawn to the Neoplatonic ideal out of a reactionary point of view to the Christian trinity. The psychology of the Neoplatonic or pagan model allowed the young Julian to incorporate his Mithraic beliefs, which contained similar doctrines to Christianity, and worship into the same philosophical and religious system.

The beliefs of the Mithraic cult, Christianity, and Neoplatonism went hand-in-hand in many respects. A psychological example is the thought that self-control and not doing things to excess were virtuous. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121-180) practiced this and was admired as a great Stoic. The roots of this ideal are within all three subsequent points of view Julian incorporates into his psychology.

Psychologically he was an individual that had his liveliness taken from him at an early age. The death of his mother (shortly after his birth), his father, his brothers at the hands of his cousins and uncles must have been devastating. Julian had no firm Pater Familias influence upon
which to draw strength, fear, advice or guidance. His incarceration by Constantius in a fortress at Macellum, along with his brother Gallus, for six years shows family strain and fear. It is surprising that Julian was not a ruthless, egomaniacal, persecuting Emperor that did nothing but kill as was his family trait. He was a temporary calm in the storm of religious, political, and economic troubles of the fourth century Roman Empire.
CHAPTER 3

THE ROMAN EMPIRE OF THE THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES A.D.

A mere ghost of the greatness that it once had been, the Roman Empire of the third and into the fourth century was economically, politically, and socially unstable. Throughout the third century chaos was normal. Between A.D. 285-360 stability was created through the reigns of Diocletian (A.D. 285-305), Constantine (A.D. 312-337), and Constantius (A.D. 337-360). The instability within the governmental system affected all phases and strata of society. The generation of the Emperor Julian was brought up in a turbulent time of constant change and uncertainty throughout society. Symptoms of this turmoil become evident in the edicts, actions, and thoughts of the Roman rulers from A.D. 200 to the time of Julian.

The Roman economy, starting in approximately A.D. 200, consisted of two main components. These principal components were commerce and taxes. Regulated by laws, commerce was not restricted nor confined to the bidding of any given emperor. Although this was true, commerce was run chiefly by the Imperial government. The economic factors that increased instability during the later Roman Empire were increased taxes, decreased commerce, and increased inflation. Roman
citizens and provincials were sources for taxes used in the Imperial treasury. These funds provided pay and materials for the army, fire brigades, mail service, public works, grain or corn doles, and various functions provided to the Imperial family. Ammianus Marcellinus stated the following about the tax relief Julian enacted on the Gallic region:

When he first entered those parts [A.D. 355], he found that 25 pieces of gold [aureus] were demanded by way of tribute from every one as a poll-[tax] and land-tax; but when he left [A.D. 360], seven only for full satisfaction of all duties.¹

Taxes were out of control because many emperors were more involved in enriching themselves than sustaining a stable economic state.

From the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, known as Caracalla (Emperor A.D. 211-217), Roman citizenship was not a selective or prestigious honor bestowed upon individuals for years of meritorious service to the Roman state or high birth. Instead, citizenship was converted from a valued commodity of the few into a watered down right or obligation of the many as a vehicle for further revenue, i.e. tax revenue. In the famous Constitutio Antoninina of A.D. 212, Caracalla states:

Accordingly, I grant Roman citizenship to all aliens throughout the world except the dediticii, local citizenship remaining intact. For it is proper that the multitude should not only help carry all the burdens, but should also now be included in my victory.²

Every male born within the confines of Roman territory and the provinces was considered a Roman citizen and taxable. Taxes
were doubled from five to ten percent on manumission of
slaves, legacies, bequests, and tax-exempt status was
abolished.\textsuperscript{3} The Emperor Septimius Severus (reigned A.D. 193-
211), the father of Caracalla, stated to his sons upon his
deathbed one important piece of advice: "enrich the soldiers,
despise all others."\textsuperscript{4} It is very apparent Caracalla took the
advice of his father to heart and led himself toward a quicker
demise and the Empire into a sharper decline.

The tax practices used against the citizens and
attitudes toward the army were commonplace from Septimius
Severus through the reign of Julian. The traditional
conservative moral and ethical fiber of the Romans was being
eroded at a quicker rate than ever before. Pandering by the
Severan Emperors (A.D. 193-235), and support of coups,
elevated the Imperial army to a level where they were in
essence the supreme ruler of the Roman State. Civil careers
and Senatorial rank no longer held power within the Empire
during and after the Severan Emperors, but in turn, military
service and Equestrian rank were the centers of power.\textsuperscript{5}

Commerce suffered immensely from taxes levied upon all
of the later Empire. The tax funds were used to fill the
public treasury for mainly political and military interests.
Taxes were placed upon individuals and levied heavily against
merchants. As a result, private contractors and merchants
from a considerable sector of the economy were eliminated.\textsuperscript{6}
The economy run by the state through private industry was
phased down to a bare minimum. In turn, wealthy merchant landowners withdrew themselves and their products from marketplaces becoming totally self-sufficient in the suburban areas and provinces of the Empire. The act of withdrawing many goods from the market further created instability of the third century economy since the government could not provide all needed services. In an attempt to keep individuals from consolidating their resources and utilizing their skills collectively, the Emperor Diocletian (reigned A.D. 285-305) enacted reforms that tied individuals and their offspring into hereditary occupations. These occupations included agriculture, which essentially tied them to the land, and local government offices. The revised government of Diocletian furthered the metamorphosis of the tenant farmer into the serf of the Middle Ages.

High inflation during the third and fourth centuries indicate the level of financial decay to which the Roman Empire had fallen. A major factor was the devaluation of currency by the minting of outlandish amounts of money by various emperors. People hoarded coins and decreased the number in circulation. The emperors did not answer the shortage of coins for the general populace, but they did it to enrich themselves and their heirs. This created a type of action-reaction cycle that forced inflation higher. The poor were left within the cities to become poorer, as the rich moved to the provinces. In the larger cities grain and corn
doles were recommenced beginning with Septimius Severus and continued through Julian regardless of the political outlook of the individual emperor. As a result of the economic hardships, crime increased and the traditional Roman morals and ethics decreased among the general population. Nowhere could this be seen more prevalently than in the ranks of the military.

Military coups against the Emperor were not unusual from the assassination of the Emperor Commodus on December 31, A.D. 192 until the end of the Western Empire in A.D. 476. Succession was usually attained by the man with most power in the military. As compared to the Empire through the reign of Marcus Aurelius (d. A.D. 180), the ambition of lower ranking individuals within the Roman military and the killing of Senatorial families provided for no internal balance of politics, wealth, or power. Individuals linked themselves to high ranking members of the military, typically their commanding officers, in hopes of their becoming the next Emperor. This eroded the allegiance to the current Emperor and State, that Augustus (reigned 27 B.C.- A.D. 14) had demanded of the legions, and further undermined the values that created the superstructure of Roman society.

In an attempt to curb the downward spiral of the Empire, Diocletian restructured the government and society. Along with his tax, inflation, and price cap legislation Diocletian devised a system where four rulers operated
simultaneously in the position of Emperor. There were two Augusti and two Caesars. The Augusti ruled as co-emperors and the Caesars ruled as vice-emperors in different regions of the Empire. The Caesars attained the position of Emperor upon the retirement or death of the Augusti. This tetrarchy was established and regions divided in A.D. 293:

Forthwith he [Diocletian] proclaimed as co-emperor Maximian [A.D. 286] a faithful friend... [The rise of usurpers and foreign attacks decided the two emperors] to select as Caesar Julius Constantius and Galerius Maximianus, surnamed Armentarius, and to associate with themselves in marriage... As the burden of the wars mentioned above became heavier, a sort of division of the Empire was made: all countries beyond the Gallic Alps were entrusted to Constantius; Maximian had Africa and Italy [and Spain]; Galerius, Illyria as far as the Black Sea; and Diocletian retained all the rest.11

This was an attempt by Diocletian to prevent the military anarchy of Imperial succession in the third century from carrying into the fourth century. A stable government with an Imperial ruler in four different areas of the Empire was also an attempt to prevent further attacks on the frontiers.

The borders of the Empire were very expansive and constantly forced inward on all fronts. From the Principate through the period of Julian the Persians, Goths, Visigoths, Vandals, and various Germanic tribes attacked the borders of the Empire at any given time. Julian was successful in unifying the Empire under his sole rule12 and in repelling the tribes of the Gallic Region in the West, but the Persians were still forcing the borders inward in the east. With the ever changing borders and constant contact with the east,
opportunities were abundant for exchange of ideas and adaptation of customs.

Worship of the Greco-Roman pantheon was a waning tradition by A.D. 360. More monotheistic types of "mystery religions," such as Mithrasism and Christianity, supplanted the old public traditions through personalized religion. No longer persecuted, Christianity became the dominant religion of the Imperial Families and Senatorial aristocracy during the fourth century. The Edict of Milan in A.D. 312 opened the door for mystery religions to flourish. A once small religious sect, Christianity, blossomed into a full fledged religion with the assistance of Imperial faith and funding from the years A.D. 312-360. Although there were other prominent religious factions such as Zoroastrianism and the Pantheon of Greco-Roman Gods, Christianity appeared to have the most appeal. In the fourth century A.D. it was within the wealthy educated class of society, as opposed to its humble beginnings in the poor and uneducated sectors during the two previous centuries, that Christianity thrived. Julian's study under a Christian teacher named Heracleios, is an example of the phenomenon of upper class families moving away from the ancient public religious traditions towards a personal mystery religion in the form of Christianity.

The Emperor Julian was born into an aristocratic family, the Constanii, that had him educated as a Christian alongside some of his later Christian detractors. His
education was a combination of the new Christian religious
doctrines with the literature of the Greek, and selected
Roman, classics. Many of the doctrines of the Christian
church were retrieved from the ideas of ancient pagan mono-
and polytheistic thinkers and incorporated into the Christian
schema. Socially, the cultural ideas and ideals used were
widespread throughout the Roman Empire. Christianity borrowed
many Neoplatonic themes and doctrines in initially formulating
its religious philosophy.

Saint Augustine (A.D. 354-430), who basically wrote
the doctrines of the early Christian church using a
combination of Platonism and Neoplatonism, was educated in the
manner of a son of an Aristocratic Roman family. His ideals
were viewed as the pinnacle of Christian doctrine from the
late fourth century until Saint Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1224-
1274) revised many of Augustine’s assertions through the newly
discovered, in the western tradition, Aristotelian point of
view.
CHAPTER 4
THE RELIGIONS THAT AFFECTED JULIAN

After the Battle of Milvian Bridge and the defeat of Maxentius (d. A.D. 312), Constantine "The Great" became Emperor of the Roman Empire in the West. Licinius (d. A.D. 325) was Emperor in the East, after his defeat of Maximinus (d. A.D. 313) at Adrianople and Tarsus in A.D. 313, until A.D. 324. In A.D. 313, the Edict of Milan, agreed to by Constantine and Licinius, guaranteed freedom of worship to all persons. In the West, Constantine gave the Christians confiscated land and money previously taken from them by the Imperial government. Constantine showed favor to Christianity through gifts of Imperial land, buildings, and funds. By promoting Christianity, Constantine shunned the ancient traditions of the Greco-Roman pantheon which further destabilized the core of the ancient belief structure of Roman society.

Christianity was the favored religion of the Imperial family from A.D. 313-360 with the death of Constantius. The Emperor Julian renounced his Christianity in 350/351. Although he did not publicly do this until after the death of Constantius (d. 360), Julian practiced and developed the ideals of Mithras and Neoplatonism within the confines of his
Imperial army.

Compared to the Greco-Roman pantheon, the evolving forms of Christianity at the time of Julian were still in their infancy in terms of a philosophical foundation of beliefs and application. Saint Augustine's writings, beginning around A.D. 382, created, defended, and propagated the "official" philosophy of Christianity against pagan attacks. The lack of fully developed philosophical materials prior to Saint Augustine, although there was an intellectual tradition, may have been a factor for Julian not to remain a Christian when the philosophical tenets of the Greeks and Romans were well established and respected. Another possible factor of Julian's renunciation of Christianity was the actions of the Christians closest to him in the form of the Imperial family. Constantius and his siblings were hypocritical, killers of his immediate family, and may have had plans to kill him. Julian stated in the following when he was summoned to live in the Imperial palace in 355:

But this I must not omit to tell here, how I submitted and consented to dwell under the same roof with those whom I knew to have ruined my whole family, and who, I suspected, would before long plot against myself also.¹

Christianity had been around for over three centuries before Julian became sole Emperor in A.D. 360. During this time it was persecuted and eventually praised by various Emperors. Not until the late fourth century did Christianity really develop a total philosophical framework forced by the Arian controversy. Arius of Alexandria (c. A.D. 260-336)
proposed, in A.D. 319, the idea that Jesus Christ was not
divine, but a created being. Many believed this doctrine and
the church splintered into various factions. Constantine
presided over the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 in an effort
to reconcile the two main factions: the Arians and the
Orthodox Catholics. The Council determined that the Father,
the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit were all divine in
nature. The decree stated "Father and Son were composed of
one substance." In fact the Emperors Constantius and Valens
(reigned A.D. 364-378) supported the Arian viewpoint while
Julian believed in the pagan gods. The decree was re-
promulgated again at the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 381.

The most widespread pagan religion of the time was the
cult of Mithras. Mithrasism was the worship of the divine Sun
God, or as the Latins and most Roman Emperors knew him, Sol
Invictus, or Mithras. Mithras was the ancient Indo-Iranian
god of truth, light, middleness, and the plighted world. Within Persian Zoroastrianism, he was the ally of Ahura Mazda,
the good power, and the foe of Ahriman, the evil power.
Mithras was often depicted as a bull slayer symbolizing the
conquest of death by life, i.e. afterlife over death. This
oriental mystery religion was very popular with the army and
the merchant class of the fourth century A.D. After his
initiation into the mystery cult while in Ephesus in A.D.
350/351, Julian took Helios-Mithras as the head of his
Neoplatonic system.
Mithrasism was well known throughout the Empire by the time of Julian. Within the army, Mithraic sacrifice was basically for the elite and wealthy officers because of its monetary demands on its initiates. In A.D. 355 Julian came to the Imperial Army instilled with the ideals from Mardonius and the ancients. For the years 355-357, Julian was not a power in the decisions nor did he have the respect of the men as he stated:

At the time, then, I inspired their ridicule, but a little later their suspicion, and then their jealousy was inflamed to the utmost.\(^6\)

As General and Caesar, Julian was in control of all matters in Gaul, only after 357. Julian longed for something more than the murdering hypocritical Christians of his family offered. He wanted to belong to the society that he was so accustomed to reading about, and the one instilled in his mind by Mardonius. The army and Cult of Mithras gave him an opportunity that allowed his Neoplatonic ideas and pagan tendencies to flourish. For the first time in his life, Julian had a support network, or "miniature society," of people who would follow his ideas and thoughts out of respect not only for Julian, but for their ancestors, and the God Mithras and his promise of afterlife.\(^7\)
The military phase of Julian's life reaches from his elevation to the Caesarship in October 355 until his death as Emperor on the battlefield in June 363. Within these years, the period from 355 until the Battle of Strasbourg (Argentoratum - Fig. 1) in 357 was very significant. This short span of time had a powerful impact on the impressionable philosophy student's later actions. The army was not a profession Julian chose for himself, but one thrust upon him not only by his birth but by the plans of his cousin, the Emperor Constantius and his wife, the Empress Eusebia. The Constanii family had only one lawful male heir to the Imperial throne, Julian, since Constantius and Eusebia had no children. This was a result of the successive purges of the Imperial family carried out by Constantine I, Constantius, his brothers, and the Imperial Army since 337.

The Emperor Constantius was wary of bringing Julian to an Imperial office, but the Empress Eusebia persuaded him he could utilize the successful or unsuccessful actions of Julian to his advantage. Eusebia was "extremely well educated and wiser than women usually are" and had great sway over Constantius. Eusebia believed:
Fig. 1. Map of Gaul, Germany, and the Rhine River Region of the Later Roman Empire during A.D. 200-400. This was the region Julian was sent to rule over as Caesar in A.D. 355. Reprinted from Ammianus Marcellinus, The Later Roman Empire: A.D. 354-378, (London, England: Penguin Books, 1987), 501.
He [Julian] is a young man of simple character, who has spent his whole life as a student, and his complete lack of experience in worldly matters will make him more suitable than anyone else, for either he will be lucky and his successes will be ascribed to the emperor, or he will make a mistake and get killed and Constantius will be free of any imperial successors.²

Therefore, the decision was that Julian be made Caesar. Julian was crowned as Caesar on November 6, 355 in Milan by the Emperor Constantius.³ After the coronation of Julian, Constantius sent him to calm the insurrections of the Franks and Alamanni in Gaul. Between November 6 and November 30 Julian was given the hand of the maiden Helena, the sister of the Emperor Constantius, in marriage. On December 1, 355, Julian, Helena, and three hundred-sixty⁵ members of a personal military bodyguard were sent to help defend the Gallic regions of the Roman Empire. A combination of popular opinion and Ammianus Marcellinus' own theory about Julian receiving the title of Caesar may give an idea of what surrounded the action taken by Constantius. Ammianus recorded that:

A rumor, however, was generally current that Julian had been appointed, not to relieve the distresses of Gaul but to ensure his own destruction in a fierce war, while he was still supposed to be a novice, unlikely to be able to stand even the noise of arms.⁶

The power of the Caesar was second only to that of the Augustus in the governmental system of the Empire after Diocletian in 305. Constantius did not allow Julian to use the powers of Caesar because he was sent to Gaul purely as figurehead and not a military commander or king. Julian stated in his Letter to the Athenians:
And I was sent not as commander of the garrisons there but rather as a subordinate of the generals there stationed... they were to watch me as vigilantly as they did the enemy, for fear I should attempt to cause a revolt... about the summer solstice [A.D. 357] he [Constantius] allowed me to join the army and to carry about with me his dress and image. And indeed he had both said and written that he was not giving the Gauls a king but one who should convey to them his image.7

Julian, to this point in his life, has been orphaned, jailed, in protective custody, and used as an imperial icon by his cousin the Emperor Constantius. Even when he was placed into an Imperial office of Caesar he was looked upon with suspicious eyes and given a title purely in name. Julian was placed into a position where he was a naive twenty-four year old with no power to defend himself from the ravages of the Imperial court or army intrigue. He walked a thin line between pleasing the Emperor, his officers, the colonists he was instructed to protect, his wife, and most of all protecting his own life. Julian was in the most subservient of positions while being in the office below only the Emperor. The psychology of Julian was of a philosopher and not a warrior, but that demeanor soon changed. Secretly, over the winter of 355/356 at his winter quarters in Vienna (Vienne - Fig. 1), Julian collected around him volunteers made up of both infantry and cavalry to bolster the scant bodyguard given him by Constantius.

The year of 356 was one of new experiences for the recently crowned Caesar. During the winter of 355/356 Julian was very busy in Vienna (Vienne) reading and performing minor
governmental functions. Early in June of 356 word reached Vienna that the Germans had laid siege to the ancient city of Autun (Augustodunum - Fig. 1). Julian, ready for the challenge marched his troops toward Autun (Augustodunum). Ammianus described the actions of Julian and the Germans in the following:

Without putting aside his cares, and disregarding the servile flattery with which his courtiers tried to turn him to pleasure and luxury, after making adequate preparation he reached Autun on the 24th of June, like some experienced general, distinguished for power and policy, intending to fall upon the savages, who were straggling in various directions, whenever chance should give opportunity.8

Julian's first military experience was a success. The enemy retreated for fear of a major conflict upon sight of the Caesar and his troops. This auspicious beginning launched Julian on the road toward conquest of the Gallic region and the entire Roman Empire within four years time. Although he still held no power in the army other than his title, the Caesar prepared to set off for Troyes (Tricasae - Fig. 1) pleased with his first victory.

In order to reach Troyes (Tricasae), Julian had to choose a route that was passable and presented little problems to his forces. After consultation with his superiors, Julian chose the most direct route which was also the most dangerous. To keep risk at a minimum and avoid delay, Julian took only two detachments. One detachment consisted of Curiassiers, mounted warriors, while the other was comprised of Ballistarii, the equivalent of modern artillery and
crossbowmen. On the way to Troyes (Tricasae) Julian stopped at Auxerre (Autessiodurum - Fig. 1) to refresh himself and his troops. Ammianus described the remainder of Julian's journey and the actions that portrayed the subtle transformation of Julian's demeanor from timid philosopher to successful general with his pitched battles against the Germans. Ammianus stated:

When troops of savages kept making attacks on him, he sometimes, fearing that they might be in greater force, strengthened his flanks and reconnoitered; sometimes he took advantage of suitable ground, easily ran them down and trampled them under foot, capturing some who in terror gave themselves up, while the remainder exerted all their powers of speed in an effort to escape. 9

Julian and his troops reached the gates of the walled town of Troyes (Tricasae) in such short time there was "anxious debate" by the inhabitants about whether the army should be allowed in for fear they were the enemy. After being greeted by the town's citizens, the Caesar and his troops stayed for a short rest and then departed for the headquarters of his superior, General Marcellus (c. A.D. 310-c.370), at Reims (Remi - Fig. 1). There plans for the remainder of the campaign season were formulated by the Generals Marcellus and Ursicinus (d. A.D. 378). Julian offered his opinions, but they were probably pushed aside because of the personal ambitions of the two generals. Julian stated his own demeanor in his Letter to the Athenians:

I in my turn was thought to be by no means capable or talented as a general, merely because I had shown myself mild and moderate. 10
The remainder of the campaign season in 356 was a success for the Roman army in the Gallic provinces. The two most important recoveries were the town of Brumath (Brotomagnum - Fig. 1) and the fortress city of Cologne (Colonia Agrippina - Fig. 1) on the Rhine River. Julian, acting in the office of Caesar, negotiated truces with the Germans and fortified strategic points along the Rhine. The Caesar also learned an important military lesson in the battle following his stay at Reims (Remi): Defense against ambush.¹¹

Winter quarters for Julian and his troops were to be at Sens (Senones - Fig. 1). As it turned out, most of his troops wintered with Marcellus, leaving Julian in a quandary:

I returned to winter quarters [at Sens], and there I was exposed to the utmost danger. For I was not even allowed to assemble the troops; this power was entrusted to another, while I was quartered apart with only a few soldiers, and then, since the neighboring towns begged for my assistance, I assigned to them the greater part of the force that I had, and so I myself was left isolated.¹²

Customarily, battle was suspended during winter months and the warring parties rested. The Germans broke this custom in the winter of 356/357, as the Romans had often also done, to lay siege to the city of Sens (Senones). The Germans learned of the reduced forces protecting the Caesar and the city of Sens (Senones) from deserters. The siege lasted one month and Julian showed himself as a capable leader and diligent planner. Ammianus described the siege and Julian’s actions:

So, having shut the city gates and strengthened a weak section of the walls, Julian could be seen day and night
with his soldiers among the bulwarks and battlements, boiling over with rage and fretting because however often he tried to sally forth, he was hampered by the scanty numbers of the troops at hand."

During this siege, Julian made an indelible imprint in two different fashions psychologically on the townspeople and soldiers around him. The first was his ability and diligent efforts to protect all inhabitants of the town at the risk of his own life. The second impression came from his mannerisms and actions of non-excess. Julian proved himself a "common" man that would endure personal hardships in the same manner as any Roman footsoldier or citizen. His eating of ordinary soldier's rations and sleeping under a coarse woolen blanket, known as a Susurna, endeared him to all. Julian appeared to be a common man in an Imperial position with the intelligence and wisdom of the ancients.

The siege of Sens (Senones) lasted for one month and no Roman reinforcements were sent to aid the town. The General Marcellus and the bulk of the Gallic Legions were not far away, but did not respond to reports of the siege. The Emperor Constantius was so displeased by this action when Julian reported it to him that he "deprived [Marcellus] . . . of his command and superseded." In 357, Marcellus was called by Constantius to Milan to face charges. There Marcellus talked badly about Julian and was transferred, as was the other Gallic General Ursicinlus, to the East. The charges levied by Marcellus were of such damaging nature that Julian sent Eutherius, his grand chamberlain, to counter the charges
of his ambitions toward the throne. Julian was completely vindicated.

At the beginning of the campaign season of 357 Julian found himself subordinate to and at the will of two new Generals named Severus and Barbatio (d. 359/360). Severus was a commander of the cavalry hand picked by Constantius for his ability: he proved a helpful ally to Julian. General Barbatio on the other hand, an infantry commander of 25,000 men, was tied to the murder of Julian’s brother Gallus (d. 355) and had no use for Julian either. The plan for the first engagement of the season was to catch the Germans in a pincer movement in which the army of Barbatio and Julian would join together. The Germans slipped between the two armies’ encampments and attempted to take the city of Lyons (Lugundum - Fig. 1).

The advances of the Germans were repelled by closing the city gates and fortifying the surrounding walls. As a result, the Germans began pillaging the outlying areas. Word of the attack at Lyons was almost immediately dispatched to Julian. The Caesar deployed three squadrons of light cavalry to watch three of the four roads leading from Lyons in an attempt to block the marauding hordes from fleeing with their booty. The fourth road was watched by the army of Barbatio. As a result, many Germans escaped along the road watched by the troops of Barbatio and none by the routes protected by the forces of Julian. On another occasion shortly after this
engagement Julian requested seven boats from Barbatio to attack the Germans on islands within the Rhine, but was denied them because Barbatio had the boats burned. The Imperial army viewed Barbatio's actions in the following manner:

Whether he did this like an empty-headed fool, or at the emperor's [Constantius] bidding brazenly perpetrated his many abominable acts, has remained obscure up to this time.

On every occasion Barbatio tried to destroy or severely hamper Julian. Upon hearing of the debacle at Lyons, Constantius transferred Barbatio during the winter of 357 and a few years later had him executed for an alleged plot against the throne.

Julian, after his run in with Barbatio at the battle at Lyons, still wanted to take the islands in the Rhine. His plan was the following fashion:

[By] wading through the shallows, now swimming on their shields, which they put under them like canoes, came to a neighboring island and landing there they butchered everyone they found, men and women alike, without distinction of age, like so many sheep.

As a result of this plan the Romans captured all of the islands in the Rhine River. By consolidating these islands under Roman control, Julian hedged off the possibility of further attacks because the Germans usually launched their attacks on either side of the Rhine River from these islands. The once "mild and moderate" philosophy student, Prince Julian, was metamorphosizing into a calculating military commander, Julian Caesar. Julian's ability to take life or give clemency as the situation permitted helped form and reinforce his convictions towards the Empire. This may have

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been the turning point that Constantius observed in making his
decision allowing Julian to be commander of the Gallic forces.
The Caesar Julian now became not only Caesar in name, but
Caesar in actuality. He had shown himself in negotiations
with enemies, conquered peoples, and on the battlefield as
competent in all phases. In his Letter to the Athenians
Julian recorded his elevation:

Constantius thinking that there would be some improvement,
but not that so great a transformation would take place in
the affairs of Gaul, handed over to me in the beginning of
the spring [A.D. 357] the command of all the forces.  

The Caesar and his troops next took the town of
Saverne (Tres Tabernae - Fig. 1), on the west bank of the
Rhine River south-west of Brumath (Brotomagnum - Fig. 1) and
north-west of Strasbourg (Argentoratum). Julian and his
troops rebuilt the fortress there and fortified the outpost.
While in Saverne (Tres Tabernae), Julian heard of a massive
German force that crossed from the east to west side of the
Rhine and gathered near the city of Strasbourg (Argentoratum)
consisting of seven of the German Kings including
Chonodomarius, Vestralpus, Urius, Ursicinus, Serapio,
Suomarius, and Hortarius. A deserter from the Scutarii,
known as the targeteers, to the Germans "informed them that
only 13,000 soldiers had stayed with Julian." Julian allowed
this figure to circulate because it underestimated his forces
and gave overwhelming numbers, estimated at 35,000, to the
Germanic troops. Therefore, the Germans had no reason to
flee. King Chonodomarius was confident because he had
previously defeated equal forces of Romans under the command of Decentius Caesar and the Germans won a pitched battle over Barbatio.24

The Germanic Kings sent delegates to the Caesar stating he was to leave the area they had "won by valor and sword."25 Julian was not a threat to them because he was not a battle hardened man with a reputation of valor and his forces were supposedly inferior in numbers. The small clashes in which he had succeeded did not impress the Germanic Kings nor place fear into their hearts. Julian was viewed as an inferior foe both in experience and numbers. The trap was set and Julian intended to spring it by taking advantage of the false sense of security in the minds of the Germans. In his character Julian now resembled the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, one of his heroes:

The new emperor was a philosopher but he could also be a man of action. That was just what philosophy was designed to equip him for.26 Julian was showing himself to be a man of action and that philosophy prepared him to overcome all obstacles in his Imperial pursuits.

The Caesar's plan was to catch the German forces with their backs to the Rhine River so that escape to their rear was futile. Julian and Severus constructed and executed their battle plan to perfection at the ensuing Battle of Strasbourg (Argentoratum). In my opinion, this battle was the defining moment in the early military career of Julian. The fortress
of Saverne (Tres Tabernae) and city of Strasbourg (Argentoratum) were roughly twenty-one Roman miles apart which equaled one to one and one-half days of march that the Romans traversed in one day.

Upon reaching the outskirts of town Julian halted the troops suggesting they pitch camp and rest for the evening. Their march had been quick and they were tired, but the troops wanted to battle the Germans that day since they were prepared to fight. One of the standard bearers proclaimed the unity of the troops and their confidence in the Caesar. As a result of this outpouring of support, Julian and Severus put their attack plan in motion.

Julian and Severus planned to keep the German troops backed up against the Rhine River and out-flank them on either side. The strength of the Roman cavalry was set to the left of the formation, led by Severus, facing the Germans’ right, where a marsh created a natural hazard. The Germans planned to ambush the cavalry of Severus in the marsh, but were unsuccessful. The Roman right consisted of a lesser contingent of cavalry under one of Severus’ subordinates. Julian was in control of the entire army, but concentrated on the infantry.

The initial German attempt to outflank and ambush Severus’ cavalry was thwarted and forced the Germans into a defensive posture on their right flank. The German left advanced through the Roman right cavalry into the reserve
troops, scattering the Roman cavalry. In turn, the German left then attempted to breech the infantry of the Romans on their right. The Roman infantry, battling with cavalry on either side and being attacked by the German cavalry on the Roman right, were doing serious damage to the Germans because of their tortoise shell defense and straight ahead advance. The Germans were superior in physical size and strength, but the Romans were superior in their equipment and tactics.

As the battle wore on, the cavalry of the Roman right that had crumbled regrouped under the leadership of the Caesar and pushed back the Germans. The whole of the Roman army advanced slowly towards the Rhine. As the bodies piled high all along the battlefield, the Germans and their Kings started to flee. The only direction the Roman army would allow them to go was rearward into the Rhine. The Romans pursued the Germans to the banks of the Rhine, but were instructed by their commanders not to follow into the river. The Germans were butchered when they turned back toward the field of battle, or pelted "with various kinds of darts" as they fought the swift running current of the Rhine.

As a result of Julian's plan, the Germans were massacred and the Romans victorious. Ammianus Marcellinus described the results of the battle:

So the battle was thus finished by the favor of the supreme deity; the day had already ended and the trumpet sounded; the soldiers, very reluctant to be recalled... Now there fell in this battle on the Roman side 243 soldiers and four high officers... of the Alamanni there were counted 6,000 corpses lying on the field, and heaps
of dead, impossible to reckon, were carried off by the waves of the river.\textsuperscript{30}

The Battle of Strasbourg was a rout for the forces of the Germans and a huge victory for the young military commander Julian. The Romans killed 6,000 Germans on land and were speculated to have killed at least another 2,000\textsuperscript{31} that washed up on the shore of the Rhine. Losses to the Romans were exactly 247 men. Julian was a success and heralded by his troops, for the first but not the last time, as Augustus.\textsuperscript{32}

Although Julian was never formally trained to be a general, he showed a keen ability and masterful utilization of the weapons of war from the outset of his sole command in 357. His military successes were unimagined by the Emperor Constantius, Empress Eusebia, or anyone in the Imperial court. Julian probably read the campaigns of Alexander The Great (356-323 B.C.)\textsuperscript{33} and certainly read the Gallic and Civil Wars by Julius Caesar (c.100-44 B.C.) during the winter of 355/356. It is evident that Julian utilized the warring and peace making techniques of two of the greatest generals of the ancient world. As a result of his victories between 357 and 360, Julian wrote Commentaries on his wars in Gaul, in the manner of Caesar, that have since been lost.

The transformation of Julian from the "mild and moderate" philosophy student into the military commander of the Gallic forces was complete. Julian showed himself from the winter of 355 through the Battle of Strasbourg (Argentoratum) in 357 as a competent negotiator,
administrator, commander, tactician, and overall leader. The study of philosophy prepared him for the toughest tasks of his life and he utilized his resources to their utmost. Julian was a moderate, cautious, reasonable, logical, decisive, and superstitious leader of an army devoted to the Cult of Mithras. The Mithraic Cult was a major factor in the cohesiveness of Julian and his troops. Julian’s commitment to the Cult of Mithras was so strong and visually evident, through his continual sacrifices of "hecatombs" of bulls, that common perception of his devotion appeared to be a strong commitment to the members of the Imperial army. Although this may have been true on the Physical level, on the psychological and philosophical levels he was devoted exclusively to the God Mithras as the Neoplatonic One. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus, viewed through the Cult of Mithras, was expounded by the Caesar in such a subtle manner at this point that there was no major problem. It is not until later, when he attempted to distribute his popular form of Neoplatonism to the general population, that Julian was viewed as an "Apostate" of the Christian faith.
CHAPTER 6
THE NEOPATONIC INFLUENCES

The philosophical thought of Julian is a conglomerate of many different strains of Neoplatonism. Plotinus (A.D. 205-270) and his thoughts were the basis of all strains, but utilized in different aspects. As the years wore on between Plotinus and Julian's death, A.D. 270-363, Neoplatonic thought became more magical and otherworldly rather than philosophical in content.

The main propagator of the doctrines of Plotinus was Porphyry of Tyre (A.D. 232-305). Porphyry studied in Rome under Plotinus from 263-270 and was editor of The Enneads of Plotinus while writing his own set of fifteen books entitled Against the Christians. He was the successor of Plotinus as the Leader of the Roman School of Neoplatonism. He wrote on many subjects such as mathematics, chronology, history, music, psychology, Homeric criticism, vegetarianism, and metaphysics.¹ Porphyry's metaphysics follow in line with those of Plotinus, but his interest in divination and theurgy are not of Plotinian origin. It is evident from Eunapius' Lives of Sophists that Porphyry's thought of oracles and their information were of great importance from his youth.² Porphyry stated that "men ought to pay attention to..."
oracles" and that he had "expelled some sort of daemon from a certain bath" with his theurgic practices.

The ideas of Plotinus were brought to the public by Porphyry's excellent oratory skill and his ability to explain complex ideas in general terms. His criticism of Plotinus' Categories can be seen in his replacement of some with those of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). While Plotinus was the metaphysician, Porphyry was the moralist of Neoplatonism. Iamblichus (d. 325), who wrote a book entitled On the Mysteries, was the most influential disciple of Porphyry.

Iamblichus was born in Chalcis in Coele, Syria and was a disciple of Porphyry in Rome. Before his Neoplatonic study, he admired Neo-Pythagorean and Aristotelian philosophy. His Neo-Pythagorean study was at Alexandria and his Aristotelian study was with the Peripatetic Anatolius (c. A.D. 265-c.280), the later Bishop of Laodicea. Iamblichus and Porphyry initially formed a good philosophical relationship that later broke down over their divergent thoughts.

Porphyry, at the time of Iamblichus, believed in a relationship between philosophy and positive rational religion. This belief that the Gods were "impassable," or one was not able to go beyond the Gods because there is nothing higher, was opposed to the theurgic thoughts of his youth. Iamblichus believed and was committed to the implementation of the Theurgic Arts within Neoplatonism. This was the source of the break in their relationship and Iamblichus' reason for
founding the Syrian School of Neoplatonism. Porphyry, as did Plotinus, interpreted the writings of Plato and Aristotle as the most crucial to Neoplatonic doctrine. Iamblichus reinterpreted the Chaldean Oracles as his foundation and integrated them into Neoplatonism with a revived theoretical foundation of polytheism. The new division of the Plotinian Hypostases by Iamblichus shows the culmination of the Greco-Roman Pantheon, through the Mithraic Cult, integrated at various levels and reasserting traditional beliefs within popular culture. Iamblichus’ most important disciple was a man known by the name of Aedesius.

Aedesius was from Cappadocia and a disciple of Iamblichus at his Syrian School of Neoplatonism. Following an oracle he had received in his sleep, Aedesius went into hiding in Cappadocia, upon the death of Iamblichus, because he feared the hostility of the Emperor Constantine (reigned A.D. 313-337). Constantine had previously killed another disciple of Iamblichus, Sopater of Apamea (c. A.D. 330-337). This was because he was accused of using "Magic" or theurgy against the Imperial Court. The word leaked out that Aedesius was in hiding and he was flushed out by many who wanted to study with him. Forced back into the public eye, Aedesius set up a school of Neoplatonism at Pergamum.

Aedesius’ fame attracted the later Emperor Julian to the school at Pergamum. Upon Julian’s accession as sole Augustus in 361, he invited Aedesius and others to join him at
the Imperial Court, but Aedesius was too aged and sent two of his disciples, Chrysanthius and Maximus of Ephesus "The Theurgist," in his place. Aedesius based his form of Neoplatonism on the Chaldean Oracles and the doctrines of Iamblichus. Aedesius was the teacher of the following influential Neoplatonists during the time of Julian: Chrysanthius, Eusebius of Myndus, Priscus (c. A.D. 308-398), Julian, Saturninus Salutius Secundus or Sallustius (c. A.D. 300-375), and Maximus of Ephesus "The Theurgist."

Chrysanthius devoted himself chiefly to the Mystical side of Neoplatonism. He was one of the favorite pupils of Aedesius and upon his advice, Julian took up study with him and a fellow disciple, Maximus "The Theurgist." When Julian became Emperor he invited Chrysanthius to the Imperial Court, but he did not go because of unfavorable omens "and that the gods had informed him of this."6

In his capacity as High Priest of Lydia, Chrysanthius abstained from drastic religious reforms. Although he was a pagan, he remained as High Priest through Christian Emperors until his death. Along with his wife Melite, he was venerated both by Christians and Pagans. Melite worked as an associate with him in the Office of the High Priest. She was also a relative of Eusebius, the biographer of Constantine, which established ties to the Imperial Court.

Maximus of Ephesus "The Theurgist" was the son of a rich and Noble Greco-Roman family. He was a disciple of
Aedesius and is considered perhaps the most important of the followers of Iamblichus for his transmission of Iamblichus' doctrine to the next generation. Julian was directed to Maximus in about 350 by Eusebius, because of Julian’s interest in the Theurgic aspects of Neoplatonism. Maximus exercised great influence over the young and impressionable mind of the 19 year old Julian. Maximus, by careful administration of the omens, attained a high court position when Julian became Emperor. When they met in 350 Julian was told by Maximus, through his theurgic rites, that he would become Emperor. From the beginning in 350 until Julian’s death in 363, Maximus catered to Julian’s love of magic and theurgy.

Maximus has left us nothing written, but his influence and charisma show that he was a powerful man of his time. Eunapius stated, "For both ruler and ruled were entirely devoted to Maximus." He was not interested in logical proof or argument, but he did agree with Eusebius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus in asserting the validity of the second and third figures of the syllogism (i.e. Nous and Logos). He was purely interested in the Mysteries and Theurgic Practice to attain unity with "The One."

A more philosophical Neoplatonist of the time was Sallustius. Sallustius was born Saturninus Salutius Secundus and is known as Salutius, Sallust, Sallustius, and Secundus in inscriptions and Imperial correspondence. The Greek is
"Salutius" and is more often used than the Latin "Sallustius" but in inscriptions he is known as "Secundus." He is identified as the author of the Neoplatonic treatise On the Gods and the World written in 361/362 to complement the treatise Against the Galileans written by the Emperor Julian (Winter 362). This was to be the official view of the Empire under Julian and his Neoplatonic Court.

Sallust was the Proconsul of Africa (c.345-355) and Praetorian Prefect of Gaul during the reign of Julian, and Asia during the reign of Valens. Julian wrote his Oration IV, entitled Hymn to King Helios Dedicated to Sallust, and Oration VIII, entitled A Consolation to Himself upon the Departure of the Excellent Sallust9 in honor of his good friend. The latter work was written in reaction to Sallust's departure from Gaul as ordered by Constantius prior to 360. Constantius feared the closeness that Julian and Sallust had attained during their work together in Gaul.

Upon the death of the Emperor Julian at midnight on June 26, 363 Sallust was offered the Imperial Throne.

All by general agreement united on Salutius, and when he pleaded illness and old age... a few hot-headed soldiers chose an emperor in the person of Jovianus.10 At Jovian's demise in A.D. 364, the throne was offered again to Salutius, but he declined the Imperial Purple for himself and his son. He ruled as Praetorian Prefect of "The East," in Asia, until the Proconsul Clearchus forced him to resign in A.D. 370.
Sallustius belonged to the Pergamum School of Neoplatonism where Aedesius taught his form of Neoplatonism. The Iamblichan brand of Neoplatonic thought was the blueprint for the restoration of the ancient traditions, as well as most Neoplatonic Philosophy for the next 200 years.
CHAPTER 7
INTERPRETATION OF NEOPATONISM

In order to understand the philosophy of Julian, as well as Neoplatonism in general, we must explain how the Neoplatonists interpreted their classical sources. Plotinus focused his thought mainly on the metaphysics of the works of Plato (c.429-347 B.C.) and Aristotle. As his Neoplatonic interpretations took life, other sources became important to round out his conceptions. The works of Homer (8th Century B.C.), Hesiod (8th Century B.C.), and a document entitled The Chaldean Oracles were of major influence on the whole of Neoplatonic doctrine.

The interpretation of the writings of Plato and Aristotle was the focal point of Neoplatonism. Aristotle was to be read first and then followed by the works of Plato. The Neoplatonic goal was to view Aristotle's interpretation of Platonic doctrine as a "vaccinated" version of Plato. The purpose of this was to establish a logical and categorical outlook prior to taking up the metaphysical doctrines of "the Forms" and "the Good." Plotinus and his immediate followers could be called "Neo-Aristotelians" as easily as Neoplatonists for their dependence on Aristotle's thought.

The works of the classical poets Homer and Hesiod were
more influential on the later fourth century A.D. Neoplatonists, but had their place in early Neoplatonic doctrine. The myths of creation, adventure, and human interaction with the gods are of great significance. From the time of Iamblichus (d.325), the insertion of the Greco-Roman pantheon into the Neoplatonic system allowed greater flexibility in interpretation of Homer, Hesiod, and The Chaldean Oracles.

The mystical and magical aspects of Neoplatonism are attributed to the document entitled The Chaldean Oracles. The Oracles were written in the time of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121-180) by a man known as Julian "The Theurgist" and his son Julian the Chaldean. The Oracles probably originated "from an ecstatic prophet or prophetess and is written in the style of Greek hexameter verse."¹ Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus (A.D. 410-485) all wrote Neoplatonic commentaries on this document. The Oracles are a combination of Greek philosophical interests with several different Eastern and Oriental thoughts. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus makes The Chaldean Oracles its foundation of philosophical interpretation, as opposed to the earlier foundation of Plato and Aristotle, which promotes the theurgic Neoplatonism to future generations, i.e. the Emperor Julian. The practice of Theurgy is of main importance in the Oracles.²

The practice of theurgy is popularly known as "Divine Work." The main idea of theurgy is to bring the God or Gods
to you in the Physical World from their divine realm and
attain a possible union, in a semi-divine realm, temporarily.
Individuals, such as Maximus "The Theurgist," would use
salves, incense, chants, incantations, and any other "natural"
aids to invoke a reaction from the Gods. The ability to make
contact with the Gods is possible because all things are an
extension of the Ultimate and all needed tools to reach the
Gods are within the Physical World as an extension of the
Ultimate. This practice of theurgy, in a less critical form,
is of vital importance to the philosophical system of the
Emperor Julian.

Julian attempted to revive the pagan Gods of his
ancestors within a society that had been under Christian
control for almost three generations. In order to perform
this monumental task, Julian needed a way in which his deities
were superior or more attractive to any man, especially those
of the upper class, than the Christian God. In uniting with
the God or Gods in life through theurgy, it appears that
Julian was giving a better alternative, in his point of view,
than being in the presence of the Christian God and attaining
eternal life upon death.

Taking the initiative to unite with the Gods through
theurgy was more plausible than uniting with them through
philosophical practices, as was the view of Plotinus. Not
many people could attain union through philosophical means,
but theurgy was a magical art that many could apply. Although
theurgy was something that Julian had been practicing for over ten years before he came to be sole ruler of the Empire, in my opinion, his political and social ambitions of converting the Roman Empire back to the entity it was during the time of his much admired hero, Marcus Aurelius (Emperor 161-180), were good reasons to have a less critical and more experiential form of popular religion. The general populace could then personally unite with the god in this world in a semi-divine realm. The eternal afterlife of Julian's Neoplatonism is a form of the Mithraic afterlife through theurgic practices.
"The One," according to Plotinus, is the eternal perfect being, essentially a combination of the "Unmoved Mover" of Aristotle and the "Good" of Plato. It is the perfect essence above all being. "The One" is the producer of all things that exist at this moment and will ever be or ever has been in existence. By producing all things, it does not mean that "The One" is in need of anything that it makes. We, as physical and mental entities, rely on "The One" for our existence. "The One" does not need anything to survive because it is everything. "The One" is "overflowing" with essence and perfection. Overflowing, "The One" produces the realms of all existence in the physical and mental worlds. "The One" gives us fire, water, snow, wind, mind, body, intellect, and an abundance of other things. In writing about generative power of "The One" Plotinus states:

Everything which is already perfect generates. That which is always perfect [the One] generates always, and generates something eternal.¹

Plotinus is stating that everything perfect, which there is only "The One," generates all else and will eternally generate things if it remains perfect. "The One" will never degenerate, therefore, it will eternally generate. The second
statement implies that "The One" is eternal perfection and will remain eternally perfect while all things are an eternal extension of "The One." Lesser levels of perfection are found further from the source than closer.

There is no decay of "The One" because it is unmoved, eternal, and all existence emanates from "The One." This is the basis and doctrine of creation within the system of Plotinus. If "The One" were not unmoved, meaning that there were no precursors, there would be no thing to exist. No thing exists without or outside "The One" since it is all an emanation of the overflowing eternal perfection. Comparing "The One" to the Sun, Plotinus stated that the Sun is an unmoved thing and its power illuminates from within. The Sun is eternal and immobile as it is with "The One." Everything revolves around "The One" in the way that the planets revolve around the Sun. Julian picks up on this idea, in following Iamblichus and places his personal modification on Plotinus' thought by using the motif of Mithras as Helios with all revolving around him in the same manner.²

The ideal of Plotinus' Neoplatonism, as with all major religions or religious philosophies, is the attainment of salvation or unity with "The One." Salvation differs from religion to religion and time period to time period. The later Neoplatonists of the fourth century had a radically different idea of attaining salvation from the original ideal of Plotinus. The psychological and philosophical degradation
of the time period manifested itself in eternal salvation being based upon pure magic.

The original Neoplatonic concept of salvation or unity with the divine through philosophical manipulation of the mind was the thought of Plotinus. Many of the ancients, including Plato and Aristotle, were of the mind that all things eternal could be attained through the study of "the love of wisdom" or philosophy. Plotinus combined Pythagorean, Platonic, and Aristotelian ideals for salvation within his Neoplatonic philosophical framework. Within this elitist form of philosophical salvation, there were various points and guidelines to be followed. It is essential to understand salvation in order to grasp the magnitude and importance of the Ultimate in the system of Plotinus.

Firstly, the hierarchy that ruled the cosmos of existence was established as the Psyche, Nous, and "The One." This was the basis of the emanation principle that Plotinus so repeatedly enforces to the reader. This three tiered emanation radiates from the source, "The One," toward the outer extremes of existence, the Psyche, in forms of lesser "Good." This can also be stated as lesser forms of the God or "The One" are within the Psyche than "The One." As an individual cultivates the lesser divine principle within themselves, i.e. the soul or Psyche through intellect, toward the highest principle, i.e. "The One," through philosophy it is possible to take a step up the ladder towards divine
salvation. Through philosophical introspection or cleansing and physical catharsis the individual can attain unity with "The One" which is ultimate salvation.4

The Nous is usually translated as "mind" or "intelligence." This is located at the level just below "The One." It is a lesser concentration of the Ultimate, but it is still aspiring towards "The One." Nous, as well as all other things in existence, is viewed as a principle of "The One." All principles are unified within "The One" while still being an extension of the divine realm. This principle of intelligence is a greater concentration of the intelligence that all things contain. Instead of calling other things in the lower levels of the Plotinian Hypostases inferior, they should be viewed as lesser or unordered.5

The Psyche, usually translated as the soul, is the lowest level of the triadic system of Plotinus. The Psyche is a lower level of order than the Nous. Psyche is constantly attempting to acquire the next rung up the ladder and establish itself as Nous. Psyche is anything that is alive and able to move under its own will and power. A soul is a "mind in motion" because the soul is created by the mind, a.k.a. the divine mind.6 This is a more active and lower level of order of Nous that is beginning its quest toward salvation, or at least the next level of Plotinus' system.

There is a total self-cleansing of the eternal soul within the body by self-introspection through the higher
intellect. Neoplatonic values state that "The One" is the God and the Ultimate Good while all human beings are lesser forms of that Good. There is no Sin in the equation because all things are a lesser or greater form of the Good, which is a part of "The One" or God. This is a parallel of having Karma to a lesser or greater amount in some Buddhist religions.

All people can attain salvation through hard work and a higher learning, but only a higher intellect can interpret and comprehend the higher ideals of "The One." Sallustius stated in his work, On the Gods and the Worlds, that:

[Only] those of Intellect... [can hear and comprehend that] the myths state the existence of Gods... only to those who can understand.'

For an analogy of this higher attainment of knowledge we can view the classical musician. Only someone of a higher musical learning can appreciate or interpret the higher technical skills required to perform great musical pieces. In this way Neoplatonism and Music are synonymous in their thought and performance. This is the reason why there are so few great Composers or Music Writers in the same way that there are so few humans that attain total unity with "The One." Plotinus attained temporary unity with the divine on three different occasions and his disciple, Porphyry, did twice.

The Neoplatonic system of Plotinus was based upon six main concepts in the tradition of Plato. These are a combination of philosophical assumptions and mystical ideas. They are namely:
1. Immateriality of reality
2. Visible and sensible refer to a higher level than the level which they occur
3. Intuition over the empirical
4. Immortality of the soul
5. The whole universe is "Good"
6. The true, beautiful, and good are the same

These ideas flow throughout the doctrines of Neoplatonism, as well as Christianity which was developing quite a following in the time of Plotinus.

In contrast to the philosophical Platonic doctrines adhered to by the Neoplatonists, Christianity placed emphasis on the higher reality behind the physical and the more non-critical ideals of Plato. There was minimal or no self-analysis needed for the Christian at the time of Plotinus. Self analysis was believing that Jesus was the savior of the people of the world. This was an attractive doctrine for the uneducated or a useful tool for the educated over the uneducated. Minimal intellect or no education was required within the Christian schema. If an acolyte believed in the minimum requirements of the doctrine he or she would be "saved" and attain eternal existence in the divine realm of Heaven. There was no union with "The God" of the Christians because "The God" is outside the existence of all others. Humans were all endowed with the "original sin," a later development, from the time of their birth. This they could never shake off and they could only be "saved," without ever attaining union with the Divinity. But in Neoplatonism, all things are lesser forms of the Good or "The One."
CHAPTER 9
IAMBLICHAN NEOPLATONISM

Iamblichus (d. 325), the disciple of Porphyry of Tyre, is the man on which the next two hundred years of Neoplatonic thought and practice were based. He was a major innovator who re-integrated the basic building blocks of Neoplatonic interpretation based upon philosophy into a system based upon theurgy and created a cult or religion through these theurgic ideas. By utilizing The Chaldean Oracles, the concept of unity with the Ultimate through philosophical introspection was replaced by temporary union with the divine through theurgic practices. His innovations to the system that had been propounded by Plotinus and Porphyry, opened the door for the Emperor Julian and the other later Neoplatonists to create their own theurgic systems of Neoplatonism.

In Iamblichus' bastardized version of the Three Hypostases of Plotinus, we can see the implementation of a triple Godhead that allows for divinity of all materials within these realms. The spheres of "The One," the Nous, and the Psyche, derived their existence from the ultimate power source of their level in the triad which is considered as an individual God.¹ Under these "Gods" of each realm, Iamblichus subdivided each of the hypostases into triads, and in some
cases even further triads upon triads of the initial division. As a result, Iamblichus created several very specific and technical levels of existence or thought that were filled by the Gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon. This created a triple-triadic polytheistic form of Neoplatonism from the triadic monotheism of Plotinus.

"The One" of Iamblichus is a conglomerate of two forms of "The One," which are the Absolute and Second Principal, and the Ultimate form of "The One," which includes "The One," Nous, and Psyche, simultaneously. This Hypostase of Iamblichus' Neoplatonic triad is copied, in an uncritical fashion, by the Emperor Julian in a way that he has the Uncompounded Cause, the Absolute, and Helios perform the same functions as the Iamblichan triad for the Ultimate.²

The Hypostase of the Nous, or Mind, was a further division of subdivisions created by Iamblichus that allowed for the insertion of "moments" and the Greco-Roman pantheon of Gods into Neoplatonic thought. Nous was divided into the three following categories: the sphere of the Intelligible, the sphere of the Intelligible and Intellectual, and the sphere of the Intellectual. Each of the three spheres were then subdivided into triads and then into further triads, while the sphere of the Intellectual may possibly be three triads or a hebdomad.³ By dividing the Nous in this manner, Iamblichus succeeded in separating the two essential aspects of the Plotinian Nous, the Mind and the Intelligible.
The Hypostase of the Psyche, or Soul, was also divided into a triad by Iamblichus. The Psyche was divided into the following categories: the Hypercosmic Soul, the Soul of the Whole, and Individual Souls. These souls were in constant process, as in the original idea of Plotinus, but their quest was for temporary union with the Ultimate principle through theurgy and not through philosophical introspection to purify the human soul.

Iamblichus' principle of Logical Realism, the classical Greek idea that objects of thought must exist prior to and independent of the thinking of them, is portrayed within all levels of his Neoplatonic triad. For example, within the First Hypostase, the Second Principle is the Intellect of "The One" and it did not exist prior to "The One" itself. The Absolute One existed prior to all and generated all that exists spontaneously. In the Second Hypostase, the Intelligible Cosmos were in existence before the Intellectual Mind that comprehends their existence. The Third Hypostase had the Hypercosmic Soul, which is the Soul of the Universe, existing prior to the more critical Soul of the Whole. Being is prior to Life and Life is prior to Intelligence because not all things in existence are alive and not all living things exercise thought.

The theurgic thoughts of Iamblichus, which were the antithesis of his philosophy, can be viewed as magical, mystical, and religious. Only priests of the cult could
perform the rites and attain semi-divine status while still being a man in the physical world. Priests used incantations, acts, symbols, formulas, salves, herbs, and other "things of nature," since all things in the physical world were an extension of the Ultimate, to invoke the will of the Gods. The priest was the catalyst of all action with the Gods as Iamblichus stated:

For these things, also, another reason may be assigned, and which is as follows: in all theurgical operations the priest sustains a twofold character; one, indeed, as man, and which preserves the order possessed by our nature in the universe; but the other, which is corroborated by divine signs, and through these is conjoined to more excellent natures, and is elevated to their order by an elegant circumduction, this is deservedly capable of being surrounded with the external form of the Gods... the priest very properly invokes, as more excellent natures, the powers derived from the universe, so far as he who invokes is a man; and again, he commands these powers, because through arcane symbols, he, in a certain respect, is invested with the sacred form of the Gods. Theurgy is the culmination of the Gods entering the physical realm by the forced invitation of the priest. Although the Gods were all powerful, they could not resist the rituals and rites performed by theurgic priests that drew the divine into a state of union with the physical realm. Theurgy was not only a drawing down of the divinity, but it was a drawing up of the man from the physical realm into a divine realm, of sorts, in as much as the union between man and god is not physical but divine.

The Emperor Julian was not as critical in his internal distinctions of the theurgic arts as was Iamblichus. Iamblichus believed that Gods and man are drawn together into
a semi-divine realm, not totally in the Physical nor the Intelligible Worlds, while the priest still resided bodily in the Physical world. Julian believed that the Gods attain union with humans totally in the physical world through theurgy. Therefore in my opinion, he was less sophisticated in his philosophical interpretation, but more practical for a popular application to the general populace in his attempt to revive the Greco-Roman pagan heritage.
CHAPTER 10
THE UNCOMPONDED CAUSE OF JULIAN

As we have seen previously in the outlined ideas of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, their Neoplatonic thoughts were based on a unified triad system (see Appendices A-C). All of existence was included within the triads and was in essence a part of or an extension of the Ultimate. At the pinnacle of the triad system was "The One" which was also known as the Good, the Ultimate, the Father, or the Uncompounded Cause which was the combination of the "Good" of Plato and the "Unmoved Mover" of Aristotle. It is not only at the pinnacle of the triad, but the center of all existence. The Neoplatonism of Julian was a combination of the philosophical thoughts of Plotinus and the Theurgy of Iamblichus wrapped within the beliefs and rituals of the Mithraic cult.

The "Uncompounded Cause" of Julian was equivalent to "The One" of Plotinus in as much as it is imperishable, the unifying principle, the highest reality, and at the center of all things that exist. "The One" overpoured its inner bounds of intelligence and goodness to emanate its power throughout all of existence. The composition of the Ultimate for Plotinus was "Pure Intelligence" and is "One" with no
component parts, but Julian takes an alternative point of view and copied, from Iamblichus, a triad of the Ultimate. This was not done at the highest level in the Intelligible world, which is the realm of the Uncompounded Cause, but in the secondary level of the Intelligible world.

Julian believed in a triad of gods as the composition of "The One" in the Intellectual world:

For this god declares: Zeus, Hades, Helios Serapis, three gods in one godhead!4

The gods were equal in power and yet had different functions. Zeus and Helios Serapis had joint sovereignty among and over the Intellectual gods while Hades performed the following functions:

He completely frees our souls from generation: and the souls that he has thus freed he does not nail to other bodies, punishing them and exacting penalties, but he carries aloft and lifts up our souls to the Intelligible world.5

Hades was known as the god of the "Unseen" since his function was collecting the righteous or worthy souls and taking them to the next level of existence in the Intelligible world. The three gods of the Uncompounded Cause (Zeus, Hades, and Helios-Serapis) at this Intellectual level were equivalent both individually and collectively. The countless functions of the Ultimate were later named for the gods by Proclus, even though Julian appears to be a forerunner to this thought in the Iamblichan tradition.6 The functions of the Uncompounded Cause were countless in their number but can be broken down into five categories according to the thought of Julian.
Firstly, "The One" had the power to perfect anything that is within existence either in the Intellectual world, Intelligible world, or Physical world. The primary tool of the Uncompounded Cause in its never ending process of perfection was Light. This was produced by the physical Helios, i.e. the Sun, shining down upon the earthly physical realm. We can see the perfection with our senses as Julian stated:

His power to perfect, from the fact that he makes visible the objects of sight in the universe, for through his light he perfects them.

Within this passage we see that Julian clearly believed his form of the Ultimate needed a physical representative and tied it to the Physical Sun which he also believed was the incarnation of the Uncompounded Cause.

Secondly, the power of creation and generation of all things and forms was the responsibility of the Uncompounded Cause. No other form or being had the capability of creation. Beings only had the power of generation which was endowed upon them by the creator or the Uncompounded Cause. Creation could be performed only by the Uncompounded Cause because it was an extension of itself and no other being or form can extend the Ultimate. All of existence was created by this extension or emanation of the innate goodness overpouring "The One" to create the various levels of existence.

The generation of beings, animals, or plants was included into Julian's Aristotelian motif of potentiality.
Aristotle believed that the potential of all things was given to it by the divine and generated by nature. When did the acorn know to become an oak tree? The divine had encoded a portion within the individual to react when the prime conditions arose. Generation would occur and the potentiality of the individual would be fulfilled, becoming actuality, by its divine inspiration towards the higher reality. Julian echoed the generative power of the potentiality idea in stating:

[We know he is the Uncompounded Cause because] his creative and generative power [are physically seen] from the changes wrought by him in the universe.11

We can interpret this as meaning all things are inherently good because of the source being full of goodness only and also being pure Intellect. All things aspire towards their highest level of existence through the potentiality or generation being actualized in the quest towards the Ultimate (the "Good" of Plato, the "Unmoved Mover" of Aristotle, "The One" of Plotinus, or the Uncompounded Cause of Julian).

Thirdly, the Uncompounded Cause linked all things together as a whole.12 The principle of emanation that all things generated in their existence from the Uncompounded Cause tied the whole of the universe together into one coherent system. The physical form of the Uncompounded Cause as the Sun tied together the physical universe of the earth, stars, and planets. The god Helios Serapis had dominion over the Intelligible world and was part of the triple godhead.
Therefore, the god of the Intelligible world was also the Ultimate or Uncompounded Cause as seen in the lower state of existence. Since all things aspired towards the Ultimate and higher existence, there was a motion to unify with the Uncompounded Cause. Julian stated it in the following words:

His power to link together all things into one whole, from the harmony of its motions towards one and the same goal.\textsuperscript{13}

Fourthly, the Uncompounded Cause was the center of all existence and was the "Middleness" that held the universe together. This idea of "Middleness" utilized by Julian came from his combination of Neoplatonism and the Cult of Mithras, a form of Ancient Persian Zoroastrianism. The importance of the middle station in both Neoplatonism and Zoroastrianism are evident in Julian's thought even though they were simply stated. We see the simplicity and the power of thought that was commanded by the middle station in Julian's following statement:

[He is the Uncompounded Cause because of] his middle station we can comprehend [all] from himself, who is midmost.\textsuperscript{14}

In Zoroastrianism there was an evil power known as Ahriman and a good power known as Ahura Mazda. The God of the Sun, Mithras, was in the "Middle" of the two constantly feuding gods, but often allied with Ahura Mazda. The Cult of Mithras sprang from Zoroastrianism to become an aristocratic cult of the Imperial Roman army.

The Intellectual gods were in the realm of the
Intelligible or Intellectual world, with Helios-Mithras being the sovereign power. The Middle station of the Neoplatonic triad was held by Helios-Mithras whose function was a bastardization of that carried out by the god Mithras in Zoroastrianism. Therefore, we must assume that not only was Helios-Mithras the most important god of the Intelligible or Intellectual world, but he was the most important god of the whole Neoplatonic system. This is the form of the Uncompounded Cause named as Helios, Helios-Mithras, and Helios.

Fifthly, the Uncompounded Cause was the King among the Intellectual Gods. Julian stated:

[He is the Uncompounded Cause for] the fact that he is established as King among the Intellectual gods, from his middle station among the planets.15

The physical Sun was the central point of the universe according to Julian's thinking. Since the Sun was simultaneously the pinnacle of all three triads (the realm of the Uncompounded Cause, The Intelligible or Intellectual world, and the Physical world) in the form of (the Uncompounded Cause, Helios-Mithras, and Helios) it was the King of all in existence. The emanation of the Uncompounded Cause was physically manifested in sunlight that extended to all by its divine nature.

The Uncompounded Cause was Pure Intellect for Plotinus, but it appears for Julian that its main emphasis was as a manifestation of the higher Intellect in the form of the
Sun. This consistent leviathan of power and light must be the Uncompounded Cause, according to Julian and the ancient Greeks, for it exists daily, it existed daily, and had existed since history began, it generated all life grown on earth, it had not generated from any material A Priori, it will exist forever, and it was an eternal soul, but to name a few. Julian stated:

Man and the sun together beget man, and that the god sows this earth with souls which proceed not from himself alone but from the other gods also.\textsuperscript{16}

The divine nature of the Sun was shown in the previous passage as working through the Physical world from the Intelligible world and the realm of the Uncompounded Cause. Julian appeared to be engaged in a monotheistic worship of the Sun God, Helios, in the guise of Neoplatonism within the Physical world. To make the system more appealing to the Christians of the period, Julian emphasizes the son of Helios by the name of Asclepius which tied the Physical to the Eternal world in the form of a divine saviour in the flesh.\textsuperscript{17}
CHAPTER 11
THE PHYSICAL WORLD OF JULIAN’S NEOPLATONISM

The Physical World in the triadic system of the philosophy of Julian was, in my opinion, the most important stage. In this world or stage, the unifying principle was the physical Sun or Helios. This stage was also headed by a triple-godhead which included Helios, Attis or Gallus, and Asclepius.¹ The three together created the Sun in the sky and the powers it used for our benefits while ruling over the physical world.

Let us speak of the three components of the triple-godhead by beginning with Helios himself. Julian propounded the following ideas of the functions of Helios:

Helios holds sway among the intellectual gods in that he unites into one, about his own undivided substance, a great multitude of the gods: and further, I demonstrated that among the gods whom we can perceive, who revolve eternally in their most blessed path, he is leader and lord; since he bestows on their nature its generative power, and fills the whole heavens not only with visible rays of light but with countless other blessings that are invisible; and, further, that the blessings that are abundantly supplied by the other visible gods are made perfect by his unspeakable and divine activity.²

We can determine that Helios was the center of the physical world while being a part of the great Helios-Mithras that was the center of all existence. The physical Sun was the center of Julian’s universe that portrayed stability and dominance.

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Helios gave to the rest of the gods their powers of intelligence, generative powers, and essentially their existence. Without the power of Helios, as the Sun, there would be no life upon earth. This was one of Julian's subtle but powerful messages that tied all things of the physical world into his system of theurgy. Julian stated:

Aristotle says that man is begotten by man and the sun together. Accordingly, the same theory about King Helios must surely apply to all the other activities of the divided souls.  

The Sun and man together were the generative powers of the physical world. Julian believed this statement with all of his human and divine fiber, for if he did not, his theurgic practices would not bring the desired results.

The second portion of the triple-godhead of the physical world was Attis or Gallus. Julian gave Attis/Gallus the importance of being the Sun's rays and nature itself. These were an extension of the physical Sun, Helios, that permeated the physical world of the Earth and propagated the generation of nature. Julian stated the importance of Attis/Gallus was:

Under the hand of the third creator [physical sun]-- who for us is the lord and father not only of these forms but also of the visible fifth substance [Aristotle's aether]-- from that creator we distinguish Attis, the cause which descends even unto matter, and we believe that Attis or Gallus is a god of generative powers.  

This appears to be a mere extension of the Sun but it was a powerful ideal to Julian. He placed such importance on the Sun in his philosophical system that every property of
existence must emanate from that source. This was the reason why he placed "The One" and Helios-Mithras as equivalent in his Neoplatonism. His theurgy was the basis for the Sun having to be all and generate all.

Asclepius was the son of the god Helios in the physical world, but more importantly he was the son of the great Helios-Mithras or the Uncompounded Cause. In this way, the Julianic Neoplatonic system had the same appeal as the Christian system by having a "saviour" of the physical world. Julian was attempting to redefine and delineate a philosophy on religious grounds that could replace the Christianity that had been catapulted in front of the traditions of the ancients during the forty-seven years prior to his attaining sole power as Emperor. Julian believed that Helios-Mithras had begotten Asclepius because:

Helios took thought for the health and safety of all men by begetting Asclepius to be the saviour of the whole world. Julian showed that the God of his philosophical system was as caring for the people of the Roman Empire as the God of the Christians. Only a prolonged time would have shown what the people of the Empire believed or could be persuaded to accept, but three short years was not sufficient.
CHAPTER 12

A COMPARISON OF THE NEOPLATONISM
OF PLOTINUS AND JULIAN

The writings of Plotinus include fifty-four essays arranged into six divisions of nine topics that make up his only book *The Enneads*. The term Ennead in Greek means a group of nine and in Egypt, Plotinus' homeland, it meant any of several groups of nine gods that were considered to be associated in the mythology and religion of ancient Egypt. Within the fifty-four essays the subjects include some of the following: love, destiny, soul, eternity, time, nature, God, virtue, well being, beauty, matter, goodness and evil.

The Emperor Julian wrote various works on philosophy, politics, government, and commentaries on his Gallic wars. His most famous, or infamous, work entitled *Against the Galilaeans* was written in A.D. 362. This book was so powerful in its insights that it was not silenced even when Saint Cyril (c. A.D. 380-444) wrote against it almost seventy years later. His *Hymn to King Helios* propounded his version of Neoplatonism in the Iamblichan tradition. It speaks of the divine and all things within the realm of "The One."

In the following section we will compare some of the main doctrines of the philosophy of Plotinus to those of
Julian to show the differences between early and later Neoplatonism. Plotinus and Julian were both Neoplatonists, but from different eras. Plotinus adhered to his philosophical tenets for salvation while Julian applied his more magical theurgy for temporary union with the deity and allowed his Mithraic beliefs to supply salvation.

In the thought of Plotinus and Julian, we shall compare the areas of First Principles, Fate and Destiny, Existence of the Divine Being, the Human Soul, Matter, Time and Eternity, and the Contemplation of "The One." By comparison we will see Julian falls short of being a major philosopher in the same vein as Plotinus, but his importance lies in his propagation of the Neoplatonic ideals, whether through theurgy or logic, to the general populace and later generations.

**First Principles**

Plotinus stated that all things have a cause except the first principles. Therefore, all things that come into existence come from the first principles. What is meant by the first principles are the creators of all souls, intelligence, and the universe which was "The One." In discussing anything about an object or person, its essence is what is being discussed and not its actual physical being. This is similar to the forms of Plato. Plato said there were forms and ideas that were the essence of everything and they were more important than the physical entity itself. All
things had an essence to them which we in English define as a spirit or soul. All causes were traceable to their root initiator. Plotinus illustrated this by saying:

The cause of getting well is the medical art and the doctor: and the cause of getting rich is a treasure which has been found or a gift from someone, or making money by labor or skill.

Plotinus meant this in the same way that all things were traceable to "The One" by containing a touch of "The One" within them. This "divine thread" gave all existence the same root initiator, "The One." Julian believed in the same principle, but he considered "The One" and Helios as identical:

Nay rather, the god [Helios] came forth from an eternal cause, or rather brought forth all things from everlasting, engendering by his divine will and with untold speed and unsurpassed power, from the invisible all things now visible in present time.

Fate and Destiny

On the issue of fate and destiny Plotinus was very specific. Fate was the controller of all that we do. Plotinus stated that "all causes are included in fate." He said everything was predestined by fate, including chance. External causes and chances seemed also to have their place in fate:

The soul is altered by the external causes, and so does something and drives on in a sort of blind rush, neither its action nor its disposition is to be called free; this applies, too, when it is worse from itself and does not altogether have its impulses right or in control.

Everything was destined to be what its essence and
fate had set out for it to be from the start. This also included the human soul or essence:

Other things [not the soul] are responsible for not thinking; and it is perhaps correct to say that the soul acts unthinkingly according to Destiny, at least for people who think that destiny is an external cause; but the best actions come from ourselves; for this is the nature we are of, when we are alone; good and wise men do act, and do noble actions by their own will.  

Aristotle viewed this potentiality and destiny within his analogy of the acorn growing into the powerful Oak. While Julian believed in potentiality as did Aristotle and Plotinus, he saw fate, as with all other things, in a theurgic light. 

Existence of a Divine Being

Plotinus tried to explain how belief in the existence of a Divine Being and a God totally full of Goodness can be justified in the face of all the evils of the world. He began by speaking of a Logos which was a rational forming principle of the universe. The "Logos is the vehicle of something of Nous, that brings about the presence of Nous in its inferiors". The world of Intelligence, Nous, and the Soul (as Psyche) were separate and distinct from the world of the Material Body. In Julian's thought they were combined as one in the Physical and Spiritual worlds. In the Material World man was a "second rate" thing that was not only between the Gods and Beasts, but was imperfect, unlike the Soul (Psyche), Nous, or Intelligence. Julian believed man could be semi-divine within the intermediate realm created by the act of theurgy.
In Plotinus' system there were no Evil things, but only things with lesser amounts of Good. The Nous produced all things and "shows diminuation... in the descent from Nous to Soul [Psyche]." This made his system say that everything, no matter how bad or hideous, had a form of "Goodness" in it. Humans must cultivate their personal "Goodness" into its purest form, through intelligence, to attain the next level. This gave Plotinus an "out" within his framework. Although all things contained "Goodness," this did not mean they were destined for unity with "The One." Plotinus' ideal implied that humans should do the following:

Not keep ourselves set towards the images of sense or towards the merely vegetative... our life must be set towards the divine mind."

Julian, on the other hand, also believed union with the deity was possible for those who could attain a "higher level of intelligence," but theurgy rather than philosophy was the main route to unification with the Uncompounded Cause. Of course we see that philosophy is a component of his unification, but the act of Theurgy in the Physical World was of utmost importance to Julian.

The idea of incarnation to which Plotinus adhered resembled that of the Indian religions. The idea of reincarnation and the advancing or declining of the soul within the material world was consistent with the Indian ideal. The number of good deeds, the amount of goodness that was attained throughout your life, and the plane on which your
soul chose to live in the material realm determined where you would land in the next incarnation. This idea of Plotinus' parallels that of Karma in the death and re-birth cycle of Samsara.

The Human Soul

The soul was an "intelligible universe" within the larger universe of all things. The soul kept its characteristics, since it was a higher level of concentrated intelligence within this "intelligible universe" no matter where it travelled and what material form it took. It was not the Neoplatonic goal to become one with the eternal being, as it was with Indian religions, but it was to attain close proximity to the eternal being and a possible mystical union with "The One." Julian agreed on this point with Plotinus because all strains of Neoplatonism adhered, for the most part, to the mysticism of Plotinus.

In Plotinus, we see the human soul was an incorporeal, non-material, or non-bodily entity that was not modified by its material surroundings. There was no change of the soul unit itself, but within it there were minor alterations. These minor alterations were caused by vice and virtue. The soul unit of Julian was also incorporeal, non-material, or non-bodily, but it could be modified by its material surroundings. The physical world was where theurgy took place because all "physical materials" for the act were here in this realm. In bringing the deity to a union with yourself in the
physical world, or the semi-divine realm of Iamblichus, the soul could be manipulated from a source outside the mind of the individual human. Therefore, the Uncompounded Cause of Julian could manipulate the soul, although it was an extension of itself in a lesser concentration, of an individual, but that was an unlikely occurrence.

The Soul-element and the Body-element were delineated very distinctly by Plotinus. The soul was pure "Form" and was supposed to be purifying itself by aspiring towards a higher reality. The soul was not to be concerned with physical affections and should have been attempting to attain philosophical purification and unity with "The One." Julian took this view of the ancients seriously and played the part of philosopher by not concerning himself with bodily things. In this action, we see that Julian wanted to play the part of philosopher, but his philosophy always acquiesced to the dominance of his theurgic beliefs and tactics of propagating the traditions of the ancients.

When speaking of the topic of "Matter," Plotinus stated that it too was incorporeal as was the soul. The real essence of a being or the soul, was immaterial, unchanging, eternal and pure intellect. In the light of this, we can say that bodies are not real and if it is thought that they are, this is an illusion. The only reality was that of the Soul and the Intellect. Therefore, "Matter" was non-being, immaterial, eternal and pure intellect. The "more corporeal
a thing is--the more easily it is affected\textsuperscript{12} by physical factors and was not eternal "Matter." Julian essentially agreed with this premise philosophically, but he was attempting to recruit the general populace into his form of Neoplatonic-Mithrasism and needed a psychological hook, i.e. union with the One in the physical world, to convince followers not only by words, but by actions.

"Matter" existed within the shells of our human bodies while on earth in a quasi-existence. Since the souls and intellect were tied to human bodies the pure existence of the soul was hard to attain. Only in the philosophical purification of the soul can one attempt to attain the most pure form of intellect. Once again we see Julian as a practicing Neoplatonic-Mithraic follower as opposed to being a critical thinking philosopher.

**Time and Eternity**

To explain his own concept of Time and Eternity Plotinus spoke of the ancient philosophers that came before him. Time was contained within the system of Eternity. Eternity was that which exists completely and simultaneously with no beginning or end and no before or after. Eternity was all that happens forever. Everything in the universe worked within the system of Eternity. Eternity and unity or wholeness were essential to the duration and movement of time. Without the movement of Time there would be no Eternity. "Eternity is above and beyond us, though in it we live and
move and have our being." The Eternity within ourselves, or the eternal soul, is what we judge the Eternity of the Divine as being. If the Divine being was Eternal, therefore, we must be Eternal "Matter" within the Divine system. Eternal existence meant "truly existing" and not only existing in time alone, but existing in both Time and Eternity. For Julian, his doctrine of eternity was commensurate with that of Plotinus except for the insertion of Helios in the place of "The One." Julian believed that:

Helios, [shines on] the visible world, and from eternity the light that encompasses the world has its fixed station, not shining intermittently, nor in different ways at different times, but always [eternally] in the same manner.

Time belonged to movement, being moved and movement itself. The previous statement is what Plotinus said the Ancient philosophers believed. Plotinus' statement of Time was the life of the soul in its never resting movement from one thing to another while it was separated from Intellect in quest of "The One." The universe was in Time because the Soul had put itself into the construct of Time. Therefore, we can assume if the Soul turned back to the Intellect Time would have to stop completely. Therefore, time would be eternal while not being in existence simultaneously. Plotinus' final conclusion against the Stoics was that Time is the life of the Soul and "the movement of the Cosmos that is measured in accordance with time . . . heavens' periodic rotation indicates . . . time". Although time was important, in that
it gave the soul a residence, Julian viewed it in an uncritical fashion as he did so many of the other Neoplatonic doctrines. As with all other things in existence, time was a by product of Helios and had a very simple function, praising the god Helios and his gifts to the world. Julian stated:

We and the Egyptians alone reckon the days of every year according to the movements of the sun [Helios]... and they all sing the praises of the most visible gifts of Helios.\(^\text{16}\)

Plotinus stated the main point of all of his philosophy is that all life is essentially contemplation. This contemplation began at the lowest level of existence called nature. All things contemplated, including the earth and plants. It may not have been inspiring contemplation, but it was still some type of contemplation which usually consisted of how Nature makes things grow. This contemplation, the weakest of them all, nevertheless still showed that any type of contemplation created many diverse actions and things. Julian, in the Iamblichian tradition, did not believe that plants or animals had souls. Julian made a distinction between the souled and the soulless:

I regard this god [Helios], if we may believe the wise, as the common father of all mankind. I consider to be of greatest importance for all things, "That breathe and move upon the earth," and have a share in existence and a reasoning soul and intelligence.\(^\text{17}\)

Iamblichus, Julian, and Sallustius did not believe that plants or animals have any form of the Uncompounded Cause’s soul which was in opposition to the thought of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Porphyry.
The truest identity of contemplation was that of the Intellect. The **Nous** was the intermediate contemplation state that enabled us to reach the truest state of the Intellect (The Ultimate, "The One," The Good, The Uncompounded Cause). "The nature of the **Nous** is seen to demand the One." The Intellect aspires only for one thing. The thing that the Intellect aspired towards was that of The Good, The Ultimate, "The One," or The Uncompounded Cause. "The One" was the only thing in this system that did not aspire towards any higher reality in the same manner as the "Unmoved Mover" of Aristotle and the "Good" of Plato were the summit of all Intellect. The Ultimate was the one productive power within this system. The Intellect needed the Good, but in turn the Good needed nothing. "The One" stood alone at the pinnacle as the highest form of Contemplation that could be attained for Plotinus, but Julian believed physical actions, i.e. theurgy, rather than contemplation were the pinnacle of gratifying or attaining union with the deity.
CHAPTER 13

JULIAN’S POPULARIZATION OF NEOPLATONISM

Committed to the ways of the ancients, the Emperor Julian was very proud and honored of his Roman heritage. He felt society had deteriorated through the Imperial implementation of Christianity that shunned the ancient pagan traditions. In light of this idea, Julian attempted to revive the pagan worship and implement various measures to return society to its former condition. During his very short reign Julian attempted a sweeping attack upon society by saturating it with Neoplatonic influences.

Neoplatonic doctrines were to be the basis of the revival of the ancient traditions. Julian himself wrote two influential works which included a major attack on Christianity, entitled Against the Galilaeans,¹ and his own Iamblichan brand of Neoplatonism, entitled Hymn to King Helios.² The emperor employed two of his long time associates and friends, Oribasius (c. A.D. 315-c.385) and Sallustius, both Neoplatonists, to assist in his pagan revival. On one front, Julian’s Oration IV, known as Hymn to King Helios, was a description of his Neoplatonic system and the combination of the Cult of Mithras. It described a form of Neoplatonism that could be easily assimilated by the indigenous population of
the Eastern Empire because of their Christian and otherworldly beliefs in all levels of society. On the other front, Julian employed Sallustius to propose his form of Neoplatonism, in the treatise *On the Gods and the World*, that could be easily assimilated by the indigenous population of the Western Empire because of their Stoic and practical way of thinking in all levels of society. This dual attack was supported by a barrage of other Neoplatonic doctrines in order to wear the general populace into submission and back to the traditional ways of pagan religion.

Oribasius was the personal physician of Julian since his days in Gaul as Caesar. By order of Julian, Oribasius compiled the medical works of the ancients into a Neoplatonic encyclopedia of medicine. Some seventy volumes were compiled and edited for public consumption. This encyclopedia, no doubt, had much of a Neoplatonic overtone showing the superiority of the pagan medical practices over the ones practiced by the Christians.

Meanwhile, Sallustius, who was a personal friend, government official, and military man within Julian’s ranks, was entrusted with the writing of a Neoplatonic guideline to worship and thought. The treatise on Neoplatonic philosophy, entitled *On the Gods and the World*, was written in 360 and was the sister document to the book written by the Emperor Julian, *Against the Galilaeans*, that attacked the Christians. Together, these two works compiled reasons and methods for
their dislike of Christianity and alternative practices of Neoplatonism to be followed.

The Emperor Julian, along with his writing, assaulted the public in his pagan revival by replacing individuals within government with Neoplatonic appointments. Modern and ancient politics merge at this point where Julian restructured the thought and outlook of the Imperial administration towards the people. Julian appointed a well known Neoplatonist and friend, named Chrysanthius, to be the High Priest of Lydia. Since Chrysanthius performed his job well and without drastic measures, he was kept in the position through pagan and Christian emperors until his death in c.405. Julian also appointed the Roman antiquarian and Senator Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (A.D. 320-384) to be proconsul of Achaia in 362.

The repair of Pagan temples, ordered on the day of religious toleration February 4, 362, and rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem were the next order of business for Julian to use in his revival of the Roman world. All materials that had been sold and taken from the pagan temples were to be returned. Julian consulted with the leaders of Jewish communities to persuade them to take up religious sacrifice once again. The Jewish leaders stated they could sacrifice only in the Temple of Jerusalem. Therefore, Julian began his attempt to rebuild the temple. Julian entrusted Alypius, a former governor of Britain, to the rebuilding, but he abandoned the project because of mysterious "balls of flame,"
probably an earthquake. Julian retracted funding from Christian churches, that was so abundant during the years of Constantine and Constantius, and also stripped their tax exempt status.

The Emperor Julian delivered an edict that no Christian teachers could teach rhetoric or philosophy throughout the Roman Empire. Ammianus Marcellinus stated, on two separate occasions, how harsh an action he viewed it to be:

But this one thing was inhumane, and ought to be buried in eternal silence, namely, that he [Julian] forbade teachers of rhetoric and literature to practice their profession, if they were followers of the Christian religion.²

For example, it was a harsh law that forbade Christian rhetoriticians and grammarians to teach, unless they consented to worship the pagan deities.⁵

Julian was serious about reasserting the ancient traditions, in the form of Neoplatonism, by cutting off Imperial funding and the ability of Christians to teach. In his mind, this forced the general populace to come back to the ancient traditions or go underground. In going underground, as a result from the loss of their educational base in the Greco-Roman heritage and economic funding, the Christians would be out of the mainstream. The prominence of the Greco-Roman tradition would be re-established and prosperity would once again reign over the Roman Empire as in the time of Julian’s hero Marcus Aurelius.
CHAPTER 14
JULIAN'S EFFECTS ON THE WORLD AROUND HIM

The Emperor Flavius Claudius Julianius had a major impact on both eastern and western thought that followed his Imperial reign. His thought affected many of his contemporaries, such as Saint Basil, Libanius (A.D. 314-393), Ammianus Marcellinus (c. A.D. 330-393), Eunapius (A.D. 346-414) and Saint Gregory, while fueling authors of later periods, such as Saint Augustine and Saint Cyril. Julian's ideas on philosophy may not have been totally original, but his slight innovations or bastardizations gave rise to closer inspection, as well as introspection, of the Physical and Spiritual world in the hundred years following his death.

Although Neoplatonism was in its dark period during the time of Julian, it too was affected by the thoughts and actions of the last pagan Emperor through the legacies of his closest associates, i.e. Sallustius, Maximus, and Oribasius. Neoplatonic thought was carved up and used by the Christians in their philosophy, by Saint Augustine, in order to support their views of all things in heaven and on earth. Although Christianity won out over the traditions of the ancients, organized schools of pagan Neoplatonism still existed in
Athens until the Emperor Justinian closed the schools in the year A.D. 529.¹

The Emperor Julian was partially a product of his environment, personal choices, and a victim of uncontrollable circumstances. In these facets we see that he could be viewed as a normal person, but his successes and failures were to be judged on a much greater scale. Every facet of Julian's life was either of one extreme or the other from the beginning of his life to his death. From his religious and philosophical beliefs to his ruling style, as opposed to others before and after him, Julian was unique and an important transitional figure in the world of Western and Eastern history and philosophy.

Born in 331, Flavius Claudius Julianus was beset by obstacles from the outset of his life. He was motherless shortly after his birth and given in care to an Imperial Nutrix. At the age of six, Julian was orphaned when the sons of the Emperor Constantine fought to keep control of the Empire upon the Emperor's death in 337. Julian and his brother were placed under house arrest by the Emperor Constantius between 342 and 348.

The family of Julian was to consist of one brother and cousins in the Imperial household. There was no Pater Familias to protect or discipline him. Julian had no family to show him the societal rules or actions of an upper class Roman male. The closest relatives he had were murderers and
hypocritical Christians in his point of view. This opinion was reinforced with the murder of his brother Gallus by order of the Emperor Constantius, his cousin, in 355.

Between 337 to 355, besides the time of his imprisonment at Macellum, Julian was a travelling student. During this period, 348-355, Julian viewed the cities and ideals instilled in his mind by the family slave Mardonius. Julian was deeply affected by the ideas and literature of the ancients that Mardonius had him learn. The Mithraic-Neoplatonism of Iamblichus and the Christianity of the Imperial family polarized the religious and philosophical thoughts of Julian.

The Iamblichan vein of Neoplatonism, to which Julian ascribed, was magical in its nature as opposed to the logic based system of its founder Plotinus. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus was greatly affected by the Cult of Mithras. Portions of Mithrasism are incorporated within the Iamblichan synthesis of his Neoplatonism on most philosophical levels. A monotheism of Mithras within the constructs of Neoplatonism can be the best description of Julian’s outlook on his bastardization of Iamblichus’ philosophy.

Julian was probably initiated into the Cult of Mithras while in Ephesus in 350 or 351. This initiation into the cult prior to his military service in 355, may have helped his acceptance into the Imperial Army more easily while aiding in the promotion of his Neoplatonism on the Gallic legions after
taking command in 357. Since the army was a society within itself containing certain rules and rites of passage, the brotherhood of Mithrasism and blossoming Neoplatonic ideals of Julian would be shared with and reinforced by the masses of the army. In turn, the army would spread the Neoplatonic ideals of Julian over the whole Empire by its constant movement, recruitment, relocation of troops, and regaining of lost territory.

Julian's experiences within the Imperial Army left him with an indelible and substantial psychological mark that paganism was still alive and well in the Roman Empire of the fourth century. With his Imperial aspirations, realistically beginning after the Battle of Strasbourg in 357, Neoplatonism and Mithrasism were to be the prime religious and social tools for the resurgence of pagan rule to be spread to the general populous of the Roman Empire. His popularization of the Mithraic Cult and a magical version of Neoplatonism placed Julian ready to take the world by storm.

On the Gods and the World, written by Sallustius at the request of the Emperor Julian in 361/362, was the popular version of Neoplatonism to be used in the pagan reformation. Also based on the Iamblichan version of Neoplatonism, it coincided with the beliefs of the Mithraic cult and to an extent Christianity. By placing the Christians, who had essentially been in power since the Edict of Milan in 313, into a defensive posture with his powerful writing style,
Julian was set to take control of the Empire and lead the general populace back to ways of the ancients. Julian saw this as his duty. The responsibility of renewing pagan worship was placed on him not of his own choice, but by the Gods. Julian accepted the responsibility, in his Letter to Maximus, and stated:

The gods command me to restore their worship in its utmost purity, and I obey them, yes, and with a good will. For they promise me great rewards for my labors, if only I am not remiss.²

Julian planned to use the treatise written by Sallustius as a general guide in how the Neoplatonic system of the new Roman Empire was to be practiced by the common man.

The writings of Oribasius promoted the ancient ways of medicine from a Neoplatonic view. These were a compilation of ancient medical writings from pagan physicians such as Hippocrates (c.470-c.395 B.C.), Soranus (c. A.D. 68-c.140), and Galen (A.D. 129-c.199) to rival the medical opinions of the Christians. This compendium of documents was collated at the request of the Emperor Julian in 361/362. As Emperor, Julian further promoted his Neoplatonic ideas by placing many Neoplatonists into governmental offices such as Chrysanthius and Praetextatus.

The very form and set up of the Imperial Army with its relocation of individuals promoted the Neoplatonic and Mithraic ideas of Julian to the outer most reaches of the Empire. The Cult of Mithras had flourished within the bounds of the Empire from the time of the Emperor Nero (reigned A.D.
54-68). Julian perfected his worship of the Sun God within the Army and said others joined his practice of sacrifices to the Gods openly. In his Letter to Maximus Julian stated:

I worship the gods openly, and the whole mass of the troops who are returning with me worship the gods. I sacrifice oxen in public. I have offered to the gods many hecatombs of thank-offerings.³

Although Julian viewed Mithras as a part of his philosophy, the Neoplatonic mysticism he utilized was merely an extension of the Mithraic Cult within the ranks of the military. In this, the common soldier of the Roman Legions under Julian was not as much interested in the philosophy of Neoplatonism as they were in the offerings of the afterlife of the Cult of Mithras. Therefore, the Neoplatonic principles that Julian intertwined within the Cult worked hand-in-hand in promoting his popularized notion of Neoplatonism to the general populous without their knowledge. In this way Julian psychologically gave the Roman Army what they wanted with the afterlife that was promised by Mithras in a Neoplatonic magical shell. Using oracles and theurgy, Julian imposed his importance upon the ranks of his army and the rest of the Roman world to show his divine link to the ancient gods of Greece and Rome. The Emperor Julian ended his Hymn to King Helios with:

May he [Helios] grant me a virtuous life and more perfect wisdom and inspired intelligence, and, when fate wills, the gentlest exit that may be from life, at a fitting hour; and that I may ascend to him thereafter and abide with him, for ever if possible, but if that be more than the actions of my life deserve, for many periods of many years!⁴

This statement spoke about many of the ideals that
Neoplatonism held most sacred. The ideas were so universal, both in the fourth century and in the twentieth century, that if read with no supporting documentation, this statement of Julian's could be mistaken for the religion that he attempted to quash, Christianity.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


NOTES

CHAPTER ONE


2 Ibid., 14.

3 Ibid., 15.

4 Ibid., 20.

5 Ibid., 27-29.

6 Ibid., 29.

7 Ibid., 46.


9 Ammianus Marcellinus *Ammianus Marcellinus* 21.15.2-3.

10 Ibid., 21.2.4.


12 Amm. Marc. *Ammianus* 25.3.9.

CHAPTER TWO


2 See Tacitus, *Annals*, Books XI-XVI. The reigns of Claudius and Nero, which have an interesting player in the form of Agrippina, show the abuses of the Imperial family in the ways of social normalcy.

3 Amm. Marc. *Ammianus* 15.8.18.

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A certain rich man (Constantine) had numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and ‘ranging flocks of goats’ and many times ten thousand mares ‘grazed his marsh meadows.’... Now much of all this his father had bequeathed to him, but he had himself acquired many times more, being eager to enrich himself whether justly or unjustly; for little did he care for the gods. Several wives he had, and sons and daughters by them, among whom he divided his wealth before he died. But he did not teach them how to manage it, or how to acquire more if it should fail, or how to preserve what they had... Accordingly since he thought that a number of sons would suffice to preserve his wealth, he took no thought how to make them virtuous... Then ensued a general slaughter, and heaven brought the tragic curse to fulfillment. For ‘by the edge of the sword they divided their patrimony’ and everything was thrown into confusion.

As you can see Julian did not have the highest of opinions for the sons of or Constantine himself.
CHAPTER FOUR

1. Julian, Letter to the Athenians 274D-275A.
3. Ibid., 548.
6. Julian, Letter to the Athenians 274D.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Cameron, Later Empire, 90. From Zosimus Zosimus 3.1.
2. Ibid., 90.
5. Julian, Letter to the Athenians 277D.
Head, Julian, 53. Julian was wary of ambushes because he and his troops were passing through a thickly wooded area and the rear guard of two legions were attacked. German troops were lurking in the forest waiting for the inexperienced commander. Since the legions were divided into two columns it was much harder for the Germans to surmount an effective operation. Julian narrowly missed being destroyed and was very wary from this point on.

Ibid., 16.2.6.

Ibid., 16.2.2.

Ibid., 16.11.12.

Ibid., 16.11.9.

Ibid., 16.11.3.

Ibid., 16.11.5-8.

Ibid., 16.11.12.

Ibid., 16.11.2.

Ibid., 16.11.1-2.

Ibid., 16.12.5.

Ibid., 16.12.3.

Ibid., 16.12.1.


Ibid., 16.11.13.

Julian Letter to the Athenians 277D-278A.

Julian Letter to the Athenians 278C.

Julian Letter to the Athenians 278A-278B.

Julian Letter to the Athenians 278B.

Julian Letter to the Athenians 278D.


28Tim Cornell and John Matthews, Atlas of the Roman World (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1983), 101. The Tortoise Shell, testudo, defense was when the legions placed their shields together over head, in front, and occasionally around themselves to make an impenetrable wall. This tactic was used for approaching walled towns during sieges, but could also be used in open warfare against larger opponents, i.e. the Germans.

29Amm. Marc. Ammianus 16.12.56.


31Head, Julian, 61.

32Amm. Marc. Ammianus 16.12.64. Julian was again hailed as Augustus while wintering in Paris in 360 A.D. which is the most common known date and when he accepted the title. This is when the Germanic kingship ritual of hoisting the leader atop a shield was done and also is the beginning of Julian’s serious thoughts about reorganization of the Empire.


CHAPTER SIX


2Eunapius Lives of Sophists 457.

3Reale, Imperial Age, 413. This is a book of the magical aspect of Neoplatonism propounded by Iamblichus and his followers, such as the Emperor Julian.

4Eunapius calls Sopater the most outstanding thinker among the followers of Iamblichus. His wisdom was compared to that of the philosopher Socrates (469-399 B.C.), the teacher of Plato (429-347 B.C.). Sopater’s political ambition drew attention from the Imperial Court of Constantine (A.D. 313-337). Sopater was hired as an "initiate" by the Emperor Constantine to help the emperor found and consecrate the city of Constantinople (May 11, A.D. 330). Sopater was at the Imperial court between 330-337 as a personal assessor to Constantine at "his right hand" (Eunapius Lives of Sophists 490). Relations with the emperor were good until he was accused of performing Magic to "fetter the winds" (Eunapius

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Lives of Sophists 463) and delay the corn ships due to Constantinople. The Emperor had him beheaded for this dreadful act. The act of "Magic" went against the newly developed Christian thought of Constantine's court.

5Reale, Imperial Age, 421.

6Eunapius Lives 478.

7Ibid., p. 327.

8Ibid., 477.

9These letters are found in the Works of the Emperor Julian. Salustius wrote On the Gods and the World at the request of Julian probably in 361/362 A.D. Julian and Salustius we very close friends up until Julian's death in 363 A.D.

10Amm. Marc. Ammianus 25.5.3-4.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1Hammond and Scullard ed., OCD, 226.

2Reale, Imperial Age, 412.

3Iamblichus On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians 4.2.

CHAPTER EIGHT


2The Iamblichan vein of Neoplatonism appears to have taken the Neoplatonic triad and replaced it with the Mithraic trinity. Therefore, Mithras is the center of all existence. In the case of Julian it is Helios.

3For the purpose of consistency I will use the term Psyche for the lowest of the Plotinian hypostases. It is usually known as the Logos, but for the ease of comparison with the other Neoplatonic systems we will use the example of the Psyche or soul.

5Ibid., 72.
6Ibid., 85.
8Armstrong, Platinian Studies, 35.

CHAPTER NINE
1Reale, Imperial Age, 414.
3Reale, Imperial Age, 415.
4Ibid., 415.
5Ibid., 414.
6Iamblichus Mysteries 4.2.
7Ibid., 4.2.

CHAPTER TEN
1Hammond and Scullard, OCD, 840.
2Ibid., 116.
3Julian Hymn to King Helios 132D.
4Ibid., 136A.
5Ibid., 136A-136B.
6Ibid., 148C. Julian states, "so as to make 36 Gods in all".
7Ibid., 135C.
8Ibid., 135C. Julian also stated:

And in harmony with this is our theory, seeing that light itself is incorporeal, if one should regard its fountainhead, not as corporeal, but as the undefiled activity of mind pouring light into its own abode: and this is assigned to the middle of the whole, (from 134B).
I mean to say that Zeus engendered Asclepius from himself among the Intelligible Gods, and through the life of generative Helios he revealed to him the earth. Asclepius, having made his visitation to earth from the sky, appeared at Epidaurus singly, in the shape of a man; but afterwards he multiplied himself, and by his visitations stretched out over the whole earth his saving right hand... he raises up souls that are sinful and bodies that are sick.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Julian Against the Galilaeans 200A-200B. Julian stated:

CHAPTER TWELVE

Armstrong, Platinian Studies, 11.
2 Julian Hymn to King Helios 146B-146C.

3 Armstrong, Platinian Studies, 29.

4 Ibid., 33.

5 Ibid., 35.


7 Julian Hymn to King Helios 148D-149B. Julian believes in the ideas set forth by Iamblichus (Mysteries 4.2).

8 Deck, Study in Plotinus, 57.


10 Vice is the "Disharmony" of the soul unit. It is a lower sense of goodness as compared to Virtue. The higher goodness within the soul, Virtue, is also termed as "harmony". Both of these factors of the soul, Vice and Virtue, need each other to survive. They appear to be a force and counter-force like Plotinus' concept of Good and Evil.

11 Julian let his hair, beard, and fingernails grow long in showing his philosophic tendencies by not concerning himself with bodily things. For an example see Julian Misopogon 339B-339D.

12 Turnbull, Essence of Plotinus, 102.


14 Julian Hymn to King Helios 145D.


16 Julian Hymn to King Helios 155A.

17 Ibid., 131C.

18 Deck, Study in Plotinus, 8.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1 Julian, Works, 3:319-428. The work was written in the Winter of 362 A.D. while Julian was in Antioch preparing his plans for the Summer campaign against the Persians. It attacked the Christians and compared them against the Jews and Pagans. The attack was so powerful that nearly 70 years afterwards, Christian bishops were still trying to refute its points.

2 Julian, Works, 1:353-435. The work was written as an uncritical popular essay about the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus which Julian and many other Neoplatonists of the period ascribed.

3 Julian, Works, 3:xvii.

4 Amm. Marc. Ammianus 22.10.7.

5 Ibid., 25.4.20.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1 Reale, Imperial Age, 447.

2 Julian Letter to Maximus the Philosopher 415D.

3 Ibid., 415C.

4 Julian Hymn to King Helios 158B-158C.
APPENDIX A

THE NEOPLATONIC SYSTEM OF PLOTINUS (A.D. 205-270)

I. THE ONE = THE ETERNAL REALM OF EXISTENCE
   A. All emanates from the One
   B. Eternal and never ending
   C. Only Goodness - No evil only lesser properties of goodness

II. NOUS = THE INTELLIGIBLE REALM
   A. Lesser form of the One - Higher form of the Logos - an extension of the One
   B. Logos in process

III. LOGOS = THE PHYSICAL REALM
   A. Lesser form of Nous - still an extension of the One
   B. Soul (Human and Plant)
   C. Mind
APPENDIX B

THE NEOPLATONIC SYSTEM OF PORPHYRY (A.D. 232-305)

I. THE ONE = THE FATHER OR SUSTAINER
   A. SUBSISTENCE
   B. Life (= Power)
   C. Mind

II. LIFE = POWER
   A. Subsistence
   B. LIFE
   C. Mind

III. THE MIND = NOUS
   A. Subsistence
   B. Life
   C. MIND
APPENDIX C

THE NEOPATONIC SYSTEM OF IAMBlichus (c. A.D. 250-325)

I. THE ONE
   A. The One (The Ultimate) = The Supreme and Absolute One (The First One)
   B. The One (The Second One) = The Second Principal

II. THE MIND (NOUS)
   A. The Sphere of Intelligible
      This is divided into 3 Triads
   B. The Sphere of Intelligible-and-Intellective
      This is divided into 3 Triads
   C. Sphere of the Intellective
      This is divided into 3 Triads (1 triad - Proclus)

III. THE SOUL (LOGOS)
   A. Hypercosmic Soul
   B. Soul of the Whole
   C. Individual Souls
APPENDIX D

THE NEOPLATONIC SYSTEM OF JULIAN (A.D. 331-363)

I. THE ONE = HELIOS (THE UNCOMPOUNDED CAUSE)
   A. The One (The Ultimate) = The Supreme and Absolute One
      1. Center of all things in existence
      2. Holds all things together

II. THE MIND (NOUS) = HELIOS-MITHRAS
   A. The Sphere of Intelligible or Intellectual Gods
      1. Helios-Mithras is Ruler of Level
      2. Zeus, Hades, Helios-Serapis (Godhead of the level)

III. THE SOUL (PSYCHE) = HELIOS
   A. The Physical World
      1. Individual Souls
      2. The Sun (Helios) - Rays