

ΘΕΟΙ ΘΕΩΝ: AN IAMBLICHEAN DOCTRINE IN JULIAN'S AGAINST THE GALILAEANS

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The first two words of the Demiurge's speech in Plato's *Timaeus* (41A7), "gods of gods," presented later platonists with a problem of interpretation: to whom did the words refer? In his anti-Christian tract, *Against the Galilaeans* (173.6–175.20), while contrasting the accounts of creation given in Genesis and Plato's *Timaeus*, Julian gives an interpretation of the first two words of the Demiurge's speech which differs from any of those given by Proclus in his *Timaeus* commentary (3.202.19–203.32). This paper will present evidence that Julian's interpretation is based upon that of Iamblichus.¹

Julian discusses the Demiurge's speech from the *Timaeus* (41A7–D3) to criticize Moses' account of creation: Moses fails to differentiate the invisible noetic gods from the visible encosmic ones. According to Julian's interpretation of the first two words of this speech, "gods of gods," the vocative "gods" refers to the invisible noetic gods and the genitive "of gods" to the visible encosmic gods. Julian's interpretation takes on new importance when compared with Proclus' commentary on these same words.² Proclus devotes seven pages of

¹ The following works are cited by the author's name alone: R. D. Archer-Hind, *The Timaeus of Plato* (1888: rpt. New York 1973); J. R. Asmus, *Julians Galilaërschrift* (Freiburg 1904); F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London 1937); J. M. Dillon, *Iamblichi Chalcidensis in Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta* (Leiden 1973); E. R. Dodds, *Proclus: The Elements of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford 1963); A. J. Festugière, *Proclus: Commentaire sur le Timée*, 5 vols. (Paris 1966–68); J. F. Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory of the Vehicle of the Soul* (Chico 1985); T. Gollwitzer, *Observationes Criticae in Iuliani Imperatoris Contra Christianos Libros* (Erlangen 1886); W. J. Malley, *Hellenism and Christianity* (Rome 1978); A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Oxford 1928); W. C. Wright, *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, 3 vols. (Cambridge 1913–23). Julian's works will be cited from the edition of J. Bidez, F. Cumont, G. Rochefort, and C. Lacombrade, 2 vols. (Paris 1932–64); his *Contra Galilaeos* from the edition of C. J. Neumann (Leipzig 1880); Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis* from the edition of E. des Places (Paris 1966), but Parthey's page numbering is retained; Proclus' *On Platonis Timaeum Commentaria* from the edition of E. Diehl, 3 vols. (Leipzig 1903–6); his *Elements of Theology* from the edition of E. R. Dodds (above).

² Before the discussion of Proclus' commentary, something must be said about his and Julian's text of the Demiurge's speech. Proclus (3.206.22–23) reads the following: θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατήρ τε ἔργων, ἃ δι' ἐμοῦ γινόμενα ἅλута ἐμοῦ γε ἐθέλοντας. Julian (173.8–9) gives the following: θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατήρ τε ἔργων ἅλута ἔσται ἐμοῦ γε ἐθέλοντος. The differences between Julian's and Proclus' texts (Julian omits the

commentary (*In Tim.* 3.199.14–206.21) to the two Greek words that open the Demiurge's speech. At 202.19–203.32, Proclus, without any attribution, isolates three different interpretations of the two words before giving Syrianus', with which he himself agrees.

In the first interpretation (202.28–203.8), the genitive is construed not with the vocative ("gods of gods") but with the following clause ("gods, of which gods I am Demiurge"), as if θεῶν and ὧν had been transposed. The vocative and the genitive have the same referent, the visible gods created by the Demiurge; this interpretation appears to be a (Middle Platonic?) search for an easy solution to the meaning of θεοὶ θεῶν. Proclus is quick to point out both exegetical and linguistic problems with the solution: first, it makes the Demiurge the Demiurge of some entities (the encosmic gods) but the Father of other, less honorable entities. But, Proclus points out, the paternal aspect is more august than the demiurgic. Thus, the divine creator cannot be called the father of entities less honorable than those of which he is the Demiurge.³ Second, the construction "gods, of which gods" involves a needless repetition of the word "gods."⁴

In the second interpretation (3.203.8–20), the encosmic gods are called gods of the noetic gods because they are images (εἰκόνες) of them. Under this interpretation, the vocative refers to the encosmic visible gods, the genitive to the noetic invisible gods. As Festugière (5.62 note 1) points out, the genitive here shows that the encosmic gods are dependent on or belong to the noetic gods, related as an image to its paradigm. The Demiurge is addressing the

phrase ἃ δι' ἐμοῦ γινόμενα and adds the verb ἔσται) are of little importance for present purposes. Wright (3.336 note 1) is surely correct that Julian is quoting from memory. Festugière (5.66 note 1) points out that there are two possible translations for the Procline text, depending on whether the word ἔργων refers to the encosmic gods alone or to all the works created. As Festugière notes, Proclus uses ἔργων in both senses. This is not surprising since the encosmic gods and other, lower entities are equally "works of the Demiurge and Father." The same ambiguity is present in Julian's text. In what follows (174.21–175.20), Julian argues that the Demiurge creates the gods, visible universe, and the immortal soul. These would all be "works of the Demiurge and Father." Both Julian and Proclus would agree that whatever the Demiurge himself creates (including the encosmic gods) is created imperishable as long as he wills it so and that whatever the encosmic gods and the Demiurge create together is perishable. For modern editors' attempts to reconstruct the text of Plato, see Archer-Hind (137–38), Taylor (247–51), Cornford (367–70), and Festugière (loc. cit.)

³ For Proclus, at least, the matter is reinforced by his exegesis on the words δημιουργὸς πατὴρ τε (3.208.25–209.13). Proclus distinguishes between four entities: the Father, the Father and Maker, the Maker and Father, and the Maker. To the Father are subject noetic, noeric, hypercosmic, and encosmic entities; to the Father and Maker all but noetic entities; to the Maker and Father all but noetic and noeric entities; to the Maker encosmic entities alone. The Platonic Demiurge corresponds to the third of these entities. It can easily be seen that for Proclus the paternal aspect is superior to the demiurgic. Cf. *Tim.* 28C 3 and Proclus *In Tim.* 1.311.25–312.26; *El. Th.* prop. 151 and Dodds (279).

⁴ So also Cornford (369), cited by Festugière (5.61 note 3).

visible gods as vertical emanations of the higher invisible gods. As such, the interpretation has a neoplatonic (Porphyrian?) ring and is somewhat similar to Proclus' solution in that it stresses the connection between the two levels of gods. Proclus, however, finds two problems with this interpretation. First, he says, the described connection is not a special privilege (ἐξ αίρετον) of the encosmic gods, because not only the visible gods but also mortal beings are "of the gods."⁵ Second, even if the genitive referred to the noetic, because the visible gods are created by the one Demiurge, Plato would have written "gods of (singular) god".

According to the third interpretation (3.203.20–32), the Demiurge is addressing "the most universal henads of the encosmic gods," i.e., the best or chief of the encosmic gods.⁶ Thus, the word θεῶν is taken as a partitive genitive, the vocative referring to some particular part of the encosmic gods, viz. their leaders. Although this is a plausible translation of the two words,⁷ Proclus retorts that the Demiurge is addressing "all the encosmic gods and the attendants of the gods" (25–26). The interpretation, then, is unacceptable because it conflicts with Plato's words at 41A3–6, where for neoplatonists the Demiurge is said to address both the heavenly bodies and the sublunary gods.⁸

While none of these three interpretations discussed by Proclus matches the one given by Julian, there are certain important similarities between the interpretations given by Julian and Syrianus. Proclus gives Syrianus' view (3.203.32–203.32) that the encosmic gods are gods in two senses. They are separated, invisible, and hypercosmic but with a visible image (ἄγαλμα) in the cosmos. They are gods primarily by their invisible part and secondarily by their visible vehicle (ὄχημα), which is attached to their invisible essence. Just as human beings are double (soul and body), so too are the encosmic gods. The phrase θεοὶ θεῶν, then, is addressed to all the encosmic gods. The vocative refers to the higher invisible aspect of the encosmic gods; the genitive to the lower visible aspect. But, Syrianus believes, it is not the visible gods alone that the Demiurge is addressing. He is also speaking to demons and, presumably, all the divine intermediaries. Proclus concludes: "They are all, then, 'gods of gods' inasmuch as they have their visible aspect interwoven (συμπελεγμένον) with

⁵ Proclus does not, of course, deny that the visible gods are images of the noetic gods (cf. 3.204.5–7), only that being an image of them is a special privilege. This objection has an Iamblichean ring. At *De Myst.* 1.19, 60.11–18, the intimate connection that exists between the noetic and visible gods is called a special privilege (ἐξ αίρετον) of their cause and order. What is a "special privilege" is the gods' interconnection and association with the Good (*De Myst.* 1.5, 15.5–11). Other, lower entities do not share in this privilege.

⁶ I follow Festugière (5.62 note 3) against Cornford (368) in taking θεῶν with ἐγκοσμίῳ in 203.20.

⁷ As Festugière (5.62–63 note 4) says, citing Taylor (248). Cf. Archer-Hind (138).

⁸ For the neoplatonic doctrine that ὅσοι τε περιπολοῦσιν φανερώς (*Tim.* 41A 3–4) are the Visible gods (i.e., the planets and stars), while ὅσοι φαίνονται καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἐθέλωσιν are the sublunary gods, see Proclus *In Tim.* 3.194.28–195.7. The doctrine is probably Iamblichean. See Dillon (368–69).

the invisible and the encosmic with the hypercosmic" (3.204.29–31). Syrianus' explanation is, certainly, more elaborately worked out than the one found in Julian's *Galilaeans*, but the essence of his position is similar: the words "gods of gods" are addressed to the visible gods with special reference to their connection to the invisible gods.

There is good reason to believe that Syrianus is following Iamblichus' lost commentary on the *Timaeus*. Syrianus often uses Iamblichean doctrines as a basis for his own theories and then elaborates on that doctrine. In fact, on the next three occasions when a doctrine of Syrianus is explicitly mentioned (3.233.13–22; 236.31–238.26; 247.26–249.26), Syrianus is developing an Iamblichean theory. In the first passage (233.4–22), Proclus discusses various opinions about the meaning of the word σπεύρας (*Tim.* 41C8). The Platonists, Proclus says, thought that there was one sowing, Iamblichus⁹ thought there were two, but Syrianus (building on Iamblichus' theory) claimed there were three. In the second passage (234.8–238.26), Proclus discusses the various theories of the mortality or immortality of the vehicle of a human soul. Iamblichus argues against Atticus, Albinus, and Porphyry that it is immortal. Syrianus claims that there are two Vehicles, a higher immortal one and a lower mortal one.¹⁰ In the final passage (246.29–249.26), Syrianus adopts and adapts Iamblichus' theory of the mixing bowl (*Tim.* 41D4) as a life-producing cause that provides "appropriate measures of coherence" to different classes of soul.¹¹ It is clear that, at least in this section of Proclus' commentary, Syrianus typically expresses Iamblichean ideas in his explication of problem passages in the *Timaeus*.¹² It is most likely that Syrianus is also doing so when discussing the first words of the Demiurge's speech.

It is time to turn to Iamblichus' surviving works to see if the interpretation given by Syrianus bears any resemblance to Iamblichean doctrines there. Iamblichus discusses the connection between the invisible and visible gods in *De Mysteriorum* 1.19, where he argues that the visible gods are unmixed with the visible realm and exist along side the noetic gods (57.11–14). This community (κοινωνία) of the encosmic and noetic gods comes about through the agency of the One (58.17–18). The connection between the incorporeal noetic gods and the visible corporeal gods comes about because the visible gods are, strictly,

⁹ The second opinion is not expressly ascribed to Iamblichus. For the evidence that it is Iamblichean and for a fuller discussion of the entire passage, see Finamore (80–85).

¹⁰ The passage is discussed at length by Dillon (371–77), who believes that the doxography was originally set out by Iamblichus in his *Timaeus* commentary, which Syrianus in his turn followed. For the theory of the two vehicles, see Dodds (320–21).

¹¹ For a discussion of the μέτρα τῆς συνοχῆς πρέποντα, see Finamore (36–48).

¹² As Dillon notes (364), Proclus also seems to be following Syrianus (who is following Iamblichus) from 3.173.7–1191.24. Indeed, at 174.13–17, Proclus states that he will both adopt Syrianus' teachings (and thereby escape the errors of previous commentators) and follow the purest theories of Iamblichus. See Dillon (365).

exterior to their bodies and exist in the noetic realm (60.11–12). Thus, the noetic gods can envelop the visible gods in themselves and create a single τάξις of invisible and visible gods (60.12–17).¹³ For Iamblichus, then, there is a special, intimate connection between the invisible noetic and visible encosmic gods. The noetic gods give their unity and coherence to the visible. They provide them the ability to participate directly in the One and, thus, to share the same essence with them (60.4–8).

In his *Timaeus* commentary, Syrianus seems to make use of this Iamblichean conception of the community of the noetic and visible gods. The phrase “gods of gods” refers to that aspect of the visible gods that is particularly noetic. This noetic aspect is the visible god’s soul (as opposed to the vehicle). Iamblichus makes a similar distinction, stating that the visible gods have bodies (i.e., vehicles) but that they transcend them; in their incorporeal aspect, the visible gods are properly noetic. Syrianus (204.3–7) differentiates between the visible gods’ “separated, invisible, and hypercosmic” aspect and their visible image (ἐμφανὲς ἄγαλμα) in the cosmos. The visible gods are gods in both aspects, soul and body. Iamblichus (57.16–58.1) states that the visible images (ἐμφανῇ ἀγάλματα) of the visible gods are generated from and situated in their noetic paradigms. The visible gods have an image (εἰκόν) that belongs to and is perfected by their noetic paradigms. In both passages, then, the visible gods’ vehicles are visible extensions of their noetic essence.¹⁴ The vehicle makes the gods encosmic, but it in no way interferes with their noetic activities. Julian also states that the visible gods are images (εἰκόνες) of the invisible and noetic gods (174.10).¹⁵

¹³ Cf. *De Myst.* 1.17, 50.14–52.16, where Iamblichus argues that the visible gods completely transcend their bodies and that the relationship between a visible god and its body is not at all analogous to that between a human being and its body. Iamblichus concludes that the visible gods are in a certain sense incorporeal and, thus, closely akin to the invisible gods. In the beginning of 1.18, 52.17–18, he concludes: “Thus, the gods visible in heaven are also all in a certain way bodiless.”

¹⁴ Syrianus (204.10–13) goes on to argue that if human beings have a soul and body, then *a fortiori* the gods have both also. Syrianus’ point is that, even though the gods share this attribute of the double life with human beings, their relationship of soul to vehicle is so far superior that they are much more closely linked to the noetic gods (204.13–16). The point is clarified by Iamblichus (59.1–60.8), who differentiates between the gods, whose unity and essence is single and uniform, and “entities of different essence, such as soul and body,” whose union with the noetic is acquired from entities above and is not a part of their essence. (They are at times attached and at times separated from the noetic.) Cf. 52.3–16, where the soul of the god is not “joined to the body as one animal from two.” Their connection to the noetic is, therefore, superior to that of entities beneath them.

¹⁵ Julian says that the visible gods are τῶν ὀφανεῶν εἰκόνες (174.10; cf. 174.13, εἰκόνες τῶν νοητῶν). Cf. *Fragmentum Epistolae* 295A: the visible gods are the living ἀγάλματα of the invisible essence of the invisible gods. Asmus (10–11) lists other parallel passages. Syrianus evidently wrote that a visible god was an ἄγαλμα of the invisible gods (3.204.6). Both are using terminology from

Syrianus concludes that the words θεοὶ θεῶν are addressed to all the visible gods, "among whom there is some interweaving (συμπλοκή) of the invisible gods to the visible"¹⁶ and that the Demiurge has brought forth a double order (διττὸς διάκοσμος), one hypercosmic, the other encosmic (204.13–18). Iamblichus also mentions these two related concepts of the interweaving and the double order. At 60.5–8, Iamblichus is discussing the community existing between the invisible and visible gods. He calls it "a community of indissoluble συμπλοκή." At 58.2–5, Iamblichus claims that the visible ἀγάλματα of the gods have been created in a different διακόσμησις than the noetic gods. The visible gods in their διακόσμησις are conjoined (συνεχῇ) to the noetic gods in theirs by a single union (ἔνωσις).¹⁷ The two classes of gods form two separate orders of deities, but the connection between them is so close as to make differentiation almost unnecessary. They are, as it were, woven into a single order.¹⁸ For Syrianus the interweaving occurs within the encosmic gods themselves, whereas for Iamblichus it occurs between the noetic and encosmic gods. This difference will be of importance in the discussion of Julian's text.

It seems likely that Syrianus is basing his interpretation on Iamblichean principles. Can the same be said for Julian? The metaphysical hierarchy found in the *Galilaeans* bears a striking resemblance to that found in the texts of Syrianus and Iamblichus. Plato, Julian tells us, differentiates between the visible gods (e.g., the sun, moon, and stars) and the invisible noetic gods. The visible gods are images (εἰκόνες) of the visible. This scheme is in some respects similar to that presented in the *Hymn to King Helios*. In this latter work, which is assuredly based upon Iamblichean doctrines, three worlds are described: noetic, noeric, and visible. In each realm, there is a "sun" who rules over that realm: the noetic sun is the neoplatonic One or Aion, the noeric sun is

Plato's *Timaeus* (37C6–7 and 92C7). It is interesting to note that the second group of interpreters mentioned by Proclus say that the encosmic gods are εἰκόνες of the noetic (203.8–9) "just as the whole cosmos is an ἄγαλμα of the eternal gods" (203.9–10). It appears that the words εἰκόν and ἄγαλμα are interchangeable in this context. This point adds more evidence to the claim that Julian and Syrianus are following a common source, Iamblichus, since he himself uses both terms of the visible gods (*De Myst.* 57.16–58.1).

¹⁶ Cf. 204.29–31: "And all [the visible gods] are 'gods of gods' because they have their visible aspect interwoven (συμπεπλεγμένον) to their invisible, and their hypercosmic to their encosmic." The term συμπλοκή is, of course, taken from Plato's *Sophist*.

¹⁷ Cf. 60.15–17: "And this [i.e., the close connection between the noetic and visible gods] is a special privilege of the cause and of the διακόσμησις of the gods, for which reason the same ἔνωσις of all the gods extends from on high to the end of the divine order."

¹⁸ Syrianus also claimed that the Demiurge's speech was addressed to demons as well as to the visible gods (204.23–29). There appears to be Iamblichean precedent for this as well. At 59.15–60.2, when Iamblichus turns to discuss the intimate association of the gods, he claims that the primary and secondary classes of gods and τὰ περὶ αὐτὰ φύομενα πολλὰ [γένη] possess a τάξις unified by their ἔνωσις. This third group includes the classes superior to embodied human souls, viz. angels, demons, heroes, and purified souls. See Finamore (44).

Helios or the Demiurge, and finally there is the visible sun itself. Each rules over the gods existing at his level: noetic, noeric, and visible gods. In the *Galilaeans*, as scholars have noted,¹⁹ Julian does not distinguish the noetic from the noeric realms, but it appears that, in this context, neither do Iamblichus or Syrianus. Julian seems to be following the neoplatonic line. If so, it is possible that the two-tiered universe of the *Galilaeans* represents a simplified view of the three-tiered universe of the *Hymn to King Helios* and that Julian uses the term “noetic” in the *Galilaeans* to refer to both the noetic and the noeric.²⁰

This two-tiered view of the universe can help to explicate the position of the Demiurge in Julian’s *Galilaeans*. Julian says that “the noetic and invisible gods exist in, exist with, and are generated and proceed from the Demiurge” (174.13–16) and that the Demiurge is “the one who has made heaven, earth, sea, and stars, having generated²¹ their archetypes in the noetic” (19–20). Here the Demiurge appears to be a noetic being of some power, whereas, in the Helios Hymn, the Helios-Demiurge is the king of the noeric gods, intermediate between the noetic and visible gods.²² There appears to be a conflict between the two works. If, however, Julian is using a simplified model of the more complicated neoplatonic universe, it is possible that the Demiurge is fulfilling two roles: noetic and noeric. In the Helios Hymn, all three “suns” are considered creators, each in his own capacity.²³ Thus, the Demiurge is in a sense double, responsible in his noetic aspect for the generation and creation of the noetic entities and in his noeric aspect for bringing about both the union that exists between the noetic and visible worlds and the immortal entities that inhabit the visible world.²⁴

¹⁹ See Asmus (10), Wright (3.336–337 note 2), and Malley (58 note 115).

²⁰ This is the view of Asmus (10).

²¹ I omit καὶ with the manuscripts and Gollwitzer (29).

²² For the middle position of Helios–Demiurge, see *Hymn to King Helios* 138D–139A, 141B, 142A. On his connection to the noetic gods as an emanation from them, see 139D, 141D, 146B–C. On his role as link between the noetic and visible realms, see 139B–C, 142A, 146B–C. See also Malley (59–61). For the Demiurge as the intermediary between the noetic god and “the many demiurges” [i.e., the encosmic gods], see Proclus, *In Tim.* 3.230.23–25.

²³ Julian describes the three “suns” at 132C–134D. The One is the πρωτοπυργός οὐσία and Helios is the middle of the δημιουργικαὶ αἰτίαι (133A). In 157C, Helios is said to have τριπλῇ δημιουργία and, in the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* 161D, is called τρίτος δημιουργός.

²⁴ This same explanation will serve at 197.13–15: “For Zeus generated (ἐγέννησεν) Asclepius in the noetic from himself, and he [Asclepius] appeared on earth through the creative life of Helios.” If Zeus is identical to Helios here (and on that identity, see the *Hymn to King Helios* 143D, 149A, 136A, 144B), two aspects of him are being contrasted: Helios as noetic monad (= Zeus) and Helios in his lower, life-producing aspect. Cp. the Helios Hymn 144B and 153B, where it is Helios that generates (γεννᾷ, ἀπογεννήσας) Asclepius. Thus, there is no need for Malley’s bewilderment (98–99 note 505) that Zeus is not mentioned in the passage of the *Galilaeans*. If the explanation given in this paper is correct, the noeric god Helios–Zeus is being taken over into the two-tiered world of the *Galilaeans* as “noetic.”

Some may wish to argue against this view that the metaphysical framework of the *Galilaeans* is ignorant of the noetic realm entirely and that the Demiurge is considered a noetic being.²⁵ Such a view, however, makes Julian inconsistent with himself. The *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*, written in the spring of 362, and the *Helios Hymn*, written in December of the same year, both present a three-tiered, Iamblichean universe. Julian published the *Galilaeans* in early 363 and was probably composing it simultaneously with the *Helios Hymn*. Given this temporal framework, such inconsistency seems improbable, especially because Julian is writing on such an important issue of theology and is eager to codify pagan doctrines in accordance with Iamblichean neoplatonism.²⁶

If the above explanation is accepted, how should one take Julian's interpretation of the phrase "gods of gods?" Julian states that the Demiurge addresses "gods" to the invisible gods and "of gods" to the visible.²⁷ Syrianus' commentary sheds light on Julian's meaning. Syrianus believes that the Demiurge is addressing all the encosmic gods and that the phrase θεοὶ θεῶν means "the noetic aspect of the encosmic gods." It has been seen that Iamblichus does not make precisely this distinction, but argues instead for a close union between the noetic and visible gods. In fact, the passages from the *De Mysteriis* show that Iamblichus is much more concerned with the affinity between the two orders of gods than with the differences between them.²⁸ For Iamblichus, the visible gods exist partly in the noetic realm and are, in a sense, noetic. Syrianus (204.7–10) does seem to echo this Iamblichean doctrine: "For their invisible part is 'god' primarily...but this vehicle attached to the indivisible essence in them is 'god' secondarily." The meaning of Julian's interpretation emerges from this Iamblichean doctrine. The Demiurge addresses the visible gods as θεοὶ because in their highest aspect they are noetic beings

²⁵ This would be a middle platonic view, perhaps that of Atticus. See Proclus *In Tim.* 1.305.6–16 and 431.14–20. Cf. Dillon (318) and his *Middle Platonists* (Ithaca 1977) 254.

²⁶ On Iamblichus as the source for Julian's *Hymn to King Helios* and *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*, see Finamore (133–39). Julian refers to Iamblichus by name at 146A, 150D, and 157C–D. Asmus (52–53) believes that Iamblichus "is responsible for the entire theology" of the *Galilaeans*.

²⁷ If one takes the position that Julian is following a non-Iamblichean source that allows for a noetic Demiurge, then the phrase "(invisible) gods of (visible) gods" must be addressed to other invisible, noetic gods in their capacity of rulers of the visible, encosmic gods. But such an interpretation raises its own difficulties. According to the *Timaeus* (41A3–6), the Demiurge is addressing all the gods ὅσοι τε περιπολοῦσιν φανερώς καὶ ὅσοι φαίνονται καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἐθέλωσιν. The first class, at least, cannot be described as invisible. Even middle platonists believed that the so-called νέοι θεοὶ were the visible gods. In the *Helios Hymn* (140A), Julian himself refers to οἱ κατ' οὐρανὸν περιπολοῦντες δημιουργικοὶ θεοί, apparently alluding to the *Timaeus*. Again, it is preferable to suppose that Julian is following Iamblichus but uniting the two invisible realms.

²⁸ See *De Myst.* 1.19, 57.13–14; 57.16–58.1; 60.11–12.

and in complete union with the noetic gods; as θεῶν because they rule over their encosmic bodies, which can be called “gods” in an inferior sense.²⁹

The significance of Iamblichus’ interpretation of the first two words of the Demiurge’s speech can now be seen. The continuity between all the world orders is of prime importance in Iamblichean metaphysics. From the highest level in the realm of the One to the lowest realm of matter, all things are connected. It is important for a neoplatonist that the Demiurge’s speech in the *Timaeus* reflect this continuity, inasmuch as the Demiurge is about to pass on the rest of the act of creation to the visible gods. The continuity from on high is assured by the interweaving of the noetic and visible gods. The chain is not broken when the power is handed on. What the visible gods will create will necessarily be inferior to the Demiurge’s works, but it will still be linked to what came before because of the visible gods’ connection to the noetic gods. This metaphysical principle has a religious corollary. Because human souls are so far inferior to the souls of the visible gods, who have a special connection to the noetic, they require the aid of intermediaries (such as angels, demons, and heroes) in order to reascend to the noetic gods.

In summary, there is reason to believe that the interpretation of the words θεοὶ θεῶν found in Julian’s *Galilaean*s is that of Iamblichus. The interpretation is meant to emphasize the interweaving of noetic and visible gods that was part of Iamblichus’ philosophy as expressed in his *De Mysteriis*. Further evidence for the Iamblichean origin of the interpretation is found in Proclus’ commentary on the *Timaeus*. The similarity of Syrianus’ explanation there to Iamblichus’ suggests that Syrianus was following Iamblichus’ lost commentary.³⁰ Thus, it seems likely that the first expounder of the view that the words θεοὶ θεῶν meant “invisible gods of visible gods” was Iamblichus.³¹

²⁹ Cf. 206.13. It is odd to find the vehicle called a god, even δευτέρως. Iamblichus seems to be straining his metaphysical system to explicate Plato’s text. There is a tension between Iamblichus’ desire to separate orders (noetic from encosmic) and to join invisible and visible gods into one order. Syrianus perceives this tension and, in his customary manner, attempts to lessen it by weakening Iamblichus’ claim and combining it with another explanation. He makes use of Iamblichus’ interweaving of the two orders of gods (204.13–18) but adds a second element according to which the invisible gods are participated by other visible gods (204.18–23). (This second element is reminiscent of the third interpretation given by Proclus at 203.20–32.) Iamblichus does not seem to rely upon this second element, although the distinction between participated and unparticipated entities is certainly Iamblichean. These two elements can be glimpsed again at 206.10–16, where Proclus distinguishes two senses of the phrase “gods of gods.” The first is Iamblichean; the second is Syrianus’ above. See Festugière (5.65 note 2).

³⁰ And, thus, the three earlier interpretations given by Proclus (202.19–203.32) were probably first discussed by Iamblichus.

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