

Ultima Thule: Julius Evola and Herman Wirth



Ultima Thule. Julius Evola e Herman Wirth - In appendice : Hyperborea di Claudio Mutti - **Arthur Branwen** - Quaderni del Veltro - € 13,00

In this short monograph, Arthur Branwen shows the influence of Herman Wirth on the thought of Julius Evola and clarifies how Evola adapted Wirth's ideas on the origins of Western civilisation. Herman Wirth (1885-1981) was born in Holland, becoming a German citizen in 1910. He headed up the Ahnenerbe from its founding in 1935 until 1937.

Wirth's masterpiece, titled *Der Aufgang der Menschheit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Religion, Symbolik und Schrift der atlantisch-nordischen Rasse* ("The Ascent of Mankind: Investigations on the History of the Religion, Symbols, and Writings of the Atlantic-Nordic Race"), appeared in 1928. As far as I know, it has never been translated into English, and copies in the used book market run around € 500. Evola devotes an entire chapter in *Il mito del sangue* (MS) ("The Myth of Blood") to Wirth's ideas.

The following passage, quoted in full in Branwen's book, summarizes Evola's opinion of Wirth.

Wirth's thesis must be considered as a bold surprise attack, whose profound directive impulse is to follow extra-scientific intuitions, which are then justified through very laborious philological, anthropo-geological, mythological, and symbolic methods ... But as the contingent balancing and discontinuity of ice floes in a winter stream say nothing against the continuity of the current that transported them, so that everything scientifically inexact, arbitrary, fantastic and unsystematic which is found in Wirth's work must not hide the strength of the "myth" that animates and directs the whole, its deepest significance and its character of necessity vis-à-vis the problems indicated.

The Arctic region would therefore be the original homeland of the primordial Nordic race Once the freeze came about, the pre-Nordic race -- as the only way to safety -- moved away from the ices in a Southward direction toward the Atlantic. At this point Wirth accepted the hypothesis of the existence of Atlantis and believed that the centre of civilisation and of the Nordic race was found in Atlantis, which then spread beyond there both to the East toward the European coast, and to the West toward the American coast.

Wirth claimed to reconstruct not only the history of the Nordic-Atlantic race, but moreover its religion. It would have been a superior, monotheistic religion, distinct from the animism and demonism of the African and Asiatic natives, without dogmas, of a great purity and potentially universal ... The primordial religion of 15,000 BCE would have been solar and compenetrated with the sense of a universal law of "eternal return", of death and rebirth ... So Wirth speaks of a primordial Nordic monotheism and of a "cosmic Nordic Christianity" that would therefore date back to thousands of years before Christ.

Evola traces the origins of the Hyperborean theory not to Wirth, but to Ludwig Wilser whose book “Origins and Prehistory of the Arians” was published in 1899. In that work, the Nordist myth appeared for the first time in a decisive form in German science. It is not *ex Oriente lux*, but rather *the light from the North*. There the theme of Thule comes up, the legendary polar island, originary homeland of the white race.

Wirth’s influence on Evola is both in his conclusions – although Evola differs from Wirth in fundamental ways – as well as in his methods. This influence is most obvious in *Revolt against the Modern World* (RAMM) and in the German edition of *Pagan Imperialism*. Obviously, Wirth’s methodology of the analysis of myths, symbols, sagas, and legends is familiar to any reader of RAMM.

Wirth’s claim that the Nordic race originated in the Polar Regions (Hyperborea) and was the seat of an advanced civilisation had the most importance to Evola. Evola then adapted some of Wirth’s conclusions to fit into his Traditional world view. For example, Evola rejected Wirth’s thesis of a Mother Earth – a lunar conception, and postulated instead a primordial solar tradition. Nevertheless, Evola’s acceptance of Wirth’s Nordic-Arctic hypothesis obligated him to reformulate the doctrinal bases of the Roman tradition. In the original Italian edition of *Paganismo Pagano*, Evola spoke of a Mediterranean tradition. However, after Wirth, the much revised German edition of *Paganismo Pagano* spoke instead of a Nordic tradition and claimed that the Greek and Roman civilisations were essentially the creations of the Nordic race.

Evola also fit the scheme into the traditional “ages”, now in the kali-yuga. This relativised Roman history, which then lost its uniqueness and was just one of the manifestations of Nordic civilisation. Branwen concludes, “Evola’s new universal vision interpreted the history of Rome and even that of Europe itself as an important episode, but one of so many of human becoming and cyclic development.”

Evola himself concludes his chapter on Wirth from MS with these words:

... the period preceding liberalism and scientism was characterized by three fundamental ideas:

- 1. The equality of the human race***
- 2. Nordic barbarianism and the origin of every civilisation from the East***
- 3. The Hebraic origin of monotheism***

Wirth struck down or overthrew those ideas with these three: ...:

- 1. Humanity is differentiated into distinct races***
- 2. Civilisation did not come from the East, but from the North***
- 3. It was the Nordics who would have known a higher monotheistic religion well before the Hebrews***

Evola began the chapter in MS with this paragraph:

Oswald Menghin, rector of the University of Vienna, wrote: "More than any other discipline the science of prehistory has been brought, and furthermore should be brought, to the centre of the spiritual battle of our time. I don't believe I am mistaken in asserting that general prehistory will be the science that will guide the next generation." In recent years, in many circles, there has been a significant impulse of return to the origins. The origins here appear under a special, spiritual light. It will be shown that in primordial times, meanings and symbols still survived in a pure state, and then were lost, obfuscated, or altered. Prehistoric research, brought from a level of disanimated scientific-archaeological or anthropological positivism to a level of spiritual synthesis, promises therefore to open new horizons for the true history of civilisation.

The human race is not moved by metaphysical truth, but by the force of myth, particularly the myth of origins. In the three generations since Wirth's book was published, the battle over the prehistory of man continues, although other, allegedly more scientific, theories hold the spotlight. Yet others, under the banner of "Radical Traditionalism" or other such movements, still respond to that impulse of return to origins. Whoever controls the "narrative" of prehistory controls the present.