

DEITIES ON BRONZE RAILING FROM MEDIANA
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOLOGY OF JULIAN THE APOSTATE

In the course of excavations at Mediana, archaeological site in the suburb of Niš, was in 2000 discovered a hoard containing fragments of the bronze railing (Fig. 1). This exceptionally interesting, rare and valuable find is now housed in the National Museum in Niš.¹

The railing consisted of eight cancelli – four to the left and four to the right of the passage. At each side of the railing were three herms with images of different gods. To the left were male deities and to the right their female counterparts. Cancelli were decorated with heads of Medusae and lions. Rear parts of the cancelli had not been trimmed. Four cancelli damaged to the more or less extent, two herms with images of Aesculapius and Luna and post of the third herm of obviously some female deity are preserved. First cancellus at each end was attached to the wall and all of them together were used as some kind of altar screen (Fig. 2). According to the opinion of Dr. Miloje Vasić, director of investigations at Mediana, this railing was standing in the apse of triclinium of the so-called ‘villa with peristyle’ turned into a pagan shrine.²

Perhaps we should say here few words about the term *cancelli*. The word *cancelli* is the diminutive of *cancri*. They had generally been used as barriers in theaters and at hippodromes. Later they had also been used to divide space in the churches. They had usually been made of wood. The railing from Mediana is hence more interesting and more important find as this is the unique specimen of metal-made cancelli in the entire territory of the Roman empire. Cancelli from Mediana are 90 cm high, 71 cm wide and the height of their tops is 20 cm. Herms are 20 cm wide and 90 cm high. The busts are 20 cm high.³

As we already said, the figures of Luna and Aesculapius are preserved. Luna is recognizable by the moon crescent on her forehead. M. Vasić is of the opinion that she has the features of certain historical person, more precisely of

¹ Miloje Vasić, *Bronze Railing from Mediana*, Старинар LIII–LIV (2003–2004), 2004, 79–109.

² For railing reconstruction see *ibid.*, 82–83.

³ *Ibid.*, 84–85.

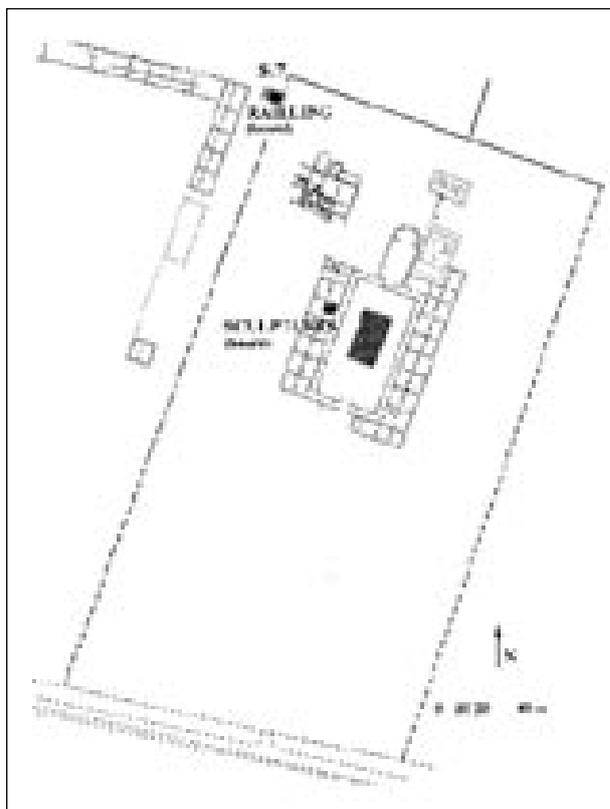


Fig 1. General plan of the site. Taken from M. Vasić, *Bronze Railing from Mediana*, Старинар LIII–LIV (2003–2004), 2004, 80.

Сл. 1. Општи план локалитета. Преузето из М. Васић, *Bronze Railing from Mediana*, Старинар LIII–LIV (2003–2004), 2004, 80.

Fausta, wife of emperor Constantine.⁴ The observer is inevitably faced with the question which other four deities had been represented on the railing. M. Vasić assumes that these are Sol, i.e. Helios as the male counterpart of Luna – Greek Selene, then Hygieia as the counterpart of Aesculapius, and probably Dionysus or Hercules and of female deities also possibly Diana – Artemis.⁵ If Luna really has the features of Fausta then it is logical to assume that Sol – Sun was the portrait of emperor Constantine himself.⁶

The chapel where the railing was standing, was, as it seems, dedicated to so-called ‘iatric deities’, as M. Vasić identifies them, that is gods – protectors, who protected mortals from illness and helped their healing.⁷ In favor of this it should be remembered that in 1972 in the triclinium of the villa had been discovered a group of sculptures and among them were Aesculapius, Hygieia, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Heracles and Mercury – Hermes.⁸

Considering the question of origin of this shrine, i.e. some kind of private small chapel in the villa,

⁴ *Ibid.*, 97–98. For basic data on Fausta see A.H.M. Jones – J.R. Martindale – J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire I, A.D. 260–395*, Cambridge 1971, s.v. Fl. Maxima Fausta, 325–326; Seeck, *Fausta (3)*, Pauly – Wissowa – Kroll, *Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, neue Bearbeitung, sechster Band, Stuttgart 1909, 2084–2086.

⁵ M. Vasić, *Bronze Railing*, 82.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 98. Constantine’s connection to the cult of Sun venerated in Rome since the time of Aurelian (AD 274) as *Sol Invictus*, is profound and is a very complex problem when his ruling and religious ideology is concerned. We have here neither time nor space to discuss this problem, which occupies many investigators of the Late Roman period for decades.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁸ А. Јовановић, *Неки аспекти проблема скупног налаза скулптура са Медијане код Ниша*, Старинар XXIV–XXV (1973–1974), 1975, 57–65. М. Васић, *Bronze Railing*, 103; П. Петровић, *Медијана. Резиденција римских царева*, Београд 1994, 36–38.

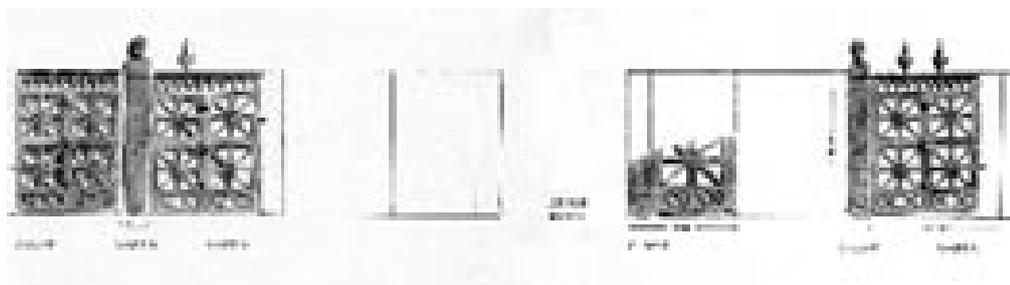


Fig. 2. Reconstruction of bronze railing. Taken from M. Vasić, *op. cit.*, 82–83.

Сл. 2. Реконструкција бронзане ограде. Преузето из М. Vasić, *op. cit.*, 82–83.

M. Vasić suggests interesting and as we think rather plausible hypothesis. Namely, he assumes that apse of the villa was turned into the shrine by emperor Flavius Claudius Iulianus, better known as Julian the Apostate, during his stay in Naissus in 361. The sculptures had been standing in the apse and railing was at its entrance.⁹ As it is well known, Julian, while preparing for the civil war against Constantius, the legitimate augustus of that time, spent few months in this town.¹⁰ Such an enterprise of construction of private shrine is typical for Julian. He was going to do the same thing few months later in Constantinople, where he arranged in the palace his private mithreum – shrine of the Persian Sun god Mithras.¹¹ This also fits well into the Julian's general politic of restoration of cults of pagan deities and construction or reconstruction of their temples.

According to this hypothesis, Julian himself brought the railing and sculptures from the triclinium to Naissus and placed them in the shrine of the villa, whence they had been removed before the invasion of the Goths after the battle of Adrianople in 378. It could not be established with certainty whether the railing had been produced in the West, in Gaul, and brought by Julian on the ship when he was sailing down the Danube on his campaign against Constantius, or it had been brought from some of nearby provinces – Thrace or Macedonia.¹² In any case, the railing had been produced much earlier, before AD 324/5.¹³

Julian did not reinstate and support pagan religion and fight against Christianity by his practical efforts only. He was also the author of few philo-

⁹ M. Vasić, *Bronze Railing*, 103–104; Idem, *Mediana – domaine imperial ou bien privé?*, *Römische Städte und Festungen an der Donau*. Akten der regionalen Konferenz organisiert von Alexander von Humboldt – Stiftung, Beograd, 16–19 Oktober 2003, hrsg. von M. Mirković, Beograd 2005, 167–176.

¹⁰ About Julian's stay in Naissus see W.E. Kaegi, Jr., *Julian at Naissus*, *L'antiquité classique* XIV (1975), 161–167. We also discussed his literary activity at that time in the work presented to the last year scientific meeting «Niš and Byzantium» («Ниш и Византија»): А. Поповић, *Књижевна делатност Јулијана Апостате у Нишу, Ниш и Византија: 800 година после пада Константинопоља 1204–2004*, Трећи научни скуп, Ниш, 3–5. јун 2004, Зборник радова III, уредник М. Ракоција, Ниш 2005, 79–86.

¹¹ J. Bidez, *La vie de l'empereur Julien*, deuxième tirage, Paris 1930, 219–224.

¹² Vasić, *Bronze Railing*, 103–105.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 98.

sophical and theological texts of which should be mentioned first of all prose *Hymn to king Helios* and also *Hymn to the Mother of Gods* and text *Against the Galilaeans*. In short indications M. Vasić quoted Julian's texts to support his hypothesis concerning the origin of the railing.¹⁴ We are going to try to comprehend in more details what was the role of each of assumed 'iatic deities' in Julian's writings and what was their place in his religious concept of cosmos. Of course, we must emphasize that this discourse of ours has any sense only if the starting assumption that the railing had been brought to Mediana by Julian himself is correct.

Pagan religion that Julian tried to establish differed from traditional Greek and Roman religion. There was conspicuously great influence of Neoplatonism, first of all of Syrian philosopher Iamblichus as well as the influence of oriental cults of Mithras and Cybele. Let us look in the first place what was Julian's idea about the structure of cosmos.

In accordance with the doctrine of Iamblichus, Julian believes in existence of three parallel worlds. First and the highest form of existence is intelligible world (νοητὸς κόσμος), world of Plato's ideas, i.e. of intelligible gods (νοητὸι θεοί). It is followed by intellectual world (νοερὸς κόσμος), which has intermediary role between intelligible and world of sense-perception (αἰσθητὸς κόσμος). Analogously, all the gods have three aspects: sensory perceptive (planets and stars), intellectual and intelligible. Supreme deity of the Julian's pantheon is the Sun god, Helios, equal to the Persian god Mithras. All the deities emanate from Helios and fit into the 'solar chain of beings', which extends from intelligible to our world of sense-perception. The entire cosmos is some kind of living being endowed with soul and intellect and that is an idea originating from Plato's *Timaeus*.¹⁵ This is how in essence looks Julian's picture of the world.

First deity that we are going to look for in Julian's texts is the one whose image is best preserved on the railing from Mediana. This is **Luna – Selene**, goddess of Moon (Fig. 3). She is infrequently mentioned in Julian. According to him, Selene as Moon represents in our world the lowermost of the heavenly spheres. She, with the help of Athena, *beholds the intelligible which is higher than the heavens, and adorns with its forms the realm of matter that lies below her, and thus she does away with its savagery and confusion and disorder*.¹⁶ Selene is also the creator – demiurge of the entire cosmos.¹⁷ As the deity of light, she shares with Helios the kingdom of visible world.¹⁸ Julian relates Selene to Athena and hence indirectly to himself. Thus in some place he says that Athena protected him with the help of Helios' and Selene's angels.¹⁹

However, it should be borne in mind that Selene is the goddess with many faces, meaning that practically all female deities in the Greek mythology and

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 104–105.

¹⁵ Plato, *Timaeus*, 32 C – 33 A; Iulianus, *Oratio IV*, 139 B.

¹⁶ Iul., *Or. IV*, 150 A. All quotations from the Julian's works we cite from *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, with an English translation by W.C. Wright, I–III, The Loeb Classical Library, London – Cambridge Mass. 1913–1923.

¹⁷ Iul., *Epistula 47* (ed. Wright), 434 C.

¹⁸ Iul., *Or. IV*, 154 D.

¹⁹ Iul., *Epistula ad Athenienses*, 275 B.

religion are equated with her. Just one such goddess, **Cybele – Mother of Gods**, an ancient Near East goddess of earth and its fertility, has in Julian an exceptionally important place together with Helios as his female counterpart. To her, as we already said, Julian dedicated one of his two philosophical hymns. Cult of the Mother of Gods was closely related to the cult of Mithras. Cybele stands in accordance with Helios as on the railing Luna is in accordance with Sol, that is Fausta with Constantine, i.e. the empress in accordance with the emperor. Thus, through Cybele as one aspect of lunar deity we can perceive Luna in Julian's religion. It is worth mentioning that in the course of earlier excavations at Mediana was discovered a statue initially assumed to represent Demeter – Cybele.²⁰

Cybele's role in Julian is multifarious: managing, generative and soteriological. She rules together with Zeus, whom Julian in his texts equates to Helios. She is, at the same time, also Zeus' mother and his wife.²¹ He obviously equates Cybele also with Athena and calls her Pronoia and says for her that she is *the motherless maiden* (παρθένος ἀμήτωρ).²²

The concept of Cybele as goddess – virgin, who is at the same time, wife, mother and as Pronoia, daughter of Zeus, the supreme god of traditional Hellenic pantheon irresistibly resembles the Christian idea of Virgin Mary. In the Mother of Gods Julian obviously saw Hellenic counterpart to the Mother of Jesus.

Equalizing of Cybele and Athena brings this goddess in connection with Luna – Selena. Namely, Neoplatonists considered Athena to be the lunar deity. Confirmation of this belief could be found in Iamblichus as Julian's great role model.²³ After all, Athena was also in Julian, as we have seen, related to Selene.

Soteriological role of Cybele could be best perceived in the final Julian's prayer in the *Hymn to the Mother of Gods*.²⁴ Julian does not connect just his own fate with her, but the fate of the entire Roman empire.

Aesculapius, whose image on the railing is completely preserved, is the 'iatic deity' in the full sense of the word (Fig.4). Son of Apollo and mortal woman Coronis, he was in traditional Hellenic religion the god of medical skill. Just Aesculapius was the deity whom Julian had chosen for the pagan equivalent of Christ. As the nature of Christ, the nature of Aesculapius was also dual, at the same time human and divine. According to the myth, he learned medical skill from the wise Centaur Chiron and started to restore the dead to life thus interfering with natural order. Because of that Zeus killed him with thunderbolt, but later restored him to life and took him to the Olympus. Like Christ, Aesculapius is at the same time human and god. He also first died and then was resurrected and ascended to heaven. Like Christ he was Savior (Σωτήρ), who

²⁰ The prevailing opinion nowadays is that it is local, Thracian or Illyrian goddess (Dea Dardanica). A. Јовановић, *Неки аспекти проблема скупног налаза*, 62; П. Петровић, *Медијана*, 30.

²¹ Iul., Or. IV, 166 A-B.

²² Ibid., 166 A-B.

²³ Iamblichi Chalcedensis *In Platonis dialogos commentarorum fragmenta*, edited with translation and commentary by J.M. Dillon, Leiden 1973, *In Timaeum*, frg. 19.

²⁴ Iul., Or. V, 179 D – 180 C.

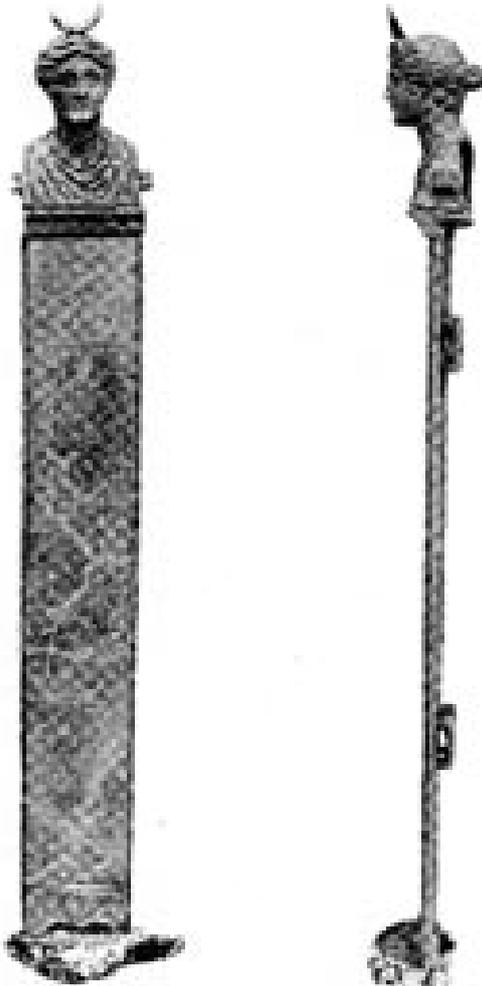


Fig. 3. Herm with bust of Luna. Taken from M. Vasić, *op. cit.*, 92.

Сл. 3. Херма са бистом Луне.
Преузето из М. Васић, *op. cit.*, 92.

performed miracles by healing the sick and resurrecting the dead. In Julian's texts his soteriological function is much more extensive: he spread his rescuing hand over the entire Earth and he does not resurrect only sick bodies, but also the sinful souls.²⁵ Since the 5th century BC Aesculapius was greatly venerated in the entire Hellenic world not only as miraculous physician, but also as god who is special guardian and savior of mankind.

Julian deviates from the traditional Hellenic myth. He quotes as Aesculapius' father Zeus, whom he identifies with Helios, and for Helios he says that he took Aesculapius to the light of the day.²⁶ In the *Hymn to king Helios* Aesculapius is one of Helios' emanations:

*Further Helios, since he comprehends in himself all the principles of the fairest intellectual synthesis, is himself Apollo the leader of the Muses. And since he fills the whole of our life with fair order, he begat Asclepios in the world, though even before the beginning of the world he had him by his side.*²⁷

From Aesculapius as the son of Apollo in the traditional Hellenic myth it was not difficult to come to Aesculapius as the emanation of Neoplatonic Helios.

Julian's analogy between Aesculapius and Christ was not his original idea. Neoplatonist Celsus already in the 2nd century in his text aiming against Christians, titled *The True Word*, put Aesculapius against Christ.²⁸

Also, great father of the church, Clement of Alexandria, contemporary of Celsus, emphasizes the importance of Aesculapius as a soteriological deity in Greek religion. Clement says that he was, according to Hellenic (pagan) belief, one of the heroes saviors whom gods created as a result of their benevolence towards humans. As such heroes

²⁵ Iul., *Contra Galilaeos*, 200 A-B.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Iul., *Or. IV*, 144 B.

²⁸ Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, III,24–25 and VII,53.

Clement mentions also Dioscuri and Heracles.²⁹ Aesculapius – Savior played also in the ensuing centuries an important role in the works of Neoplatonic writers as in the Greek East also in the Latin West.³⁰

Besides the role Aesculapius played in the Neoplatonic tradition Julian also had political reasons to choose just Aesculapius as opposition to Christ. Namely, his panegyrists praised him as incarnation of Aesculapius who will save the world.³¹ Hence, Julian's aspiration to revive his cult had also purely personal, practical reasons in reinforcing his own popularity.

Sol, i.e. **Helios** as male companion to Luna was without doubt depicted on the railing. His herm was in central place in the left, so to say, 'male' side of the railing. If Luna really has the features of the empress Fausta it is certain that Sol personified Constantine.

Sol or Helios is the supreme deity of Julian's pantheon. He is, as we already said, equated with Persian Mithra whose cult was exceptionally popular throughout the Empire in the 4th century and in particular among the soldiers. To this god Julian dedicated his prose *Hymn to king Helios*, the text where he most completely and most systematically explained his religious ideas.

In accordance with the belief in the existence of three worlds, the Sun was also perceived in three ways: as transcendental Sun identical to the Plato's supreme idea of Good or the Neoplatonist *One* in the intelligible world, then as Helios-Mithra ruler among the gods of intellectual world and finally as visible Sun - ὁ φαινόμενος δῖσκος, as is called by Julian.³² Julian pays the greatest attention to Helios as intellectual deity. He originated from intelligible Helios and from him he got the authority over the gods of intellectual world. As the *Good*, i.e. intelligible Helios, is the

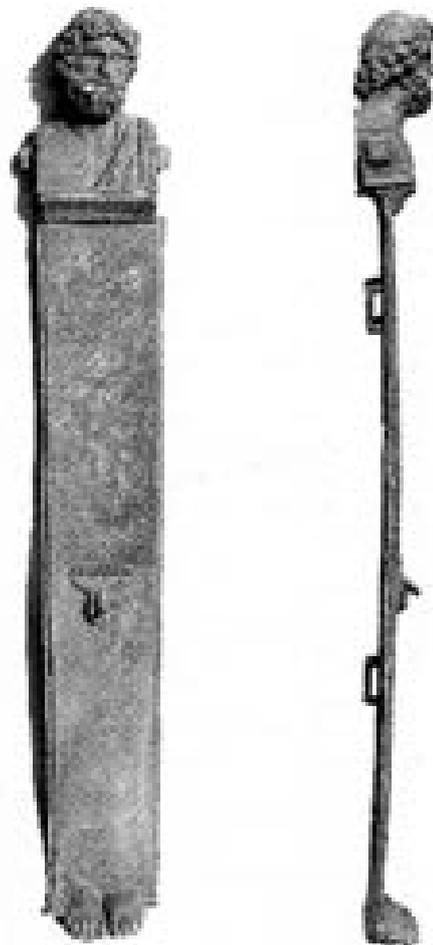


Fig. 4. Herm with bust of Aesculapius. Taken from M. Vasić, *op. cit.*, 100.

Сл. 3. Херма са бистом Асклепија. Преузето из М. Васић, *op. cit.*, 100.

²⁹ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2,22.

³⁰ For example in Proclus (*In Rem publicam*, I, p.69 ed. Kroll) and Macrobius (*Saturnalia*, I,20,1-5).

³¹ Libanius, *Oratio XIII*, 42.

³² *Iul.*, *Or. IV*, 133 C.

source of beauty, being and perfection in the intelligible world of ideas thus intellectual Helios-Mithras is the cause of all blessings in the intellectual world. The third, visible Sun has analogous role in our world of sense-perception.³³

The main characteristic of Helios as deity of intellectual world is *middle-ness* (μεσότης). The nature of this middle-ness is dual. This Helios is intermediary between intelligible Helios and the lowermost, visible Sun. At the same time as the ruler of intellectual world he has the intermediate position between the intellectual deities.³⁴

The Helios' deeds in the world of sense-perception are many. He is *the father of the seasons*³⁵ and makes the nature, spirit and everything existent perfect.³⁶ We are born from him, he brought us up, he liberates our souls from the body and raise them towards the beings related to god.³⁷

Julian emphasizes few Helios' functions: mediatory, ruling, generative and soteriological. His role in all three worlds – sensory perceptive, intellectual and intelligible – is almost identical so there are no strict boundaries between acting of intelligible Helios, i.e. supreme Idea of Good and his emanations. The confusion is even greater as in Julian there are many deities from the classical Hellenic tradition that are either equated with Helios or considered as his emanations.

The cult of Helios, although only in indications, also occurs as an important element of the Julian's ruling ideology. This god, in the Julian's opinion, was the founder of Rome, hence the Empire is under his special protection.³⁸ Julian emphasizes that he himself is also in special mystical relationship with Helios and that provided additional legality to his imperial authority.³⁹

It is almost certain that **Hygieia** as Aesculapius' female counterpart was also depicted on the railing. Her cult in Mediana is already confirmed by the mentioned group of sculptures from the triclinium of the villa where her sculpture was also encountered.⁴⁰ It is needless to talk about her links with Aesculapius in the antique mythology and iconography. As personification of health (ὑγίεια) she is the 'iatric deity' *sensu stricto*. Of all gods to be mentioned here she is the only one who did not find place in the Julian's writings, at least in those, which have been preserved.

Third male deity on the railing, as M. Vasić assumes, could have been **Dionysus** or Heracles. We are going to discuss first Dionysus in Julian's texts. This god is often mentioned in his philosophical texts. According to Julian, the main function of Dionysus is creation in the world of sense-perception, identified by Julian as *divided creative function* (ἡ μεριστὴ δημιουργία).⁴¹ In accordance with his tendency to fit all the deities into the picture of cosmos as

³³ Ibid., 133 A-C.

³⁴ Ibid., 140 A - D.

³⁵ Ibid., 147 D.

³⁶ Ibid., 149 A.

³⁷ Ibid., 152 A-B.

³⁸ Ibid., 153 D.

³⁹ Ibid., 130 B – 131 D.

⁴⁰ A. Јовановић, *Неки аспекти проблема скупног налаза*, 56.

⁴¹ Iul., Or. V, 179 B.

solar chain of beings he deviates from traditional Hellenic myth and states in one passage that Helios is the father of Dionysus.⁴² He does that perhaps in an attempt to stress Dionysus' generative and creative function, which he ascribes to Helios in the intellectual world. As he is the son of Zeus or Helios and mortal woman, Dionysus has the lower position than other gods, so Julian ascribed to him the creation in the lowermost of all worlds – our world of sense-perception. As well as Aesculapius, Dionysus also has in Julian the role of pagan counterpart of the Christian idea of the Son of God who descended into this world. If we remember the Orphic myth of Dionysus-Zagreus, who, dismembered by Titans was resurrected with the help of Zeus, then this deity really represent perfect counterpart to Christ.

Dionysus has prominent place in Julian's writings also for personal, ideological reasons. Namely, rhetor Themistius declared that god placed Julian in the same position as he once placed Heracles and Dionysus who were at the same time philosophers and kings and who cleaned the earth and sea from evil, which overwhelmed them.⁴³ Julian, in his aspirations to realize Plato's ideal of ruler – philosopher, was certainly flattered by this Themistius' comparison. Possibly, he himself believed to be incarnation of Dionysus sent by gods to clean the Earth from the worst of all evils - Christianity. Another important ideological reason for special observing of the Dionysus' cult lies in Julian's planned campaign against Persia. Namely, it is well-known that all rulers from the time of Alexander the Great who planned conquering of the East especially respected the cult of Dionysus, first, mythical conqueror of Asia.

Except direct discourses about Dionysus, we can find in Julian's texts also few allegorical interpretations of the myths related to this god whence we can see how important he considered his role to be.

Hercules, i.e. the Greek **Heracles**, is along Dionysus and Aesculapius the third semi-god, son of Zeus and mortal woman whom Julian opposes to Christ. In this role he has exceptionally important place in Julian's theology and is often mentioned in his writings. Heracles is in addition to his many other functions also iatric deity and it is also significant that he was the patron of thermal mineral springs, which even nowadays exist in the vicinity of Mediana.⁴⁴

In the speech *To the Cynic Heracleios* Julian emphasizes the duality of Heracles' nature, human and divine at the same time, having certainly in mind the analogy with Christ:

«Nay, my good sir;» said I, «do you not perceive that the myth is obviously an allegory?» For in what sense do we regard the «birth» of Heracles, yes, and of Dionysus as well, since in their case birth has superior and surpassing and distinctive elements, even though it still falls within the limits of human nature, and up to a certain point resembles our own? Heracles for instance is said to have been a child, even as we are; his divine body grew gradually; we are informed that he was instructed by teachers; they say that he carried on wars and defeated all his opponents, but for all that his body had to endure weariness.⁴⁵

⁴² Iul., Or. IV, 152 D.

⁴³ Iul., Epistula ad Themistium, 253 C – 254 A.

⁴⁴ А. Јовановић, *Неки аспекти проблема скупног налаза*, 60.

⁴⁵ Iul., Or. VII, 219 B–C.

If we remember that Zeus, Heracles' father, is in Julian equated with Helios, we can conclude that Heracles is simply still another emanation of Helios and therefore incorporated in the idea of cosmos as solar chain of beings.

According to the myth the eleventh labor of Heracles was to go to the Garden of the Hesperides to bring golden apples growing there. When traveling through Libya towards the Ocean, i.e. 'outer sea', he got from Helios the golden cup into which he sailed to the opposite coast.⁴⁶ Julian's explanation was that Heracles did not sail but he walked over water as over dry land.⁴⁷ This irresistibly resembles well-known episode from the *Gospels* when Christ was walking over the lake.⁴⁸ There is no doubt that Julian got the idea for such explanation of the quoted myth after reading *Holy Scripture*.

In favor of the thesis that Julian opposes Heracles the Savior to Christ should be mentioned his notion about unspoiled and pure soul of Heracles that, as he says, when sent from the Maker to this world put on the body and after its death returned to the Father.⁴⁹ The quoted picture really oddly resembles the Christian idea of the savior.

Heracles plays an important role also in the Julian's ruling ideology. Julian wanted his subjects to recognize him as new Heracles – savior of the world, and as a model of Cynic way of life and an archetype of exemplary ruler Heracles obviously was also Julian's personal role model.

All mentioned above indicate that depicting of Heracles on the railing from Mediana had strong support in the Julian's works.

Diana, i.e. **Artemis** has not been mentioned at all in the preserved texts of Julian the Apostate. However, although it had not been said explicitly, she could be understood in the Julian's theological system as goddess equated with Cybele and hence also with Luna – Selene. This idea for equating these two goddesses is much earlier than the time of Julian and the most striking confirmation of this is the cult of Artemis in the famous temple in Ephesus. There she was not the virgin goddess from the classical Hellenic myth, but goddess of fertility, venerated from time immemorial on the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean. If we comprehend her in such a way, equated to the Mother of Gods – Cybele, then she has the place of utmost importance in the Julian's restored pagan religion. We can expect that Diana – Artemis as a soteriological deity whose cult was very popular in the Balkan provinces had its place also on the railing from Mediana. In any case, as we said before, her cult at Mediana is corroborated by archaeological finds.

So, after careful reading of the texts of Julian the Apostate we may say that iconography of the railing from Mediana suggested by M. Vasić completely corresponds to the religious ideas of Julian. On the railing were probably standing, looking from left to right, the statues of following deities:

- 1) Aesculapius
- 2) Sol – Helios
- 3) Dionysus or Heracles

⁴⁶ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, II,5,11.

⁴⁷ Iul., *Or.* VII, 219 C-D.

⁴⁸ Mt., 14,22–34; Mc., 6,45–53.

⁴⁹ Iul., *Or.* V, 166 D – 167 A.

- 4) Diana – Artemis
- 5) Luna – Selene
- 6) Hygieia

Certainly, such arrangement is only our assumption, prone to critic and changes, so we allow possibility that herms were arranged in somewhat different way but certainly in symmetric order. Each deity had on the other side of the railing his counterpart of opposite gender. In any case, we can say that 'iatic deities' on the railing fit perfectly into Julian's theological system. The railing had been made some forty years before Julian's philosophical-theological texts. Judging by coinciding of its iconography and Julian's writings, we can conclude that they both represent the result of identical widely distributed ideas of Late Roman pagan religion. Therefore, one should be cautious not to over-emphasize the new elements, which Julian introduced in the pagan religion of his time and ascribe to his beliefs certain exclusivity as it is sometimes the case.

After reading of Julian's texts we keep thinking whether these deities should be at all called 'iatic', as M. Vasić suggests. Some of them, as Aesculapius and Hygieia, had been patrons of medical skills, but other deities had not been directly related to medicine. 'Iatic' role is segment of 'soteriological' salvation function, it is inseparable from it and represents one of its manifestations.⁵⁰ Just the soteriological function is the common denominator of all the gods we discussed here. Therefore we think that deities on the railing from Mediana should not be considered as 'iatic' but as 'soteriological' deities.

Александар В. Поповић

БОЖАНСТВА НА БРОНЗАНОЈ ОГРАДИ СА МЕДИЈАНЕ
У СВЕТЛУ ТЕОЛОГИЈЕ ЈУЛИЈАНА АПОСТАТЕ

Током ископавања на Медијани, археолошком локалитету у предграђу Ниша, 2000. године је откривена остава са фрагментима бронзане ограде. Ограда се састојала од осам канцела – четири са леве и четири са десне стране. Са сваке стране ограде стајале су по три херме „јатричких божанстава“. Сачувана су четири канцела, две херме са ликовима Асклепија и Луне, као и подножје треће херме, очито неког женског божанства. Како сматра др Милоје Васић, руководилац ископавања на Медијани, ограда је стајала као олтарска преграда у апсиди триклинјума такозване „виле с перистилом“, претвореној у паганско светилиште.

Намеће се питање која су остала четири божанства представљена на огради. М. Васић претпоставља да су то Сол, односно Хелије, као мушки пандан Јуни – грчкој Селени, затим Хигија, као пандан Асклепију и, вероватно, Дионис или Херакле, а од женских божанства још можда Дијана – Артемида.

Капела у којој је ограда стајала била је, како изгледа, посвећена такозваним „јатричким божанствима“, како их М. Васић назива. У прилог овоме треба подсетити да је у вили 1972. године откривен групни налаз скулптура, међу којима се налазе Асклепије, Хигија, Артемида, Дионис, Херакле и Меркур – Хермес.

⁵⁰ А. Јовановић, *Неки аспекти проблема скупног налаза*, 60, uses term 'soteriological-iatic'.

М. Васић претпоставља да је апсиду виле у светилиште претворио император Флавије Клаудије Јулијан, познатији као Јулијан Апостата, за време свог боравка у Нису 361. године. Скулптуре су стајале у самој апсиди, а ограда на њеном улазу.

Прво божанство које ћемо потражити код Јулијана је оно чији је лик на огради са Медијане најбоље сачуван. То је **Луна – Селена**, богиња Месеца. Она, уз помоћ Атене, украшава материју облицима. Селена је и творац – демијург читавог козмоса. Као светлосно божанство, она са Хелијем дели краљевство видљивог света. Јулијан везује Селену за богињу Атену, па посредно и себе. Међутим, треба имати на уму да је Селена богиња са много ликова, односно, да су практично сва женска божанства у грчкој митологији и религији изједначена са њом. Управо једна таква богиња, **Кибела – Мајка Богова**, стара малоазијска богиња земље, односно њене плодности, заузима код Јулијана, уз Хелија, као његов женски пандан, изузетно важно место. Култ Мајке Богова је био тесно повезан са Митриним култом. Кибелина улога код Јулијана је вишеструка: управљачка, генеративна и сотериолошка.

Асклепије, чији је лик на огради у потпуности сачуван, представља „јатричко божанство“ у правом смислу речи. Јулијан наглашава његову сотериолошку функцију и види у њему пагански пандан Христу – Спаситељу.

Као мушки парњак Луни на огради је несумњиво стајао **Сол**, односно **Хелије**. Његова херма је била централна на левој, да тако кажемо, „мушкој“ страни ограде. Сол, или Хелије, је врховно божанство Јулијановог пантеона. Он је, као што смо већ рекли, изједначен са персијским Митром, чији је култ у IV веку био изузетно популаран широм Царства, а нарочито међу војницима. Јулијан наглашава неколико Хелијевих функција: медијаторску, управљачку, генеративну и сотериолошку.

Као Асклепијев женски пандан готово сигурно се на огради налазила **Хигија**. Њен култ на Медијани је посведочен и већ споменутим налазом групе скулптура у триклиноријуму виле, где је и она заступљена.

Треће од мушких божанстава на огради би, како претпоставља М. Васић, могао бити **Дионис** или Херакле. Дионисова главна функција, по Јулијану, је стварање у чулно-опажајном свету, које Јулијан назива *раздељеним стварањем* (ἡ μεριστὴ δημιουργία). Као и Асклепије, и Дионис има код Јулијана улогу паганског пандана хришћанској представи о Сину Божијем који је сишао у овај свет.

Уз Диониса и Асклепија **Херкул**, то јест грчки **Херакле** је трећи полубог, односно син бога и смртнице, кога Јулијан супротставља Христу. У тој улози он заузима изузетно важно место у Јулијановој теологији и често се спомиње у његовим списима. Херакле је, поред многих других својих функција, и јатричко божанство, а значајно је то да је био управо заштитник лековитих термалних извора, какви и данас постоје у околини Медијане.

У сачуваним текстовима Јулијана Апостате нигде се не спомиње **Дијана**, односно **Артемиди**. Међутим, иако то нигде није експлицитно речено, она би се у Јулијановом теолошком систему могла посматрати као богиња изједначена са Кибелом, па, сходно томе, и са Луном – Селеном.

После пажљивог ишчитавања текстова Јулијана Апостате, можемо рећи да иконографија ограде са Медијане, какву је предложио М. Васић, у потпуности одговара Јулијановим религијским представама. На огради су се, поређане с лева на десно, вероватно налазиле статуе следећих божанстава:

1) Асклепије 2) Сол – Хелије 3) Дионис или Херакле 4) Дијана – Артемиди 5) Луна – Селена 6) Хигија

Наравно, овакав распоред је само наша претпоставка, подложна критици и изменама, па допуштамо да су херме биле и нешто другачије, али свакако симетрично, распоређене. Свако божанство је имало, на другој страни ограде, свој пандан супротног пола. У сваком случају, можемо рећи да се „јатричка божанства“ на огради савршено уклапају у Јулијанов теолошки систем.

После читања Јулијанових списа наметнуло нам се питање да ли ова божанства уопште треба називати „јатричким“, како то чини М. Васић. Нека од њих су, као Аскл-

епије и Хигија, били заштитници лекарске вештине, али остала божанства нису с њом директно повезана. „Јатричка“ улога је део „сотериолошке“, спаситељске функције, неодвојива је од ње и представља једну њену манифестацију. Управо је сотериолошка функција заједнички именитељ свих богова о којима смо овде говорили. Зато сматрамо да не треба говорити о „јатричким божанствима“, већ о „сотериолошким божанствима на огради са Медијане“.

