



January 2022

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Recommended Citation

Greene, Carson R. (2022) "Anti-Christian Rhetoric and Neoplatonic Thought in Against the Galileans," *Penn History Review*. Vol. 28 : Iss. 2 , Article 5.

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ANTI-CHRISTIAN RHETORIC AND NEOPLATONIC
THOUGHT IN *AGAINST THE GALILEANS*

Carson R. Greene (Emory University)



“Julian the Apostate Presiding at a Conference of Sectarians.”
Painted by Edward Armitage, 1875.¹

The time has come for me to say for the benefit of all how I discovered beyond any doubt that the stories of the Galileans are the inventions of deceivers and tricksters. For these men seduce people into thinking that their gruesome story is the truth by appealing to the part of the soul that loves what is simple and childish.²

-Flavius Claudius Julianus

Introduction

When the Roman army in Gaul proclaimed Flavius Claudius Julianus emperor in 360 CE, the emperor invoked the war goddess Bellona through secret rites in order to ask her for aid in his coming civil war with the Christian emperor Constantius.³ There was no great civil war between Julian and Constantius, however. Instead, Constantius suddenly died while marching west to meet his usurper on the battlefield.⁴ And so, Julian entered Constantinople without opposition, formally casting aside his mask of Christianity, and began what he hoped would be a pagan revival movement across the Roman Empire. The reign of Julian the Apostate had begun.

Despite only reigning as sole emperor for around eighteen months, from November 361 to June 363, Julian has become a figure of both admiration and scorn, with his memory casting a great shadow over late antiquity and Emperor Constantine's legacy. One of the most impressive facets of Julian's life and reign was the sheer volume of written work he left behind. As such, this article focuses on one of his most famous works, the anti-Christian polemic *Against the Galileans*. My aim is to not only demonstrate Julian's views towards early Christianity, but how these views were shaped by his own pagan theology. My analysis then moves to how Julian's pagan beliefs influenced many of his political actions as emperor. I conclude by placing Julian's beliefs as well as his works in the broader context of Neoplatonic philosophy in late antiquity.

Primarily composed as an anti-Christian polemic, Emperor Julian's *Against the Galileans* is one of his most perplexing works. *Against the Galileans* is not only the Roman emperor's critical arguments against Christianity as a religion, it also contains crucial insights into Julian's own theological and philosophical views at the time of its composition. Julian likely wrote the original text during his winter stay at Antioch in the winter of 362/363 CE. The text in its entirety has not survived, and historian Rowland Smith speculates that it was outlawed

either by a Theodosian law in 448 or the emperor Justinian in 529. The only extant pieces of *Against of Galileans* have survived as quotations in Cyril of Alexandria's refutation from some time during the 430s.⁵ Despite the pieces that have survived, large parts of the polemic have been lost, based on evidence from fragments 39A-42E of the work where Julian states his intention to cover all the primary teachings of Christianity.⁶ In the fragments that have survived, Julian makes three primary arguments against Christianity. Firstly, he views the myth of creation found in Genesis as unsatisfactory compared to Plato's description of the origin of the universe in the *Timaeus*. Second, Julian addresses several pieces of the Old Testament which he sees as contradictory. Finally, Julian relies on his broad knowledge of the New Testament, the Gospel of John in particular, to attack the claim that Jesus was divine.

It is difficult to accurately estimate the original size of *Against the Galileans*. Yet if Julian did in fact set out to disprove all aspects of Christianity, then it becomes clear that his endeavor was not merely an intellectual hobby. Rather, he intended *Against the Galileans* to be a serious intellectual work, supporting the theory that Julian wanted to be seen both as an accomplished philosopher and an emperor. It is important to note, however, that by the fourth century, many philosophers had steered away from the more rational elements of Plato and Aristotle's writings and instead, turned towards the esoteric and mystical writings of Plato—the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*, for instance. Neoplatonism was further complicated as some philosophers began incorporating theurgy into their practices. Julian was very much a part of this Neoplatonic tradition for as evidenced in his style of writing, he often preferred the magical over the rational. Hence, it would be inappropriate to apply modern conceptions of philosophy and religion when analyzing Julian and the other Neoplatonic writers' works.

While his arguments are sometimes opaque and difficult to follow, Julian nonetheless pays homage to earlier Neoplaton-

ic thinkers in *Against the Galileans*, drawing upon the works of former anti-Christian polemicists such as Celsus and Porphyry. Further, Julian frequently cites and shows his reverence for the philosopher and theurgist Iamblichus, who was very influential on the evolution of Neoplatonism. It is evident that Iamblichus had a massive impact on Julian's own philosophy and his interest in the more arcane disciplines of Neoplatonism including magic and divination. Other evidence in the text suggests that Julian was simultaneously appropriating ideas from Christian theology into his own pagan cosmology.⁷ Ultimately, the knowledge of both Christian and pagan thinkers from which Julian draws upon during the composition of *Against the Galileans* demonstrates that he was an active participant in the 4th century intellectual discourse of the eastern Mediterranean.

The Tradition of Anti-Christian Polemics Before the Time of Julian

Before engaging in a comprehensive analysis of Julian's *Against the Galileans*, it is crucial to understand the anti-Christian polemicists who came before him as well as the religious environment of the empire during the second and third centuries. As I have previously stated, Julian was keenly aware of both the works of Celsus and Porphyry. And like *Against the Galileans*, Celsus and Porphyry's works only survive in the form of quotations provided by other authors.⁸

The Roman philosopher Celsus' *On the True Doctrine*, composed circa 185, has remained easily accessible thanks to his opponent Origen of Alexandria's liberal quotations of the work in his refutation.⁹ In Origen's work, Celsus is chiefly concerned with the teachings of second century Christians as well as the life of Jesus. During Celsus' time, there was a great deal of syncretism occurring between traditional Roman paganism and Christianity, often resulting in the two religions borrowing ideas from one another.¹⁰ The theory that Christianity plagia-

rized many of its ideas from early Hellenic thinkers, primarily Plato, permeates Celsus' polemic. Like Julian, Celsus also does not strictly adhere to one philosophical movement. Instead, he incorporates both Platonic and Stoic philosophies into his arguments as well as elements of history and religion.¹¹ As for the polemic itself, Celsus demonstrates his expertise with Platonism in the eighth section of *On The True Doctrine* where he criticizes the Christian conception of God:

They have not read Plato, who teaches us in the Republic that God (the Good) does not even participate in being. It is true that all things are derived from the Good, as Plato says; but it is also clear that God made nothing mortal. This God of philosophers is himself the underivable, the unnameable; he cannot be reached by reason. Such attributes as we may postulate of him are not the attributes of human nature, and all such attributes are quite distinct from his nature. He cannot be comprehended in terms of attributes or human experience, contrary to what the Christians teach; moreover, he is outside any emotional experience.¹²

Celsus argues that an omnipotent and omniscient god as the Christians conceptualize could not possibly have any features associated with the physical world, since based on Plato's theory of forms, the physical world is inherently imperfect. Celsus uses this as the basis of his argument where he rejects the logos of Christ as humanity's savior for he believes that an omnipotent god would not need to send his son to save humanity and instead, could correct the sins of the world by himself.¹³ Thus to further support his claim, Celsus asserts that Jesus was not divinely conceived but was instead the illegitimate son of Mary and a Roman soldier named Panthera.¹⁴

Similar to Julian, Celsus is also concerned with the intellectual character of many Christians. As such, a central tenet of his polemic questions the legitimacy of a religion whose members consist of the lowest ranking classes of the empire: “wool workers, cobblers, laundry workers, and the most illiterate country bumpkins.”¹⁵ One must always remember that Celsus was writing nearly two centuries before Julian, during a time when Christianity had not yet penetrated the upper ranks of Roman society. Thus, in *Against the Galileans*, Julian focuses his attacks on the moral character of Christians rather than their low societal rank. Further, Julian deliberately chose to use the term “Galilean” instead of Christian in his work to draw attention to the religion’s localized and provincial origin. While Celsus’ polemic was certainly widespread enough to earn him the ire of Origen, a century after he wrote *On The True Doctrine*, the philosopher Porphyry of Tyre would write a far more scathing and possibly compelling critique of Christianity.

Composed in the final decades of the third century, Porphyry’s *Against the Christians* responded to a Christianity that was much more widely accepted than it was during Celsus’ time. In fact, the polemic even concedes that the religion had gained a permanency within the empire.¹⁶ Porphyry’s work was not only unique for this rhetorical shift away from Celsus, but also because he was the first anti-Christian polemicist to have actively studied the Bible. As a student of Plotinus, he was already an established philosopher by the time he composed *Against the Christians*.¹⁷ Hence, Porphyry stood superior compared to his contemporary intellectuals; his complex arguments against Christianity and eloquent writing style made his fellow pagans admire him and his Christian opponents fear him. Unfortunately, none of Porphyry’s opponents quoted his work in sufficient length to preserve it, as was the case with Origen’s *Contra Celsum*. What has remained is extremely fragmentary and only survives as quotations from Christian sources and in the form of indirect references.¹⁸ Further, the actual size of the po-

lemic has been a subject of much debate, with the early Christian author Lactantius claiming that *Against the Christians* was only three books long while Eusebius and Jerome stating that it was as many as fifteen books in length.¹⁹ Despite the controversial debate, it is clear that Porphyry's arguments threatened and frightened many Christian authors, so much so that both Augustine's *City of God* and *Harmony of Gospels* were responses to Porphyry's anti-Christian works and his other literature.²⁰

While it is difficult to follow Porphyry's exact line of argumentation from the surviving fragments of his work, it appears that in many ways *Against the Christians* was a continuation of the arguments made by Celsus. He also wrote that Jesus' disciples were deceitful magicians, and because of this the Gospels were contradictory and unreliable. Yet, this is where the similarities between Celsus and Porphyry ends. While Celsus' work dealt primarily in philosophical arguments against Christianity, Porphyry was far more concerned with the religious nature of Christianity. Christianity had become much more public and widespread in the third century, and Porphyry likely realized that it had become a permanent fixture of the empire. With this in mind, Porphyry used his extensive knowledge of the Bible to underline what he saw as Christians' misunderstanding of the Old Testament and the contradictions found in the New Testament. Additionally, as a student of Plotinus, Porphyry incorporated elements of Neoplatonism into his works such as *Philosophy from Oracles* where he tries to blend traditional Hellenic religion with Greek and Roman philosophy.²¹ This shift from a philosophical to a religious focus in the evolution of anti-Christian polemics was critical, since Julian's *Against the Galileans* was undoubtedly a continuation of Porphyry's works as evidenced by his often mystical arguments regarding creationism and metaphysics as well as his repeated references to Iamblichus and theurgy.

One final point of context regarding Porphyry must be made before analyzing Julian's polemic. Porphyry composed

Against the Christians during the reigns of Diocletian and Maximian after the end of the “crisis of the third century,” an era of great political anarchy for the Roman Empire marked by climate change, plague, invasion, and civil war.²² This tumultuous period also led to a major shift in Rome’s religious landscape as Christianity and other cults like Mithraism gained an increased number of converts. Emperor Aurelian was able to restore the empire during his short reign from 270 to 275 and attempted to unify Rome’s many disparate religious groups by introducing the cult of the Sol Invictus. The cult of the Sol Invictus marked a shift in Roman religion away from the polytheistic tradition of distinct cults to a more syncretic henotheism with Sol Invictus being at the top of this new hierarchy.²³

This shift towards a solar henotheism in the later Roman Empire has major implications for Julian’s *Against the Galileans* given the unique nature of the Apostate’s own paganism. As one will see in the following sections, Julian created his own hierarchy of gods and priests in an attempt to unify all of the pagan cults in the Roman Empire. The major difference between Aurelian and Julian is that the latter centered his religion around a reimagination of the similar solar deity Zeus Helios and used many Platonic concepts for explaining the origin of the universe. Julian’s devotion to Zeus-Helios is not surprising given the already established precedent for solar worship in the late Roman Empire. Aurelian, in the latter half of the third century, expanded the solar centric cult of Sol Invictus. Constantine I, before his conversion to Christianity, was a devotee of Apollo Helios, and the coinage he issued had the inscription “Sol Deus Invictus.”²⁴

Julian’s Critique of Genesis and Interpretation of Plato’s *Ti-maeus*

Despite the fact that some of Julian’s arguments against Christianity are rather esoteric and consist of obscure exegeses,

it is still an impressive intellectual work as it demonstrates the emperor's command of both Greek and Christian literature as well as a keen understanding of Neoplatonism. Following the footsteps of Porphyry, Julian had a deep understanding of both the Old and New Testament and frequently cited Biblical passages in his polemic. In some respects, Julian's Christian upbringing and education were major factors in the composition of *Against the Galileans* as it was during these formative years that the Apostate had acquired his intimate knowledge of the Bible. During his education at Nicomedia and later at Constantinople and Athens, Julian also gained his love for traditional Greek literature and philosophy, which he used constantly in his arguments against Christianity.²⁵

After giving his opening remarks and setting out his goals in writing *Against the Christians*, Julian first critiques the Book of Genesis and explains why he believes its creation myth is insufficient compared to Plato's *Timaeus*. However, before directly citing the *Timaeus*, Julian uses general Platonic principles in his analysis of the myth of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In fragments 75B and 89B, Julian argues that this story is "a complete fable" because an omnipotent god would not leave humans in an incomplete condition.²⁶ Fragment 89B is also significant, as it shows Julian's knowledge of Gnostic texts when he asserts that "the serpent [was really acting as] benefactor of the human race."²⁷ While this opening salvo from Julian is not the most impressive piece of his polemic, it more or less serves as an outline for the structure of most of Julian's arguments in *Against the Galileans*. In this structure, Julian begins by quoting or paraphrasing a passage from the Bible, and then uses citations from classical Greek literature to disprove whichever Christian myth or argument he has chosen. During most of his refutations, the emperor will also either reference other Neoplatonic philosophers or support his argument with an exegesis. For the most part, this strategy worked for both Christians and pagan thinkers. Indeed, Libanius wrote that Julian's polemic was

superior to Porphyry's *Against the Christians* and the Christian apologist Cyril believed that *Against the Galileans* was not only a monumental pagan work but also nearly irrefutable.²⁸ Modern scholarship also praises *Against the Galileans* as being "well-articulated Neoplatonic theory."²⁹

Following his initial argument concerning the Garden of Eden, Julian then attacks the entire creation myth established in the book of Genesis. In fragments 49A through 49C, he gives an abbreviated quotation from Genesis 1.1-1.17 which describes how God created and separated Heaven and Earth. In Julian's eyes, this story is quite insufficient for an omnipotent god:

as Moses tells the tale, God is creator of nothing without a body; he merely organizes and shapes the stuff that already exists—since the words "And the Earth was unseen and without form" must mean that God thought of wet and dry stuff as original matter, and this means that God is simply the shaper of this matter.³⁰

Any story concerning the origin of the universe or other similar metaphysical concepts would have been of great interest to Julian as a Neoplatonic writer, since Neoplatonists based their own conceptions of the universe on the works of Plato and Aristotle. Given that Julian was particularly influenced by the Iamblichan branch of Neoplatonism, it is not surprising he relied nearly exclusively on Plato's *Timaeus* for his refutation of Genesis' creation myth. In explaining the origin of the universe, Neoplatonists would often turn to the *Timaeus*, in which Plato describes the universe as a divine living entity, perfectly created by the Demiurge.³¹ Hence, it is unsurprising that Julian found Genesis to be so unsatisfactory.

In his counterarguments, Julian is very concerned with the Platonic concepts of the Demiurge and the creation of the universe. Thus, he gives a lengthy quotation of *Timaeus* 41A-C

before providing his own exegesis of the text. Julian's explanation of Plato's creation myth was similar to other Neoplatonic interpretations.

Plato calls those things which are visible by the name of gods: sun, moon, the stars, and the heavens—but he regards them merely as images of the invisible gods. The sun which we see with our eyes is a likeness of the intellectual principal, the invisible sun; and so the moon we see with our eyes, and the stars: these are likenesses of the intelligible. Clearly Plato knows of intelligible and unseen gods who are immanent within and exist alongside the creator, and proceeded or originated from the creator himself.³²

In sections 41A-C of the *Timaeus*, the character Timaeus explains to Socrates how the Demiurge brought the five generations of gods into being and which roles has Demiurge assigned them.³³ As the passage continues, the Demiurge explains to the gods that they must create and nurture mortals in order to make the universe whole.³⁴ Julian interprets this passage as meaning that the gods are subservient to the Demiurge and as such are each in charge of a different region or city.

Because of this interpretation, Julian, echoing Celsus, is very critical of the idea that the god presented in Genesis is only concerned with the Hebrews. Given that Julian's own philosophical beliefs are rooted in Neoplatonism and the belief that the perfect Demiurge made the universe, the idea that an omnipotent god only cares for one group of people is in many ways incompatible with the emperor's own theology.

Yet, if he is the God of all alike, the shaper of every thing, why did he overlook us? Is it not preferable to think that the God of the Hebrews is not maker of

the whole cosmos with power over it all, but only, as I have suggested, a god of limits, whose dominion is bounded on all sides.³⁵

Continuing from this quotation regarding Mosaic anthropogony, Julian briefly moves into the New Testament where he cites Jesus and Paul as proof that Jahwe is exclusively the god of Israel and of the Hebrews. One of the main tenets of Platonic philosophy was the “unconditional and unchanging goodness of the divine” and as Julian saw it, a supreme creator could not care for only one group of people and neglect the rest of the world.³⁶ Julian concludes his arguments against Mosaic anthropogony by stating that the god of the Old Testament was only given the lands of Judea and therefore cannot be the Demiurge.³⁷ During his explanation of this, Julian also sheds light on his own henotheistic cosmology. He writes, “our authorities maintain that the fashioner of the universe is both the common father and the lord of all that exists, while the gods of nations and the gods who protect cities have been delegated specific responsibilities by him.”³⁸ Ultimately, it seems that Julian does not set out to disprove the existence of the Hebrew god in the same way that Celsus does. Rather, Julian argues that while the Hebrew god exists, he could not possibly be the Demiurge.

Julian further reinforces his belief that Jahwe could not be the Demiurge with his critique of Exodus and the Ten Commandments. Citing Exodus 20.5 in his exegesis, Julian writes that Jahwe’s jealousy is proof that as a god, he is neither omnipotent nor the only god:

For if God is indeed jealous, it must follow that all other gods who are worshipped receive honor to spite him, and all people who worship these other gods defy the will of God. Well, then, how is it that he is not able to restrain the nations if his jealousy demands that other gods, besides himself, should

not be worshipped?³⁹

The argument Julian makes in this passage is quite simple. If Jahwe was omnipotent then he would simply be able to stop people from worshipping other gods. Secondly, Julian seems to see the Exodus 20.5 passage, “for I am the Lord your God, a jealous god, repaying sins of fathers upon children up to the third and fourth generation to those who hate,” as a contradiction to the monotheistic tenet of Christian theology.⁴⁰ In fragment 159E, Julian attacks the Christians of his time, stating that if Jahwe is jealous, then they should not worship his son, Jesus. Regarding the substance of *Against the Galileans*, this exegesis further illustrates how the theology of the Bible was ultimately incompatible with Julian’s Hellenism and his own solar henotheism. This incompatibility is a major feature of the laws and edicts which Julian passed during his reign in an attempt to bring about a pagan revival. Interestingly though, Julian later praises Jahwe when comparing Hebrew religious rites to Christian ones.

Julian’s New Henotheism: Asclepius Against Jesus

Following his mention of Jesus in his critique of Genesis and Exodus, Julian attacks Jesus repeatedly throughout the rest of his polemic. Beginning at 200A, the emperor once again reveals facets of his own pagan theology. He writes that Asclepius, a Greek god associated with medicine and healing, is the extant son of Zeus-Helios and a gift to humanity for his extraordinary healing talents.⁴¹ Asclepius was a god with a long standing tradition in Greek religion, having first been mentioned in Homer’s *Iliad*. However, in many traditional myths, he is presented as being born mortal who only experienced divine apotheosis after being struck down by Zeus.⁴² Julian’s myth regarding the god of healing seems to be his own invention and draws obvious parallels to Jesus’ conception. David Neal

Greenwood argues that Julian's Asclepius was meant to be the "pagan antagonist of Christ" and borrows from many of the ideas of the core Christian logos.⁴³ Though Julian's reimagining of Asclepius's creation myth as the son of Zeus-Helios might have been Julian's own invention, he was certainly not the first to pit Jesus and the god of healing against one another. When criticizing the miracles of Jesus, Celsus also mentions Asclepius and extolls him as the superior god of healing, citing his shrines across the eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁴ Asclepius was a very prominent god during Celsus' time, having played a major role in the Second Sophistic as the subject of Aelius Aristides' *Sacred Tales*. As an attentive student of Greek literature, Julian would likely have noticed the frequent usage of Asclepius dating back to Homer's time.

Julian's own description of the god of healing reads, "Asclepius appeared in the shape of a man, alone, at Epidaurus ... He came to Pergamon, to Ionia, to Tarentum, and thereafter to Rome. He also traveled to Cos, and then to Aegae. Thereafter he was manifest everywhere."⁴⁵ All of these locations listed by Julian were sites of the major temples and shrines to Asclepius, whose worship was widespread throughout the Mediterranean world. By listing all of these locations, Julian was criticizing the fact that Jesus only performed his miracles in a small geographic area. Celsus was also critical of this in *On the True Doctrine*.⁴⁶ Julian was so convinced of Asclepius' miracles that he even recounts in a later passage in *Against the Galileans* that the god has personally cured him: "With God my witness, I know when I have been ill, Asclepius has cured me by proffering remedies."⁴⁷ This argument, which seems illogical by modern standards, would have been quite strong in the ancient world since belief in miracles was commonplace in antiquity. Additionally in this reference, Julian might also be comparing the miracles of Jesus to the miracles of Asclepius, though it is never made explicit.⁴⁸

One of Julian's inspirations for incorporating certain

Christian ideas into his own theology could possibly be found in a letter he wrote to a pagan priest in either late 362 or early 363. In this letter, he describes a visit to Ilios where a Christian named Pegasus showed him the shrines of Hector and Achilles and told him that the Christian population of Ilios revered ancient heroes in the same way that they revered their martyrs.⁴⁹ Hoffman writes that this meeting with Pegasus first gave Julian the idea to use religious syncretism in his plan to restore the traditional Greek religion.⁵⁰ If this is indeed the case, then by positioning Asclepius as Jesus' pagan antagonist, Julian was using the same tactics in his pagan restoration just like the Christians had used to gain so many converts to the new religion.

Julian's use of Asclepius ultimately shows the emperor's imagination at work in an attempt to formulate a new pagan religion that would be a direct foil to Christianity. In many ways, this new henotheism would not have been possible without Julian's sweeping knowledge of Christianity and the Bible since he synthesizes concepts found in the New Testament with traditional Platonic metaphysics to create his own onto-theology. Of course, Julian's new pagan religion never took root because he was killed in 363, and probably also because it was too radically different from the disparate cults which had traditionally been the pillars of Greek and Roman religion. And yet, Asclepius played a role in Julian's portrayal after his death, with Libanius comparing the emperor favorably to the god of healing in his oration at Julian's funeral.⁵¹ Even though his plan of Hellenic revival failed, the evidence from Libanius suggests that Julian's pagan theology left a lasting impact.

Julian Against Jesus and the New Testament

Celsus devotes a significant portion of *On the True Doctrine* to his criticism of Jesus' life and the doctrine of salvation. His arguments, however, were not based on any first-hand knowledge of Biblical scripture, and he had instead

constructed them from second-hand accounts and observations of the Christian community. Julian, in sharp contrast, displays a wealth of knowledge of both the Gospels as well as the Pauline epistles in the surviving fragments of *Against the Galileans*. This intimate knowledge of the New Testament undoubtedly came from Julian's education during his youth at Nicomedia, Constantinople, and Athens.

Beginning with the Gospel of John, Julian first attacks its opening verse in fragment 262C, arguing that the "Word," which John later calls Jesus, does not align with Moses' account of creation since he makes no mention of Jesus in his books.⁵² According to Hoffman, Julian, like Porphyry, preferred using the literal meaning of texts as opposed to allegorical interpretations and as such used this method when building his exegesis for both the Old and New Testament.⁵³ Given this, it is no surprise Julian was so critical of the New Testament interpretation of Old Testament prophecy since he believed that none of the Hebrew prophets foretold the birth of Jesus.

After his initial critique of John, Julian then turns to the inconsistencies among the Gospels and the Pauline epistles. Julian writes that of the apostles, John was the only one who directly referred to Jesus as being God or the "Word of God."⁵⁴ He uses this premise to attack the verse of John 1.18, "No man has seen God at any time but the only begotten son of God, the one who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him."⁵⁵ Julian states that this conception of God is logically inconsistent as Jesus cannot be God if no one has ever seen God, concluding that, "but if the only begotten son is one thing and God the Word is something else, as I have heard it said by some of the members of your sect, then it seems that not even John was foolish enough to declare that Jesus was God."⁵⁶

One of the major reasons why Julian considered the doctrine of John so offensive to his philosophical and theological principles was that, in his eyes, John's account was not only inconsistent with itself, but that John also has never fully devel-

oped his theology concerning the divinity of Jesus.⁵⁷ Ultimately for Julian, the major flaw in Nicene Christian theology is that, based on his own understanding of Platonic metaphysics, neither the god described by Moses or Jesus himself could be the creator of the universe.⁵⁸ Interestingly, as will be explored in the next subsection, Julian never denies or attempts to disprove the existence of Jahwe. He is instead content to conclude that Moses' god is not the Demiurge, but instead only the god of the Hebrew people. In regards to Jesus, while Julian is very dubious of his divinity and immaculate conception, he never makes an attempt to disprove any of his miracles, writing instead that "he accomplished nothing worth mention — that is, unless one should think that healing a cripple and a few blind men, or driving the demons from possessed men in wayside villages like Bethsaida and Bethany count as mighty works!"⁵⁹ I have already written about Julian's belief in the miracles of Asclepius and this belief concerning Jesus suggests that in the emperor's mind, the world was a place where such supernatural acts were not only possible but also not uncommon. This sentiment echoes Celsus, who equates Jesus' miracles to spells performed by Egyptian sorcerers and tricksters.⁶⁰

Julian's Analysis of Abraham and the Impact of Iamblichan Theurgy on his Polemic

One of the most esoteric sections of *Against the Galileans* can be found beginning at fragment 356C, where Julian seemingly defends Abraham and the other Hebrew Patriarchs for their use of sacrifice and divination. Julian does so because he interprets several passages in Genesis, describing Abraham's worship of Yahweh as being similar to descriptions of traditional Hellenic and Roman sacrifices.

For you have nothing in common with Abraham,
who built altars to God and worshiped him with sac

rifices on those altars with burnt offerings. Like the Greeks, Abraham was accustomed to offer sacrifice daily, and he shared with us Greeks the custom of telling the future from shooting stars. And for significant things he learned to augur from the flight of birds, hiring a servant in his house who was expert in the reading of signs.⁶¹

Since Julian was trying to bring about a restoration of the traditional Greek and Roman cults, he would have seen Abraham's sacrifices and augury as a rational practice. Augury had long since been an integral part of Roman state religion, and many believed that the practice dated back to the mythical time of Romulus and Remus and the founding of the city. In essence, in his attack against Christianity, Julian is highlighting the fact that one of the major figures of the Old Testament practiced the same pre-Christian traditions of the Roman state. The emperor bases his interpretation of Abraham's sacrificial rites and divination through birdsign on chapter 15 of Genesis.

Then he brought him outside and said to him, "Look up to the sky, and number the stars, if you will be able to count them." And he said, "So shall your offspring be." And Abram believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness . . . And he said to him, "Take for me a heifer three years old and a female goat three years old and a ram three years old and a turtledove and a dove." And he took for him all these and divided them in the middle and placed them facing one another, but he did not divide the birds. And birds came down on the carcasses, their cut halves, and Abram sat together with them.⁶²

Further evidence for Julian's sympathy for the Jewish religion

as well as his esoteric irrationalism can also be found earlier in *Against the Galileans* in fragment 351A wherein he attributes Greek theurgy and ancient Hebrew rites to the same source:

With the gods as my witnesses I count myself among those who avoid the festivals of the Jews. But I venerate without hesitation the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for they were members of a sacred race, the Chaldeans, learned in the arts of divination, who became acquainted with the rite of circumcision during the time of their wandering among the Egyptians. And the Jews worship a God who has always been gracious towards me, as he was always gracious to Abraham and those who, like Abraham, worshiped him. He is a great and powerful God, to be sure, but he is no God of yours.⁶³

Upon a first reading, this passage might seem out of place in *Against the Galileans*, since up to this fragment, Julian has repeatedly called passages in the Old Testament fables and claimed that the writings of the Hebrews are insubstantial compared to those of the Greek canon. However, the progenitor of theurgy was one Julianus, who lived sometime during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and composed the *Chaldean Oracles* in hexameter. Additionally, Neoplatonic and theurgic traditions claim that Julianus was the son of a Chaldean philosopher by the same name and that both the father and son were powerful magicians.⁶⁴ Therefore, after the Neoplatonists incorporated theurgy into their philosophy, they also claimed a heritage based on ancient Chaldean and Mesopotamian tradition, even if the *Chaldean Oracles* were only composed in the late second century CE. While Julian never explicitly links Abraham to theurgy, Jeffrey Siker, in his article “Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism,” asserts that many Greek and Roman authors associated Abraham

with theurgy and astrology based on chapter 15 of Genesis.⁶⁵ In his explanation, Siker also highlights the connection Celsus makes between the Jewish people and Egypt and their magical heritage as well as Origen's refutation. Celsus writes that the Jews "tried in their holy books — shamefully I may add — to trace their genealogy back to the first offspring of sorcerers and deceivers, invoking the witness of vague and ambiguous utterances concealed in dark obscurity."⁶⁶ In his refutation of this passage, Origen equates the "sorcerers" Celsus mentions to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and defends them rigorously:

In any event, it is clear that the Jews trace their genealogy back to the three fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their names are so powerful when linked with the name of God that the formula 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' is used not only by members of the Jewish nation in their prayers to God and when they exorcise daemons, but also by almost all those who deal in magic and spells.⁶⁷

Here, Origen explicitly connects Abraham and the other Hebrew patriarchs to magic and illustrates that some Romans would even use Abraham's name in certain spells. Siker points out that in the magic formula Origen describes, Abraham's name is listed before Isaac and Jacob's, possibly indicating that Abraham's name was the most powerful when performing an invocation.⁶⁸ Accordingly, based on his interpretation of Genesis and his familiarity with earlier Greek and Roman writings, Julian might have in fact viewed Abraham and the other Jewish patriarchs as being descended from a Chaldean lineage and being practitioners of magic in their own right.

One of Julian's most influential mentors was the theurgist Maximus, who was himself a pupil of Aedesius, the direct successor of Iamblichus.⁶⁹ In his book *The Greeks and the*

Irrational, E.R. Dodds contends that Iamblichus' major work on theurgy, *On the Mysteries*, is a "manifesto of irrationalism" in which the author asserts that salvation "is found not in reason but in ritual."⁷⁰ This religious irrationalism pervaded throughout nearly all of Julian's writings and Ammianus, one of the emperor's admirers, even condemns him for his obsession with Maximus and his disregard of traditional religious practices in favor of his own rituals.⁷¹

Iamblichus' theurgy, however, was not an agreed upon practice by all the Greek philosophers of the 4th century. Eusebius of Myndus warned Julian to stay away from Maximus, referring to him as a "theatrical miracle-worker."⁷² Even before Julian's time, Iamblichus faced opposition to his magical practices primarily from his contemporary Porphyry. While Porphyry certainly influenced the style of Julian's *Against the Galileans* in terms of argumentation, he was deeply critical of the practice of theurgy, as evidenced in his *Letter of Anebo* and *On the Return of the Soul*. Ultimately, Porphyry believed it was only useful to those who could not philosophize.⁷³ Iamblichus, on the other hand, wrote *On the Mysteries* as a response to Porphyry's attitudes toward the mystical art and claimed that theurgists could learn and know aspects of the universe which ordinary philosophers could not.⁷⁴ In fact, it was only under Julian's patronage that theurgy became briefly fashionable, with Julian appointing several prominent theurgists to positions in his new pagan priesthood and making Maximus "a theurgic consultant to the imperial court."⁷⁵

Iamblichus suggests in *On the Mysteries* that Neoplatonists often divided magical practice into practical and theoretical modes of theurgy.⁷⁶ Although modern scholars debate how exactly Iamblichus envisioned these two modes of theurgy, Roland Smith described the two methods in his work, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate*:

In the sensible world, theurgy provided a means to affect daimones in virtue of the ‘sympathies’ inherent in material objects; but directed at a higher level, it could lead to a union of the soul with noetic entities, and it was for that above all that Iamblichus will have prized it.⁷⁷

According to Ammianus, during Julian’s campaign against Sassanid Persia, arguments often arose between the army’s soothsayers, who would read omens through augury, and Julian’s own theurgic friends over how to interpret various mystical signs.⁷⁸ Based on these disagreements, it seems that in Julian’s view, his theurgic friends could commune with divine entities in a way which soothsayers could not. Given this, much of Julian’s sympathy for Abraham and the other Hebrew patriarchs comes from their Chaldean lineage, and the emperor might have even believed that they had some knowledge of theurgy even though there is no direct evidence for this.

Given the fact that Julian placed such an emphasis on the importance of ancient tradition in religion, it is no wonder that one of his major criticisms of Christianity was the simple fact that, at the time of *Against the Galileans*, the religion was less than three centuries old. Further, Julian also dismisses the idea held by some that Christianity was a new sect of Judaism since in his view Christians practiced none of the traditional Jewish rites: “So you who perform the rites which God has always hated, as we know from Moses and the prophets, you nevertheless refuse to sacrifice animals at the altar.”⁷⁹ The god which Julian is referring to in this passage is Jahwe, and he is criticizing the Christians for disregarding the Jewish sacrificial traditions. It is not exactly clear what Julian means when he writes “the rites which God has always hated,” as Hoffman notes that Julian seems to ignore the Christian belief in Jesus’ sacrificial death.⁸⁰ This idea ties into Julian’s harsh critique of the Christian synthesis of Greek and Jewish culture found towards the

beginning of his polemic.

These Galileans have accepted not a single admirable or important belief from those that we Greeks hold; nor any from those imparted by Moses to the Hebrews. They have instead taken on the mold that has grown up around these nations like powers of evil — denial of the gods from Jewish recklessness; and from us laziness and superstition as a consequence of our way of life. This, they say, should be considered the most excellent way of revering the gods.⁸¹

It is clear that Julian believed that one could gain wisdom from both Greek and Hebrew wisdom, though he held Hellenic religion in much higher regard. Throughout the rest of *Against the Galileans*, Julian shows a particular ire against the Christian appropriation of Greek literature, and the belief he articulates in his polemic seems to have played a major role in the passing of his school edict.



“A Gold Coin Representing Emperor Julian.” Minted c. 361.⁸²

Julian’s School Edict and Answer to Christian Martyrdom

There is ample evidence throughout *Against the Galileans* that Julian not only opposed Christianity on philosophical grounds, but also saw it as a moral threat to the fabric of Ro-

man society. As such, Julian enacted many novel edicts during his brief rule in an attempt to stop the growth of Christianity and effect a pagan revival. Much like Celsus, Julian saw Christianity as being morally dubious and called into question the types of people the religion attracted, primarily citing First Corinthians as evidence.⁸³ Celsus, as I have already discussed, had less knowledge of the New Testament, and his discussion of Christian morality is primarily based on observations in a time before the young religion had taken root in the upper echelons of Roman society when Christianity appealed mainly to people who were considered lower-class. In sharp contrast, Julian reigned over a Christianized Roman Empire where Christians were not only well-educated, but also occupied many positions of power. This made it necessary for Julian not only to be well versed in Christian literature for his pagan reforms to succeed, but also ruled out many of the traditional methods of religious persecution that had been practiced before the reign of Constantine.

In his treatment of Christianity, Julian introduced three important changes to the Roman government. The emperor enacted the first of such reforms shortly after his arrival at Constantinople in December of 361, which guaranteed religious toleration across the empire for both Christian and pagan cults and granted amnesty for all Christians exiled during Constantius' Arian influenced regime.⁸⁴ While this policy of amnesty towards Christians might seem strange at first given that one of Julian's main goals was to restore the traditional Roman religion, Ammianus states explicitly in his *History* that Julian's purpose in this edict was to create dissension amongst the Christian priesthood.⁸⁵ Evidence for this line of thinking in the edict can be found in fragment 205E of *Against the Galileans*, where Julian criticizes the multitude of sects within Christianity and the history of violence between them.⁸⁶

Greek and Roman pagan cults historically had always been disparate and never followed a strict unity or hierarchy

like Christianity. And yet, Julian, in another display of his great imagination, attempted with his second edict to create a hierarchical pagan priesthood that would play an integral role in the administration of his empire. Around February 363, he addressed an imperial letter to the pagan priest Theodorus, granting him “the office of governor of the temples of the East.”⁸⁷ Julian’s intention was for Theodorus and other governor priests to oversee the appointment of lesser priests, the restoration of temples, and the organization of festivals and sacrifices in their jurisdiction.⁸⁸ While Julian had hoped that this fundamental change to the pagan priesthood would lead to a widespread resurgence of belief and adherence to Rome’s traditional religion across the empire’s cities, it was met with more resistance than the emperor had thought it would.⁸⁹ While this ultimately failed, Julian’s attempt at creating a hierarchy of pagan priests in some ways parallels his organization of a henotheistic pagan religion centered around Zeus-Helios that also failed to take root. In both instances, Julian was modeling his systems at least somewhat on pre-existing Christian models, likely with the hope that he could replicate for his own pagan religion the success Christianity had in its spread and acceptance across the empire.

By far, Julian’s third and most impactful edict was his infamous school law, issued early in the summer of 362. The law forbade Christian teachers from teaching Greek rhetoric, literature, and philosophy.⁹⁰ Even Ammianus, who was one of Julian’s greatest admirers, described this law as “inhumane” and wrote that it “ought to be buried in eternal silence.”⁹¹ Julian’s political intentions with this edict are quite clear. First, by excluding Christians from teaching classical literature, Julian was attacking the non-pagan “gatekeepers of the later Roman social and economic system.”⁹² Another key part of this edict was the emperor’s clarification that students of Christian parents could still attend the lectures of pagan teachers: “For it is not reasonable to shut out boys who are still too ignorant to know which way to turn....It is proper to cure them, even against their

will, as one cures the insane.”⁹³ Thus, by upsetting the empire’s social order through the exclusion of Christian teachers from their profession while still allowing Christian youths to attend schools and lectures, Julian hoped to foster a new generation of pagan intellectuals and slowly erode Christianity’s presence in the upper levels of the Roman economy and society. The Belgian historian Joseph Bidez wrote that this edict marked a shift away from a policy of universal religious toleration and moved the empire towards a pagan theocracy and a “bloodless persecution” of Christians.⁹⁴ Watts seems to be in agreement with Bidez, writing that “the emperor was not proscribing a set of beliefs, but he was very clearly establishing a legally preferred category to which only those who believed in the pagan gods could belong.”⁹⁵ The other innovation of this law lies in the simple fact that by not physically persecuting Christians in the same manner as Diocletian and other emperors had, Julian was able to avoid Christian martyrdom which only seemed to strengthen the religion in the face of earlier persecutions.

When he began writing *Against the Galileans* in the winter after enacting his school edict, Julian elaborated further on his reasons for preventing Christians from teaching Hellenic literature.

And if you can be happy with reading your own books, why nibble at the learning of the Greeks? ... For in studying yours no man would ever achieve ordinary goodness, let alone virtue, whereas from ours a man might become better than before, even if he had been born with no natural aptitude for excellence. A man who has such aptitude and has added to it the benefit of our writing—that man is a gift of the gods to mankind: such a man can light the fire of knowledge, can write a constitution, rout his country’s foes in battle, travel bravely to ends of the earth and back again, like the heroes of old.⁹⁶

This passage alone shows that Julian did not have just political motives when he enacted his school law. He saw the Bible and other Christian literature as completely inferior to the classical Greek literature he treasured so highly. The emperor also felt that the two were incompatible with one another.

Against the Galileans as a Work of Neoplatonic Literature

While never intended to be a work of Neoplatonic philosophy, *Against the Galileans* still reveals much about Julian's understanding and interpretation of this branch of philosophy in the arguments he made against the Christian doctrine. An analysis of the work shows that Julian was eclectic in his philosophical heritage. The rhetorical strategy he employs in his polemic is reminiscent of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, while his understanding of Greek religion and theurgy is based heavily on the works of Iamblichus. Even though both of these authors are considered Neoplatonists by modern scholars, Porphyry and Iamblichus were very much opposed to one another in matters of religion. Celsus' influence is also very apparent in *Against the Galileans* as the spirit of Julian's attacks is reminiscent of those found in *On the True Doctrine*. Julian's broad range of influences is not only indicative of his deep knowledge of Greek philosophical literature, but also suggests that Julian was a Hellenic apologist; one of his main grievances against Christianity was the religion's appropriation of Hellenic culture.⁹⁷

Despite his broad knowledge of earlier Neoplatonic thinkers, any influence from Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, is noticeably lacking in *Against the Galileans*. While Hoffman comments on Plotinus' influence, Smith argues that there is little evidence which suggests that Julian was familiar with Plotinus' *Enneads*.⁹⁸ A possible explanation could be that Julian's references were too general and broad Neoplatonic concepts that he likely learned from the writings of Porphyry or Maximus. Moreover, since *Against the Galileans* only survives in Cyril's

quotations, references to Plotinus and his *Enneads* might have existed in now lost fragments. Whether or not Julian had any knowledge of Plotinus does not change the fact that in addition to being an anti-Christian polemic, *Against the Galileans* is fundamentally a Neoplatonic text which highlights the emperor's predilection for the more mystical and irrational elements of Neoplatonism.

Ultimately, *Against the Galileans* was not merely Julian's critique of Christianity. While its main purpose was certainly to deconstruct the Abrahamic religion's theology, it also demonstrates the emperor's wide breadth of knowledge. Julian was not only learned in the Classical Greek of Homer and Plato, he also had quite the command of Biblical scripture and even some knowledge of early gnostic traditions. Tying these disparate groups of thought together was his philosophical convictions in Neoplatonism. Thus, *Against the Galileans* also provides modern scholars with invaluable insight into Julian's own theological convictions and his attempts to reorganize Rome's traditional pagan cults.

Notes

¹ Edward Armitage. “Julian the Apostate Presiding at a Conference of Secretarians.” (National Museums Liverpool, Wikimedia Commons, 1875).

² Julian. *Against the Galileans*, trans. R. Joseph Hoffman (Amherst: Prometheus Press, 2004), 91.

³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *History, Volume II: Books 20-26*, trans. J. C. Rolfe. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), 109. XXI.5.1.

⁴ Ammianus, *History, Volume II: Books 20-26*, 171. XXI.15.2-3.

⁵ Rowland Smith, *Julian’s Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 190.

⁶ Christoph Riedweg, “Anti-Christian Polemics and Pagan Onto-Theology: Julian’s *Against the Galileans*,” in *A Companion to Julian the Apostate* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020), 246.

⁷ See *Against the Galileans*, fragment 200A.

⁸ R. Joseph Hoffman, introduction to Celsus’ *On The True Doctrine*, trans. R. Joseph Hoffman (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 29.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jeffrey W. Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemics* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 41.

¹¹ Hoffman, introduction to Celsus’ *On The True Doctrine*, 29-30.

¹² Celsus, *On The True Doctrine*, trans. R. Joseph Hoffman (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 103-104.

¹³ David Neal Greenwood, “Julian’s Use of Asclepius: *Against the Christians*,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 109 (2017): 492.

¹⁴ Celsus, *On The True Doctrine*, 57.

¹⁵ Ibid, 73.

¹⁶ Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemics*, 64.

¹⁷ Robert M. Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 2.

¹⁸ Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 118-119.

¹⁹ Ibid, 4. It should also be noted that Porphyry’s polemics were not a unitary work and did not gain the title of *Against the Christians* until around 1000 CE (see Berchman, 5).

²⁰ Ibid, 4.

- ²¹ Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemics*, 70-72.
- ²² Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*, 3.
- ²³ Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemics*, 67-68.
- ²⁴ Clyde Pharr, "Constantine and the Christians," *The Classical Outlook*, Vol. 16 (1922), 57-58. "Sol Deus Invictus" translates to "Unconquered Sun God."
- ²⁵ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 24-25.
- ²⁶ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 94-95. The translation of *Against the Galileans* I draw all of my quotations from was made by R. Joseph Hoffman in 2004. For publication information, see footnote 2 in this paper.
- ²⁷ Ibid, 95. See Hoffman's footnote 284 for Julian's reference to the Testimony of Truth.
- ²⁸ Libanius, "Funeral Oration Over Julian," in *Selected Orations, Volume I: Julianic Orations*, trans. A. F. Norman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 397; Cyril, *Address of the Blessed Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, to the very pious emperor Theodosius, devoted to Christ*, trans. Roger Pearse, accessed August 23, 2021, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_against_julian_00_address.html.
- ²⁹ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 191.
- ³⁰ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 97.
- ³¹ Pauliina Remes, *Neoplatonism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 77-78.
- ³² Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 99.
- ³³ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Donald J. Zeal, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 1244.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 1244-1245.
- ³⁵ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 101-102.
- ³⁶ Riedweg, "Anti-Christian Polemics and Pagan Onto-Theology: Julian's *Against the Galileans*," 253.
- ³⁷ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 100-101.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 102.
- ³⁹ Ibid, 110.
- ⁴⁰ *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and Other and Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 65.
- ⁴¹ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 115.

- ⁴² Mabel Lang, *Cure and Cult in Ancient Corinth: A Guide to the Asclepion* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1977), 6.
- ⁴³ Greenwood, "Julian's Use of Asclepius: Against the Christians," 499.
- ⁴⁴ Celsus, *On the True Doctrine*, 69.
- ⁴⁵ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 115.
- ⁴⁶ Celsus, *On the True Doctrine*, 68-69.
- ⁴⁷ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 122.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. See Hoffman's footnote 379.
- ⁴⁹ Julian, *Letters. Epigrams. Against the Galileans. Fragments*, trans. Wilmer C. Wright (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1923), 51.
- ⁵⁰ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 135. See Hoffman's footnote 440.
- ⁵¹ Libanius, "Funeral Oration Over Julian," 469.
- ⁵² Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 126.
- ⁵³ Ibid, 128. See Hoffman's footnote 408.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, 133.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, 134.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, 134-135.
- ⁵⁷ Riedweg, "Anti-Christian Polemics and Pagan Onto-Theology," 258.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid, 259.
- ⁵⁹ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 116-117.
- ⁶⁰ Celsus, *On the True Doctrine*, 59-60.
- ⁶¹ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 140.
- ⁶² *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title*, 14.
- ⁶³ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 139.
- ⁶⁴ Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 283-285.
- ⁶⁵ Jeffrey S. Siker, "Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* Vol. 18, no. 2 (1987): 193.
- ⁶⁶ Celsus, *On the True Doctrine*, 79.
- ⁶⁷ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 209. Book IV, Chapter 33.
- ⁶⁸ Siker, "Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism," 202-203.
- ⁶⁹ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists [and] Eunapius, Lives of the Philosophers*, trans. Wilmer C. Wright (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921),

427.

⁷⁰ Dodds, E.R. *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1951), 287.

⁷¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *The History*, trans. J.C. Rolfe (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1950), 209.

⁷² Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 435.

⁷³ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 105.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 106.

⁷⁵ Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 288.

⁷⁶ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 106.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 107.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 137.

⁸⁰ Ibid. See Hoffman's footnote 445.

⁸¹ Ibid, 92. For Julian's reference to Greek "laziness and superstition," see Hoffman's footnote 271.

⁸² "A Gold Coin Representing Emperor Julian." (Wikimedia Commons, 361).

⁸³ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 123.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 208.

⁸⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, *The History*, 203. Book XXII, Chapter 5; Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 212.

⁸⁶ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 117.

⁸⁷ Julian, "To Theodorus, on his Appointment as High Priest and Guardian of the Temples," trans. Joseph R. Hoffman, in Julian's *Against the Galileans* (Amherst: Prometheus Press, 2004), 153.

⁸⁸ Edward Jay Watts, *The Final Pagan Generation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 112.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 112-113.

⁹⁰ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 212.

⁹¹ Ammianus, *The History*, 257. Book XXII, Chapter 10.

⁹² Watts, *The Final Pagan Generation*, 114.

⁹³ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 199. Smith used Bidez's translation of the emperor's correspondence when quoting Julian. Bidez, *Epistulae 36* (Paris, 1922).

⁹⁴ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 212.

⁹⁵ Watts, *The Final Pagan Generation*, 114.

⁹⁶ Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 121.

⁹⁷ Hargis, *Against the Christians*, 93.

⁹⁸ Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 40. The *Enneads* is generally considered a foundational text in the Neoplatonic school of thought. Julian, *Against the Galileans*, 93-94. See Hoffman's footnotes 275-278.