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Julian as a mystic and dietician. Rules for the life of a priest

Michael Schramm (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen)
Michael.Schramm@phil.uni-goettingen.de

ABSTRACT

One of Julian's main tasks as *pontifex maximus* was to select suitable priests for the pagan cults. The paper first traced what the general requirements for a priest were. Then, specific rules for the practice of the priesthood were presented using the cult of the Mother of the Gods as an example.

Uno dei compiti principali di Giuliano in qualità di *pontifex maximus* era quello di selezionare sacerdoti adatti ai culti pagani. Il saggio illustra anzitutto i requisiti generali richiesti a un sacerdote. Quindi, prendendo ad esempio il culto della Madre degli Dei, presenta le regole specifiche relative all'esercizio del sacerdozio.

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Rules for the life of a priest

Michael Schramm
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Abstract: One of Julian's main tasks as *pontifex maximus* was to select suitable priests for the pagan cults. The paper first traced what the general requirements for a priest were. Then, specific rules for the practice of the priesthood were presented using the cult of the Mother of the Gods as an example.

Key words: *philanthropia*, Iamblichus' philosophy, purifications, cult rules, fasting.

Sources: Julian, *Letter* 89a/b (Bidez), *Second Panegyric on Constantius - Or.* 3[2] (Bidez), *To the Mother of Gods*, *Contra Cynicos ineruditos*, *To King Helios*.

1. Introduction

During his short reign, Julian acted not only as supreme commander of the army, judge and legislator, but also as *pontifex maximus*, an office, that alle Roman emperors from Augustus onwards had held. As such, he was responsible for overseeing the cults of the traditional gods of the Roman empire. While his predecessor Constantius II banned night-time sacrifices in November 353, closed the temples of the traditional Roman gods a year later and, in February 356, banned pagan cults in general under threat of the death penalty (CTh. 16.10.4-6), after his elevation to sole Augustus on 3 November 361, Julian attempted to revive the pagan cults by rebuilding their destroyed temples and reinstating their priests[1]. There is debate among scholars as to whether this revival of paganism can be regarded as an imitation of Christianity and an attempt to establish a pagan church[2].

1 For the so-called "Edict of restoration", the wording of which has not been preserved and can only be inferred indirectly, see also Amm. Marc. XXII, 5, 2; Weis, *Restitutionsedikt*; Wiemer, *Revival*, 214-215; for an interpretation in the context of Julian's policy toward the cities, see Schmidt-Hofner, *Reforme*, 131-133.

2 Pro: Koch, *Comment I* and *Comment II*; Bowersock, *Hellenism*, 12; contra: Mazza,

Without being able to delve deeper into this debate or even decide it, it is worth pointing out one fundamental difference between Julian's reform project, the Christian church and the cults of the traditional gods of the Roman empire; this difference lies in their organizational frame: The traditional cults were tied to a specific community or city where certain gods were worshipped. Festivals were organized, temples built and priests appointed for them at the local level. They did not belong to a religious community that extended beyond the borders of their city, nor were they a separate professional group within the city that differed from the members of the political elite[3]. Julian subjected this local organizational structure to a certain degree of centralization, modelled on the political organization of the empire, by placing local priests and cults under the supervision of regional high-priests appointed by himself. However, the high-priests of different provinces were not institutionally connected or exchanged ideas on questions of theology and religious practice, unlike the Christian bishops in their synods held annually in a provincial capital or occasionally at councils convened by the emperor. Instead, they were directly subordinate to the emperor Julian, who «transformed the traditional office of *pontifex maximus* into that of a high-priest of the entire Roman empire»[4]. He did this primarily through the extensive sacrifices he personally made in public, but also through religious admonition and the formulation of a new ideal of priesthood.

2. A Code of Conduct for Priests: Julian's Letter "To the High-priest Theodoros" (*Ep.* 89a/b Bidez)

An important source for reconstructing this new type of the ideal priest is a letter that Julian wrote to a certain Theodoros in January 363, informing him of his appointment as the high-priest (ἀρχιερεύς) of the province of *Asia*. This letter is divided into two fragments, which researchers unanimously regard as fragments of a single letter (in Bidez' edition printed as no. 89)[5]. In the first fragment (*Ep.* 89a), Julian describes his friendship with Theodoros, which is based on their mutual admiration for their philosophical teacher, Maximos of Ephesus, a student of Iamblichus. Julian appoints him high-priest and legiti-

Utopia religiosa; Wiemer *Neue Priester* and *Revival*; Rebenich, *Helios-Hymnus*, 215-220. On Julian's religious policy and its philosophical foundations, see Renucci, *Idées*; Scrofani, *Religione impure*; Marcone, *Imperatore filosofo*.

3 Cf. Wiemer, *Revival*, 208 and for the following 233-237.

4 Wiemer, *Revival*, 236.

5 See Asmus, *Encyclika*; Bidez, *Lettres et Fragments*, 102; Weis, *Briefe*, 305-307.

mizes himself as the supreme guardian of religious law. In the second fragment (*Ep.* 89b), Julian outlines the requirements for Theodoros' future task and formulates «a code of conduct for priests in general»[6].

At the heart of this code is φιλανθρωπία, the central virtue of good governance, which had been part of the ideology of rulers since Hellenistic times and was also central to Julian's understanding of governance[7]. Julian defines *philanthropia* as follows: «For instance it is shown when men are punished in moderation with a view to the betterment of those punished, as schoolmasters punish children; and again in ministering to men's needs, even as the gods minister to our own» (*Ep.* 89b, 289b6-c2, tr. Wright)[8]. *Philanthropia* thus encompasses – in the terminology of Roman legal language – 1) *clementia*, i.e. leniency in judging and punishing crimes[9]. In Julian's view, however, the second part of legal leniency, *aequitas,* which is included in the Roman legal tradition's concept of *philanthropia*, is missing. *Aequitas* was intended to mitigate a literal interpretation of general law by taking into account the specific circumstances of individual cases[10]. It is probably missing because Julian considers the laws, as given to the ancestors «from the beginning» by the gods, to be «so beautiful» that they could not have been created by humans, but could only have been adulterated by later «innovation» (καινοτομία) (*Ep.* 89a, 453b4-c4)[11]. Julian's concept of *philanthropia* encompasses 2) public welfare, which originally focused particularly on the care of parentless children. Julian demands of every priest – as well as every civil servant – that even if they are poor, «a proof of his love for his fellows is his sharing cheerfully, even from a small store, with those in need, and his giving willingly thereof, and trying to do good to as many men as he is able» (*Ep.* 89b, 305b2-4, tr. Wright)[12]. This is presumably a pagan rival to Christian diaconia, which, however, is not based on the Christian obligation to charity, but on philosophical ideas such as the Stoic-Neoplatonic universal

6 Wiemer, *Neue Priester*, 227. On Julian's conception of the priesthood, cf. Olszaniec, *Julian Apostata*; Hahn, *Kaiser Julians Konzept*; Wiemer, *Neue Priester*.

7 See Hunger, *ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΑ*; Hiltbrunner, *Philanthropie*; on Julian, see Schramm, *Freundschaft*, 346-397.

8 Ἡ δὲ φιλανθρωπία πολλὴ καὶ παντοία· καὶ τὸ πεφεισμένως κολάζειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐπὶ τῷ βελτίονι τῶν κολαζομένων, ὥσπερ οἱ διδάσκαλοι τὰ παιδία, καὶ τὸ τὰς χρείας αὐτῶν ἐπανορθοῦν, ὥσπερ οἱ θεοὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας.

9 See Kabiersch, *Untersuchungen*, 11-14.

10 See Kabiersch, *Untersuchungen*, 15-25.

11 See Schramm, *Freundschaft*, 384-386.

12 Δεῖγμα δὲ [...] τοῦ φιλανθρώπου δέ, εἰ καὶ ἐξ ὀλίγων εὐκόλως κοινωνεῖ τοῖς δεομένοις καὶ μεταδίδωσι προθύμως, εὖ ποιεῖν ἐπιχειρῶν ὅσους ἂν οἷός τε ᾖ.

kinship of all human beings and the resulting Pythagorean-Neoplatonic "community of all goods"[13].

The second central requirement for the life of a priest – alongside «love for men» – is "love for the gods" (τὸ φιλόθεον): «And a proof of his [sc. the priest's] love for God is his inducing his own people to show reverence to the gods leads all his relatives to piety towards the gods» (*Ep.* 89b, 305a7-b2, tr. Wright)[14]. Already in the 'mirror of princes', which Julian presents in his second *Panegyric on Constantius*, piety (εὐσέβεια or ὁσιότης) stands at the top of the required virtues, which is a «sprout of Justice» (τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἔκγονος), that means: «No man must neglect the traditional form of worship (ἐννόμου θεραπείας)» and should worship the «higher power» (κρεῖττον) (*Or.* 3[2], 16, 70d2-6)[15], from which follows the pious worship of (living or dead) parents, goodwill towards siblings and other relatives, and kindness (πρᾳότης) towards strangers and those seeking protection (28, 86a2-6), as Plato had already postulated (*Nom.* 4, 716a6-718a8). And Iamblichus had regarded belief in the gods as useful for justice and therefore demanded that no one should be allowed to withdraw from piety and cult practice (*v. Pyth.* 174-175). Against this background, Julian demands that even a general or king «should always serve the god with the appointed ritual, like a priest or prophet» (*Or.* 3[2], 14, 68b7-c2, tr. Wright), i.e. he must be a practicing priest himself. In doing so, he opposes Constantine's role in the Christian church, who saw himself, without holding any ecclesiastical office, as «bishop of those things outside the church» (τῶν ἐκτὸς [τῆς ἐκκλησίας] [...] ἐπίσκοπος, Eus. *Vita Const.* IV, 24) in contrast to the bishops who were responsible for those things within the church, by having churches built, convening councils, settling internal church disputes, appointing or banishing bishops[16].

Although being a priest ranks above being a political official or a citizen: «The life of a priest ought to be more holy than the political life (τὸν ἱερατικὸν βίον [...] τοῦ πολιτικοῦ σεμνότερον)» (*Ep.* 89b, 289a1-2, tr. Wright), Julian's priests, unlike Christian priests, do not need a special ordination to be appointed, and they do not belong to a special institution or professional group that was separate from the political officials, unlike the clergy in the church. The emperor's most important task as *pontifex maximus* is to select suitable candi-

13 See Schramm, *Freundschaft*, 387-388.

14 Δεῖγμα δὲ τοῦ φιλοθέου μέν, εἰ τοὺς οἰκείους ἅπαντας εἰς τὴν περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς εὐσέβειαν εἰσαγάγοι [...].

15 Οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τῆς ἐννόμου θεραπείας ἀποστατέον οὐδὲ τὴν τοιαύτην τιμὴν ὑπεροπτέον τοῦ κρείττονος, θετέον δὲ ἐν ἀρετῆς μοίρᾳ τὴν εὐσέβειαν τὴν κρατίστην· ἔστι γὰρ ὁσιότης τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἔκγονος.

16 See Straub, *Kaiser Konstantin*; Dassmann, *Kirchengeschichte*, 60.

dates for priests and to lay down rules for their conduct and the performance of their cultic duties. As far as selection is concerned, Julian favours «the better sort» (βελτίους) und «those who are naturally good and upright» (ἐπιεικεῖς φύσει καὶ σπουδαίους) (*Ep.* 89b, 289a3-5), i.e. virtuous men in the sense of ethical virtue, who willingly practice obedience to gods and laws. These are not «pure souls» or «priests absolutely», but only «a man who has received the office of a priest», for whom Julian does not demand a uniform way of life and to whom he makes ‹concessions› «on occasion when he is not actually engaged in service in the temples» (302c2-7, tr. Wright). The cult officials are thus defined analogously to political officials, but distinguished from them by their area of responsibility: they deserve «a far greater share of good will (εὔνοια)» and «not less, if not indeed more, than the honors that we pay to the magistrates of the state [...], for they sacrifice and pray on behalf of all men» as «officials and servants of the gods (ὡς λειτουργοὺς θεῶν καὶ ὑπηρέτας) and because they minister to us what concerns the gods, and they lend strength to the gods' gift of good things to us» (296b5-d4, tr. Wright).

Julian establishes clear rules for preparation and for the service itself: before beginning service in the temple, the priest must «keep himself pure from all contamination» for a day and a night and perform the prescribed «purifications» (καθαρμοί); he is to stay in the temple as long as local custom requires; during this time he is not allowed to leave the temple, to go home or to engage in political affairs, but he may only perform sacrifices and study philosophy (*Ep.* 89b, 302d1-303a4)[17]. This corresponds to Iamblichus' Pythagorean-Neoplatonic concept of a philosopher's school, according to which paideia must be preceded by a phase of asceticism through philosophy (Iambl. *Vita Pyth.* 68-69). As with Iamblichus, the study of philosophy involves a combination of the study of philosophical texts with theurgy, i.e. sacrifices and prayers, which Iamblichus understands as the path complementary to philosophy for gaining knowledge of the gods and uniting with them. Julian describes the curriculum of texts to be read in great detail, and this corresponds in broad terms to the school curriculum of Iamblichus' school[18]. Julian names Pythagoras,

17 Οἶμαι δὲ χρῆναι τὸν ἱερέα πάντων ἁγνεύσαντα νύκτωρ καὶ ἡμέραν, εἶτα ἄλλην ἐπ' αὐτῇ νύκτα καθηράμενον οἷς διαγορεύουσιν οἱ θεσμοὶ καθαρμοῖς, οὕτως εἴσω φοιτῶντα τοῦ ἱεροῦ μένειν ὅσας ἂν ἡμέρας ὁ νόμος κελεύῃ· τριάκοντα μὲν γὰρ αἱ παρ' ἡμῖν εἰσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ, παρ' ἄλλοις δὲ ἄλλως. Εὔλογον οὖν οἶμαι μένειν ἁπάσας ταύτας τὰς ἡμέρας ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς φιλοσοφοῦντα, καὶ μήτε εἰς οἰκίαν βαδίζειν μήτε εἰς ἀγοράν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ ἄρχοντα πλὴν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ὁρᾶν, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δὲ τῆς περὶ τὸ θεῖον θεραπείας αὐτὸν ἐφορῶντα πάντα καὶ διατάττοντα, πληρώσαντα δὲ τὰς ἡμέρας, εἶτα ἑτέρῳ παραχωρεῖν τῆς λειτουργίας.

18 For this curriculum, see O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 61-65.

Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics Zeno and Chrysippus (*Or.* 89b, 300d4-301a2); Epicurus and Pyrrhonian scepticism, on the other hand, are excluded (301c5-d3). Non-philosophical literature is limited to historiographical works on real events (301b3-4) and hymns to the gods, which are attributed either to the gods themselves or to god-loving people with pure minds and which must be memorized for use in worship (301d7-302a4). Excluded are satirical poetry (e.g. Archilochos, Hipponax, Old Comedy, 300c7-d3), historical fiction and romance novels (301b4-7), because they arouse passions and desires in the soul (301c2-5). Finally, it is also forbidden to use or even hear «uttering words» (300c5-7) or to attend the theatre, chariot races, dances or animal baiting (304b2-d4).

This code of conduct for priests is quite abstract and general, which is also due to the fact that this letter is written more in the style of a theoretical treatise on the requirements of the priesthood in general. This code of conduct focuses mainly on philosophy and literature and bases the concept of priesthood on the ideas of piety, philanthropy and purity. While the first two ideas are presented in more detail in *Ep.* 89a/b Bidez, there are, as we have seen, few concrete provisions for the idea of purity, even though this was a distinctive feature of his conception of priesthood. In order to reconstruct what it means to «keep himself pure from all contamination» and to perform the prescribed «purifications», one must refer to a specific cult. It is therefore no coincidence that Julian's first religious-philosophical writing as emperor was devoted to the propagation of the cult of the Mother of the Gods, in which purity and abstinence played a particularly important role.

3. Rules for Priests in the Cult of the Mother of the Gods

Julian wrote his prose hymn *To the Mother of the Gods* for the feast of the Mater Magna and Attis between 22 and 25 March 362, which was close to and almost parallel with Easter. A close reading of the text reveals that the Neoplatonic allegory of the myth and cult of the Mother of the Gods and her favorite Attis, his castration and return to her was intended to create a pagan counter-model to the Virgin Mary, her son Jesus and his crucifixion and resurrection[19]. The hymn is divided into three parts: an introduction, a main section and a closing prayer. The main section is also divided into three parts according to the key questions posed in the introduction: «Who is Attis or Gallus, who is the Mother of the Gods, and what is the manner of their ritual of purification?» (*In Matr. deor.* 1, 158D3-159A2, tr. Wright). These questions come quite abruptly after only two introductory sentences,

19 See Schramm, *Göttermutter*, 3-5.

which narrow down the target audience of the text: «Ought I to say something on this subject also? And shall I write about things not to be spoken of and divulge what ought not to be divulged? Shall I utter the unutterable?» (1, 158D1-3, tr. Wright). These questions show that the text is addressed to those who are not (yet) initiated into the cult of the Mother of the Gods, to whom the author must not reveal certain things that he does not need to tell those who are already initiated. This explains why some things that are important to the cult or that one would expect to learn are omitted, especially the initiation process or the actual cult ritual, e.g. that on *dies sanguinis,* the climax of the festival on 24 March, altars and cult images are sprinkled with blood, priests dance in ecstasy or, in some cases, castrate themselves[20]. Regarding the cult, Julian explains and justifies only the dietary regulations in ch. 14-18 of the text, after the allegory of Attis and the Mother of the Gods. The text is therefore limited to the preparatory fasting period, which lasts a total of nine days from 16 March to the *dies sanguinis* on 24 March, so it can be assumed that it was written before the beginning of the fasting period, i.e. in early to mid-March[21].

The passage on dietary rules not only provides information about what Julian considered necessary for preparing for initiation into the cult of the Mother of the Gods, but also allows conclusions to be drawn about Julian's general view of the preparatory purifications that priests had to undergo before taking up their priestly duties. This may also explain the meticulousness and detail of this part of the text, which has no parallel in ancient literature and makes it the most important source for reconstructing the dietary rules of the cult of the Mother of the Gods cult[22]. While the allegorical interpretation of the myth of the Mother of the Gods and Attis shows numerous traces of Iamblichus' theology, the philosophical justification of the disparate fasting and dietary rules of her cult seems to be entirely Julian's own work[23]. It offers a fascinating insight into his self-image as *pontifex maximus* and religious legislator and is therefore briefly outlined here.

20 These ideas were taken up and passed on primarily by Christian opponents of the cult of the Mother of the Gods (e.g. Min. Fel. *Octav*. 24, 12; Tertull. *Apol*. 25, 20-26; Arnob. *Adv. Nat.* 1, 41; 5, 11; 14, 17; Lact. *Epit*. 18, 4), see Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, 93-98. For the realities of the cult and its rituals, see Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, 90-93, 99-100; Van Haeperen, *Etrangère*, 99-148 (and 17-54 on the castrated followers of Mater Magna). For the popularity of the Metroac cult in the Roman empire, see Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 171-176.

21 See Schramm, *Göttermutter*, 14-15.

22 E.g. Arbesmann, *Fasten*, 83-86; Brelich, *Offerte*.

23 For a detailed interpretation of the chapters, see Schramm, *Göttermutter*, 264-344.

According to Julian, the dietary rules are based on a «sacred law» (ἱερὸς νόμος) or a «divine ordinance» (θεῖος θεσμός)[24]; Julian distinguishes between «secret statutes concerning the mysteries» and «those that can be told to all» (9, 169A1-3). As an example of the second type of ordinances, Julian cites the tree felling on 22 March (*dendrophoria*), when, in memory of Attis' castration under a pine tree, the cult college of tree bearers (*dendrophori*), consisting of woodcutters, carpenters and timber merchants, cuts down a pine tree and, in the manner of a funeral procession, carries it to the Metroon and sets it up there. According to Julian, this means that «the gods wished to teach us, in symbolic fashion, that we must pluck the fairest fruits from the earth, namely, virtue and piety, and offer them to the goddess to be the symbol of our well-ordered constitution here on earth» (9, 169A5-7, tr. Wright)[25]. The «divine ordinance» that establishes the dietary rules is therefore an ethical, not a mystery-theological statute, which, as a religious-theurgical symbol, is intended to guide the uninitiated to a virtuous, pious way of life. It brings about purification, the goal of which is the «ascent of souls» (ἄνοδος τῶν ψυχῶν) (15, 175B5-6) – or, to put it more technically: «to turn our gaze inwards and to observe how the soul and embodied mind are a sort of mould and likeness of the forms that are embodied in matter» (4, 163A4-6, tr. Wright)[26]. Purification is thus the ascent to the spiritual origin of the soul through self-knowledge, i.e. through the return (ἐπιστροφή) of the soul to itself, and this self-knowledge consists more precisely in recognizing the kinship and image of the soul as the knowing subject to the objects of its knowledge.

This is the epistemological foundation for dietary laws, whose meaning is based on the relationship and similarity between the parts of the soul and forbidden or permitted foods. Human beings consist of two parts of the soul, as stated in *Contra Cynicos ineruditos*: «one part of our souls is more divine, which we call mind and intelligence», and the other part is «changeful and multiform, something composite of anger and appetite, a many-headed mon-

24 Cf. 14, 174A2; 174D6; 17, 177D1; 18, 177D4; 178A3-4; 178B4.

25 [...] διδασκόντων ἡμᾶς οἶμαι τῶν θεῶν συμβολικῶς ὅτι χρὴ τὸ κάλλιστον ἐκ γῆς δρεψαμένους, ἀρετὴν μετὰ εὐσεβείας, ἀπενεγκεῖν τῇ θεῷ, σύμβολον τῆς ἐνταῦθα χρηστῆς πολιτείας ἐσόμενον. Cf. 9, 169B5-8.

26 κάθαρσις δὲ ὀρθὴ στραφῆναι πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ κατανοῆσαι, πῶς μὲν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ ὁ ἔνυλος νοῦς ὥσπερ ἐκμαγεῖόν τι τῶν ἐνύλων εἰδῶν καὶ εἰκών ἐστιν; cf. Porph. *Sent*. 32, 3-5 Lamberz: πρῶτον μὲν οἷον θεμέλιος καὶ ὑποβάθρα τῆς καθάρσεως τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν ψυχὴν ὄντα ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ πράγματι καὶ ἑτεροουσίῳ συνδεδεμένον; Iambl. *De an*. fr. 43, 70, 1-3 (Finamore - Dillon): καὶ μὴν τῆς γε καθάρσεως ἀφαίρεσις τῶν ἀλλοτρίων, ἀπόδοσις τῆς οἰκείας οὐσίας, τελειότης, ἀποπλήρωσις, αὐτάρκεια, ἄνοδος ἐπὶ τὴν γεννησαμένην αἰτίαν [...].

ster» (*Contra Cyn*. 15, 197A5-B1, tr. Wright)[27] – or as expressed in the hymn *To the Mother of the Gods*: «us, who by nature belong to the heavens but have fallen to earth», «us who once flew down from heaven and fell to earth» (*In Matr. deor*. 9, 169B5-6, C2-3, tr. Wright). These formulations sound gnostic[28], but probably allude to Plato's image of the soul as a winged soul chariot that enters the body through the loss of its wings, i.e. through the forgetting of the ideas seen in the supercelestial place (*Phdr*. 246a-249b)[29].

Heaven and earth are the two points of reference for the aforementioned divine ordinance, which is developed into two basic dietary rules, one prohibiting certain foods in worship and one permitting others: «[The divine ordinance] forbids us first to eat those fruits that grow downwards in the earth» (*In Matr. deor*. 16, 175B7-8, tr. Wright)[30]; «but we are allowed to eat fruit and vegetables, only not those that creep on the ground, but those that are raised up from the earth and hang high in the air» (16, 175D5-7, tr. Wright)[31]. To justify the first rule, Julian refers to Plato and the *Chaldean Oracles:* according to Plato, evil has been banished «here», i.e., to the earth, which the Chaldeans call «refuse» (σκύβαλον) and from which one must «escape» (16, 175B8-C2). The reference is a passage in *Theaetetus,* according to which evil exists as a necessary opposition to good, but not «among the gods», i.e. in the noetic realm, but in «mortal nature» and in «this region here», from which one must «escape» as quickly as possible, which is synonymous with the *summum bonum* of Platonic ethics, «becoming as like god as possible» (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν) (*Tht*. 176a5-b2). Chaldean is the expression «refuse» (σκύβαλον) for the earth, because in the *Chaldean Oracles* (fr. 158,1 des Places) this is a term for «abysmal» or earthly matter, i.e. the last, lowest form of matter[32], which is why Julian also refers to the earth as «the last and lowest of things». «Heaven» is the necessary antonym and refers to the «heaven of ideas» in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

27 [...] τὸ μέν ἐστι τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν θειότερον, ὃ δὴ νοῦν καὶ φρόνησίν φαμεν [...], ἕτερον δέ τι τούτῳ συνέζευκται ποικίλον καὶ παντοδαπόν, ὀργῇ καὶ ἐπιθυμίᾳ ξυμμιγές τι καὶ πολυκέφαλον θηρίον [...].

28 See De Vita, *Giuliano Imperatore. Lettere*, CLXXXI n. 398 and 575 n. 100 (with further secondary literature).

29 See Ugenti, *Giuliano Imperatore*, 85.

30 Οὐκοῦν οὐκ ἐᾷ πρῶτον σιτεῖσθαι τὰ κατὰ γῆς δυόμενα σπέρματα· ἔσχατον μὲν γὰρ τῶν ὄντων ἡ γῆ.

31 [...] ἐπιτέτραπται δὲ χρῆσθαι καρποῖς καὶ λαχάνοις, οὐ τοῖς χαμαιζήλοις, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐκ γῆς αἰρομένοις ἄνω μετεώροις.

32 See Schramm, *Göttermutter*, 232-233.

Julian himself describes the two principles mentioned above, which dictate what is forbidden and what is permitted to eat in the cult of the Mother of the Gods, as «certain rules, so to speak, and norms (ὥσπερ τύπους τινὰς [...] καὶ κανόνας), in order to be able to decide about these matters (i.e. the forbidden or permitted foods), though perhaps, owing to my haste, my argument may pass some evidence by» (14, 174D7-9, tr. Wright, slightly modified)[33]. With this last reservation, Julian apologizes in advance for perhaps omitting something from the list of forbidden or permitted foods that he promised earlier; however, it would be impossible to list everything. The τύποι καὶ κανόνες are a phrase commonly used by Christian authors for traditional internal church and liturgical rules, to which Julian refers with a certain distance, expressed by τινάς[34]. In analogy (ὥσπερ!) to Christian church rules, the «rules and norms» of the cult of the Mother of the Gods are also traditional, practical basic rules derived from fundamental theological convictions. However, their primary purpose is not to improve the ethics of the believers and their community[35], but to develop the individual initiate's ability to judge which foods are prohibited or permitted in the cult. This ability to judge results from a theoretical understanding of the meaning and rationale behind the basic rules, as presented here by Julian, and their practical application in the cult (οἷς ἑπόμενοι). Julian implicitly marks a difference from the Christian understanding of church rules, which seems to be based essentially on the adoption and practical observance of norms and rules handed down in the Bible or by the Christian community, rather than on their justification and cognitive understanding. However, he adopts from Christian church rules the intention of reducing the regulations for many individual cases to a few basic rules that the initiate can use as practical guidance[36].

Foods prohibited during the fasting period before the festival include plants that grow into the ground, e.g. beets, root vegetables, seeds planted in the

33 [...] ὥσπερ τύπους τινὰς προθεῖναι καὶ κανόνας, οἷς ἑπόμενοι, κἄν τι πολλάκις ὑπὸ τῆς σπουδῆς παρέλθῃ τὸν λόγον, ἔξομεν ὑπὲρ τούτων κρῖναι.

34 E.g. Athan. *Contra Arian*. 69, 2: τῷ ἐκκλησιαστικῷ κανόνι κατὰ τὸν παλαιὸν τύπον ὑποτάσσεσθαι; Athan. *Ep. encycl. ad episc*. 1, 8, 1: κανόνες καὶ τύποι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις ἐδόθησαν; Bas. *Reg. mor.* 13 (PG XXXI, 864, 46-48); Greg. Ny. *Contra usurarios* (GNO IX, 1, 201, 12-13): ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας διδάσκαλος εὐχῆς κανόνα καὶ τύπον ἀπέριττον τοῖς μαθηταῖς εἰσηγούμενος; Ioh. Chrys. *fr. in Iob* (PG LXIV, 513, 39-42).

35 E.g. Bas. *Reg. mor.* 13 (PG XXXI, 864, 46-48): ὡς τύπον ἢ κανόνα τῆς εὐσεβείας εἰς κατόρθωσιν μὲν τῆς ἐν πᾶσιν εὐθύτητος τῶν ἀκολουθούντων τῷ Κυρίῳ.

36 E.g. Ioh. Chrys. *fr. in Iob* (PG LXIV, 513, 39-42): διεξελθὼν δὲ πάντα τά τε πρακτέα, καὶ τὰ μή, τὸν κοινὸν κανόνα καὶ τύπον πᾶσιν ἐφήρμοσεν, εἰς ὃν ἀφορῶν τις, ἐν οὐδενὶ διαμαρτήσεται.

ground; plants that grow out of the ground, e.g. vegetables, are permitted[37]. However, this does not include all plants that grow out of the ground; apples, pomegranates and dates, for example, are still forbidden, for a variety of reasons, some based on cult practice and others on theology (e.g. pomegranates because they were considered chthonic plants in the cult of the Mother of the Gods, dates because they were sacred to Attis)[38]. Bread, which according to other traditions was forbidden in the cult of the Mother of Gods, is not specifically mentioned by Julian, but is presumably included in his general prohibition of seeds planted in the earth. Fish and pork are also forbidden because they were also considered chthonic[39]; birds (with a few exceptions, perhaps the rooster) and the usual four-legged sacrificial animals such as sheep, goats and cattle are permitted[40].

Many considered it «ridiculous», as Julian says, that meat consumption was permitted during the fasting period in the cult of the Mother of the Gods while seeds were forbidden, because one should abstain from inanimate beings but not from animate beings, or the differentiation in plant-based foods between sprouting vegetables and roots[41]; the former apparently seemed ridiculous to critics such as Porphyry, who had been the most vehement advocate of vegetarianism within Neoplatonism, and the latter to Christians, including Julian in his earlier Christian phase of life. As an emperor who openly professed his belief in pagan cults, he was – similar to Iamblichus before him within Neoplatonism[42] – a supporter of animal sacrifice, but otherwise committed to vegetarianism in practice, not in principle[43]. Julian justified his change of opinion regarding the fasting rules and sacrificial practices of the cult of the Mother of Gods with his own initiation into the cult, through which he ex-

37 Cf. 16, 175B7-8; 175D4-176A5.

38 Cf. 16, 176A5-B6.

39 Cf. 16, 176B6-C1; 17, 177A7-B2; 177C1-6.

40 Cf. 17, 177B7-9.

41 Cf. 14, 174A1-B8.

42 See e.g. Iambl. *Resp*. 5, 14, 162, 9-163, 6 (Saffrey-Segonds-Lecerf) (against Porphyry regarding animal sacrifice as an appropriate sacrifice), but also positively regarding Pythagorean vegetarianism *Vita Pyth.* 187; *Protr*. 21, 39, 125, 27-29 (Pistelli). On Iamblichus' position on vegetarianism, see Haussleiter, *Vegetarismus*, 337-342.

43 See Haussleiter, *Vegetarismus*, 341-351. Characteristic of Julian's position is, on the one hand, his sympathy for Plato's «well-conducted», i.e. vegetarian, city as opposed to the «luxurious», i.e. meat-consuming, city (*Misop*. 20, 350B7-C6, cf. Plat. *Rep*. 2, 372c-373c), and on the other hand his defense of the Cynic Diogenes against critics of his meat consumption (*Contra Cyn*. 12).

perienced the meaning of its cult rules in a very practical way and recognized them theoretically:

> She [the Mother of the Gods] did not disregard me when I wandered as it were in darkness. For first she bade me cut off no part indeed of my body, but by the aid of the intelligible cause that subsists prior to our souls, all that was superfluous and vain in the impulses and motions of my own soul. And that cause gave me, to aid my understanding, certain beliefs which are perhaps not wholly out of harmony with the true and sacred knowledge of the gods (14, 174C5-D2, tr. Wright)[44].

Julian derives his legitimacy as a mediator and explainer of the cult rules (especially the preparation for the cult) from his own initiation and his personal experience as an initiated[45]. He explains the «command» of the Mother of Gods to «cut off the superfluous and useless» in imitation of the castration of Attis not as a call for one's own physical castration, but as a purification of the soul with regard to the activity of its irrational part. This part should not be completely eliminated, but only its excess should be curtailed, and the soul as a whole should be brought into a moderate harmony between its rational and irrational parts[46]. Fasting from certain foods brings about this purification of the soul and thus represents the appropriate preparation of the initiate for initiation, through which his soul, i.e. its rational part, is enabled to attain 'thoughts' and theological «knowledge of the gods».

However, fasting not only affects the soul, but also the body. At the end of his exposition on the dietary rules of the cult of the Mother of Gods, Julian speaks of the «great and marvellous benefit» (ὠφέλεια) for the body and its health:

44 [...] μοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐκέλευσεν ἀποκόψασθαι, οὔτι κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, κατὰ δὲ τὰς ψυχικὰς ἀλόγους ὁρμὰς καὶ κινήσεις τῇ νοερᾷ καὶ προεστώσῃ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν αἰτίᾳ τὰ περιττὰ καὶ μάταια· ἐπὶ νοῦν δὲ ἔδωκεν αὕτη λόγους τινὰς ἴσως οὐκ ἀπᾴδοντας πάντη τῆς ὑπὲρ θεῶν ἀληθοῦς ἅμα καὶ εὐαγοῦς ἐπιστήμης.

45 On Julian's self-presentation as a practicing devotee of the Mother of Gods and a philosophical theologian, see Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Theologe*, 182-190, 207-208.

46 It is the ideal of μετριοπάθεια, not ἀπάθεια of the soul, that is to be realized here. Julian's statement is similar to that of Iamblichus: with the Pythagorean apophthegma that one must «cut off with fire and sword everything that does not fit into the right measure» (πυρὶ καὶ σιδήρῳ τὰ ἀσύμμετρα πάντα ἀποκόπτειν, Iambl. *Vita Pyth.* 187), which also includes «abstinence from all food that is animated and makes one undisciplined», he introduces his treatment of σωφροσύνη. And it is one of the effects of sacrifice to «cut off the superfluous in us» (τὰ μὲν ἀποκόπτων τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν περιττευόντων) and «to bring what is flawed and disturbed into the right measure and order» (τὰ δὲ εἰς συμμετρίαν ἄγων καὶ τάξιν ὅσα πλημμελῶς ἐπιτετάρακται, *Resp.* 5, 16, 165, 8-13 Saffrey-Segonds-Lecerf).

> For when the soul abandons herself wholly to the gods, and entrusts her own concerns absolutely to the higher powers, and then follow the sacred rites [...] then, I say, since there is nothing to hinder or prevent – for all things reside in the gods, all things subsist in relation to them, all things are filled with the gods – straightway the divine light illumines our souls. And thus endowed with divinity they impart a certain vigour and energy to the breath implanted in them by nature; and so that breath is hardened as it were and strengthened by the soul, and hence gives health to the whole body. For I think not one of the sons of Asclepios would deny that all diseases, or at any rate very many and those the most serious, are caused by the disturbance and derangement of the breathing. Some doctors assert that all diseases, others that the greater number and the most serious and hardest to cure, are due to this (18, 178B2-C7, tr. Wright)[47].

The focus of cultic dietetics is not on the body and its organs, but on the pneuma. Julian distinguishes between two forms of pneuma: the immaterial, «luminous pneuma» (αὐγοειδὲς πνεῦμα), which mediates between the incorporeal soul and the body, and the material, «innate pneuma» (σύμφυτον πνεῦμα) of the body, which is inherently connected to the luminous pneuma and is the carrier of the irrational soul[48]. Through preparatory fasting and initiation into the mysteries of the Mother of the Gods, the «fineness» and «good mood» of the luminous pneuma[49] is strengthened and enlarged, so that its attachment to the innate pneuma and thus to the body is reduced.

47 Ὅταν γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ πᾶσαν ἑαυτὴν δῷ τοῖς θεοῖς, ὅλα τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐπιτρέψασα τοῖς κρείττοσιν, ἑπομένης, οἶμαι, τῆς ἁγιστείας καὶ πρό γε ταύτης τῶν θείων θεσμῶν ἡγουμένων [...], αὐτίκα μὲν αὐταῖς ἐλλάμπει τὸ θεῖον φῶς, θεωθεῖσαι δὲ αὖται τόνον τινὰ καὶ ῥώμην ἐπιτιθέασι τῷ συμφύτῳ πνεύματι, τοῦτο δὲ ὑπ' αὐτῶν στομούμενον ὥσπερ καὶ κρατυνόμενον σωτηρίας ἐστὶν αἴτιον ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι. Τὸ δὲ ὅτι μάλιστα μὲν πάσας τὰς νόσους, εἰ δὲ μὴ ὅτι τὰς πλείστας καὶ μεγίστας, ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος εἶναι τροπῆς καὶ παραφορᾶς συμβέβηκεν, οὐδεὶς ὅστις, οἶμαι, τῶν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν οὐ φήσειεν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ καὶ πάσας φασίν, οἱ δὲ τὰς πλείστας καὶ μεγίστας καὶ ἰαθῆναι χαλεπωτάτας.

48 On the «luminous pneuma», cf. *In reg. Sol.* 37, 152B2-3, its source perhaps *Or. Chald.* fr. 120 des Places (ψυχῆς λεπτὸν ὄχημα), cf. De Vita, *Giuliano Imperatore*, 221; on the «innate» pneuma, cf. *Contra Cyn*. 3, 182C8 (πνεῦμα ἔνθερμον), its source is presumably the medical school of pneumatics (cf. Bouffartigue, *Julien*, 485-486; De Vita, *Giuliano imperatore*, 218-219). This school distinguishes between a «natural» or «warm pneuma» (πνεῦμα φυσικόν, πνεῦμα ἔνθερμον) located in the heart as the principle of life and movement (Ps.-Gal. *Def. med.* 49 [XIX, 360, 4-6 Kühn]; 95 [XIX, 371, 7-9 Kühn]), and a «soul pneuma» (πνεῦμα ψυχικόν) that permeates the entire body, which is the principle of human perception and thought and is located in the head (Ps.-Gal. *Intr.* 8 [XIV, 697, 6-8 Kühn]; 13 [XIV, 726, 6-14 Kühn]; *Def. med.* 29 [XIX, 355, 15-17 Kühn]; cf. Verbeke, Évolution, 191-206; Schramm, *Göttermutter*, 333-338).

49 Cf. *In reg. Sol.* 37, 152B2: τὸ λεπτὸν καὶ εὔτονον τῆς θείας αὐγῆς οἷον ὄχημα [...].

For the physicians whom Julian refers to for the innate pneuma, health consists in the «good mixture» (εὐκρασία) or «harmony» (ἁρμονία) of the four primary qualities of warm, cold, moist and dry[50], diseases arise accordingly from their lack of harmony and poor mixture[51]. Quite a few of the diseases are explained by the ‹thickening› of the pneuma[52], therefore, in medical dietetics, a light, non-burdensome diet is generally considered to be beneficial to health[53]. This is the medical background for Julian's interpretation of the dietary rules of the cult of the Mother of Gods. This is because the forbidden foods are all those that were considered particularly heavy and coarse due to their earthiness[54].

4. Conclusion

The hymn *To the Mother of Gods* provides a clearer understanding of how Julian conceived of the prescribed purifications that the priest had to undergo before the beginning of his service. These consist essentially of fasting, abstaining from heavy foods or foods that are forbidden in a particular cult. Within the cult, this diet was limited to the fasting period, but Julian certainly wanted it to be recommended as permanent and beneficial for both body and mind[55]. This is supported by the latter reference to the medical background of his dietetics. This probably also applied to priestly service in general, for which he required a day of purification as preparation (*Ep.* 89b, 302d1-2); this probably consisted of fasting, as described for the nine-day fasting period of the cult of the Mother of Gods. In general, Julian considers this moderate lifestyle to be

50 Cf. Ps.-Gal. *Def. med.* 31 (XIX, 356, 7-12 Kühn); 129 (XIX, 382, 8-12 Kühn).

51 Cf. Aret. III, 16, 1 (CMG II, 60, 10-13 Hude); Ps.-Gal. *Intr.* 9 (XIV, 699, 6-10 Kühn); Orib. *Coll. med.* IX, 20, 6 (CMG VI, 1, 2, 20, 1-3 Raeder). Examples of diseases caused by disturbance of the pneuma: sore throat (Aret. I, 7 ,1 [CMG II, 7, 25-27 Hude]; I, 7, 2 [CMG II, 8, 11-13 Hude]); hypochondria (Aret. III, 14, 3 [CMG II, 56, 12-14 Hude]); colic (Aret. II, 6, 1 [CMG II, 25, 10-13 Hude]); fever (Ps.-Gal. *Def. med.* 185 [XIX, 398, 14-15 Kühn]); for further examples of diseases resulting from a poor condition of the pneuma, cf. Verbeke, *Évolution*, 199-205; Schramm, *Göttermutter*, 339-342.

52 Cf. Bouffartigue, *Julien*, 485; De Vita, *Giuliano Imperatore*, 218.

53 E.g. Orib. *Ad Eun.* 1, 17, 4: ἀσφαλεστέρα τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἡ λεπτύνουσα δίαιτα πρὸς φυλακὴν ὑγείας τῆς παχυνούσης μᾶλλον; Hierocl. *In carm. aur.* 16, 11, 1-3 (Köhler): ἔστι γάρ, ἃ μὴ δεῖ προσφέρεσθαι ὡς βαρύνοντα τὸ σῶμα καὶ καθέλκοντα τὸ συμφυὲς πνεῦμα τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς ὑλικωτέρας ἐμπαθείας [...].

54 Cf. Sallust. *De diis* 4, 10, 8, 20-21 (Nock).

55 Cf. 17, 176C2-3 (on the prohibition of fish); Arbesmann, *Fasten*, 85; Schramm, *Göttermutter*, 302.

a necessary prerequisite for practicing theology as knowledge of the nature of the gods and their work: whether it is conveyed through cult initiation, as in the cult of the Mother of Gods, or through the study of philosophical-theological writings, as required in Letter 89a/b. Only this opens the soul to the spirit and the gods. It is therefore not surprising that an emperor such as Julian, in his hymn *To the Mother of Gods*, deals in such detail with questions of nutrition, particularly for cult aspirants, but also for priests in general. This, too, was part of his understanding of his office as *pontifex maximus*.

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