

Soli Deo Gloria

[Introduction](#)

o o o

Discourses by David Myatt

[Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos](#)

[A Sacramental Link?](#)

[A Few Minor Missives](#)

[Soli Deo Gloria](#)

[Catholic Still In Spirit?](#)

[Persecution And War](#)

[The Beatitudes](#)

[The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth](#)

[Questions Of Hermeneutics And Exegesis](#)

[Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos](#)

[Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions](#)

[In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church](#)

[Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God](#)

[The Gospel According to John](#)

Translation And Commentary

Chapters 1 - 5

[Corpus Hermeticum](#)

Eight Tractates

Translation And Commentary

Reviews

[Christianity, War, Paganism, And Honour](#)

[The Question Of David Myatt And Expiation](#)

[Scholarship, Primary Sources, And Mr Myatt](#)

[Another Iconoclastic Translation](#)

[Notes On Expiation, Forgiveness, And Implacability](#)

Introduction

This compendium includes a selection of the post-2010 writings of David Myatt, including his latest one dated September 2023, regarding religion in general and Christianity in particular, as well as several personal writings which are spiritual in nature. For completeness we have included Myatt's translation of and extensive commentary on chapters one to five of the Gospel of John; and his translation of and commentary on eight of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum since they include extensive reference to Christianity.

The writings are followed by reviews by other hands which provide an overview of those writings by Myatt and how and perhaps why they have been assiduously neglected both by academics who have written about Myatt and especially by Myatt's former and current political enemies.

The compendium should therefore enable readers to make their own assessment of Myatt, as seems only fair and fitting. One caveat is that since both the reviews and Myatt's writings include multiple references to texts on his personal wordpress weblog, which being 'free' is unfortunately replete with advertisements, we advise using the Firefox browser with extensions such as 'noscript' and 'unblock origin' and with images disabled by changing, in Firefox, the preference 'permissions.default.image' in 'about:config' to 2 instead of 1.

A quotation from one of Myatt's writings included in the compendium perhaps illustrates his sentiments in respect of Christianity:

"Catholicism did manifest, and to an extent still does manifest, aspects of the numinous and therefore this particular guide to human living is one which I understand and appreciate as one style of earthly-harmony [...]

Catholicism (before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican) represented, in my view, the original Way known as Christianity, and was – at least before those reforms – quite distinct from those schisms which are now known as Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity. Indeed, distinct enough – until those reforms – to be considered a different Way of Life, a Way evident, for example, in Catholic rites (such as the Tridentine Mass), in monasticism, in Papal authority, in the use of Latin, and in the reverence accorded The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, it is my view that the schism now termed Protestantism was a classic example of the religious attitude predominating over numinosity – and thus that it is and was redolent of attempts to reduce The Numen to linear causal abstractions. Thus, Mysteriums such as the Tridentine Mass became replaced with recitation of Scripture in the vernacular and with attempts to rationally explain – according to some abstract causal theory – the mystery of the consecration." *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011

In regard to God, Myatt has written several times about the equivalence of the fundamental message of the major religions:

"Pathei-mathos – the personal learning from grief, suffering, pain, adversity, and experience – directly connects us to and thus enables us to personally experience and appreciate the numinous, sans words, ideations, ideology, theology, and dogma. An experience and an appreciation outwardly and inwardly manifest in a personal humility; in the knowledge of ourselves as but one fallible, mortal, fragile, human emanation of and connexion to Being; and in an empathic understanding of how all religions and spiritual ways, in their genesis and in their original emanations, express – or try to express – the same wisdom: manifest in an appreciation of the numinous, and in our human necessity for the natural balance that is humility and a very personal honour. And, because of this spiritual and religious equivalence, it does not matter if the individual of pathei-mathos, having so touched and felt the numinous, develops their own weltanschauung or none, or leaves or finds an existing spiritual or religious one, although it is and often has been such pathei-mathos which reveals to individuals, or which enables them to rediscover, the essence of a particular religion or a particular spiritual way: that simple and similar numinous essence which schisms, harsh interpretations, dogma, and ideology, have so often and for so long obscured." *Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions*, 2013

"[The] beautiful traditional music many employing Maqam modes [...] brought memories of a different plane of existence, far removed from the turmoil, the Machiavellian machinations, the egoism, the materialistic, and often godless, modern Western world. I was back in the Sahara Desert where as I once said I wordlessly had intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God. I was back in Arabic – Muslim – lands where I had travelled and stayed and learnt. I was back as a novice in a Catholic monastery, wandering outside the Abbey in the contemplative period between chanting Matins and Lauds." *A Rare Moment*, 2023

Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos

In my recent (2023) essay *A Sacramental Link?* I mentioned that my interpretation of the Gospel of John inclined me suggest that Johannine Christianity was "the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations." [1]

My interpenetration of that text is however just one of thousands over centuries with many of those other interpretations, of that and the other Gospels and the Scriptures in general, causing schisms, conflicts, and accusations of heresy as in the case of the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεός and the denotatum ὁ θεός in, for instance the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

Which returns us to the problems of exegesis and denotata, and the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos which are:

- (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself;
- (ii) that it is denotata - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being;
- (iii) that denotata and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and
- (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share our planet.

What is important about empathy and pathei-mathos is that they are directly personal perceivations and experiences, and therefore have what I termed a 'personal horizon' meaning that they

"cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." [2]

The knowing so revealed is only and always our personal fallible answer or answers, and which knowing is invariably a wordless empathic knowing that cannot be adequately expressed by words and terms (by denotata) without in some manner distorting it because words and terms depend on exegesis, which exegesis can and often does vary from century to century.

In practical terms this knowing implies a certain humility since empathy and pathei-mathos inform us that we are fallible beings, arising as this personal knowledge does from the intimations of the numinous that empathy and pathei-mathos almost invariably provide: of our connexion to other beings, human and otherwise; of our minute place in the Cosmos as one mortal, short-lived, being on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of Galaxies; and of the suffering of so many human beings, century after century, often caused by wars and conflicts often based on some certitude of belief in some cause, or on some passion, or on some interpretation of some religion, or some ideology or notion or 'destiny' with such wars and conflicts generationally replaced by others based on other certitudes of belief or on the same old passions.

A forgetting of this humility, will-fully or otherwise, has however frequently occurred and still occurs with the individual seeking to make their pathei-mathos the basis for some -ism or -ology or more often some interpretation of some existing -ism or -ology. However, a remembering of such humility can often lead to the life of the reclusive mystic or to a life of compassionately seeking to alleviate in some non-confrontational and practical way at least some of the suffering of other life, human and otherwise.

As I noted in *Soli Deo Gloria*,

"all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose - that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned. For such personal humility - that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the raison d'être, the theology, the philosophy - is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility - whatever the source - that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological

allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals. " [3]

A Personal View

While I appreciate how various Ways of living and codified religions can presence and often have presented the numinous and thus have been and are for many a conduit toward a personal humility and compassion, my personal perceivration has been for over a decade and remains my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which is just some recollections of my experiences and contemplations regarding the loss of loved ones, of working and living on farms in England, and of solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of rural English Shires.

Given the 'personal horizon' of these recollections and contemplations they cannot not, without removing from them their essence of a personal wordless experiencing of the numinous, form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a philosophy or a Way to guide others, just as the recollections and contemplations of others ancient and modern, and the authors themselves, should not be or become or be seen as a guide or even as a meritorious example.

As it says in Ayat 63 of Surah 25 of the Quran:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ
الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are those who walk on earth in humility and, when the arrogant speak to them, they reply Salaam." [4]

As the poetess Sappho wrote:

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε [5]

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun

As it says in the Beatitudes:

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean. [6]

Which interpretations of mine illustrate the problems of exegesis, and why my preference, now and for over a decade, is and has been for the wordless perceivations of empathy and of a personal pathei-mathos.

David Myatt
October 24th, 2023

[1] The essay is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[2] *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022. www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf

[3] *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011. Included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[4] Ar-Rahmaan is one of the names of Allah, signifying The Most Merciful. The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are the Believers who follow the Word of Allah in the Quran and as manifest in the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

[5] P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

[6] The Gospel According To Matthew 5: 3-10. My translation and commentary of The Beatitudes is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

Since I have used unusual words - for example, the spiritus instead of the conventional 'the spirit', and Empyrean instead of 'heaven' - I append here extracts from my commentary.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate" [...]

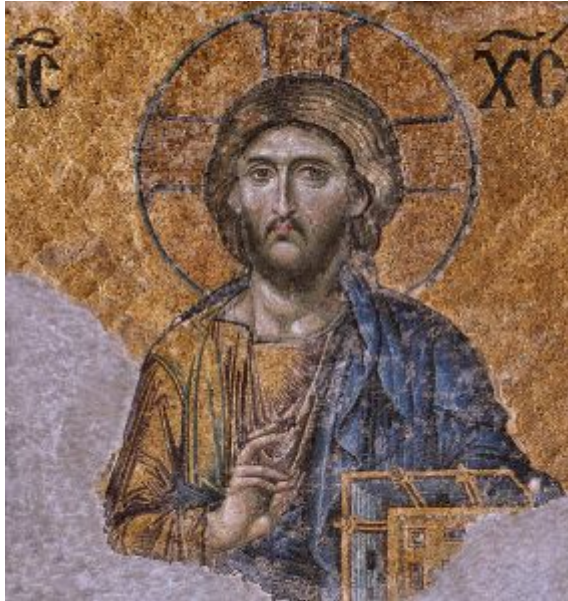
πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), cf. my commentary on John 1:32 from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

A Sacramental Link?



Would being connected again to the 'source of grace' through the Catholic sacrament of confession and Holy Communion provide expiation for past transgressions and be cathartic? Possibly, given that certain passages from the gospel of John have somewhat resonated with me since I began the task, in 2017, of translating that Gospel.

Among the passages were, in my translation, "aware as he [Jesus] was of the person within" (2:25) and "receive the Halig Spiritus [Holy Spirit]. If you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto," 20:22-23. [1] [2] With, according to my fallible understanding, the second quotation the genesis of one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: of an ordained Priest having the religious authority to give absolution for the errors [1] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation. There is thus a sacramental, a living, link to the message of Jesus.

Which reminds me of what you mentioned in previous correspondence about the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward a having a partner of the same gender. In my experience, the attitude at the Parish and monastic level is often more understanding and compassionate than some past or ancient announcement or some work emanating from the Vatican perhaps suggested and suggests.

Having endeavoured to translate the gospel of John what I found was, to quote what I wrote in the *Introduction* to my translation of chapters 1-5 of the Gospel of John, that

"it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth."

Which is that it is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and hence on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

It seems that such an appreciation - perhaps more correctly, re-appreciation - of this is slowly permeating, at the Parish level and around most of the world, the Roman Catholic Church.

As for me, and in respect of Catholic sacraments, perhaps I am weakening as my last mortal days seem to near, just as the libertine and poet Earl Rochester confessed on his death-bed, and just as the character Lord Marchmain, portrayed by Laurence Olivier, symbolically did in his last moments in that wonderful 1981 adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited*.

David Myatt
September 2023

A slightly revised extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

[1] I translated ἀμαρτία not by the conventional *sin* but rather as 'error' or 'mistake' for reasons I attempted to explain in my commentary and in various essays such as *Exegesis and Translation*. One of the reasons relates to how Julian of Norwich perceived the teaching of Jesus; another to the c. 880 AD translation of the c. 525 AD text *Consolatio Philosophiae*; another to something Thomas Aquinas wrote.

As explained in my *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral

attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

ƿæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn ƿæt mon ƿæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius [i] is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, [ii] the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin *sons, sontis*.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 [iii] I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her.

ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμαρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those". [iv]

Such a translation avoids the rather contradictory nature of most other translations which have Jesus clearly stating that he also does not judge her but then have him go on to say that she should 'sin no more' with the obvious implication that he has indeed judged her in that in his judgement she had indeed sinned before.

Understood and appreciated thus, sans the now culturally-biased word sin, these passages from the gospel according to John - together with passages such as Luke 19.10 and Romans 13.10 [v] - perhaps usefully summarize the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth; the (in my view) rather human message of avoiding judging others because we ourselves are prone to error, the message of love, and the message of redemption (forgiveness) for those who in the past have made mistakes but who have thereafter tried to avoid making such mistakes again, those hitherto perhaps damaged or lost.

Footnotes:

[i] Quare quod a summo bono diversum est sui natura, id summum bonum non est; quod nefas est de eo cogitare, quo nihil constat esse praestantius. *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Liber Tertius, pr. x

[ii] *Beowulf*, 2470f, where the spelling *synn* is used:

eaferum læfde, swa deð eadig mon,
lond ond leodbyrig, ƿa he of life gewat.
ƿa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata
ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,
herenið hearda, syððan Hreðel swealt

[ii] qv. Myatt, *Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations*. 2013

[iv] The conventional interpretation of ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε is "from now on sin no more".

[v] (a) Luke 19.10:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός. "The arrivance [ἔρχομαι] of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost.

However, a more interesting interpretation is:

The arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to repair [σῶζω] what had been damaged [ἀπόλλυμι]

and which interpretation is suggested by (i) the sense of σῶζω: keep safe, preserve, maintain -

whence repair, and (ii) the sense of ἀπόλλυμι: destroy, ruin, kill, demolish, and - metaphorically - damaged, lost, and die.

(b) Romans 13.10:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law

[2] As I noted in my commentary on John 1:33 regarding the Holy Spirit, which I translated as Halig Spiritus:

ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized. In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

Related:

The Gospel According To John

Chapter 1 - 5

Translation and Commentary

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

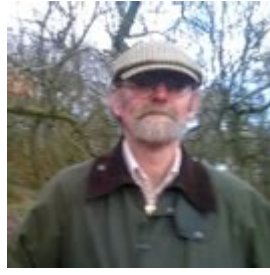
Exegesis And Translation

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

Image credit:

Icon of Jesus Pantocrator, Δέησις Mosaic
Hagia Sophia, c. 1260 CE

A Few Minor Missives 2023



Missa Pro Defunctis

What have we in over four and a half centuries to compare, in terms of presencing the numinous, with *Missa pro defunctis* by Francisco Guerrero? Perhaps some music by JS Bach?

Here I am almost half a century since I as part of a choir sang in a public performance of Mozart's Requiem having possibly in those intervening years learnt some things about myself and about our human nature. Who reads, who even cares about such pathei-mathos? Yet such numinous music remains to remind, if only a few, while we en masse as a species seemingly move on to new diversions which betake us further and further from such presencings of the numinous as may ineluctably change and rebirth us as individuals.

September 2023

Memory Of A Beautiful World

One of the pleasures I have found in old age – beyond my three score years and ten – is recalling alone or reminiscing to others about times past. One especial memory is of when a younger version of me was cycling home from work one Summer in Shropshire [1] when I chanced upon someone – a celebrated cycling time-trial champion whom I seem to recall at one time held every RTTC record from 25 miles to 12 hours – while he was out training. We chatted as the comradeship of cycling decreed, and together cycled along together for many miles at over 20mph. A pace I intuitively knew from years of competing in local club and RTTC Time Trials.

But then he gradually increased the pace up to almost 30mph until after a few miles I made some excuse and turned left onto some minor road to collapse onto the grass verge. But it was wonderful, lying there, in the quiet isolation of a country English lane with only the breeze rustling trees and birdsong for company. Then, in those moments, that was my simple, my entire, life. If only – if only – it had lasted; if only – if only – I had somehow in some way managed to make it last so that it and similar moments became my life thereafter.

But it was not alas then to be, for I soon, so soon, returned to the world of extremism, of causal abstractions with its dialectic of opposites which so engendered a supra-personal certitude of knowing and the inevitable suffering of others. And it would take some twenty years for me to recall that – and similar – moments again following the most traumatic incident of my life: the unexpected suicide of my then fiancée, genesis as that incident was of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

Mea Culpa; Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa. But even now saying that, and Κύριε ελέησον, out loud does not help in these twilight years of my life. For there seems to be no expiation for my extremist past with its certitude of knowing. A certitude of knowing which is glorified even unto this day by others with their -isms and -ologies and the causal abstractions, the often suffering causing dialectic, on which they are based.

May 2023

ooo

[1] I was riding my hack work-bike; a Mercian 531 frame, Cinelli bars and stem; TA double-chainset; Mavic G40 rims with Campag Record hubs; and – a concession to comfort – a leather well-broken in saddle.

A Rare Moment

There are few moments that I believed could surprise this somewhat world-weary man beyond his three score and ten mortal years. But some information received from a middle-Eastern contact was one of them.

Knowing my love of classical Arabic music and of how I used to (badly) play the Persian Daf, the information was regarding the Syrian Takht Ensemble whose beautiful traditional music – many employing Maqam modes – and their innovations of such music, brought memories of a different plane of existence, far removed from the turmoil, the

Machiavellian machinations, the egoism, the materialistic, and often godless, modern Western world.

I was back in the Sahara Desert where as I once said I wordlessly had intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God. I was back in Arabic – Muslim – lands where I had travelled and stayed and learnt. I was back as a novice in a Catholic monastery, wandering outside the Abbey in the contemplative period between chanting Matins and Lauds.

Such a waste for over forty years of such experiencing, such wordless knowing. There are no excuses; for the fault, the hubris, was mine. All I have to offer in recompense, in expiation, is my wordfull weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which compared to such wordless personal experiencing and such Arabic music is so woefully inadequate.

August 2023

One Tree Among Many

Beside the stone wall that marks one of the boundaries of what has for several years been my home is an evergreen Oak; almost a dome of spreading branches and so tall it might well be an hundred or so years in age. The tallest tree around from near where several other and various and tallish specimens of arboreal life provide perches for those whose Dawn Chorus becomes, was, is, a hymnal to such natural Life as has for centuries pleased us.

Two months ago, the Oak was sad; with leaves dry and dying and infested. But now, as clouds break to reveal sky-blue, bringer of early Summer warmth: the tree has that light green of leaf rebirth, and catkins heralds of acorns an English season hence. So there is joy within as this aged man "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." [1]

Would that he might hear one more Dawn Chorus to so remember those, these, simple natural beauties of life which he as so many others so easily forgot enwrapped as he, they, were in believed in, in felt, selfish concerns which all will, must, die with us while the Sun again warms each year as it warms and life-sprouting rain seeds rebirth without any interference from us at all.

So I sit, windows of sky and trees to enlighten again my life, listening to a heartbreaking, suspended moment in my measured out so very limited timespan of causal life: the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*.

6th June 2023

[1] τό θ' ὑπέργερων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 79-82. My translation.

Tenebrae

The liturgical season of The Passion is upon us again and I find myself appreciating once more how the numinous allegory of The Passion was presented in liturgical music from the Graduale *Christus Factus Est* to Vittoria's *Popule meus, quid feci tibi* – Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς – to Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* to JS Bach's *St John* and *Matthew Passions*. And I reminded so movingly of – when a monk – singing Tenebrae amid the flickering then extinguished light of candles...

So much human suffering for so many millennia which the allegory of The Passion of Jesus of Nazareth reminded so many of, century after century; as it reminded me several times in the depths of my decades of extremism. In comparison with such numinous music, liturgical and otherwise, what is my own wordy weltanschauung of pathei-mathos worth?

Very little it now seems to me, if anything at all.

April 2023

The Hour Before Dawn

It is the hour before Dawn on the Spring Equinox, dark outside, with the Blackbird in the tree at the edge of the garden already singing. No other sounds, as yet, and there arises within me questions I have felt several times in the past few years.

Which are: is what we in a land such as this – a modern Western land such as England as Spring dawns even within, upon, urban conurbations – have acquired, developed, manufactured over the past few hundred years worth the

suffering that has been inflicted upon other human beings, upon our forebears, and upon Nature? Is that suffering the price of such societies as we have developed and now seek to maintain?

Numerous overseas conflicts; two World Wars with millions upon millions dead, injured, traumatized, and cities, towns, Nature, destroyed. Numerous invasions and wars since then. Poverty, homelessness, injustice, inequality, crime, still within our lands. Has anything in terms of our humanity, of we being self-controlled, rational, honest and honourable – of ourselves as causes and vectors of suffering – really changed?

It is not as if I am exempt from having caused suffering. My past decades long suffering-causing deeds are my burden and will be until I die.

My personal, fallible, answers born of my pathei-mathos, is that unfortunately we as individuals have not as yet *en masse* changed sufficiently so as to cease to be a cause and a vector of suffering. Tethered as we still apparently are to causal abstractions, to -isms and -ologies, and thus to denotata and the dialectic of opposites, to the conflict that such denotata is the genesis of.

Perhaps we need another hundred, two hundred, or more years. Our perhaps we will continue, *en masse*, as we mostly now are, the eventual extinction of our sometimes stable causal societies of human beings acausally inevitable, fated; until the planet we call Earth finally meets its Cosmic end as all planets do, with we human beings never making real the visionary dream of a few to venture forth and colonize the stars. And even if we did somehow realize that dream, would we venture forth as the still savage, dishonourable, war-mongering species we still are?

Yet all I have in answer, in expiation for my own past suffering-causing deeds, is my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos; so insufficient in so many ways.

March 2023

Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License

DW Myatt 2023

Soli Deo Gloria

Being extracts from a letter written in reply
to someone enquiring about the philosophy of The Numinous Way.

Since you enquire about the veracity of my Numinous Way, I should perhaps emphasize – as I have mentioned several times over the past few years – that this Way represents only my own fallible answers born from my own pathemathos, and that I am acutely aware that the answers of many other Ways, such as Buddhism and the answers of conventional religions such as Catholicism, also in their own particular harmonious manner express something of the numinous and may thus for many people provide a guide to living in a more numinous way.

As I wrote many years ago:

The Numinous Way is but one answer to the questions about existence, [and] does not have some monopoly on truth, nor does it claim any prominence, accepting that all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose – that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned.

For such personal humility – that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the *raison d'être*, the theology, the philosophy – is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility – whatever the source – that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals.

As I mentioned in my essay *Humility, Abstractions, and Belief*,

One of the great advantages – a manifestation of humanity – of a Way such as Islam and Christianity and Buddhism is that they provide, or can provide, us with the supra-personal perspective, and thus the humility, we human beings require to prevent us veering into and becoming subsumed with the error of hubris.

As it says in the Rule of Saint Benedict:

" The peak of our endeavour is to achieve profound humility..." Chapter 7, *The Value of Humility*

As it says in the Quran:

" The *'Ibaad* of Ar-Rahman [Allah] are those who walk on earth in humility." 25:63

As it says in the Dhammapada:

" Yo bâlo maññati bâlyae paúóitovâpi tena so bâlo ca paúóitamânî sa ve bâloti vuccati."

" Accepting of themselves, the simple person in their simplicity is wise, although if they pride themselves they are wise, they are simply full of pride. "

Furthermore, such Ways provide such a supra-personal perspective in a manner which is living – that is, these Ways are presented to us as something which has a historical genesis and which lives among us, in our own times, in and through those devoted to them in that dignified manner which makes such people living examples of those tenets, of those Ways. That is, the dignified people who follow such Ways – who are inspired by those Ways to practice humility in their own lives – thus manifest the numinous, the sacred, among us, and so can provide us with practical, and personal, guidance, and a sense of belonging.

Thus, I now have, partly from practical experience, come to apprehend a certain unity, a certain common insight, behind many outwardly differing Ways and religious forms, to the extent that I personally have been considered by some people to be some kind of Buddhist-Taoist-Muslim-Sufi-Catholic-NuminousWay-pagan-mystic hybrid. But in truth, I am merely someone who as a result of pathemathos knows their limitations, their fallibility, and thus who empathically resonates with past and present emanations of the numinous, often because of struggling to answer certain questions about our human nature, about our mortal existence, and about the nature of Reality which many others over millennia have also sought to answer.

Since you especially ask about Catholicism in relation to the Numinous Way, all I can say in my experience – having been raised a Catholic and having spent some time as a Catholic monk – is that Catholicism did manifest, and to an

extent still does manifest, aspects of the numinous and therefore this particular guide to human living is one which I understand and appreciate as one style of earthly-harmony.

As I wrote a year or so ago:

"The Latin Tridentine Mass of the Catholic Church [...] evolved over a certain period of causal time, and became, for many Catholics, the main ritual, or rite, which imbued their ordinary lives with a certain numinosity – a certain awareness of the sacred, with attendance at this rite involving certain customs, such as modest and clean dress, and women covering their heads with a veil. This rite was, in essence, a *Mysterium* – that is, it embodied not only something holy and somewhat mysterious (such as the Consecration and Communion) but also was wordlessly un-mundane and so re-presented to most of those attending the rite, almost another world, with this re-presentation aided by such things as the use of incense, the ringing of the Sanctus bell, and the genuflexions. In addition, and importantly, the language of this rite was not that of everyday speech, and was not even, any longer, a living changing language, but rather had in many ways become the sacred language of that particular Way.

The Catholic rite endured for centuries and, indeed, to attend this particular rite marked, affirmed and re-affirmed one as a Catholic, as a particular follower of a particular Way, and a Way quite distinct from the schism that became Protestantism [1], a fact which explained, for instance, the decision, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth the First of England, to punish by fine or imprisonment those who attended this rite, and to persecute, accuse of treason, and often execute, those who performed this rite.

However, the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican replaced this numinous rite, this *Mysterium*, with rites and practices redolent of un-numinous Protestantism. Why? Most probably because those involved in such planning and producing and implementing such reforms were swayed by the causal abstractions of "progress" and "relevancy" – desiring as they did and do to be in accord with the causal, material, *Zeitgeist* of the modern West where numbers of adherents, and conformity to trendy ideas and theories, are regarded as more important than presencing The Numen in a numinous manner. When, that is, some profane causal abstractions come to be regarded as more relevant than experiencing and manifesting the sacred as the sacred.

Yet this does not mean that Catholicism, before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, was or remained a Way, *per se*. Only that, of all the variants of what are now termed Christianity, it retained a certain numinosity expressed by the original Way; that, through its *Mysteriums* such as the Tridentine Mass, it still presenced something of The Numen; and that it managed to avoid the worst excesses of the religious attitude, maintaining as it did a monasticism which by its own particular way of life encouraged the cultivation of a genuine, non-dogmatic, humility." Source – *Concerning The Nature of Religion and The Nature of The Numinous Way*

As that quotation – and the associated footnote – make clear, it is my personal opinion that traditional Catholicism, with its Tridentine Mass and its particular conservative traditions, was a somewhat better, more harmonious, expression of the numinous (a necessary and relevant expression of the numinous), than both Protestantism and the reforms introduced by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and which reforms served only to undermine the numinous, to untwist the threads that held together its "hidden soul of harmony".

However, what really matters in my view in respect of considering how we judge and evaluate other Ways and other styles of earthly-harmony (that is, what are often regarded as religious expressions of the numinous), is not so much their veracity as perceived and/or assumed by us during one span or certain spans of causal Time, but rather how those Ways, those expressions, affect people and predispose them toward or guide them toward living in a more numinous manner. That is, by criteria such as humility, avoidance of hubris, compassion, fairness toward others: by those things which express, which manifest, the numinous in us, in terms of our character, our behaviour. Not, that is, by some abstract criteria which we posit and which we with arrogance use to condemn or malign, often based on some vainglorious assumption or need that our own beliefs, our own answers, are the correct ones.

There is thus a tolerance, a respect; a desire not to stridently condemn; an awareness of our own fallibility deriving from our own *pathei-mathos* and from the numinous perspective, the silent wordless clarity, that such a personal learning from the suffering of experience brings.

All I have tried to do in respect of The Numinous Way is present what I hope is an alternative style of earthly-harmony, and sought to clarify how this alternative differs from others. For instance, in the matter of empathy, of honour, and of seeking to avoid the dogma arising from some causal abstraction or other. As to the veracity of my personal answers, I admit I do not know.

David Myatt
June 2011 CE

Footnotes:

[1] Catholicism (before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican) represented, in my view, the original Way known as Christianity, and was – at least before those reforms – quite distinct from those schisms which are now known as Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity. Indeed, distinct enough – until those reforms – to be considered a different Way of Life, a Way evident, for example, in Catholic rites (such as the Tridentine Mass), in monasticism, in Papal authority, in the use of Latin, and in the reverence accorded The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, it is my view that the schism now termed Protestantism was a classic example of the religious attitude predominating over numinosity – and thus that it is and was redolent of attempts to reduce The Numen to linear causal abstractions. Thus, Mysteriums such as the Tridentine Mass became replaced with recitation of Scripture in the vernacular and with attempts to rationally explain – according to some abstract causal theory – the mystery of the consecration.

Catholic Still In Spirit?

Perhaps I remain, partially at least, a Catholic in spirit – in my heart – though not, most of the time, in words and deeds. For while I intellectually and empathically disagree with the teachings of the Catholic Church on many matters – such as homosexuality, contraception, and on divorcées who have remarried being excluded from Holy Communion (unless they have resorted to a Papal Annulment) – I still find myself in my inner weakness not only sometimes frequenting the Lady Chapel of my nearest RC Church – lighting a candle, kneeling, and in reverent silent contemplative prayer remembering, in the felt presence of The Blessed Virgin Mary, those now dead loved ones such as my mother and father and Sue and Francis, and those other women hurt by my selfishness – but also traveling several times a year to where Gregorian chant is sung and where the Tridentine Mass is celebrated, bringing as such Latin chant and such a Latin Mass still do, in me, a renewed awareness of the numinous and a renewal of such humility as I strive – and sometimes still so often fail – to remember and feel.

There seems to me no intricate and difficult interior problem here derived from my somewhat pagan way of patheism, for that way is essentially – for me, even born as it is from my own patheism – rather intellectual, a perceivment, lacking as it does something outward, practical, supra-personal, and communal, to presence the numinous and thus affect one's very being in a spiritual way. So I seem to now exist – and have for several years existed – between two worlds: apparently emotionally needing something practical, living, and spiritual beyond myself and my intellectualism, and yet knowing in a rather unemotional manner that it is the way of patheism, and not Catholicism, which is my weltanschauung.

No intricate and difficult interior problem, no inner dichotomy, because I know the many flaws in my weltanschauung and in myself; and one cannot intellectually create something – manufacture something devoid of ψυχή – to presence the numinous. For it seems to me that such a presencing has to evolve, organically, over causal time, because it has been wordlessly presenced in other mortals and then kept alive because also felt by some of a newer generation. Will – can – such a presencing of the numinous arise from that way of patheism? Most probably not, intellectual and so very personal as it is.

So the need for some inner, numinous, sustenance remains; for fulfilling as a lot of classical music – such as the Cantatas of JS Bach – is and are, and fulfilling as walks alone in wild and rural Nature are, I sense a yearning in me for something more: some wordless intimation of the Divine which betakes me so far away from my still egoistic self that I am both awed and humbled again, as I often was in Winter wandering a darkened cloister as a monk in that quiet contemplative time between Matins and Lauds.

David Myatt
2015

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

Persecution And War

A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then – again for a while – at a Catholic boarding school, I remember the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who – after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry – escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's – during The Troubles – ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's – before the Good Friday Agreement – visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

War And Combat

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve – by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury – intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring

obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Authority And Society

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with there being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Đa sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sarig
þæt he ne meahste ongemong oðrum mannum bion
(XXXV, 6)

David Myatt
9.ix.18

[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos. The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. Seventh edition.
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/dwm-some-metaphysical-questions-v5b.pdf>

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 516. My translation.

The Beatitudes

The Learning On The Hillside

Τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον

The Gospel According To Matthew

5:1-10

Text

- 1 Ἴδων δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ·
- 2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·
- 3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
- 4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
- 5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
- 6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
- 7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
- 8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
- 9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
- 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Translation

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

Commentary

1. ὄρος. Here a hill, rather than a mountain.

2.

ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. I take this metaphorically as in a disclosing or a revealing, not literally as in "opening his mouth."

those there. Although the Greek text does not explicitly state the fact, the context suggests that Jesus addressed both the multitude and his disciples.

3.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate".

On a pedantic note, English translations invariably add "are" after μακάριος whereas the Greek - μακάριοι οἱ - reads "fortunate, the..."

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), cf. my commentary on John 1:32, [1] from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that

existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, יְרֻמַּיִם

5. πρᾶος. Gentle - in the sense of mild, balanced, temperament - rather than "meek".

6. δικαιοσύνη. Fairness. Not some abstract, legalistic, "justice", and not "righteousness" which word has over centuries acquired sometimes strident and disputable moralistic meanings as well as implying a certain conformity to accepted (and disputable or dogmatic) standards.

7. ἐλεήμων. The classical Latin term misericordia - used by Jerome, and the origin of the English word merciful - expresses the sense well, which is of συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) resulting in compassion. Cf. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἴδου πάντα καθαρά ὑμῖν ἔστιν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

8.

οἱ καθαροὶ τῆ καρδίᾳ. Literally, those whose hearts are clean, in the physical sense, as in having undertaken a ritual cleansing of the body. Cf. Corpus Hermeticum, Poemandres 22, [2] where as in Luke 11.41 - ὅτι ἐλεήμων in v. 7 here - it occurs in relation to compassion, the compassionate:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῆ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

In respect of καθαροῖς, I prefer *refined* here - as in the Corpus Hermeticum - rather than 'pure' given the disputable nature of the term 'pure' and the connotations acquired over centuries be they religious, sanctimonious, political, or otherwise.

θεὸς. For reasons explained in my commentary on verse I of chapter one of The Gospel According To John - and in my commentaries on tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum [2] - I transliterate θεὸς.

9. οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί. The peaceable ones, which includes pacificators - those who are pacificatory, and thus who are conciliatory and who actively seek peace - and those who have a peaceable disposition.

10. διώκω. Harass, rather than "persecuted" which has acquired too many modern and especially political connotations. Cf. John 5:16, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ, "and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath."

My interpretation, based on John 5:16, is that those who are harassed are so on account of (ἔνεκα) their fairness, not because those who are harassing them disparage or hate fairness in general.

David Myatt
30.iii.18

ooo

Notes

[1] My translation and commentary - of chapters 1-5 - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

Greek Bible text from:
Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others,
copyright 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth

A Question Of Hermeneutics?

As my translation of and commentary on the *Gospel According To John* so very slowly progresses [1] what I am (re)discovering is how different the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – as presented in and by that particular Gospel over two thousand years ago – seems to me to be from what has so often been preached by so many and for so long regarding that religion which has become known as Christianity, dependant as such preaching so often is and has been on interpretations, and translations, of the Greek texts that form the 'New Testament'.

What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John, such as the following two, one of which involves the Greek word πιστεύω, and which word is perhaps a relevant hermeneutical example. The conventional interpretation of meaning, in respect of New Testament texts, is 'believe', 'have faith in', so that John 3:16 is interpreted along the following lines:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (King James Bible)

Similarly in respect of other verses where πιστεύω occurs, so that the impression is of the necessity of believing, of having or acquiring faith.

Yet, and in regard to the aforementioned verse, if one interprets that particular (and another) Greek word in a more Hellenistic – a more Greek – way, then one has:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

Not only is this personal, direct – as in personally trusting someone as opposed to a 'blind believing' – but there are no prior hermeneutic assumptions about 'God', derived as such assumptions are from over two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

Example One. Chapter Three, 16-21

DWM:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting. For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him. Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos. [2]

King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Example Two. Chapter Five, 1-16

DWM:

Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem. And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades in which were a large number of the infirm – the blind, the limping, the withered – awaiting a change in the water since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm. Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk?"

But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete, and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. [3][4]

King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Conclusion

The first example seems to me to be revealing of the personal nature of the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' - of a personal trust in a particular person, in this instance a trust in Jesus because of how he and his life are recounted by the Evangelist - contrasting with a rather impersonal demand to believe, to have faith, based on doctrine as codified by someone else or by some organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy.

The second example seems to me to be revealing of the contrast between the then organized supra-personal religion of the Judaeans - with its doctrinal forbiddance, sometimes on pain of death, of certain personal deeds - and the empathy and compassion of an individual, as evident in Jesus in the immediacy of the moment healing a long-suffering infirm man and bidding him to take up and carry his bedroll, undoubtedly aware as Jesus was that he was doing and inciting what was forbidden because for him empathy and compassion were more important than some established doctrine.

Is this contrast between what seems to be a particular dogmatism, a particular religious (hubriatic) intolerance by the Judaeans, and an individual being empathic and compassionate in the immediacy of the moment, still relevant today? Personally, I do believe it is, leading me to conclude that τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - The Gospel According To John - contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous. For, as described in tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum,

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis, for Physis is presenced in the divine. [5]

David Myatt
October 2017

ooo

Footnotes

[1] Volume I (chapters 1-5) of my translation of and commentary on the Gospel According To John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

[2] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 3:16-21.

° *Nomos*. νόμος. A transliteration since as with 'logos' a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

° *Phaos*. Given that φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration - using the Homeric φάος instead of φῶς - and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωή and θεός and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος (Poemandres, 1.21)

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

° *For their deeds were harmful*. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. Harmful: that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

° *whomsoever practices disclosure*. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[3] Note how Jesus does not disapprovingly preach about - does not even mention - the apparently superstitious practice of infirm individuals waiting by a 'miraculous' pool in order to be cured.

[4] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 5:1-16.

° *the place of the sheep*. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

° *named in the language of the Hebrews*. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

° *the infirm*. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

° *awaiting a change in the water*. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

° *Envoy of Theos*. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινε (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχῆν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιῆς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δῆποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. The verse is omitted

by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

a) *envoy*. As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos*. Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English as both a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or a deity.

c) *became complete*. ὑγιής ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

° *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

° *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

° *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

° *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction [to Volume I of the translation] regarding translating ἁμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

° *Judaeans*. Qv. my essay *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John*, available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/07/05/a-note-on-the-term-jews-in-the-gospel-of-john/>

° *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find what they regard is evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[5] *Ἰερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. Included in: David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

All translations by DW Myatt

This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License and can be copied, distributed, and republished, according to the terms of that license.

Questions Of Hermeneutics And Exegesis

For over twenty years questions of hermeneutics and exegesis in relation to religions, ideologies, and philosophies have interested and concerned me, leading to my conjecture that the use of denotata to express a revelation, a spirituality, an idea, an ideal, or a philosophy, results in not only a dialectic of opposites - for example in the Gospels of Christianity ἁμαρτία (conventionally interpreted in Gospel translations as sin) contrasted with 'righteousness' (and being saved, rewarded by God with everlasting life in Heaven) and φαῦλος (conventionally in interpreted in Gospel translations as evil) contrasted with 'good' - but also in problems of exegesis: as in how Hellenistic Greek is expounded in terms of a modern language such as English. Thus, is the interpretation of 'sin' from the Hellenistic Greek ἁμαρτία imposing a meaning that may not have been germane to the milieu of such an ancient period in all or certain instances? [1]

In the matter of the Gospels of John did the author use ἁμαρτία to express, to expound, something - 'sin' - which might well have been a foreign concept to speakers of the Greek of that time when there was a common belief among many of them in a hierarchy of pagan deities and of propitiation (such as offering gifts or a sacrifice to the gods) for misdeeds or for 'offending' a god or gods or to ask for their help?

Consider the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum some arguably written around the time or not long after that Gospel, with the Poemandres tractate centred around θεός as in this from v.3:

φημι ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν·

"I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." [2]

Is theos here the Jehovah of the Hebrews and the God of Christianity? Or is it better to understand theos in a non-anthropomorphic way as Being, the source of beings, mortal and otherwise? If the interpretation is 'God' then this tractate, and many of the others, arguable express early Christian weltanschauungen with an implicit dialectic of opposites, unlike the neutral, non-anthropomorphic Being which can metaphysically be understood as 'the divine', the numinous. [3]

Such a dialectic, as I have previously endeavoured to explain, [4] invariably leads to conflict both internal, within some individuals, and external between individuals and entities, such as religious or political groups or factions who or which claim to have the correct or a better interpretation or understanding of their beliefs or ideology. Hence extremism [5] and the suffering that such extremism causes.

My personal experiences, over some four decades, and my subsequent reflexion on that experience, have led me to conclude that, rather than denotata, the personal experiencing of the numinous through empathy and pathei-mathos is of fundamental importance in understanding both our physis (φύσις) - and thus our relation to Being and to beings - and Being, the numinous, itself. [6]

To illustrate the dialectic of denotata and the subsequent suffering caused there is the National Socialism of Germany between 1933 and 1945. This was a way of life centred around denotata such as kampf, nation, and ethnic identity, with individuals judged by, and expected to judge others by, the primary criterion of ethnicity, with particular ethnicities assigned a certain value (high or low), and each individual judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land) and the ethnicity they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, kampf between individuals, ethnicities, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

This German National Socialist way of life was therefore a collective, supra-personal, one with the empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals, and the personal judgement and compassion derived from them, ignored or suppressed in favour of obedience to the 'will of the collective' (the folk, the nation) embodied by Der Führer and through the führerprinzip and with disobedience not only disapproved of but liable to be punished. This dialectic of opposites - of certain types of individuals or ways of behaviour being better than others and with The Third Reich having a particular destiny achievable through kampf - naturally led to the impersonal harshness of the Nürnberger Gesetze, as well as to the invasion of Poland and thence to the Second World War with the attendant deaths and suffering of millions of human beings. German National Socialism was thus from its beginnings to its ending in 1945 an extremism whose principles, causes, and characteristics promoted and incited harsh, uncompassionate, actions.

In contrast, the personal empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals provides a natural balance devoid of denotata, expressed or implied, and can only promote individual actions consistent with compassion. It cannot be extrapolated from the individual experiencing to form anything supra-personal expressed by a denotatum or by some denotata such as an -ism or an -ology be such religious, ideological, or political or otherwise, since in doing so its individual physis, its natural nameless balance, is replaced sooner or later by a dialectic of opposites.

In practical terms this implies the mortal individual could, at best, be a fallible example or inspiration for some others, since to claim or to be perceived by others as other than fallible and mortal, and other than a possible and personal inspiration, is ὕβρις (hubris) and a contradiction of the nameless balance that for centuries we have, according to my

understanding, erroneously denoted by appellations such as θεός, ὁ θεός, and God with the inevitable dialectic of exegesis and conflict and of suffering.

In relation to hubris,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὑβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελοῦσα: παθῶν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, vv 213-218

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [7]

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ
δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν. Anaximander [8]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another,
their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [9]

David Myatt
July 2023

[1] I expounded on the matter of the word sin in *Interpretation and The Question of Sin* which forms part of my 2013 essay *Exegesis and Translation, Some Personal Reflexions*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

[2] My translation, from *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[3] From *Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*, appendix II of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] In Part Seven, *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>; and in the essay *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

[5] In *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* I defined extremism and an extremist thus:

"By extreme I mean to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[6] My conclusions are outlined in two works: *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>, and *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[7] Notes on my translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common

appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[8] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[9] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License and can be copied, distributed, and published, according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt

Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief

David Myatt

Contents

- Prefatory Note
- I Numinous Expiation
- II Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God

Part One

°Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Part Two

°Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

°Jurisprudence and Society

°The Modern State

°Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

Part Three

°Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

°Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

Part Four

°Ontology and Denotatum

°The Simple Way of Harmony

Part Five

°A Very Personal Conclusion

- III Blue Reflected Starlight
- IV Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations
- Appendix - Glossary of Terms and Greek Words

Prefatory Note

This compilation is of some letters and essays of mine written during the past two years (2012 - 2013) dealing with questions of religion, redemption, expiation, humility, and spirituality in general, and thus compliments both the collection of my writings about the philosophy of pathei-mathos in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* and my autobiography *Myngath*.

All translations, and interpretations of the meaning of texts (Quranic, poetic and otherwise), are mine, and, in the interests of clarity, I have included a glossary of terms and Greek words - taken from *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* - given that (i) I tend to use certain Greek words to express my meaning, and (ii) I often have a particular philosophical interpretation or understanding of certain English terms.

David Myatt
2013

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993
In Loving Remembrance of Frances, died 29th May 2006

o o o

I Numinous Expiation

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site.

One motivation, in the case of pagan religions and ways, for a person to seek expiation is fear of *wrake*; fear of the retribution or of the misfortune, that - from the gods - might befall them or their descendants in this life. Similarly, for those acceptive of an all-knowing, all-seeing supreme deity - or even of the Buddhist mechanism of karma - there is also fear of *wrake*; fear of the punishment, the retribution, the misfortune, that might await them in the next life; or, in the case of Buddhism, the type of life that might result when next they are reborn.

As the Owl explains in the mediæval English religious allegory *The Owl and the Nightingale*,

ich wat þar schal beo niþ & wrake

I can see when there shall be strife and retribution [1]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are *ὑβρις* and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance.

In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conjecture, surmise. One of my conjectures is enantiodromia; of the process, mentioned by Diogenes Laërtius and attributed to Heraclitus, of a wholeness arising both before and after discord and division [2]. This wholeness is the healthy, the numinous, interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings - beyond *πόλεμος* and *ὑβρις* and thus beyond *ἔρις*; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. As Heraclitus intimated, according to another quotation attributed to him -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord *δίκη*, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

But what, then, in practical personal terms are this wholeness and this process termed enantiodromia? To me, this wholeness is a knowing and an acceptance of both the importance of the numinous principle of *Δίκη* [4] and the necessity of wu-wei [5] - and a knowing which empathy can provide - and thence a desire to live life in a non-interfering manner consistent with empathy, compassion, reason, honour, and humility. And it is this very knowing, this very desire to live in such a manner, which is enantiodromia; which is cathartic, restorative, healing; with a natural humility and the cultivation and practice of reason - *σωφρονεῖν*, a fair and balanced judgement - being the essence of this personal process, the essence of enantiodromia.

For the human virtue of humility is essential in us for us not to repeat our errors of *ὑβρις*, a humility which our *πάθει μάθος* makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, in a very personal sense. For we are aware of, we should remember, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow.

In addition, by and through humility, we do what we do not because we expect some reward, or some forgiveness, given by some supra-personal supreme Being, or have some idealized duty to such a Being or to some abstraction (such as some nation, some State) but because it is in our very nature to do an act of compassion, a deed of honour: to do something which is noble and selfless. That is, we act, not out of duty, not out of a desire for Heaven or Jannah, or enlightenment or some other “thing” we have posited – not from any emotion, desire or motive, not because some scripture or some revelation or some Buddha says we should – but because we have lost the illusion of our self-contained, personal, identity, lost our Earth-centric, human-centric, perspective, lost even the causal desire to be strive to something different, and instead just *are*: that is, we are just one microcosmic living mortal connexion between all life, on Earth, and in the Cosmos. For our very nature, as human beings, is a Cosmic nature – a natural part of the unfolding, of the naturally and numinously changing, Cosmos.

Thus a personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to *ἔρις*. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity.

This personal humility inclines us toward *σωφρονεῖν*; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste. Toward a balanced judgement and thence toward a balanced life of humility, *wu-wei*, and a knowing of the wisdom of *Δίκη*.

There is nothing especially religious here, nor any given or necessary praxis. No techniques; no supplication to some-thing or to some posited Being. No expectation of reward, in this life or some posited next life. Only an interior personal change, an attempt to live in a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life.

DWM
February 2012

Notes

[1] v.1194. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[2] The quotation from Diogenes Laërtius is: *πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ’ εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἠρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα* (ix. 7)

My translation is: *All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.*

As I mentioned in my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - *ἐναντιοδρομίας* - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[3] Fragment 80. qv. my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*

As I noted in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, it is interesting that:

"in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) married a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that *πόλεμος* accompanied *ὑβρις* - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing *ἔρις*."

[4] As mentioned in my *Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, *Δίκη* is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own numinous culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of *ὑβρις* and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

*Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν
μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει*

In respect of Δίκη, I write and spell it thus - in this modern way and with a capital Δ - to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning - σωφρονεῖν - that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις - between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of The Numinous Way "to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, is ὕβρις. In practice, this is the cultivation of a certain (an acausal, numinous) perspective - that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

I first became acquainted with the concept of wu-wei when, as a youth living in the Far East, I studied Taoism and a learnt a martial art based on Taoism. Thus it might be fair to assume that Taoism may well have influenced, to some degree, the development of my weltanschauung.

ooo

II Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God Some Personal Musings

Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly

seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

DWM
April 2013

Part One

Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in

Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἦδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἧ ἅν ἡμέρα φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται ὑμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν? Most translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves, an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׁרָפָה - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׁרָפָה can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדַעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract

'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν - also suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκειται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὕδαρεϊ σαίνειν φιλότητι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἴν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνήρ,
τοῦμόν παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy,

an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] *qv. A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] *qv. the Chimaera* (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἢ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

Part Two

Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - **الْخَبِيثُ** - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - **الطَّيِّبَاتِ** - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ
الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَىٰ أَلْبَابٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [**أَعْجَبَكَ**] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - **طَيِّبَةً** - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [**ذُنُوبَكُمْ**] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفِقُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
 أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
 بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَن تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢١٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [تَيَمَّمُوا] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

Jurisprudence and Society

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic, matters such as

transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, *تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ* (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between *fiqh* - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and *Shariah*, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as *fiqh* (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between *fiqh* and *Shariah*, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to *fiqh*, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between *fiqh* and *Shariah*, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and

humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

The Modern State

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted

among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over

the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is

for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Απόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἁρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of pathei-mathos.

Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of أَعْجَبَكَ , qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85 - وَلَا تُعْجِبَكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ - do not let

their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and الرُّعْبَ :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the

attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of *fiqh*) is *لعادة محكمة*. That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] qv. Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] qv. *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

Part Three

Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,

Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour.. [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5], non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of pathei-mathos offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by pathei-mathos, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of pathei-mathos [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives

from our own pathei-mathos, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathei-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life, and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally

alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἰππήων στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ-
τω τις ἔραται·
πά]λχῃ δ' εὔμαρες σύνετον πόησαι

π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἄ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
τὸν [ἀρ]ιστον
καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
κωῦδ[ἐ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
πά[μπα]ν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
[]σαν
[
[]αμπτου γὰρ [
[
[]...κούφως τ[]οη.[.]ν
[
..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὀ]νέμναι-
σ' οὐ] παρεοίσας,
τᾶ]ς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμαρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
[πεσδομ]άχευτας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

Part Four

Ontology and Denotatum

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of *pathei-mathos*, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of *ψυχή* [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of *ψυχή*.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of *φύσις* (*physis*). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our *φύσις*, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our *φύσις*, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presented as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are *ψυχή* as *ψυχή* is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the

charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἕντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκούσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὐδόντες
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

The Simple Way of Harmony

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for humility.

Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. *qv.* my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] *qv.* *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἄρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Part Five

A Very Personal Conclusion

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such

early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature *en masse* - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of *δίκη*, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived,

presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἀρμονίη we, in such honourable moments, are.

III Blue Reflected Starlight

As it departed toward the vastness of interstellar space, the Voyager 1 interplanetary spacecraft in 1990^(ce) transmitted an image of Earth from a distance of over four billion miles; the most distant image of Earth we human beings have ever seen. The Earth, our home, was a bluish dot; a mere Cosmic speck among the indefinity, visible only because of reflected starlight and - in the solar panorama imaged by Voyager on that February day - of no observed importance. One speck in one galaxy in a vast Cosmos of billions upon billions of galaxies, and one speck that would most probably appear, to a non-terran, less interesting than the rings of Saturn, just visible from such a distance.

Yet we human beings, en masse, continue to live in a manner which not only belies our Cosmic insignificance but which militates against the empathy, the humility, that such a Cosmic perspective can and does engender. Thus do we individually, as well as collectively, have pride in our lives, our deeds, our 'accomplishments', just as we continue to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself: and exploit for pleasure, or profit, or from some desire or because of some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation we believe in or support. Either believing or asserting, in our hubris, that we 'know' - that we 'understand' - what we are doing, or reckless of consequences because unable or unwilling to control our desires; unable or unwilling to control ourselves or our addiction to some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation.

Thus does the suffering we here inflict on other life - human and otherwise - continue. Thus does our human-wrought destruction continue, as if we are in thrall consciously or otherwise to the ideation that our planet, and its life including other humans, are some kind of 'resource', a means to supply our needs or a way to satiate our desires. So easy, so very easy, to injure, hate, and kill. So easy, so very easy, to satiate the desire to be in control. So very easy to place ourselves first; even easier to have our feelings, our desires, subsume, overcome, whatever consideration we might give, or previously had given, to others and to other life. So easy, so very easy, to make excuses - consciously or otherwise - to ourselves, and to others, for what we have done or what we are about to do; for always there is the excuse of self-interest or self-preservation, or the excuse of desires or some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation. So easy, so very easy, to spew forth words.

It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the pathei-mathos of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal pathei-mathos - whose

personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the indefinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history.

As I know from my outré experience of life - especially my forty years of extremism, hubris, and selfishness; my terms of imprisonment, my experience with gangs, with people of bad intentions and with those of good intentions - it really is as if we terran men have, en masse, learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years. For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, those wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical *φύσις* of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculous with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to?

Are we, we men here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves, and are given, no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for our thousand year upon thousand year of violence against women? Are we capable of such a reformation of our kind that such reprehensible violence against women by cowardly men becomes only historical fact?

Are we, here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for wars, armed conflicts, brutality against perceived or stated 'enemies', and murderous intervention? Such a reformation of ourselves that wars, armed conflicts, such brutality, and such interventions, become only historical fact?

Or are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?

Or will we, or some of us, betake ourselves away to colonize faraway non-terran places, taking with us our unreformed paradoxical *φύσις* to perchance again despoil, destroy, as some of our kind once betook themselves away to forever change parts of this speck of blue reflected starlight which gave us this fortunity of Life?

Yet again I admit I have no answers.

DWM
2012

ooo

IV

Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations

In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism; for older paganisms such as (i) θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, and (ii) άγνωστος θεός [1], and for the slowly evolving more recent paganisms evident for instance in a spiritual concern for the welfare of our planet and for

the suffering we have for so long inflicted on other humans and on the other life with which we share this planet.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, I disagree with those who, often intemperate in words or deeds - or both - disrespectfully fail to appreciate such religions and spiritual ways and the treasure, the culture, the *pathei-mathos*, that they offer, concentrating as such intemperate people so often do on what they perceive to be or feel to be are the flaws, the mistakes, of such religions and such spiritual ways while so often ignoring (as such people tend to do) their own personal flaws, their own mistakes, as well as the reality that it is we humans beings - with our *ὑβρις*, with our lack of humility, our lack of appreciation for the numinous, and with our intolerance and our often arrogant and harsh interpretations of such religions - who have been the cause and who continue to be the cause of such suffering as has blighted and as still blights this world.

As Heraclitus mentioned over two thousand years ago:

ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύουαι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν [2]

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

As recounted of Jesus of Nazareth over two thousand years ago:

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον. [3]

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [*Αναμάρτητος*] throw the first stone at her.

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God, or Allah, or *θεοί* or Nature, or *δίκη* or Wyrd, or Karma or *ψυχή* or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - *ὑβρις* - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead.

This insight of humility is evident, for instance and for me, in the sacred music of the Christian church; from the simplicity - the numinous purity - of plainchant to the polyphony of Byrd, Palestrina, and Vittoria to the counterpoint of JS Bach. For I find in this music an expression both of *κάλος* and of the numinous *mysterium* that is at the heart of Christianity, manifest as this *mysterium* is, for Christianity, in the allegory of the life, the betrayal, the crucifixion, of Jesus of

Nazareth and by a belief in redemption through both love and suffering. And this is essentially the same, albeit unallegorical and often wordless, numinous mysterium which we personally feel or we know or our touched by through that sadness born of our own pathei-mathos; by our acknowledgement of our mistakes, by our personal experience of suffering and grief, and by our heartfelt longing for, our hope for, the beautiful, for the redemption of innocence, for peace and love, manifest for example not only in the Christian allegory of Heaven, in the Muslim Jannah, in the Jewish Shamayim, but also in a very personal often private longing and hope for a better world and which longing and hope we so tearfully know is so often broken or forgotten or thrust aside by both our egoistical self and by other human beings: because of their, because of our, weakness, our failure to be the person we feel or we know we might be or perhaps could have been, born as such knowing and such feelings so often are in the inner intimacy that follows a personal grief or being a witness to or an accomplice in some act or acts of harshness and suffering.

This inner intimacy with the stark reality of our own being and with the world of suffering is what has caused so many people over thousands of years to try and not only reform themselves but also to try, in whatever way, to alleviate or try to alleviate some of the suffering of others, an effort and a reform so often aided by religion [4] and thus a tribute to those positive qualities, those personal virtues, which religions have so often revealed or reminded us of. Which is why - as I mentioned recently to another correspondent [5] - I incline toward the view that on balance the good that religions such as Christianity have done over millennia outweighs the suffering that has been caused by those who adhered to or who believed in some harsh interpretation of that religion.

There has thus developed within me these past seven years an understanding of my past hubris, my past multitudinous mistakes, and of how a lack of humility on my part - my extremism, my certainty of knowing about myself, my certainty of knowing about some cause or ideology or harsh interpretation of some religion I accepted and adhered to - was probably one of the most significant factors in that hubris and those suffering-causing mistakes. Which personal understanding, together with a decades-long experience of others such as I, led me to hypothesize that one of the fundamental causes of extremism is a masculous certainty of knowing and that, therefore, religions and spiritual ways are and can be - when not interpreted in a harsh, hubriatic, way but rather via that personal humility and that appreciation of the numinous I believe are intrinsic to them - affective and effective answers to such extremism and to the harm that extremists cause.

In essence, therefore, my philosophy of pathei-mathos - my much revised 'numinous way' - is my own spiritual answer, born of fifty years of diverse peregrinations; my personal answer and response to the certitude of knowing, the harshness, that all extremisms (political, religious, and social) manifest, as well as also - perhaps, hopefully - being (as a spiritual way) in some small manner, and now sans a personal belief in *judicium divinum*, some expiation for

all the suffering that I over decades caused or contributed to.

The numinous, the beautiful - the divine - remain, to remind us. As someone so beautifully expressed it:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäh't,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich. [6]

DWM
2012

Notes

[1] qv. Pausanias. Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις 1.1.4 -

ἐνταῦθα καὶ Σκιράδος Ἀθηνᾶς ναός ἐστι καὶ Διὸς ἀπωτέρω, βωμοὶ δὲ
θεῶν τε ὀνομαζομένων Ἀγνώστων καὶ ἡρώων καὶ παίδων τῶν Θησέως
καὶ Φαληροῦ

Also here is a shrine [ναός] to Athena Skirados and, further afield,
one to Zeus, and others to [the] un-named unknown gods, to the
heroes, as well as to those children of Theseus and Phalerus

[2] Fragment 43

[3] John, 8.7

[4] For example, I well remember, decades ago, in the first month or so of my training to be a nurse doing some research into the history of nursing as preparation for my turn in giving a talk and presentation to our class as part of our nursing course; and finding just how entwined religion and the origins of organized nursing were, from the fourth century (CE) Roman lady Fabiola to the monastic infirmaries of medieval Europe to the al-Nuri al-Kabir bimaristan in Damascus [qv. Ahmad Isa: *Tarikh al-Bimaristanat fi al-Islam* [History of Hospitals in Islam]. Damascus, 1939] to the Hospitallers of St John to Florence Nightingale and beyond.

I also remember the hundreds of people met over some forty years whose faith inspired or aided them to endeavour, in social or political or legal or personal

ways, to alleviate some of the suffering of others, and who each, in their own way - and whether Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, or Buddhist - helped make a positive difference.

[5] qv. *Just My Fallible Views, Again - Replies to Some Enquiries*. 2012

[6] Rilke, *Die erste Duineser Elegie*

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

Appendix

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of *ψυχή*.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of *pathei-mathos* adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἀρμονία

ἀρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating *wu-wei* and *σωφρονεῖν* (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means *benignity*, which word derives from the Latin *benignitatem*, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. *Benignity* came into English usage around the same time as *compassion*; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, *compassion* is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word *compassion* itself is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin *passiō*. Thus useful synonyms for *compassion*, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us - or can incline us - toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A *δαίμων* is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - *θεοί* - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, *δίκη* could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the *Δίκη* of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, *δίκη*, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of *δίκη* as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term *Δίκη* - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate *Δίκη* from the more general *δίκη*. As a numinous principle, or axiom, *Δίκη* thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of *δίκη* personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German *Einfühlung*, derives, via the late Latin *sympathia*, from the Greek *συμπάθεια* - *συμπαθής* - and is thus formed from the prefix *σύν* (*sym*) together with *παθ-* [root of *πάθος*] meaning *enduring/suffering*, feeling: *πάσχειν*, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - *ἐμπάθεια* - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of *συμπάθεια*. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature (the *physis*) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of *ψυχή*.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word *ἐναντιοδρομίας* occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἦ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By *extreme* is meant *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence *extremism* is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin *honorem* (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) *onor/onur*. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. *History of the Life of Henry the Second*. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of *ψυχή* - of Life, of our *φύσις* - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by *σωφρονεῖν* and in accord with *δίκη*. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of *ὑβρις*, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, *ἀρμονίη*.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from *πάθει μάθος*.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (*ὑβρις*) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of *ἀρμονίη*, of *δίκη*, of *σωφρονεῖν* - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that *ἔρις* and *πόλεμος*, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and *pathei-mathos* provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our *pathei-mathos*.

Morality, for the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and *εὐταξία* - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and *πάθει μάθος* incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a

certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schiboleth." *True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of *ψυχή*; a balance which *ὑβρις* upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to *ψυχή*, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of *ψυχή*.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term *πάθει μάθος* derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning *learning from adversary*, or *wisdom arises from (personal) suffering*; or *personal experience is the genesis of true learning*.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific

geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Πόλεμος - Heraclitus fragment 80 - is not some abstract 'war' or strife or *kampf*, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as *δίκη* but also accompanies *ἔρις* because it is the nature of *Πόλεμος* that beings, born because of and by *ἔρις*, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by *enantiodromia*.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, *ἔρις* was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) and a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) with *Polemos* rather forlornly following *Hubris* around rather than vice versa. Thus *Eris* is the child of *Polemos* and *Hubris*.

Furthermore, *Polemos* was originally the *δαίμων* (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's *πόλις* (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe *Polemos*, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

φύσις suggests either (i) the Homeric usage of nature or character of a person, as for example in *Odyssey*, Book 10, vv. 302-3, and also in Herodotus (2.5.2):

Αἰγύπτου γὰρ φύσις ἐστὶ τῆς χώρας τοιήδε

or (ii) *Φύσις* (*Physis*) as in Heraclitus fragment 123 - that is, the natural nature of all beings, beyond their outer appearance, and which natural nature we, as human beings, have a natural [an unconscious] inclination to conceal; either because of *ὑβρις* or through an ignorance, an unknowing, of ourselves as an emanation of *ψυχή*.

In terms of the nature or the character of an individual:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Heraclitus fragment 112

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our *self* and *the others*. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value /difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from *ἀρμονία, δίκη*, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and *pathei-mathos* can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliq/ue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the *φύσις* - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of *ψυχή*, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ὕβρις

ὕβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement - *σωφρονεῖν* - and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and *πάθει μάθος*.

Hubris upsets the natural balance - is contrary to *ἀρμονίη* [harmony] - and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, *ὕβρις* disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as *ψυχή* and *θεοί* and *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* and *δαιμόνων* and those sacred places guarded or watched over by *δαιμόνων*.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to

locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, *σωφρονεῖν*, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: *rerum divinarum et humanarum*. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between *ὑβρις* and *ἀρετή*; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of *ἀρμονίη*.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their *φύσις*, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the *physis*) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life *qua* being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of *ψυχή*. Thus *ψυχή* is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, *φύσις*, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between *σωφρονεῖν* (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and *ὑβρις*.

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2013
(Second Edition)

This work is issued under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,
according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt



Exegesis and Translation Some Personal Reflexions

Part One

Since I first studied the Greek text of the Septuagint as a Christian monk, more than thirty five years ago, I have often reflected on matters pertaining to exegesis and translation. Four issues in particular have interested me during those decades.

1. How revealed religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and how certain spiritual ways [1], such as Buddhism and even Hinduism [2], are reliant on or have developed to become reliant upon certain texts, and how such dependant texts either by their nature require interpretation [3] or (more often) how interpretation is considered as necessary in order for the religion or spiritual way to gain support, influence, and adherents.

2. How many of those of faith - especially in revealed religions and almost certainly the majority of the faithful - have to rely on, and often quote, the translations of others; even if such people of faith are engaged in proselytizing.

3. How certain English words, used to interpret a particular Hebrew or Greek or Arabic word, suggest, represent, or have acquired, a particular meaning to English readers/listeners but which particular meaning may not necessary accurately reflect the meaning of the non-English word as that

non-English word was possibly understood at the time it was included in a particular text.

4. How there seems to be, in revealed religions and most conventional spiritual ways, a rejection of *pathei-mathos* in favour of the wisdom said to be contained in the texts and thus in the teachings of the founder(s) of the religion/spiritual way, and - in the case of revealed religions - in the writings/edicts of those who have been vested with or who have acquired a certain religious authority, and - also in the case of revealed religions - how such *pathei-mathos*, to be accepted at all, has to be judged by criteria developed from such texts and/or developed from interpretations of such texts.

Interpretation and The Question of Sin

It is my view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed. [4]

Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is *sin*. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with *sin*, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word *sin* - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of *syn* is used:

Þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle
be Gode

come þonne he, gif hit swa wære. Ac þ is swiðe dyslic 7
swiðe micel syn þ mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode, oððe eft

The context of the original Latin of Boethius [5] is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf [6], the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 [7] I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those. [8]

Such a translation avoids the rather contradictory nature of most other translations which have Jesus clearly stating that he also does not judge her but then have him go on to say that she should 'sin no more' with the obvious implication that he has indeed judged her in that in his judgement she had

indeed sinned before.

Understood and appreciated thus, sans the now culturally-biased word sin, these passages from the gospel according to John - together with passages such as Luke 19.10 and Romans 13.10 [9] - perhaps usefully summarize the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth; the (in my view) rather human message of avoiding judging others because we ourselves are prone to error, the message of love, and the message of redemption (forgiveness) for those who in the past have made mistakes but who have thereafter tried to avoid making such mistakes again, those hitherto perhaps damaged or lost.

In respect of ἁμαρτάνω [10] consider, for example, Matthew 18.21:

Τότε προσελθὼν ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν [αὐτῷ] Κύριε, ποσάκις ἁμαρτήσῃ εἰς ἐμὲ ὁ ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀφήσω αὐτῷ; ἕως ἑπτάκις

Peter then approached [προσέρχομαι] him saying My Lord, how often [ποσάκις] may my brother fail [ἁμαρτάνω] me and be ignored [ἀφίημι]? Up to seven times?

Which is somewhat different from the usual "how many times shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him."

Ontology, Exegesis, and Pathei-Mathos

All religions and spiritual ways, because they are spiritual/metaphysical, either posit, or are interpreted as positing, an ontology. That is, they all offer an explanation, or an analysis, of the nature of our being as humans and of the nature of, and our relation to, Being, whether Being is understood as God/Allah/gods/Nature/Fate or in terms of axioms such as karma and nirvana. There thus exists, or there develops, an explanation or explanations concerning the meaning and the purpose of our mortal lives; of how that purpose may be attained; and thus of what wisdom is and why there is and continues to be suffering.

However, as I mentioned in *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*, citing several examples, the original message of a revelation or of a spiritual way often seems to become obscured or somehow gets lost over centuries. A loss or obscurity partly due to the reliance on revealed or given texts; partly due to divergent interpretations of such texts, with some interpretations accepted or rejected by those assuming or vested with a religious authority; and partly due to a reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts.

Furthermore, the interpretation of such religious texts - and/or the emergence or the writing of new texts concerning a particular spiritual way - has often led to schism or schisms, and to harsh interpretations of religions; schisms and a harshness that have sometimes led to sects, to violence between believers and sects, to accusations of heresy, and to the persecution of those said to be heretics. All of which have thus caused or been the genesis of suffering.

Thus, in respect of Christianity,

"...it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do." [11]

In effect, the humility that I have found by experience that all or most religions and spiritual ways manifest - and an essential part of their revelation, their message, their presencing of the numinous - is obscured or ignored in favour of arrogant human presumptions and assumptions and a personal pride: that 'we' know better, or believe we know better; that 'we' have somehow found or been given the 'right' answer(s) or the 'right' interpretation(s), and that therefore 'the others' are wrong, and 'we' are better or more 'pure'/devout than them. And so on.

Yet there is, it seems to me, after many years of reflexion, something else which accounts for why this loss of a necessary humility occurs, other than the aforementioned reliance on revealed or given texts, the divergent interpretations of such texts, and the reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts. This is the reality of religions and many spiritual ways either rejecting *pathei-mathos* as a source of wisdom or favouring specific texts and their interpretation(s) over and above the *pathei-mathos* of individuals.

For *pathei-mathos* - the personal learning from grief, suffering, pain, adversity, and experience - directly connects us to and thus enables us to personally experience and appreciate the numinous, sans words, ideations, ideology, theology, and dogma. An experience and an appreciation outwardly and inwardly manifest in a personal humility; in the knowledge of ourselves

as but one fallible, mortal, fragile, human emanation of and connexion to Being; and in an empathic understanding of how all religions and spiritual ways, in their genesis and in their original emanations, express - or try to express - the same wisdom: manifest in an appreciation of the numinous, and in our human necessity for the natural balance that is humility and a very personal honour. And, because of this spiritual and religious equivalence, it does not matter if the individual of pathei-mathos, having so touched and felt the numinous, develops their own weltanschauung or none, or leaves or finds an existing spiritual or religious one, although it is and often has been such pathei-mathos which reveals to individuals, or which enables them to rediscover, the essence of a particular religion or a particular spiritual way: that simple and similar numinous essence which schisms, harsh interpretations, dogma, and ideology, have so often and for so long obscured.

For what pathei-mathos reveals does matter, beyond such outward and such supra-personal manifestations, are the personal, the individual, virtues of love, empathy, gentleness, and compassion.

ooo

Part Two

Translation and Al-Quran

The problem of sometimes projecting modern interpretations onto ancient texts by the injudicious use, in a translation, of a particular English word is especially relevant in the matter of the Quran, for it seems to be increasingly common for someone reliant on translations - on the interpretations of meaning given by others - to misunderstand the text of the Quran and then, from that misunderstanding, not only form a misconceived (and sometimes prejudiced) opinion about the Quran in particular and Islam in general but also to give voice to such an opinion.

For example, an ayah [verse] often (mis)quoted is Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, which is usually interpreted as "Soon shall we cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers."

However, the word 'terror' is an inappropriate interpretation for several reasons. The Arabic of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran is:

سُنْتُقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ
النَّارُ وَيُسَّ مَتَوَى الظَّالِمِينَ

[Transliteration: sanulqi fee qulubi allazeena kafaroo l-ruba bima ashraaku bil-lahi ma lam yunazzil bihi sultanana wamawhumu l-naru wabisa mathwa l-zalimeena]

Does الرُّعْبُ imply 'terror' as the aforementioned interpretation suggests, along with all that the modern English word terror now implies, as in the difficult to define term terrorism? No, it does not; rather, the Arabic implies *the fear/the dread* and 'the astonishment/awe' - that is, that human feeling inspired by apprehending or experiencing some-thing supernaturally or extraordinarily powerful and numinous; for example, an Ayah (Sign) of Allah, Al-Khaliq, Al-Azim, Al-Jalil. The kind of fear/trembling/awe/astonishment felt, for instance and importantly, by the Apostles when, as recounted in Luke 24.37, they witnessed Jesus alive after the crucifixion.

That is, I suggest that what is referred to in Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran - as in the other four Ayat where الرُّعْبُ / رُعْبًا occur - is similar to the 'suffusion with fear' and the 'being scared' that occurs and has occurred, as recounted in both Christian scripture and the Quran, when a mortal is (a) confronted by God/Allah or some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring, and/or (b) has such fear, and such a being scared, thrust into their hearts by God/Allah, as a Sign, a warning, or as mention of their fate.

In respect of Luke 24.37, for instance, the Greek text is:

πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν

The term ἔμφοβος means 'suffused with/by phobos' - held/gripped by fear; timorous - and occurs in Sirach 19.24 and Luke 24.5, the latter of which is very interesting: ἐμφοβῶν δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς Τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν. That is, suffused with phobos, they assumed a posture of submission/reverence /respect by bowing their heads; in effect prostrating themselves in the presence of some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring. Since πνεῦμα - pneuma - implies apparition or ghost, and πτοηθέντες suggests they were 'scared' (cf. Odyssey 22.298 - τῶν δὲ φρένες ἐπτοίγηθεν) then Luke 24.37 could be translated as "But they, suffused with fear and scared, felt that they saw an apparition." [1]

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

In the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, a possible interpretation of meaning therefore is:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Here, I have used the unusual English word redurre, with a meaning of 'awe combined with a trembling fear'. A word suggested by its occurrence in religious works by Richard Rolle and John Gower, and also by texts such as Morte Arthure [2] and which word therefore places this Ayah from the Quran into the correct context, which is that of a religious revelation, a spiritual message, comparable to that of Christianity, and of the particular ontology that Islam offers as answers to questions concerning the meaning and the purpose of our mortal lives; of how that purpose may be attained; and thus of what wisdom is. Answers which have nothing whatsoever to do with 'terrorism', or even with 'terror' as that word is now commonly understood.

The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time

One question of possibly projecting modern interpretations onto ancient texts by the injudicious use of a particular English word, occurred to me some twenty years ago during my translation of the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, and concerned the Greek word χρόνος. This is almost always translated as 'time', a word we now associate with a regular linearity - of past-present-future - measured in terms of the minutes, hours, and fixed days, of a reliable timepiece such as a watch or clock.

In the classical world of Homer and Sophocles, this type of reliable, linear,

regularity was almost unknown, with χρόνος thus sometimes denoting some ill-defined period - long or short - and with the passing of a year, for example, often determined by the changes of the seasons, and which seasons themselves were marked in their arrival by the appearance of certain constellations in the night sky, something beautifully expressed by Aeschylus at the beginning of the Agamemnon:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὀμήγουρι,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολάς τε τῶν.
καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τό σύμβολον,
αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσαν ἐκ Τροίας φάτιν
ἀλώσιμόν τε βάξιιν: ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ
γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,
This vigil a year in length, where I repose
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens
As stars when they come forth or pass away.
And still I keep watch for the sign of the beacon,
The light of the fire which will bring report of Troy,
Announcing it is captured.
For such is the command
And expectation of that woman with a man's resolve.

However, in Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has the memorable phrase καὶ μ' ἤμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ, indicating something not only about χρόνος but also about the classical world and (importantly) about the character of Oedipus. The phrase is therefore worth quoting in context:

ὦ παῖδες οἰκτροί, γνωτὰ κούκ ἄγνωτά μοι
προσῆλθεθ' ἰμείροντες: εὗ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
νοσεῖτε πάντες, καὶ νοσοῦντες, ὡς ἐγὼ
οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῶν ὅστις ἐξ ἴσου νοσεῖ.

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ὑμῶν ἄλγος εἰς ἓν ἔρχεται
μόνον καθ' αὐτὸν κούδέν' ἄλλον, ἢ δ' ἐμὴ
ψυχὴ πόλις τε κάμει καὶ σ' ὁμοῦ στένει.
ὥστ' οὐχ ὑπνω γ' εὐδοντά μ' ἐξεγείρετε,
ἀλλ' ἴστε πολλὰ μὲν με δακρύσαντα δῆ,
πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις:
ἦν δ' εὖ σκοπῶν ἠῦρισκον ἴασιν μόνην,
ταύτην ἔπραξα: παῖδα γὰρ Μενοικέως
Κρέοντ', ἐμαυτοῦ γαμβρόν, ἐς τὰ Πυθικὰ
ἔπεμψα Φοίβου δώμαθ', ὡς πύθοιθ' ὅ τι
δρῶν ἢ τί φωνῶν τήνδε ῥυσαίμην πόλις.
καὶ μ' ἤμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ 73
λυπεῖ τί πράσσει: τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα
ἄπεστι πλείω τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου.
ὅταν δ' ἴκηται, τηνικαῦτ' ἐγὼ κακὸς
μὴ δρῶν ἂν εἶην πάνθ' ὅσ' ἂν δηλοῖ θεός.

You, my children, who lament - I know, for I am not without knowledge,
Of the desire which brings you here. For well do I see
All your sufferings - and though you suffer, it is I
And not one of you that suffers the most.
For your pain comes to each of you
By itself, with nothing else, while my psyche
Mourns for myself, for you and the clan.
You have not awakened me from a resting sleep
For indeed you should know of my many tears
And the many paths of reflection I have wandered upon and tried.
And, as I pondered, I found one cure
Which I therefore took. The son of Menoeceus,
Creon - he who is my kin by marriage - I have sent to that Pythian dwelling
Of Phoebus to learn how I
By word or deed can give deliverance to the clan.
But I have already measured the duration
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.
Yet when he does arrive, it would dishonourable
For me not to act upon all that the gods makes clear.

vv.58-77

To translate χρόνος in v.73 abstractly as 'time' is therefore to overlook not only the context - of a world where the seasons were often determined by observation of the night sky - but also the significance of what Oedipus says. For he has, out of his urgent concern for both his people and himself - out of fear of the wrack of the gods - gone to the trouble to determine how long

Creon's journey should take and to measure/calculate/record, or to have someone do this for him, precisely how long Creon has been away.

A pedantic point, possibly; but one which perhaps illustrates the engaging art of translation and the possibilities of interpretation, and of misinterpretation, that exist.

David Myatt
2013

Notes

[1] As outlined in Appendix II (Glossary of Terms and Greek Words) of *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. ISBN 978-1484096642 (2013) I make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life.

One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

[2] In Buddhism, the primary texts are regarded as: (i) for Theravada Buddhism, the collections referred to as *Tipitaka/Tripitaka*; (ii) for Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Tipitaka (in some cases, depending on interpretation) and the various *Sutras*, including the collection often referred to as The Perfection of Wisdom; (iii) for Tibetan Buddhism, the various Tantric texts, plus some of the Tipitaka (in some cases, depending on interpretation) and some the Mahāyāna sutras (in some cases, depending on interpretation).

In Hinduism, there is the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the literature of the *Vedas*.

[3] By *interpretation* here is meant (i) commentaries (academic, theological, and otherwise); (ii) explanations (critical, and otherwise); (iii) translations; and – most importantly – (iv) a seeking of the meaning of (a) both the text (in whole and in parts) and (b) of the words and terms used.

[4] One misused English word is 'terror', often used to translate الرَّعْبَ in Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran. See Part Two, below *Translation and Al-Quran*.

[5] Quare quod a summo bono diversum est sui natura, id summum bonum non est; quod nefas est de eo cogitare, quo nihil constat esse praestantius. *Consolatio Philosophiae, Liber Tertius, pr. x*

[6] Beowulf, 2470f, where the spelling synn is used:

eaferum læfde, swa deð eadig mon,
lond ond leodbyrig, þa he of life gewat.
þa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata
ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,
herenið hearda, syððan Hreðel swealt

[7] qv. Myatt, *Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations*. 2013

[8] The conventional interpretation of ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε is "from now on sin no more".

[9] Luke 19.10:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός

The arrivance [ἔρχομαι] of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost

However, a more interesting interpretation is:

The arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to repair [σώζω]
what had been damaged [ἀπόλλυμι]

and which interpretation is suggested by (i) the sense of σώζω: keep safe, preserve, maintain - whence repair, and (ii) the sense of ἀπόλλυμι: destroy, ruin, kill, demolish, and - metaphorically - damaged, lost, and die.

Romans 13.10:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law

[11] ἀμαρτάνω implies a failure, mistake, an error, deprivation, loss, to miss/fail. qv (i) Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus:

ὅταν ταχύς τις οὐπιβουλεύων λάθρα
χωρῆ, ταχὺν δεῖ κάμει βουλεύειν πάλιν:
εἰ δ' ἡσυχάζων προσμενῶ, τὰ τοῦδε μὲν
πεπραγμέν' ἔσται, τάμα δ' ἡμαρτημένα 621

But when there is a plot against me which is swiftly and furtively
Moving forward, then I must be swift in opposing that plot
Since if I remain at rest, then indeed
What is about to be done, will be - because of my mistake.

and (ii) Aeschylus, Agamemnon:

ὀφλῶν γὰρ ἀρπαγῆς τε καὶ κλοπῆς δίκην
τοῦ ῥυσίου θ' ἡμαρτε καὶ πανώλεθρον 535
αὐτόχθονον πατρῶον ἔθρισεν δόμον.

The penalty for the pillage and theft was fair -
He lost his booty and completely ruined
His own land with his father's family cut down

[11] Myatt. *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013

[12] On a pedantic note, I understand δοκέω as meaning here not the

conventional unemotional 'suppose/thought' nor (worse) 'opinion' but rather as 'felt' in the sense of experiencing (as they do) an intense and personal feeling. Hence my rendering that they "felt that they saw..."

[13] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* [written 1390 ce]

That thogh thi love more drawe
And peise in the balance more,
Thou miht noght axe ayein therfore
Of duete, bot al of grace.
For love is lord in every place,
Ther mai no lawe him justefie
Be reddour ne be compaignie,
That he ne wole after his wille
Whom that him liketh spede or spille

(Book 5, v. 4558) *The Complete Works of John Gower*.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902

Morte Arthure [written c. 1400 ce]

That thow ne schall rowte ne ryste vndyr the heuene ryche, þofe
thow for reddour of Rome ryne to þe erthe [108-109]

cc David Myatt 2013

This work is issued under the Creative Commons
(Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0) License
and can be freely copied and distributed, according to the terms of that license.

All translations: DW Myatt

Image credit:

Illumination from the MS Anicii Manlii Torqvati Severini Boetii,
De Consolatione Philosophiae cvm Commento,
dated c. 1385 ce, in Glasgow University library: MS Hunter 374 fol.4r

In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

Contents

- Prefatory Note
- In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church. Part One
- In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church. Part Two
- Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West

◦ ◦ ◦

Prefatory Note

Collected here are three essays written in 2018 and 2019 which present my personal views regarding Catholicism and in particular regarding what has been termed the "culture of abuse", cultura del abuso. The internet links in the footnotes were valid as of January 2019.

David Myatt
February 2019

In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

Part One

Listening to *Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis* - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires.

Such presencing of the Divine - such a numinous reminder of our fallibility, century following century, as for example in *Kyrie Orbis Factor* as performed by Ensemble Organum - seems to have become somewhat lost in all the recent Media propaganda about how some Catholic priests and monks have allowed their personal desires to overwhelm such a presencing of the numinous and which presencing of the divine is and was manifest in compassion, empathy, and a personal humility.

Lost, in all the Media propaganda, because I from personal experience know that such incidents are perpetrated by a minority of individuals and that the vast majority of Catholic priests and monks are good individuals who strive, who often struggle, each in their own way and according to their physis, to manifest the virtues of compassion, empathy, and humility. That so many writers and readers of such Media propaganda in this our modern world seem to commit the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter* no longer, unfortunately, surprises me.

In respect of personal experience I have to admit that I was somewhat dismayed by a recent report issued by a government sponsored Inquiry Panel. For I personally had known two of the individuals mentioned in that report, knowing from personal experience in a certain monastery that they, and the few others like them over the years, were the exception out of dozens and dozens of other monks and priests there. I was also somewhat dismayed by what I felt was the personal opinion of the authors of that report - stated in their "Conclusions" - that those involved in placing their personal desires before compassion, empathy, and humility, are "likely to be considerably greater than numbers cited in the convictions" since no evidence was presented to substantiate such an opinion. Another example of individuals committing the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*? Probably.

But why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathemathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, present – as it has for centuries presented – aspects of the numinous and which presenting has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings.

As I wrote some years ago in respect of visiting my father's grave in Africa:

"Once I happened to be travelling to an area which colonial and imperialist Europeans formerly described as part of 'darkest Africa'. Part of this travel involved a really long journey on unpaved roads by bus from an urban area. You know the type of thing – an unreliable weekly or sporadic service in some old vehicle used by villagers to take themselves (and often their produce and sometimes their livestock) to and from an urban market and urban-dwelling relatives. On this service, to a remote area, it [seemed to be] the custom – before the journey could begin – for someone to stand at the front and say a Christian prayer with every passenger willingly joining in.

It was quite touching. As was the fact that, at the village where I stayed (with a local family) near that grave, everyone went to Church on a Sunday, wearing the best clothes they could, and there was a real sense (at least to me) of how their faith helped them and gave them some guidance for the better, for it was as if they, poor as they were, were in some way living, or were perhaps partly an embodiment of, the ethos expressed by the Sermon of the Mount, and although I no longer shared their Christian faith, I admired them and respected their belief and understood what that faith seemed to have given them.

Who was – who am – I to try and preach to them, to judge them and that faith? I was – I am – just one fallible human being who believes he may have some personal and fallible answers to certain questions; just one person among billions aware of his past arrogance and his suffering-causing mistakes." [1]

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον [2]

2.x.18

ooo

[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

[2] "Immeasurable origin of piety, have mercy. Banish all our faults, have mercy." Kyrie Orbis Factor.

Although the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον is considered to be a Christian doxology, deriving from the Old Testament, it is possible that it was a common phrase in Greco-Roman culture, with origins dating back to the classical period, for it occurs in the Discourses of Epictetus – Book II, vii, 13 – in relation to a discussion about divination,

καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ κύριε ἐλέησον

and in our invocations to the theos our bidding is: Master, have mercy.

ooooooo

Part Two

Expiation And Penance

Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious

authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world. As I wrote in my essay *Numinous Expiation*,

"One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site." [3]

This personal - and via the Confessional, this priestly - connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics criticize the Roman Catholic Church for their past response to those accused of placing their personal (often sexual) desires before compassion, empathy, and humility.

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual - the eternal - dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance.

This allowance for such personal expiation by such spiritual means is what, according to my fallible understanding, informed the treatment by the Catholic hierarchy of many of those accused of placing their personal desires before obedience to their God.

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment. Understood thus, there were no – to use a vernacular term – "cover-ups", just the application of certain spiritual considerations, considerations which are the foundations of the Catholic faith based as such considerations are on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession.

Another aspect of this Catholic priority of the spiritual over the secular is the sanctity (the seal) of the confessional and which sanctity is adjudged to be more important than secular laws relating, for example, to disclosure of or information regarding actions deemed to be criminal.

As for my personal opinions on the matter, I have none, for who am I – with my decades of hubris, my knowledge of my plenitude of mistakes – to judge others, to judge anyone? I have tried to rationally understand both the secular and the spiritual dimensions involved, having personal experience of both, and as so often these days remain somewhat perplexed by our human nature and by the need so many humans, myself included, still have for a belief in a spiritual dimension whereby we can connect ourselves to the numinous, to the Divine – however the Divine is presented to and in us – enabling us to perhaps find some peace, some happiness, some solace, some answers, among the turmoil, the suffering, the chngement, of the secular world.

My portal to the spiritual remains 'the way of pathei-mathos', the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way devoid of mythoi and anthropomorphic deities.

Perhaps it would be easier to believe in God, to accept again the Catholic expiation of the sacraments of Confession and the Mass. It would perhaps be even easier to accept some tangible votive wordless means in the form of offering some paganus propitiation, some libation, some talismata left, at some numinous paganus site.

But as Aeschylus so well-expressed it,

ἔστι δ' ὄπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὄργας ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει [4]

What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,
No unburnt offering
Can charm away that firm resolve.

Which type of sentiment I feel philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also sought to express.

4.x.18

ooo

[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἀφέωνται
αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors,
they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' - both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis - now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John.

Given that the transliteration *pneuma* - with its modern association with terms such as *pneumatic* - does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen *spiritus*, as referenced in respect of *gast* in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation *Halig Spiritus*, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word *Halig* - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from *halig* and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is *sin*. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with *sin*, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word *sin* - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of *syn* is used:

Ɔæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs
wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/> and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander* (ISBN 978-1495470684)

[3] The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/numinous-expiation/>

[4] Agamemnon, 67-71

Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West

The letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019 and sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, seems to me to encapsulate two of the metaphysical contradictions of the modern Western world in regard to the numinous and the profane.

For in the letter Pope Francis, commenting on what the Media has described as "the scandal of clerical abuse" within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that

La credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes, pero especialmente por la voluntad de querer disimularlos y esconderlos. [1]

and also used Biblical quotations in support of his arguments.

The use of the phrase pecados y crímenes - sins and crimes - seems to indicate an acceptance of the metaphysical equality of Church and State: of a sin, as defined by the teachings of the Church, and of a crime as defined in laws made by some State [2].

Sins And Crimes: Sacred And Secular

Pope Francis provides the context for one metaphysical contradiction, for in respect of the response he believes is required regarding such "sins and crimes" he writes

Hoy se nos pide una nueva presencia en el mundo conforme a la Cruz de Cristo, que se cristalice en servicio a los hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo [3]

That is, there should be a change, a new presencing, and one that serves the people now; the people of our epoch, of our age, of the 'times' in which we now live.

This is the epoch in which the Media, using such expressions as a "culture of abuse" - *cultura del abuso* - can question the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, and by repetition of particular instances of abuse and the reporting of other ones, demand not only a response from the hierarchy of the Church but a response that conforms to the popular, or to the Media created, expectations of the epoch. Which expectations are that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods.

Which divine justice was, at least according to my fallible understanding and as I noted in part two of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, "often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment" especially as personal confession to a Priest, personal penitence, and undertaking the penance prescribed were, in the Roman Catholic Church, a connexion to the Divine. Hence why many of those who, via the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confessed to abuse were not "publicly named and shamed" by the Catholic hierarchy, were not brought to the attention of State authorities, but instead given penance and, in some instances, quietly moved and expected to begin a new penitential life in the service of God.

That Pope Francis uses the expression *cultura del abuso* and writes that *la credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes* suggests to me at least two things. First, that the move toward the change he suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presented for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church [4] - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal. Hence why in a speech to the Roman Curio in December 2018 he said that those who abused children should "hand themselves over to human justice." [5]

A Revealed Religion

The second metaphysical contradiction, between the sacred and the profane in the modern world, which the Papal letter reveals is the unsurprising and traditional use of Biblical quotations in support of, and to frame, the presented suggestions and argument.

This reliance on written texts and reliance on their exegesis and thus on the varied interpretations that result [6] is an implicit part of all revealed religions from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. Since these interpretations can vary and have varied over the centuries the result is schism, reformation and counter-reformation, leading as these did in the past to such things as the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, and the persecution and martyrdom of Catholics, by a tyrannos named Henry; and leading as they have in more modern times, to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and to the proliferation of Christian sects and denominations who have diverse views about such matters as same-gender love and abortion.

Such reliance on such texts, such varying interpretations, are as I have noted elsewhere the fundamental weakness of revealed religions [7] with, in my fallible view, the sacred - the numinous - unable to fully be presenced by such religions.

Thus it does not surprise me that the Roman Catholic Church apparently now considers *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State as metaphysically equal since the conflict between varying interpretations, the apparent desire for placatory reforms - of being "a new presence in the world" - as a consequence of Media attention, and the increasing move away "in this epoch" from a belief in the superiority of *judicium divinum* (the primacy of the sacred) are necessary consequences of the dialectic of exegesis.

Which is one reason why my personal spiritual belief is now not that of Catholicism even though I sense that Catholicism does still presence some aspects of the numinous.

Instead, I incline toward an apprehension of the divine, the sacred, which is *paganus* and thus individual, undogmatic, and empathic, since my *paganus* metaphysics is that of

(i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous. [8]

7.i.19

Extract from a reply to someone
who enquired about a Papal Letter in relation to my text
In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

ooo

[1] "The credibility of the Church has been seriously questioned and undermined by these sins and crimes but especially by a desire to hide or to disguise them."

The official Vatican translation is "The Church's credibility has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them."

[2] By the term State is meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area.

[3] "Today, what is asked of us is to be a new presence in the world that, in conformity with the Cross of Christ, is made clear in service to the men and women of our epoch."

The official Vatican translation is "What is being asked of us today is a new presence in the world, conformed to the cross of Christ, one that

takes concrete shape in service to the men and women of our time."

[4] As I noted in part one of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*,

"Listening to Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presented the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires."

[5] Catholic News Agency, December 21, 2018.

[6] Qv. my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, and *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[7] Qv. (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*; (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[8] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2018-2019

The essays are issued under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license and can be copied and distributed according to the terms of that license

All translations by DW Myatt



Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God

Some Personal Musings

Contents

Part One

°Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Part Two

°Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

°Jurisprudence and Society

°The Modern State

°Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

Part Three

°Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

°Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

Part Four

°Ontology and Denotatum

°The Simple Way of Harmony

Part Five

°A Very Personal Conclusion

Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused

suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

David Myatt
April 2013

Part One

Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἦδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἡ ἅν ἡμέρα φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται ὕμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν? Most

translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves, an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׁרָפִי - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׁרָפִי can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדָעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract 'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρόν - also

suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκειται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὑδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότητι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἴν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνήρ,
τούμὸν παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy,

an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

ooo

Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] *qv. A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] *qv. the Chimaera* (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἢ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

Part Two

Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - الخبيث - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - الطيبات - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَتُهُ
الْخَبِيثَاتُ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَى الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [أعجبك] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - طيبة - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ذنوبكم] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفَقُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
بِتَّخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَن تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَنَىٰ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢١٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [تَيَمَّمُوا] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

Jurisprudence and Society

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic, matters such as transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, *تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ* (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and Shariah, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between fiqh and Shariah, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to fiqh, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between fiqh and Shariah, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious

interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

The Modern State

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion

and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there

are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἁρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus

reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of *pathei-mathos*.

ooo

Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of *أَعْجَبَكَ*, qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85 - *وَلَا تُعْجِبِكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ* - do not let their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and *الرُّعْبَ* :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a

work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of *fiqh*) is *لعادة محكمة*. That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] *qv.* Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] *qv.* *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

Part Three

Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward

answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,
Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour.. [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5],

non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of *pathei-mathos* offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by *pathei-mathos*, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of *pathei-mathos* [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives from our own *pathei-mathos*, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and

thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathos-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathos-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life, and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any

Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἱππήων στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ-
τω τις ἔραται·
πά]γχυ δ' εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἃ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἐλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
τὸν [ἀρ]ιστον
καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
κωὺδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
[]σαν
[
[]αμπτον γὰρ [
[
[]...κούφως τ[]ση.[.]ν
[
..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὀ]νέμναι-

σ' οὐ] παρείσας,
τᾶ]ς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμάρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
[πεσδομ]άχεντας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

Part Four

Ontology and Denotatum

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of *pathei-mathos*, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it

can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presented as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are ψυχή as ψυχή is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἔόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσασιν, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀθρώπους
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὕδοντες
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

The Simple Way of Harmony

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for

humility.

Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] qv. *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical*

Compendiary.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Part Five

A Very Personal Conclusion

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until

another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature *en masse* - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

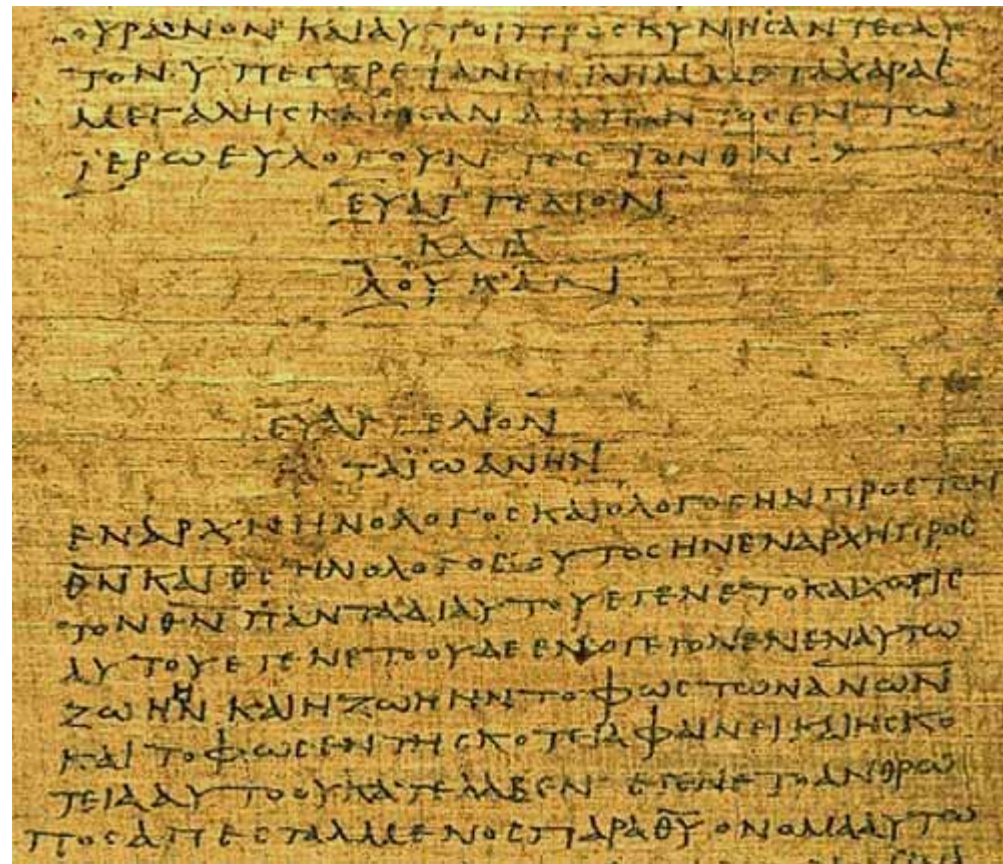
My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of δίκη, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived, presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἀρμονίη we, in such honourable moments, are.

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993

cc David Myatt 2013
(First Edition)

This work is issued under the Creative Commons
(Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0) License
and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

Image credit: NASA/STS107 (Columbia) - Moon Over the Atlantic Ocean



The Gospel According to John

Translation And Commentary

Volume I

Chapters 1 - 5

David Myatt

Preface

This is the first of five projected volumes containing my complete translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John.

In respect of the Greek text, I have followed Nestle-Aland (NA28), although I have on occasion favoured some variant reading such as from the Textus Receptus (Stephanus, 1550) or from a particular MSS with such departures noted in the commentary and which commentary illustrates my methodology and thus my interpretation, which is of seeking to understand the meaning of certain Greek words in their historical context and of searching for appropriate English words to express that meaning and not the "meaning" that particular English words may now convey to the detriment of understanding this particular Gospel in that historical context.

In terms of layout of the translation, I follow the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon version - adopted by both Wycliffe and Tyndale - of placing each verse on a separate line and capitalizing the initial letter of each verse.

2017

Image credit:

Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75). c. 175-225 CE . Gospel of John, Chapter 1, vv.1 ff. Vatican Library.

Introduction

A New Interpretation

The genesis of this interpretation of meaning was some marginal notes I made, some forty years ago while a Christian monk, in my copy of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον.

During my time in that monastery many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [i], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase - from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel - θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

In the matter of minutiae, I had then some doubts as to why θεὸς there is not ὁ θεὸς as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. But arguments were made regarding why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it was argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, were considered to be divinely-inspired - guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ [ii] - so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to such doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest - beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek - in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay-Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung brought-into-being by some thirty years of πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I now approach the text as I have in the past three decades approached the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, and as I have sometimes done in translations of mine from Hellenic Greek (for example, tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum), I have here opted for some transliterations (such as logos and theos) in an endeavour to avoid reading into the text the meanings that some of the English words conventionally used in other translations - and given in lexicons - may now suggest, or do suggest often as a result of over a thousand years of exegesis. For the hope is that such transliterations, and eschewing some other English words that have traditionally been used, will enable the reader to approach and to appreciate the text in a new way, sans preconceptions, and hopefully intimate how it might have been understood by those - both pagans and new converts - who first heard or read this evangel in the formative years of Christianity before Christian doctrine became formalized, before disputations about heresy, and before there were extensive theological commentaries on the text.

To give just two examples. (i) In 8.7 and in respect of ἀναμάρτητος I have eschewed the common translation of ἀμαρτία by English word 'sin' and which English word, through centuries of Christian exegesis and preaching, has become a theological abstraction and a pejorative term, whereas the the original meaning of the English word syn imputed the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; of in some way overstepping the bounds or transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus of accepting responsibility for such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis. While my translation of 'mistake' (in 8.7) and 'error' (in 1.29) may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the interpretation of this particular verse is "So, as they continued to ask he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake throw the first stone at her." (ii) In 1.10 - ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο - I take the sense of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν as suggesting not that "he was in the world" but rather that he was "of the world", among - with - those of the world, with his mortal body subject to pain and bodily death, with καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο thus implying not that "the world was made/created through him" but that the world was presenced in him, past, present, and future, with the English word 'presenced' - etymon: Latin praesentia - suggested by how he came to be embodied, presenced, in the Eucharist (qv. the phrase "This same presence may be called moste fitly, a reall presence, that is a presence not fained, but a true & a faythfull presence," in John Foxe's *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history: contaynyng the Actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realme*, 1570).

In several instances, in respect of choice of English words, I have taken inspiration from the Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels - the Wessex Gospels, dating from c.990 CE - as for example at 1.18 and 1.32.

[i] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[ii] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Both Wycliffe, and the King James Bible, translate as "The deep things of God."

Chapter One

1 In primacy was the logos, and the logos was with Theos, and the logos was Theos.

2 For this was, in primacy, with Theos

3 Who brought into being all beings and without whom no beings would exist:

4 Who was Life and which Life was the Phaos of human beings.

5 And the Phaos illuminates the dark and is not overwhelmed by the dark.

6 There was a man, a messenger from Theos, named John

7 Who, arriving as a witness so that others might trust him, gave evidence concerning the Phaos

8 For he himself was not the Phaos but rather gave evidence regarding the Phaos:

9 Of the advent into the world of the genuine Phaos who could enlighten any person.

10 He who was of the world with the world presenced in him but whose own did not recognize him.

11 For having ventured to his own his own did not receive him

12 While those who did receive him he confirmed as children of Theos including those affirming his Nomen

13 Who were begotten not of blood nor by the design of mortals but of Theos.

14 And the Logos became corporeal and dwelt among us and we perceived his numinosity, the numinosity of the only begotten of the Father, abounding in veritas, benevolence.

15 John was a witness for him and loudly said, "This is he of whom I spoke: the one who, arriving after me, takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.

16 Out of his plenitude we have been given benevolence after benevolence

17 For while the Nomos was received from Moses, benevolence and veritas came to be through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has ever yet beheld Theos; but the being in the greda of the Father has made him known."

19 For such was the evidence John gave when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?"

20 And he admitted, he did not deny but admitted, "I am not the Christ."

21 So they asked him: "Who, then? Are you Elijah?" And he said: "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he replied, "No."

22 So they asked him: "Who, then? For we have to give an answer to those who dispatched us. What have you to say about yourself?

23 He replied: "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places, straightening the way for the Master, just as Isaiah the Prophet said."

24 Now those dispatched were from the Pharisees

25 And they asked him, saying: "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet?"

26 John, answering them, said: "I baptize in water yet standing in your midst is someone you do not recognize

27 Who, proceeding me, arrives after me whose sandal strap I do not deserve to unfasten."

28 Such was what came to pass in Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day he saw Jesus approaching him and said: "Observe! The Lamb of Theos who removes the error of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said: 'Having arrived after me, he takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.'

31 Although personally unacquainted with him, it was for his discovery by Israel that I set out to baptize in water,"

32 And, as evidence, John said: "I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him.

33 And although personally unacquainted with Him, it was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.'

34 Such have I seen and such is my evidence that this is the Son of Theos."

35 Next day, John once more stood with two of his disciples

36 And, looking at Jesus as he passed them by, said: "Observe, the Lamb of Theos."

37 Hearing him say this, his two disciples followed Jesus

38 And Jesus, seeing them following him, turned around, asking: "What do you seek?"

And they replied: "Rabbi," - which is to say, when interpreted, Master - "where do you stay?"

39 He replied: "Arrive with me and you will see." So they arrived and saw where he stayed, staying with him that day: this, around the tenth duration.

40 One of the two who had followed him after having heard John was Andrew, brother of Simon Peter,

41 Who having firstly sought his brother Simon said to him: "We have found The Messias," which when interpreted is Christ.

42 And he led him to Jesus who, looking at him, said: "You are Simon, son of John, and you will be called Kephas," which, when explained, is Petros.

43 The next day Jesus went forth into Galilee and there found Philip, saying to him: "Follow me."
44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the community of Andrew and Peter.
45 Philip, finding Nathaniel, said to him: "We have found the one written about by Moses in the Nomos and by the Prophets: Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph."
46 And Nathaniel asked him: "Has anything good ever come from Nazareth?" To which Philip replied: "Set out with me and see."
47 When Jesus beheld Nathaniel approaching he said this about him: "Behold, a true Israelite: someone without guile."
48 Nathaniel said to him: "From where do you know me?" In answer, Jesus said: "Before Philip called you I beheld you beside a tree of figs."
49 To which Nathaniel replied: ""Rabbi, you are the Son of Theos, you are the King of Israel."
50 In answer, Jesus said: "Are you persuaded because I beheld you beside a tree of figs? You will see much more than that."
51 And he said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that you will see the sky opening and those envoys of Theos descending to and ascending around the son of a mortal."

ooo

Chapter Two

1 On the third day there was a marriage in Cana, Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.
2 Also invited to the wedding were Jesus and his disciples
3 And when there was an insufficiency of wine the mother of Jesus said to him: "They do not have any wine,"
4 And Jesus said to her: "My lady, what has that to do with you and me? For my season is not yet due."
5 His mother said to the attendants: "Do whatever he says."
6 And - as there were there six stone water-urns set up according to Judaeans cleansing holding two or three measures each -
7 Jesus said to them: "Fill those urns with water." And they completely filled them.
8 Then he said: "Now pour some out for the master of ceremonies." And they did.
9 Thus the master of ceremonies tasted the water become wine unaware from whence it was - although the attendants, having poured it, were aware - and called out to the spouse,
10 Saying to him: "Everyone sets out the better wine first and then, after a sufficiency is drunk, an inferior one, but you have kept the better wine until now."
11 This was the commencement of the signs, and this Jesus did in Cana, Galilee, and thus was his numinosity manifest with his disciples trusting him.

12 After this he - with his mother, brothers, and his disciples - went down to Capernaum, staying there for not many days,
13 And when the pascha of the Judaeans was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
14 Where, in the temple, he found those sellers of oxen and sheep and doves as well as those seated changers-of-money,
15 And, fashioning a flail from cords, he cast all of them - including the sheep and the oxen - out from the temple and poured away the coins of those changers-of-money and overturned their tables,
16 Saying to those sellers of doves: "Take those from here. Do not make the house of my father a house of merchandise."
17 His disciples recalled that it was written: "Enthusiasm for your house will devour me."
18 In response, the Judaeans said to him: "What sign do you show us for you doing such things?"
19 Jesus replied, saying to them: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it."
20 The Judaeans said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and you will raise it in three days?"
21 But he spoke of the temple of his body.
22 When therefore he was raised from the dead his disciples recalled that he had said this and trusted what was written and the word that Jesus had spoken.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at pascha on the feast-day, many trusted in his name having beheld the signs which he did,
24 But Jesus did not place his trust in them since he understood everything
25 And did not need anyone to give evidence regarding a person, aware as he was of the person within.

ooo

Chapter Three

1 Now there was a Pharisee - a man called Nicodemus, a leader of the Judaeans -
2 Who, arriving at night, said to him: "Rabbi, we recognize that you are a teacher, arriving from Theos, for no one is able to do the signs you do unless Theos is with them."
3 In answer, Jesus said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born anew they are unable to behold the Kingdom of Theos."
4 Nicodemus said to him: "How can a person be born when they are old? How are they able to twice enter the womb of the mother?"
5 Jesus answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born of Water and Spiritus they are unable to enter the Kingdom of Theos.
6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spiritus is spiritus.
7 Do not be astonished that I said to you to that it is needful for you to be born anew.

8 The wind blows where it will, and when you hear its sound you do not know from whence it came or whence it goes. So it is for everyone who is born of the Spiritus."

9 In reply, Nicodemus said to him: "How are such things able to exist?"

10 Jesus answered, saying to him: "You - a Magister of Israel - do not apprehend such things?"

11 Verily verily I say unto you that what we recognize, we can talk about, and what we have observed we can give evidence concerning, and our evidence has not been accepted.

12 Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien?

13 And no one has ascended into Empyrean without having descended out from Empyrean, the son of a mortal who is in Empyrean,

14 For just as Moses elevated that serpent in a forsaken place so will the son of a mortal be elevated

15 So that all those trusting in him might have life everlasting.

16 For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

17 For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him.

18 Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

19 And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful.

20 For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed.

21 But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples, having arrived in the land of the Judaeans, stayed there together, for he was baptizing.

23 Also baptizing - in Aenon near Salim - was John, since the water there was plentiful and others had arrived to be baptized,

24 And John had yet to be hurled into a guarded cage.

25 Now, it came to pass that some disciples of John were disputing with a Judaeon about the cleansing,

26 So they went to John and said to him: "Rabbi, there on the other side of the Jordan is the one you gave evidence about. He is baptizing and everyone is going to him."

27 In answer, John said: "A person is unable to receive anything unless it is gifted to them from Empyrean.

28 You yourselves can give evidence that I said I am not the Christ but was dispatched before him.

29 He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

30 It is necessary that he continues to grow and that I wane.

31 The one who arrives from above is above everything while the one from the Earth is of the Earth and speaks about the Earth: the one who arrives from Empyrean is above everything.

32 He gives evidence about what he observed and heard and yet no one accepts his evidence.

33 Whomsoever accepts his evidence certifies by their seal that Theos is steadfast,

34 For the one dispatched by Theos speaks the words of Theos since he does not apportion Spiritus.

35 The father loves his son and has placed all things in his hands:

36 Whomsoever trusts in the son shall have life everlasting but whomsoever does not trust the son shall not see that life; rather, the anger of Theos abides on them.

ooo

Chapter Four

1 Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had made more disciples and baptisms than John

2 Even though it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples,

3 He left Judaea and went back again into Galilee

4 With him of necessity having to pass through Samaria.

5 Thus did Jesus arrive in a town in Samaria called Sychar near to the plot of land that Jacob had gifted to Joseph his son

6 Where the well of Jacob was. And Jesus, wearied by his walking, sat down beside that well: this, around the sixth duration.

7 When a Samaritan woman arrived to haul-out water, Jesus said to her: "Grant me to drink,"

8 For his disciples had departed to the town to purchase food,

9 With the Samaritan woman saying to him: "How do you, a Judaeon, ask to drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" For Judaeans do not use Samaritan things.

10 Jesus answered and said to her: "Had you been aware of the gift of Theos and who it was saying to you 'grant me to drink,' you would have asked of him and he would have gifted you with living water."

11 The woman said to him: "Sir, you do not have anything to haul-out with and the well is deep. From where then is this living water that you have?"

12 Are you better than our ancestor Jacob who gifted us with this well which he himself drank from as did his sons and livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her: "Whomsoever drinks this water will thirst again

14 But whomsoever would drink of the water I gift them would not ever thirst. Instead, the water I gift them would be in them a source of water rising up to life everlasting."

15 The woman said to him: "Sir, grant me that water so I never thirst nor have to be here, hauling."

16 To her he said: "Go, call your spouse and return here."

17 The woman answered, saying to him: "I do not have a spouse."

Jesus replied: "It is good that you said you have no spouse.

18 Although you have had five spouses, he whom you are with now is not your spouse. Thus, you told the truth."

19 The woman said to him: "Sir, I deem you are a prophet.

20 Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus said to her: "My lady, trust me. There is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

22 You reverence what you do not recognize; we reverence what we recognize, for deliverance is of the Judaeans.

23 But a season is arriving - and is here, now - when the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity. And the Father seeks those who so reverence him.

24 Theos is Spiritus, and it behoves those reverencing him to give reverence in spiritus and sincerity."

25 The woman said to him: "I am aware that the Messias - called the Christ - is arriving. When he arrives, he will disclose everything to us."

26 Jesus said to her: "I am: who speaks to you."

27 It was then that the disciples arrived and, although they had wondered why he was speaking with a woman, none of them asked "What are you enquiring about?" or "Why are you speaking to her?"

28 The woman, leaving her water-urn, departed for the town and said to the people there

29 "Follow! Behold a man who related to me everything I have ever done. Could it be the Christ?"

30 So they went forth from the town to arrive near to him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples made a request of him, saying: "Rabbi, eat."

32 But he said to them: "I have food to eat that you do not recognize."

33 Then the disciples said among themselves: "Did anyone provide, for him to eat?"

34 Jesus said to them: "My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

35 Do you not say: There are four moons until the harvest arrives? Behold, I say to you: raise your eyes and observe the fields for they are already nearing harvest-white.

36 The one reaping receives payment, gathering together fruit for life everlasting, so that both the one sowing and the one reaping can rejoice.

37 In this instance, there is a relevant saying: One sows and another reaps.

38 I sent you to reap that which you did not toil for but which others did toil for, and you are entering into that toil."

39 Now, many Samaritans in that town trusted in him because of the word of the woman who gave evidence: "he related to me everything I have ever done."

40 Thus when the Samaritans, arriving, were near him they invited him to stay with them. And for two days he stayed there.

41 And many more trusted because of his word,

42 Saying to the woman: "We do not trust because of what you told us, for we ourselves have heard and recognize that this is indeed the Servator Of The World.

43 And, after two days, he went forth from there into Galilee,

44 For Jesus himself gave evidence that a prophet is not esteemed in his own village.

45 On his arrival in Galilee, the Galileans accepted him having observed all that he had done at the feast in Jerusalem, for they themselves had gone to that feast.

46 Then he went again to Cana of Galilee where he had made that water wine. And there was in Capernaum a royal official whose son was ill.

47 When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea he went to him to ask him to descend and heal his son who was about to die.

48 Jesus said to him: "If you do not observe signs and portents you will not trust."

49 The royal official said to him: "Sir, descend before my dear child dies."

50 Jesus said to him: "Be on your way: your son will live." The man trusted the word of Jesus that he had said to him, and went on his way.

51 And even as he was descending his servants met him, saying that his son was alive.

52 Thus he enquired of them in which duration his betterment took hold. And they said to him: "Yesterday, at the sixth duration the fever left him."

53 The father therefore learned that it was the duration when Jesus had said to him: "Your son will live," and thus he himself was trusting as was everyone in his household.

54 That was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea.

Chapter Five

1 Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem.
2 And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades
3 In which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water
4 Since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

5 And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm.
6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"
7 The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."
8 Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."
9 And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

10 Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."
11 To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."
12 So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk around?"
13 But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

14 Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."
15 The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete.
16 And thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.

17 When Jesus responded to them: "My father even now labours, and I also labour,"
18 The Judaeans were even more determined to kill him since not only had he annulled the Sabbath but also because he spoke of Theos as his Father, presenting himself as equal to Theos.

19 In response, Jesus said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the son is not able to do anything on his own: only that which he observes his father doing. For whatever the father does, the son also does,
20 For the father loves the son and reveals to him all that he does. And, beyond this, he will reveal to him greater works which shall astonish you
21 Since just as the father awakens the dead, and gives life, so also the son gives life by design to whomsoever,
22 For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son
23 So that all might honour the son as they honour the father. And whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting and is not entered into the choosing but passes from death into life.
25 Verily, verily, I say unto you that a season is arriving, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Theos and those who listen shall live.
26 Just as the father possesses Life within himself so he gifted the son with Life within him,
27 And also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.
28 Do not be astonished at this, for a season is arriving when all those in their burial places will hear his voice
29 And proceed forth: those who have acted honourably to anastasis of life; those who have acted dishonourably, to anastasis of the choosing.
30 For I am not able to do anything on my own. When I have listened, I choose; and my choosing is fair since I do not seek my own design but rather the design of he who sent me.
31 If I am a witness about myself then my testimony is invalid,
32 But there is another as a witness for me, and I recognize that his testimony about me is valid.

33 You inquired after John, and he was evidential to the veritas.
34 And, although the testimony I receive is not from people, I say these things that you may be rescued.
35 He: a lantern, firefull and revealing; you: desirous to seasonably exult in his phaos.
36 I however have a testimony beyond that of John, for the deeds the father gifted me that I should accomplish them - the deeds which I do - are witness that the father sent me,
37 With the father - he who sent me - a witness about me: he whose voice you have never heard, whose likeness you have never observed,
38 With his Logos not remaining within you for you do not trust the one he sent.
39 You search the writings because you suppose that there is within them life everlasting and that they are a witness about me.
40 And yet have no desire to go to me so that you might have Life.

41 I do not receive honours from people,
42 But I have recognized you: for love of Theos is not within you.
43 I have arrived in the name of my father yet you do not accept me, but if another arrives in his own name you will accept him.
44 How are you able to trust when you accept honours from one another and yet do not seek the honour that is only from Theos?

45 Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the father, for it is Moses - on whom you rely - who is the one accusing you.

46 Had you trusted Moses, you would have trusted me for it was he who wrote about me.

47 Thus, since you do not trust what he wrote, how can you trust what I say?

Commentary

Chapter One

1.

a) Ἐν ἀρχῇ

I have eschewed the conventional, and the somewhat bland, 'in the beginning', for the more descriptive 'in primacy', a sense which the Greek suggests.

b) λόγος

It is, in my view, better to transliterate this than give a definite interpretation such as 'Word', especially since I incline toward the view that λόγος (as the following verses indicate - qv. the note on πρὸς τὸν θεόν below) is used here both in the sense of divine wisdom as manifest in the divine Law (as for example in the LXX text of Exodus 34.28) and in reference to Jesus - the divine made manifest - thus implying a fundamental principle which describes/reveals the nature of Being and beings, and thus the relationship between Being and beings. In this case, between the divinity and we mortals, and the duties and responsibilities of mortals.

Thus the translation 'In primacy was the logos.'

c) θεὸς

A transliteration for two basic reasons. (i) Because this is the very beginning of the text, with nothing having been mentioned so far about the nature or the attributes of the deity, and (ii) because the English word God now implies a particular cultural interpretation, the assumption being of God, as father. It is here just theos, or Theos if one reads Θεόν rather than θεόν, which after much reflexion, I am inclined to do.

The nature and attributes of Theos do become revealed, as the text proceeds, and to transliterate here is to approach the text as the evangel it was, and to thus possibly appreciate how it was received by those who first heard it or read it in the formative years of Christianity.

i) In respect of Theos, the lack of the definite article in θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος formed part of a certain theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit (qv. 4.24). The basis of the controversy was whether 'the Theos' (ὁ θεός, The God) was the same or different from Theos, and if so whether Jesus, as the son of Theos, was always-existent (and thus the same as The God) or came-into-being afterwards, with the dispute later described as the Arian controversy, with 'Arianism' (the belief that Jesus was not equivalent to The God) denounced as a 'heresy'.

ii) In respect of the meaning of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος there was also some dispute on grammatical grounds and which dispute continued into the Renaissance and beyond. The conventional reading was "the logos was Theos", with the minority reading (qv. Jean Daillé) being "Theos was the logos." Although my initial reading - as evident in earlier drafts of my translation - was 'Theos was the logos' I have, after much reflection and a re-reading of pertinent texts by John Chrysostom, Origen, and others, decided on "the logos was Theos."

2.

a) πρὸς τὸν θεόν

What does πρὸς τὸν θεόν mean? Perhaps not exactly what the conventional translation of 'with' implies, given πρὸς here is a preposition (with the accusative) which is generally indicative of movement (*toward*, or to interact with, or *unto*, something) and that, for the reader of the translation, 'the Logos was *with* Theos' is not very clear. With, the reader might well enquire, in what manner? As in the sense of being beside, or close? As in the Shakespearean Heaven doth with us as we with torches do? [1] As in - a sense not relevant to the Greek here but which English usage might suggest - supporting?

The English word *with* - with all its possible meanings, recent and otherwise - is not therefore in my view altogether satisfactory in suggesting the sense of the Greek. In the subsequent verse of John - 1.42 πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν - the sense is *to* Jesus, and in Hebrews 2:17 τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν suggests the sense of 'concerning', of relating to, which the English word *with* can also denote.

Positioned as it is between 'the primacy of the Logos' and the 'Logos was Theos', the sense - because of the repeated ἦν - suggests melded, with a free, non-literal, interpretation therefore being:

In primacy, the Logos, with Logos and Theos melded, for the Logos was Theos.

This evangel does not, therefore in my view, begin with some sort of philosophical statement of a neo-Platonist kind about some metaphysical principle termed Logos, but rather is a reminder that, for mortals, what has and had primacy was Logos understood, prior to Jesus, as the divine guidance manifest in the wisdom that is the Law, and that this wisdom, given to mortals by the divinity was, of itself and for us, a divine manifestation, a presencing, of the divinity. A sense which the mention of John the Baptist in v. 6-7 confirms, for John was sent by the divinity to testify – μαρτυρήση – as to this truth. For God is Wisdom, the Law, and the Law is of God and, importantly according to the Old Testament context of this gospel and of the other gospels, how mortals could - before the birth of Jesus - know and understand and be in the presence of God. As Paul of Tarsus expressed it in relation to the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth:

πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love is the completion of the law [2]

With arrival of Jesus, the Logos is manifest in and through his life, teachings, crucifixion, death and resurrection, with reverence of and trust in Jesus reverence of and trust in Theos, with Jesus saying in 4.21 that "there is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem," and in 3.16 that "all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting."

b) Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν

This line, with its repetition of ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ and of πρὸς τὸν θεόν from line 1 is very interesting, especially in relation to οὗτος which here imputes the sense of "for *this* was in [that] primacy [already melded] with Theos," a translation which in my view is somewhat more meaningful than the conventional [3] "the same was in the beginning with God" and certainly more accurate than the "He was with God in the beginning" of some newer translations.

3.

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο

ἐγένετο – born, or (even better) *came into being*, rather than the more prosaic 'made' as if in illusion to something having been manufactured. The sense is of things – of beings – coming into being, given existence, because of and by Theos.

4.

a) ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων

Literally, "in whom The Life was" (that is, in whom The Life had being, existence) and "which Life was [became] the φῶς of human beings."

b) ἄνθρωπος – human beings, rather than the archaic 'man/Mankind'.

An alternative for ζωὴ would be 'being' in the sense of having existence as opposed to non-existence (death), suggesting "Who was Being and which being became [through Theos] the φῶς [the being] of human beings."

Given that φῶς metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φῶς instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωὴ and θεὸς and ἐγένετο and ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος [4]

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

c) τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει

Here, the value of using the transliteration phaos is evident, for 'phaos illuminates the dark' rather than 'light shines into the darkness' since the suggestion appears to that there is a revealing [5] of what has been obscured; that 'phaos dispels the obscurity' as the illumination brought by the Sun dispels the obscurity that is a feature of the night, or least was, in the days when the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth was revealed, when the dark night could only partially (and not very far, in distance) be illuminated by items such as small oil lamps or by candles or by the flicker of burning torches.

5. ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν

καταλαμβάνω is an interesting word to use, suggestive here, given the context, of an activity – overcome, seize, take -

rather than 'comprehend' which is somewhat anthropomorphic.

Hence, 'not overwhelmed by', as the dark of the night cannot overwhelm the illumination that the Sun brings but rather is itself overwhelmed.

12. *Nomen*: ὄνομα. Not simply 'name' as we understand a name but rather a term, an appellation, 'a word', which expresses or signifies his very nature, his being, his physis.

13. θέλημα - not 'will' but 'design/desire', giving thus "not by the design/desire of mortals/human beings." The English term 'will' has too many modern and post-Hellenic connotations (qv. JS Mill, Nietzsche, JS Huxley, καὶ τὰ λοιπά)

14. καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ. Compare the beginning of the *Ἱερός Λόγος* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum*: Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία, The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

As noted in my commentary on that tractate, 'numen' expresses the religious sense of δόξα better than ordinary (now overused) words such as 'splendour' and 'glory', and with 'numinal' more expressive and more appropriate there than 'divine'.

πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία. Regarding χάρις the English term benevolence is more appropriate than 'grace' given over a thousand years of exegesis in respect of 'grace', including the *sola gratia* of the Reformation. In respect of ἀληθεία I have chosen the Latin *veritas* in order to avoid the disputations - philosophical and otherwise - and the assumptions that the English word 'truth' so often now imputes and engenders, with the reader (or the listener) thus having to reflect on what *veritas* might, in this context, signify. In addition, ἀληθείας here suggests not some abstract, impersonal, 'truth' but rather truthfulness, sincerity, integrity: the type of person that Jesus of Nazareth is. In respect of 'veritas' suggesting such truthfulness and sincerity, qv. the entry for *veritas* in *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*, volume 4b. Interestingly, Tyndale in his 1526 translation has "which worde was full of grace, and verite," and at 1.17 has "favour and verite cam by Jesus Christ."

15. ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν

The sense of γίνομαι here is 'came-into-being' (before me), rather than simply 'was before me' for the usage is metaphysical as often in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, for example *Poemandres* 17, tractate III:3, tractate IV:4.

17. νόμος. A transliteration - *nomos* - since as with *logos* a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

18. Reading *μονογενῆς θεὸς* with NA28 and not the 'Byzantine textual' variant ὁ *μονογενῆς υἱὸς* which most translators - ancient and modern - have favoured given the difficulty of translating *μονογενῆς θεὸς* in context, although the meaning seems clear: "while no one so far has beheld Theos, the being [ὁ ὢν] in the *greda* [κόλπον] of the father has now explained [ξηγήσατο] him."

Regarding *greda*, this Old English word - qv. the tenth/eleventh century Anglo-Saxon version of Luke 16:23 - is a fitting translation of the Greek given that the alternatives, lap, and bosom, seem too anthropomorphic to be used in the context of Theos especially as "no one has ever seen him" with it only being said that Jesus has "explained" who and what Theos is. Interestingly, for this verse of the Gospel of John the Anglo-Saxon translator used the synonym 'barme' as does the Lindisfarne Gospel in respect of Luke 6:38.

19. ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων. After much consideration I have translated *Ἰουδαία* not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by *Judaeans*, given (i) that the English terms *Jews* and *Jewish* (deriving from the 13th/14th century words *gyn*/*gyw* and *lewe*) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, *Judaea* (as does the Latin *iudaeus*); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (*iudeas*) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, *æfter iudea geclensunge*, "according to *Judaeans* cleansing." [6]

23. ἔφη ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῃ. I have opted for a fairly literal translation, with *ἔρημος* retaining its original meaning of an 'unpopulated, deserted, forsaken' place, and with *βοάω* suggestive of a caller 'calling out aloud' in such a place. Hence, "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places" rather than the conventional (KJV) "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

26. ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε. One - someone - "you do not know" in the sense of not perceiving (seeing) them; that is, not recognizing them. Cf. *συννοία δὲ δάπτομαι κέαρ ὁρῶν ἑμαυτὸν ὥδε προυσελούμενον* (Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 438), "disturbing things devour my heart since I recognize just how mistreated I have been."

Interestingly, the ASV of the Gospel of John has *ne cunnon* so that the text can be read "not acquainted/not familiar with." Cf. *Beowulf*:

metod hie ne cuþon,
dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten god,
ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cuþon,
wuldres waldend. (180-183)

[they were] unacquainted with The Chief,
Judger of deeds, and with the Lord God,
as well as unacquainted with how to praise

29. ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. As mentioned in the Preface, I translate ἀμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake', which is quite apposite here considering the use of the singular and the preceding mention of Jesus as the Lamb of God: of Jesus having arrived to remove the error, the fault, that 'the world' has made, has fallen into, with 'the Lamb of God' thus healing the injury so caused. Which is quite different from some preacher sternly preaching about 'sin' and warning about the 'fire and brimstone' that await sinners. As Thomas Aquinas noted in his commentary on this passage, "Alia ratio ut excluderet errorem." (Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura, caput I, Lectio 14)

32.

a) τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' - both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis - now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma - with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic - does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of *gast* in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies* [7].

b) ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Conventionally, οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods (ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί), an assumption consistent with the fact that the Evangelist explains and interprets certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51).

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, שָׁמַיִם

33. ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

39. ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη. To translate ὥρα here as 'hour' is somewhat misleading given that the term 'hour' now means a fixed period of sixty minutes whereas the day of the ancient (Roman governed) milieu of the Gospel was divided into twenty-four durations or periods and which durations depended on the length of daylight (and thus the season) at the location in question, with there being twelve durations of daylight and twelve durations of night. Hence the 'tenth duration' mentioned in this verse - whether it be the tenth duration of the daylight hours or the tenth duration of the twenty-four - would not necessarily equate to what we would term 'ten o'clock' in the morning and certainly would not equate to a tenth 'hour' lasting sixty minutes. In addition, it depends on when the first duration was measured from: sunrise, or sunset, or from 'the mid-point of the night'. Which has led to debate among scholars as to whether or not John in this Gospel is, in respect of ὥρα, using Roman terminology for such periods, as well as to debates about whether the Roman durations were reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' or from sunrise. If reckoned from sunrise, then allowing for latitude and seasonal variation, this 'tenth duration' was between mid to late afternoon. If reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' then this 'tenth duration' was mid to late morning.

This fluid, local, sense of 'time' is well-expressed by the Old English word *tyd* - from whence the term *tide* - which signified a period, a duration, of the day or of a season when it was appropriate or propitious to undertake a specific task or tasks. Hence the ASV having - for ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη - *hyt wæs þa seo teoðe tyd*. Such a fluid sense of an appropriate or propitious duration - a tide, a moment, a season - is apposite in several instances when John uses the term ὥρα, as for example at vv. 2.4 and 7.30.

41. τὸν Μεσσίαν. The Messiah. Following Wycliffe and Tyndale, I have transliterated as Messiah (ASV has Messiam) rather than the more usual Messiah, given how the term Messiah is now commonly used in a non-Christian way. As John Chrysostom noted in his commentary on this verse (Migne Patrologia Graeca 59, Homily XIX), the use here of the

definite article by the Evangelist seems deliberate: with Jesus described as *The* Messiah, rather than a messias.

42. ὁ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος. I have transliterated Πέτρος - rather than translate as 'Rock' - and for ἐρμηνεύω (the etymon of the relatively modern, c.1670's, term hermeneutic) have chosen 'explain' to compliment the previous use of μεθερμηνεύω, 'interpretation'.

44. ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. While πόλις here is invariably translated as 'city' that English word is misleading given (i) the modern connotations of the term city, and (ii) with Bethsaida being described by Mark (8.22-23) - ἔξω τῆς κώμης - as a village, and (iii) that some archaeological evidence points to Bethsaida being et-Tell, which in New Testament times was a small fishing settlement beside the Sea of Galilee. Thus, I incline toward the view that πόλις here is best translated as 'community', qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 22 and 28. [8]

51.

a) ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγῶτα. Conventionally, "you will see [the] heaven[s] open" although as noted in the comment on 1.32 the term 'heaven' now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός. While, as at 1.32, Empyrean is suitable, the context suggests the ordinary meaning of "the sky", thus avoiding the colloquial "you will see the heavens open."

b) τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ. Conventionally, "the angels of God," but as seems apparent from the use by the Evangelist of expressions such as ἐρμηνεύω and μεθερμηνεύω - explaining and interpreting unusual (for Greek speakers) words such as Rabbi - those hearing or reading this particular gospel for the first time would have been familiar with ἄγγελος as an 'envoy' or as a 'messenger', not as an "angel" and certainly not as a being of the type described by later Christian iconography. Because of this, I incline toward the view that the English word 'angel' is unsuitable as a translation here leading as it does to retrospective reinterpretation of the text. Hence, "those envoys of Theos."

c) τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Is it possible to interpret this in English without defaulting to the masculine singular thus avoiding the conventional appellation *the Son of Man*, and thus providing 'gender inclusive' alternatives? In the case of υἱός this could be 'descendant' - or the later second/third century (CE) 'child' - although ἀνθρώπου is more problematic. For example the Oxford Inclusive version [9] has, for the Son of Man, "the Human One" which rather distorts the meaning of the Greek, missing at it does the reference to υἱός, while the inclusive terms 'human' and 'human being' combined with υἱός as child impart a particular meaning - the human child, child of human beings - which particular meaning does not readily convey the theological and Biblical resonances of the terms Son of Man/Son of Mankind.

Hence my choice of "the son of a mortal" - of a mortal (singular), not of *mortals* (plural) - which not only resonates with the narrative of the Virgin Birth but also provides a necessary contrast with expressions such as Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος (in truth, this was the Son of Theos) in Matthew 27.54. Hence, Jesus as being a son born of one particular mortal and also being the son of an immortal, a mortal descendant of Theos/God who as a mortal suffers and dies, and yet who, as the Son of Theos, arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

ooo

Chapter Two

4.

a) τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι. This has been somewhat misunderstood in two respects. Firstly, the rather colloquial Greek phrase τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί occurs in Epictetus (Discourses, Book II, 19) and means "what is this between you and me?" That is, what has this to do with us? [10] Secondly, to translate γύναι here as "woman" is misleading, giving the impression as it does of a rebuke. However, correctly understood in its cultural context, it is a polite honorific in the same way that the modern expression "ladies and gentlemen" is a polite form of address. The phrase in Epictetus is followed by ἄνθρωπε; here, the phrase is followed by γύναι, with the former approximating to "friend, fellow, sir" and the latter to "friend, my lady, wife" with 'wife' being, in such a cultural context, an expression of familial inclusion, or of friendship, or of politeness, and thus not restricted to one's partner by marriage, a fact expressed by the ASV version of this passage: *la wif, hwæt ys me & þe*, a literal translation of which is "Wife, what's this to me and thee?"

b) οὕτω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου. The sense of ὥρα here is 'season'. Which season is that of 'the signs' (σημεῖα), of the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension.

8. ἀρχιτρικλινός. Literally, 'the authority at the feast'. The English term 'master of ceremonies' suitably suggests the function of this person.

11. ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων. The fact that the Evangelist uses the word σημεῖον and not δυνάμεις as in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is notable and thus should be reflected in the translation, with σημεῖον a 'sign', an 'indication', or an 'omen', and with δύναμις literally implying 'force', 'power', 'authority', and which has generally - in respect of the other Gospels - been translated as 'miracle' (a manifestation of divine power).

13. τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων. As with Ἰουδαία (qv. 1.19) I have retained the meaning of the Greek and thus have here transliterated πάσχα - pascha - rather than translated as 'Passover' especially as (i) the term Passover now has (often modern) connotations not relevant to the milieu of John the Evangelist and his Gospel, and (ii) that the Greek Orthodox Church retains the word πάσχα in respect of Easter, and (iii) there has been some theological debate as to whether the

Christian pascha (that is, Easter) has through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus voided the pascha (and the Temple in Jerusalem) of the type that the Evangelist goes on to describe.

Thus I incline toward the view that the conventional translation here of "the Passover of the Jews" may impose meanings (especially modern meanings) not merited by the original text while a literal translation - "the pascha of the Judaeans" - is open to contextual interpretation, the context here being what John the Evangelist narrates in his Gospel about the signs (σημεῖα) and about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This literal sense is retained in the Latin version of the verse: *et prope erat pascha iudaeorum et ascendit Hierosolyma Iesus.*

As to whether the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη - 'went down', to Capernaum and 'went up', to Jerusalem - in verses 12 and 13 - have any significance is moot, with some suggesting that it is meant literally since Jerusalem was at a higher elevation in relation to Capernaum; others that it is metaphorical given that Jerusalem was the capital of Judea and the site of the Temple; while others, such as Thomas Aquinas, compared it to Ephesians IV, 10, and thus considered it in theological terms as a 'descending' and then an 'ascending', with Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura, caput II, Lectio 1*

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended." [11]

22. καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

a) The consensus is that γραφῇ here - as throughout the New Testament - has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* - 'what was written', writing, inscription - with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier *Vetus Latina*. [12] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφῇ: writing, something written, an inscription. [13]

Considering what has been mentioned regarding how the Evangelist explained and interpreted certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51) it seems probable that the Evangelist is using the word γραφῇ in its usual sense, and that it was only much later that the Greek word, and the Latin *scripturae*, were interpreted to mean 'Scripture' in the 14th century sense of the English word.

Thus I have retained here the ordinary meaning of the Greek, with the reference to the Old Testament being implied by the phrase "trusted what was written."

b) The use here of the singular - τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 'the word (logos) that Jesus had spoken' - is notable, and occurs several times in this Gospel in relation to Jesus, as for example at 5.24, 14.23, and 15.3.

23. ἐν τῷ πάσχα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ. The sense of the Greek is "at pascha on the feast-day." Interestingly, for πάσχα here the ASV has *eastron* - *Ʒa he wæs on ierusalem on eastron on freols-daige*; Wycliffe has *pask* - *And whanne Jhesus was at Jerusalem in pask, in the feeste dai - and Tyndale has ester*, "When he was at Ierusalem at ester in the feaste".

24. γινώσκειν πάντας. That is, as the Evangelist goes on to explain, he apprehended - he understood - the motivations, the character, of those who trusted him because he aware of, he knew, the person within.

ooo

Chapter Three

1. ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων. In reference to Nicodemus, this can be, and has been, interpreted in several ways. As referring to "an Elder," to "a leader," to "a ruler," as well as to "a prince" (cf. 16.11, ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου, "Prince of this world," in reference to τοῦ διαβόλου, the Devil). Given Mark 8.31 - τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων - I have opted for "a leader of the Judaeans."

2. οὗτος ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ. While many translations refer to Jesus here - as does the KJV, "the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him" - he is not named in the Greek verse, which verse together with the proceeding one might colloquially be translated as "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a leader of the Judaeans. The same it was who arrived at night and said to he himself..."

3. γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν. The question that Nicodemus goes on to ask - πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὦν - suggests the sense of ἄνωθεν here: 'anew', rather than 'from above.'

4. τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς. Although this literally means "the cavity of the mother" it is most often translated as "the womb of the mother" although the ASV has, instead of 'cavity', 'innoðe' - the 'inside' of the body - and Tyndale simply has 'body' (*hys moders body*). For the sake of clarity, I have chosen 'womb' here.

5. ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as 'the Spiritus' - rather than the conventional 'the Spirit' - qv. the

comment on 1.32. Also, I have translated literally - ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς, of the flesh; and ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος, of the Spiritus - thus preserving the definite article, something sometimes lost in translation, although preserved in both Tyndale and the KJV.

8. δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. The plural 'you' is meant here: 'it is needful for you all [for everyone] to be born anew.'

10. σὺ εἶ ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. Given the use here of the definite article, διδάσκαλος suggests something more than just 'teacher' - cf. 3.2 - and I have therefore opted to use the Latin term Magister, implying as it does a particular and high official status, rather than use the literal "the teacher of Israel".

Given the definite article, it is debatable as to whether the Evangelist here wants to convey that Jesus is using the appellation ὁ διδάσκαλος politely or as a rebuke, although I incline toward the view that it is meant politely. Whatever the intent, the effect is that Nicodemus stays silent either because of being rebuked or because he realizes that despite being known as a Magister he really does not know everything. That the Evangelist later on describes Nicodemus trying to ensure a fair trial for Jesus (7.50f) and assisting in the burial of Jesus (19.39ff) might indicate the latter.

In addition, in order to suggest something about the use here of the conjunctive (which allows for several interpretations of the interrogative) I have avoided the English 'and' and used dashes, thus placing the emphasis on whether or not Nicodemus is aware or unaware of such matters as Jesus has mentioned.

12.

a) οὐ πιστεύετε. As at 1.7, 2.11, and 2.24, the personal context suggests 'trust' rather than 'believe'. Here, 'trust' emphasises the person, the character, of Jesus, while 'belief' can convey a belief in something abstract, impersonal, such as a dogma or some particular interpretation of some faith.

b) τὰ ἐπουράνια πιστεύετε. As noted in the comment on 1.32, I have translated οὐρανός not by the conventional English word 'heaven' but by Empyrean. Similarly, for ἐπουράνιος here I have avoided the word 'heavenly' (with all its connotations, ancient, modern, and colloquial) and chosen 'caelestien', a 14th century variant spelling of the post-classical Latin 'caelestianus' which derives from the classical Latin caelestia (celestial).

The effect here of using 'caelestien', as with the use of words such as 'numen' and transliterations such as Theos and phaos, is to suggest the ancient milieu of those who were reading or who were listening to this Gospel in the early years of Christianity, centuries before now common words such as 'heaven', grace, God, and Light had acquired particular theological meanings and an associated iconography.

13. ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Reading the addition ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ with the Textus Receptus and Tischendorf, and which addition is followed by the ASV, Wycliffe, Tyndale, and the KJV.

In respect of "the son of a mortal" for ὁ υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, qv. the comment on 1.51.

19-20. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. For their deeds were harmful; that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

21. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

24. βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. A phrase deserving some consideration, for φυλακή is not 'prison' as prisons are understood today and in the past few centuries but rather 'a guarded cage', with βεβλημένος εἰς implying a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into such a cage.

25. περὶ καθαρισμοῦ. *about the cleansing*. The term 'the cleansing' refers to the traditional ritual purification undertaken by Judaeans.

29. Here, as at 2.9, I have translated νυμφίος by the older (and gender neutral) English term 'spouse' rather than by the now common - rather overused - term bridegroom. In regard to νύμφη I have likewise avoided 'bride' and chosen espousess which - as with espouse - is a variant spelling of espousee, a 14th century term used by Wycliffe and contemporaries, and which term seems apposite here since from the 12th to the 14th centuries it also had a specific religious connotation, being used (as with spouse) in a gender neutral way in reference to those who were devoted to Jesus, although it later came to refer only to those women, such as nuns, who devoted their lives to Jesus.

33. The phrase "certifies by their seal" expresses the literal meaning of ἐσφράγισεν here. Similarly, the meaning of ἀληθής here is well-expressed by the Old English term *soothfast* - trustworthy, steadfast - and which term is used in

this verse in the ASV (god ys soðfestnyse) and in the translation by Wycliffe, with *soothe*, and various other derivatives, also used in the Lindisfarne Gospels.

36. οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν. There are two ways of understanding the literal 'shall not see life' depending on how ὄράω is understood in context: as a reference to life everlasting (will not see life everlasting) or as will not perceive, apprehend, understand, take heed of life (for the opportunity it is).

ooo

Chapter Four

1. Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The Textus Receptus, and Westcott and Hort, have κύριος (Lord, Master) instead of Ἰησοῦς.

4. Ἦδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχασθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας. The Evangelist states that it was necessary (δεῖ) for Jesus to walk through Samaria which given what follows (vv.9-10) suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans - as is apparent from the Gospel - shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general - with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things - arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' - better than Samaritans - with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans - an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" - exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should (qv. my comment on 2.13) be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

6. ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' rather than 'hour' qv. the comment on 1.39. As noted there, there are two means of reckoning the durations, with this sixth duration thus being either around the middle of the day (reckoned from the time of sunrise at the location) or early evening.

7.

a) Ἔρχεται γυνὴ ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας. Given that the English word Samaritan now has meanings which are not relevant to the text here I have opted to use the term Samaritans - rather than Samaritans - to describe the people of Samaria. Hence here the phrase a 'Samaritan woman' rather than a 'Samaritan woman'.

b) δός μοι πείν. I take the sense of δίδωμι here to be the more polite 'grant' rather than 'give'. Combined with πείν - to drink - this (grant me to drink) imparts a somewhat different tone than the conventional "give me a drink."

9. πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὦν. This is interesting for three reasons. Firstly, the use of πῶς, 'how' (by what means). Secondly the statement σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὦν, 'you being Judaeans'. Thirdly the repetition of πείν.

The Evangelist then explains the reason for her asking 'how can' Jesus accept water from her: because Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things. Which leaves unexplained why the woman - who as the Evangelist goes on to explain has a similar religious heritage to Jesus of Galilee - considers him as being from Judaea.

10.

a) εἰ ἦδεις τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ θεοῦ. The ASV has *Gif þu wistes godes gyfe*, with 'wistes' - wistist, in Wycliffe - well-expressing in English the sense of ἦδεις here: "if you were witan to the gift of Theos," or more colloquially "if you were wise to the gift of Theos."

b) ὕδωρ ζῶν. Here, ὕδωρ ζῶν, 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς - has both a metaphysical and a literal meaning. The literal meaning of fresh, clean, water is evident from the reply of the Samaritan woman: οὐτε ἀντλημα ἔχεις, you have nothing to haul-out [water] with. The metaphysical meaning is explained by the Evangelist in the verses which follow: the living water is the gift of Halig Spiritus (the Holy Spirit) and which gift is eternal life.

20. οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν. Given that there is no context - no mention of the form or type of 'worship' - the term 'reverence' seems appropriate regarding προσκυνέω, expressing as it does both the lack of detail in the narrative and the ambiguity the Greek can have, from a profound 'reverence' - as in the custom of prostration - to an action of honourable respect - as in bowing or being in awe of or showing admiration for - to a silent or verbal (prayerful) personal or communal veneration. In addition, since the English term 'worship' has, over centuries, acquired many religious connotations - both Christian and otherwise - that are not or may not be relevant here, the term is unsuitable, projecting as it does or can do particular meanings onto the text.

21. γύναι. In respect of the polite form of address - here, 'My lady' - rather than the conventional (rather strident)

'woman', qv. the comment on 2.4.

22. ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν. Given (i) that σωτηρία is 'deliverance'; and (ii) that the term 'salvation' has acquired particular meanings through centuries of exegesis, and (ii) that Ἰουδαίων implies Judaeans, the statement is that "deliverance is of - arises from, is because of - the Judaeans." For it is Judaeans who seek to kill Jesus for blasphemy (qv. 10.33) and Judaeans who bring Jesus before Pontious Pilate and insist that he be crucified.

23. ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. In respect of ἀλήθεια as 'sincerity' qv.3.21; hence οἱ ἀληθινοὶ as 'the sincere'. In respect of 'reverencers' - "the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity" - the English word reverencer dates back to the 16th century and has been regularly used since, denoting as it does a person who shows reverence toward someone or toward something deserving of reverence, qv. 4.20.

As to whether spiritus here is Spiritus as in 1.31-2 (the Halig Spiritus, Halgum Gaste, Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit) or refers to an interior 'spiritual' reverence (cf. 3.6) has been much discussed, with the consensus being that it refers to Halig Spiritus.

24. πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. This can be read "Theos: Spiritus," and - like θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος in v.1 - lead to some theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit, for here, as with θεὸς in v.1, πνεῦμα lacks the definite article while in v.1 λόγος does not.

26. Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ἰὸ λαλῶν σοι. The first part - Ἐγὼ εἰμ - literally means "I am." Most translations insert 'he' - "I am he" - which rather lessens the impact of what Jesus says, which is that he just "is", beyond causality itself and thus beyond any manifestation of Being - on Earth - as "a being", be such a being the mortal Messiah or some other mortal. Expressed less philosophically, Jesus says that it is the divinity who is speaking to her: "it is *I AM* who is speaking to you." Cf. 8.24.

34. ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον. Given (i) θέλημα not as 'will' but rather as 'design' in the sense of 'a plan' that someone can bring to fruition - qv. 1.13 - and (ii) that ποιέω can imply make, produce, construct, and (iii) the following ἔργον, then this suggests the more evocative "undertake the design of [the one] having sent me and accomplish His work."

35. τετράμηνος. Not 'of or lasting four months' but 'of four moons' (four new moons). The word 'month' - with its modern implications of a particular number of days and of there being twelve months in a year - imposes meanings on the text that are not relevant to life in ancient times in a rather remote Roman province during the reign of Tiberius.

I read ἤδη as part of v.35 and not as the beginning of v.36.

36. εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Here, while the English words 'for' or 'unto' for εἰς are not entirely satisfactory - since the sense is of *for* the purpose of entering into life everlasting - I can find no suitable alternatives.

37. ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ ὁ λόγος ἐστίν ἀληθινός. The context suggests the meaning of ἀληθινός here. In this [matter] - ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ - of sowing and reaping Jesus says that one person has sown the crop and another person has reaped that crop, which as an objective statement of fact is not always 'true' since the same person can sow a crop and also later on reap the crop they had sown. Thus ἀληθινός here does not suggest 'true' in an objective way but 'real, genuine, trustworthy' - cf. Aristotle, Eudemian Ethics, Book VII, 1236b, ἀληθινός φίλος, a 'genuine friend'; also Plato, Republic, Book I, 347d, ἀληθινός ἄρχων, a trustworthy leader.

That is, in this particular instance the saying is trustworthy, correct; it is relevant. There is therefore no need to suggest, as some commentators have done, that this simple statement of fact is a spiritual maxim concerning the spiritual reality behind outward appearance.

42. ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου. Some MSS - including the Textus Receptus - have ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου ὁ χριστός. It possible that ὁ χριστός - 'the Christ' - was appended because σωτὴρ was an epithet of Zeus (qv. Pindar, Olympian Ode, 5.40, Σωτὴρ ὑπινεφές Ζεῦ) and other classical deities and in its Latin form, Servator, was often used in reference to the Roman Emperor and those who had done significant deeds beneficial to Rome or its Empire.

While generally translated in the Gospels as saviour, the classical sense is someone who protects, defends, and preserves; in respect of individuals, someone or some divinity who protects, can defend, them and preserve their life; in respect of communities, someone or some divinity who protects, defends, and maintains the community and thus the status quo, qv. Cicero:

ego tantis periculis propositis cum, si victus essem, interitus rei publicae, si vicissem, infinita dimicatio pararetur, committerem ut idem perditor rei publicae nominarer qui servator fuissem. (For Placinius, 36.89)

Since both 'Saviour' and 'Redeemer', in the almost two thousand years since the Gospel was written - and first read and heard - have acquired particular theological (and especially soteriological) meanings which are not or may not have been relevant all those centuries ago I have chosen to use the Latin term *servator*. This avoids imposing upon the text much later theological/soteriological meanings, iconography, and archetypes; as for example in the following: "est duplex salus: quaedam vera, quaedam non vera. Vera quidem salus, cum liberamur a veris malis, et conservamur in veris bonis." (Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, caput 4, lectio 5)

The term servator also has the benefit of suggesting that the Evangelist, in using the expression ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, might have been contrasting Jesus - as Servator of The World - with the Roman Emperor as servator of the Roman Empire.

44. ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι. This does not refer to Galilee itself - or to "in his own country" as in the KJV - but rather to "his home village," Nazareth. As to the size of Nazareth during the life of Jesus, and thus as whether it was a town or a village, scholarly opinion - based on the scant archaeological and historical evidence - indicates it was probably a village, not a town, and certainly not a city.

46. τις βασιλικὸς. The 'royal official' belonged to the court of King Herod and the term βασιλικὸς might well have been used by the Evangelist to distinguish this official from a Roman one.

47. ἠρώτα ἵνα καταβῆ. The use of καταβαίνω (descend, come down) is suggestive of topography, with Capernaum a town by the Sea of Galilee and Cana (wherever it was located historically) somewhat higher up, just as Nazareth is above that Sea.

52.

a) ἐν ᾗ κομψότερον ἔσχεν. I have translated literally - eschewing prosaic terms such as 'got better' and 'began' - in order to try and convey the meaning of the Greek, of a royal official using a precise expression: κομψότερον ἔσχεν, which implies a sudden 'betterment', a remarkable recovery, rather than 'began to get better.'

b) Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' qv. 1.39. As noted there regarding determining durations, the 'sixth duration' mentioned here could be either early afternoon or early evening.

54. The exact meaning of the beginning here - of the final verse of chapter 4 - is difficult to deduce since the Greek text - τοῦτο πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον, in the Textus Receptus - even when amended to τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον is rather obscure. However the general sense seems clear, with the Evangelist narrating either that Jesus did two signs - 'miracles' - in Galilee after he left Judea for Galilee by way of Samaria with one of them being the healing of the son of royal official, or that the two signs in Galilee are the previous one at Cana (water into wine) and the healing of the son of royal official. I incline toward the former, hence: "that was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea."

ooo

Chapter Five

2.

the place of the sheep. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

named in the language of the Hebrews. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

3.

the infirm. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

awaiting a change in the water. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

4. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγίης ἐγένετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. Although the verse is omitted in NA28, and generally regarded as an interpolation, I include it since it is in ASV, Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV, and Douay-Rheims.

a) *envoy.* As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos.* Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English both as a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or deity.

c) *became complete*. ὑγιής ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

8. *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

9. *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

10. *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

14. *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

16. *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

18. *annulled the Sabbath*. ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον. They were more determined to kill Jesus not because he himself had 'broken' the Sabbath but because they believed he had publicly 'annulled' (λύω) the Sabbath by telling someone to do what the Judeans regarded as impermissible, and thus, by now equating himself to Theos, seemed desirous of replacing their Judaeian laws with new laws of his own.

19. *on his own*. ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ. Literally, of/from himself. The verse itself is evocative of a human son learning by observing what his father does.

21. *awakens*. Given the following ζωοποιέω - 'make alive, give life' - I am inclined to take the general sense of ἐγείρω - 'wake' - rather than the specific 'raise up' and which "raising up of the dead" now implies certain post-Hellenic iconographies.

22. *For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son*. οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The preceding θέλει and the context suggest κρίνω as 'choose' not 'judge', and which interpretation imparts a somewhat different meaning from the conventional one which involves Jesus giving life to 'whomsoever he wishes' and judging them; and a different meaning given how the term 'judgement' has for over two thousand years been interpreted in relation to the Old and the New Testaments.

Instead of such later interpretations, the Evangelist describes how Jesus simply gives life by design because his father - Theos - has given the task of choosing to his son. Which is why Jesus previously said (4:34)

Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον

My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

Thus here Jesus is affirming that he is indeed annulling the laws of the old covenant: it is he who now chooses who has life everlasting. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:39, 2 Kings 5:7, et seq.

24. *not entered into the choosing*. εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται. Literally, "does not go to Choosing" - in conventional terms, does not go into judgement - because having heard, and trusted the father through the son, they already have the gift of life everlasting and thus pass straight from death to that new life.

25. *shall hear ... have listened*. ἀκούσουσιν ... ἀκούσαντες. The literal "shall hear" and "that hear" does not clearly express what is meant.

27. *and also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing*. καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Literally, "and he gifted him with authority to undertake choosing because he is the son of a mortal." Which explains the following μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, "be not astonished at this". In regard to υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as 'son of a mortal' instead of Son of Man, qv. the comment on 1:51. Also, cf. 9:35, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which makes perfect sense if Jesus is asking "Do you trust the son of a mortal?" but is somewhat problematic if conventionally interpreted as "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

28. *burial places*. While the choice in respect of μνημεῖον seems to be between the literal 'monument', and tomb or grave, a most suitable alternative - cf. ASV (byrgenum) and Wycliffe (in buriels) - is 'burial places'.

29.

a) *those that have acted honourably*. οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες. In various essays - such as *Cicero On Summum Bonum* [14] - and in my commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, I have explained my reasons for interpreting ἀγαθός not as some posited, abstract, 'good' but classically as, according to context, nobility, noble, honourable. This is apposite here given the emphasis on personal deeds, on what a person had done (ποιήσαντες) or not done. Cf. the

following from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρίναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

b) *anastasis*. ἀνάστασις. A transliteration since the term 'resurrection' has, since it was first used in the 14th century, acquired various religious, doctrinal, and other associations (such as, in relation to Jesus, the resurrection of the physical body) and which associations may or may not be relevant here. In context, anastasis might refer here (contra Irenaeus) to a non-corporeal elevation or re-birth, and thus to the ψυχή - the spirit or soul - of those mortals who have been gifted with life everlasting proceeding to a place such as Emyrean.

c) *dishonourably*. The sense of φαῦλος is not some posited, abstract, impersonal, 'evil' but of personal deeds that are 'base', mean, and thus ignoble, dishonourable, and hence revealing of a rotten personal character, of a bad physis. Qv. πονηρός and φαῦλος at 3:19-20.

d) *to anastasis of the choosing*. εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως. Literally, 'to anastasis of choosing'. They - or their ψυχή - proceed forth from their place of burial to where Jesus chooses whether or not to gift them with life everlasting.

30. *I am not able to do anything on my own*. Qv. 5:19

33.

a) *you inquired after John*. ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλκατε πρὸς Ἰωάννην. Literally, "you dispatched unto John," referring to 1:19, the priests and Levites dispatched from Jerusalem.

b) *and he was evidential to the veritas*. καὶ μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. That is, he attested - gave evidence concerning - the veritas. Regarding veritas, qv. the comment on πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία, 1:14.

35.

a) *lantern*. λύχνος. The term 'lamp' is inappropriate given its modern connotations.

b) *firefull and revealing*. καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων. I take this metaphorically - the burning fire of the lantern shines a bright revealing light - rather than the literal "burning and bright".

c) In regard to *phaos*, qv. 1:4-5. Cf. Poemandres, 32, ζῶν καὶ φῶς; Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, I:2, τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοεράν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα.

36. *beyond that of John*. μείζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου. Not the rather strident 'greater than' - with its implication of 'better than' - but the comparative 'beyond that' as in an elder or someone fully-grown who is years beyond the age of someone younger, qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 358,

ὥς μήτε μέγαν μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι μέγα δουλείας γάγγαμον ἄτης παναλώτου

Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl. [15]

37. *whose likeness you have never observed*. οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐώρακατε. An interesting question of interpretation here is the meaning of εἶδος. Whether to translate as 'form' - with a possible implied reference to Plato's 'theory of forms' - or as the literal 'shape' or 'appearance'. Given the context - and 6:46, οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα - I take the literal meaning; hence *likeness*, as in Wycliffe.

39. *you search the writings*. ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς. Qv. 2:22 regarding γραφή not as the post-Hellenic exegetical 'scripture' but as having the usual Hellenistic meaning of 'that which is written', a writing. The ASV has Smeageað halige gewritu.

41. *I do not receive honours from people*. Δόξαν παρὰ ἀνθρώπων οὐ λαμβάνω. Regarding δόξα in respect of the supra-personal, qv. the comment on 1:14. Here, the human context implies receiving honour - praise, renown, a good reputation, a title or titles - from others and thus being regarded by people as an illustrious person: being 'glorified' by them on the basis of such human given honours.

44. *from Theos alone*. Reading παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μόνου. NA28 has παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ. There are two ways of interpreting the Greek of NA28: (i) that genuine honour is only from Theos, and thus that they do not seek such honour as is "only from Theos", or (ii) that they do not seek the honour that is from "the [one and] only Theos."

While the latter imposes a strictly grammatical interpretation on the text, such a restrictive interpretation does not in my view suit the context at all, which is of worldly honours in contrast to the (genuine) honour which Theos bestows. Jesus has emphasized that he has been sent by the father, that the father is his witness, that he does not receive honours from people, and goes on to say that Moses wrote about him. There seems no need to mention that his father is "the only Theos", given the Judaeans would assuredly know that "the father" meant their "one and only god" and

that Moses spoke and wrote of "the one God". Cf. John 17:3, τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν and phrases such as ὁ μόνος θεός and ὁ θεὸς μόνος in the Old Testament. [16]

An interesting alternative Byzantine reading (Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus) is τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ, cf. 1:18, μονογενῆς θεός.

Footnotes

[1] Measure for Measure. Act One, Scene One, v. 32

[2] Romans 13.10

[3] King James version, following Tyndale.

[4] 1.21 (Ποιμάνδρης)

[5] φαίνω as a revealing is much in evidence in classical Greek literature, often in relation to theos. For example:

ἤτέομεν δὲ θεὸν φῆναι τέρας: αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἡμῖν
δειῖξε, καὶ ἠνώγει πέλαγος μέσον εἰς Εὐβοίαν
τέμνειν, ὄφρα τάχιστα ὑπέκ κακότητα φύγοιμεν.

About this we asked the god to reveal to us a sign
And he exhorted us to cut through the middle of the sea to Euboea
In order to swiftly pass that bad luck by.

The Odyssey, Book 3, 173-5

[6] As noted in the Appendix - *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John* - in respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former - entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας - should be 'Judaeae Antiquities', while the latter - entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου - should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημνηυμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους - Romaeans - implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημνηυμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is

"Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῆ παρειλήφμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις - understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement - town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish - although LSJ provide no sources, with the English word 'Jew' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE - the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὔσιων ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

[7] Thomas Wright. *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*. Second edition, London, 1884. pp.72, 156, 316.

[8]

ὄρᾳς μὲν ἡμᾶς ἡλίκοι προσήμεθα
βωμοῖσι τοῖς σοῖς: οἱ μὲν οὐδέπω μακρὰν
πτέσθαι σθένοντες, οἱ δὲ σὺν γήρᾳ βαρεῖς,
ἱερῆς, ἐγὼ μὲν Ζηνός, οἶδε τ' ἠθέων
λεκτοί: τὸ δ' ἄλλο φύλον ἐξεστεμμένον
20 ἀγοραῖσι θακεῖ πρὸς τε Παλλάδος διπλοῖς
ναοῖς, ἐπ' Ἰσμηνοῦ τε μαντεία σποδῶ.
πόλις γάρ, ὡσπερ καὶ τὸς εἰσορᾳς, ἄγαν
ἤδη σαλεύει κἀνακουφίσαι κάρᾳ
βυθῶν ἔτ' οὐχ οἶα τε φοινίου σάλου,
25 φθίνουσα μὲν κάλυξιν ἐγκάρποις χθονός,
φθίνουσα δ' ἀγέλαις βουνόμοις τόκοισί τε
ἀγόνοις γυναικῶν: ἐν δ' ὁ πυρφόρος θεὸς
σκήψας ἐλαύνει, λοιμὸς ἔχθιστος, πόλιν,
ὕφ' οὗ κενοῦται δῶμα Καδμεῖον, μέλας δ'
Ἄιδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται.

You see how many sit here
Before your altars - some not yet robust enough
To fly far; some heavy as I, Priest of Zeus, with age;
And these, chosen from our unmarried youth.
Enwreathed like them, our people sit in the place of markets,
By the twin shrines of Pallas
And by the embers of the Ismenian oracle.
Our community, as you yourself behold, already heaves
Too much - its head bent
To the depths bloodily heaving.
Decay is in the unfruitful seeds in the soil,
Decay is in our herds of cattle - our women
Are barren or abort, and that god of fever
Swoops down to strike our community with an odious plague,
Emptying the abode of Cadmus and giving dark Hades
An abundance of wailing and lamentation.

[9] *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

[10] The Discourses of Epictetus were compiled (by Arrian) some decades before the Gospel of John was written (which according to scholarly consensus was around or shortly after 90 CE). Given that both Epictetus and Arrian were native Greek speakers, the use of such a colloquial Greek phrase by the Evangelist perhaps indicates something not only about John himself but also about the audience and the readers who first heard or read his Gospel.

[11] For context, the Greek of the complete verse of Ephesians is: ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. Literally, "The one having descended is the same as the one who, having ascended high above all the heavens, completes everything."

[12] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli

eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurre xisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt scribturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[13] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

[14] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum, a term normally translated as 'the supreme good'. According to Cicero, honestum (honourable conduct) is the foundation of Summum Bonum which itself can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia),

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals:

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum – what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθὸν – depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses the Greco-Roman view, as does Seneca:

summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt. *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4

Thus, perhaps a more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum would be *the highest nobility*.

[15] In context, the quotation from Aeschylus is:

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ καὶ νύξ φίλια
μεγάλων κόσμων κτεάτειρα,
ἦτ' ἐπὶ Τροίας πύργοις ἔβαλες
στεγανὸν δίκτυον, ὡς μήτε μέγαν
μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι
360μέγα δουλείας
γάγγαμον, ἄτης παναλώτου

You, Zeus our Chief, and Nox, our companion -
Mistress of the mighty cosmos
Who cast over the Trojan towers a covering net
Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits
Of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl.

[16] In respect of the article, τοῦ, here and the phrase ὁ μόνος θεός, cf. Philo, *De Profugis*, 71-72,

τοῦ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀνθρώπου, ὃς δὴ νοῦς ἐστὶ καθαρῶτατος, εἷς ὁ μόνος θεὸς δημιουργός, τοῦ δὲ λεγομένου καὶ κεκραμένου μετ' αἰσθήσεως τὸ πλῆθος. οὗ χάριν ὁ μὲν κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἄνθρωπος σὺν τῷ ἄρθρῳ μεμνήνυται λέγεται γάρ· ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τὸν ἀειδῆ καὶ ἄκρατον ἐκεῖνον λογισμόν, ὃ δὲ ἄνευ τῆς τοῦδε προσθήκης· τὸ γὰρ ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον ἐμφαίνει τὸν ἐξ ἀλόγου καὶ λογικῆς συνυφανθέντα φύσεως.

ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ

A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messiah).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινή) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [a] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἁμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develop a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἁμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

David Myatt
2017

[a] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

Appendix

A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose – perhaps controversially – to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyy/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, ἄφ' Ἰουδαίας γεγενῆσθαι, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχρόματι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

ooo

In respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeian Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίων – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημνημένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῆ παρελήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeans, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

Bibliography & Abbreviations

ASV. The Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels, otherwise known as the Wessex Gospels, c. 990 CE.

Bright, William. *The Gospel Of John. In West-Saxon.* Heath & Co., London. 1906.

Thorpe, Benjamin. *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Holy Gospels.* Third Edition. Putnum, New York. 1851.

KJV. The 1611 CE version of the Bible otherwise known as the King James Bible.

LSJ. The Greek-English Lexicon edited by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones. 9th edition, Oxford University Press, 1996.

NA28. Nestle-Aland. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012

Tyndale. The version of the Bible translated by William Tyndale. 1526 CE.

Daniell, D (editor). *The New Testament. 1526 Edition.* Facsimile. The British Library, 2008.

Wycliffe. The version of the Bible attributed to John Wycliffe. 1389 CE.

Forshall, J & Madden, F (editors). *The Holy Bible. Containing The Old And New Testaments, With The Apocryphal Books, In The Earliest English Versions Made From The Latin Vulgate By John Wycliffe And His Followers.* Four volumes. Oxford University Press, 1850.

Second Edition
All translations by DW Myatt

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license
and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

Corpus Hermeticum

Eight Tractates

I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII

Translation and Commentary

David Myatt

Contents

Preface

Tractate I. Ποιμάνδρης. Poemandres

Tractate III. Ιερός Λόγος. An Esoteric Mythos

Tractate IV. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς. From Hermes To Thoth: Chaldron Or Monas

Tractate VI. Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else

Tractate VIII. Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν. That no beings are lost, despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

Tractate XI. Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν. From Perceiverance To Hermes

Tractate XII. Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceiveration.

Tractate XIII. Ἑρμοῦ του τρισμεγίστου προς τον υἱόν Τάτ εν ὄρει λόγος ἀπόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγῆς επαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence

Bibliography

Preface

This work collects together my translations of and commentaries on the eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum which were published separately between 2013 and 2017. From the fourteen Greek tractates that have been traditionally referred to as the Corpus Hermeticum, I chose the eight (the ogdoad) whose texts I considered were the most metaphysical and mystical and thus which can provide an understanding of what came to be termed hermeticism.

In the case of the Corpus Hermeticum, the task of translating ancient Greek into English is complicated by the terminology used in the text. Words such as λόγος, νοῦς, πνεῦμα, δημιουργόν, φῶς, ψυχή (καὶ τὰ λοιπά), all require careful consideration if the text is to be understood in relation to the cultural milieu existing at the time of its composition; a milieu where a Hellenistic paganism, of various types and hues, thrived alongside the still relatively new religion of Christianity.

All too often, such Greek words are translated by an English word which has, over centuries, acquired a meaning which is not or which may not be relevant to that milieu, resulting in a 'retrospective reinterpretation' of the text. One thinks here of (i) θεός translated as god or as God, and of λόγος translated as 'word' (or Word) which thus suffuse, or can suffuse, the text with the meanings that nearly two thousand years of Christian exegesis have ascribed to those terms; of (ii) νοῦς translated as either "intellect" or as "mind", neither of which is satisfactory especially given what both of those English words have come to denote, philosophically and otherwise, in the centuries since the Greek tractates were written. In an effort to avoid such retrospective reinterpretation here, and the preconceptions thus imposed upon the text, I have sometimes used transliterations, sometimes used a relatively obscure English word, and sometimes used a new term.

However, given that the goal of the translator is to provide for the general reader an intelligible interpretation of the text, to utilize transliterations for every problematic word would fail to accomplish that goal. Which is why the translator has to use their judgement and why every translation is 'a fallible interpretation of meaning'.

The methodology of using some transliterations, some relatively obscure

English words, and some new term or expression (such as noetic sapientia) results in a certain technical - an 'esoteric' - vocabulary which requires or may require contextual, usually metaphysical, interpretation. Often, the interpretation is provided by reference to the matters discussed in the particular tractate; sometimes by reference to other tractates; and sometimes by considering Ancient Greek, and Greco-Roman, philosophy and mysticism. Occasionally, however, the interpretation is to leave some transliteration - such as physis, φύσις - as a basic term of the particular hermetic weltanschauung described in a particular tractate and, as such, as a term which has no satisfactory English equivalent, metaphysical or otherwise, and therefore to assimilate it into the English language. All of which make these translations rather different from other English versions, past and present, with these translations hopefully enabling the reader to approach and to appreciate the hermetic texts sans preconceptions, modern and otherwise, and thus provide an intimation of how such texts might have been understood by those who read them, or heard them read, in the milieu of their composition.

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully enable the reader without a knowledge of Greek (and of the minutiae of over a century of scholarly analysis of the Greek text) to appreciate the texts anew and understand why they have - in the original Greek - been regarded as important documents in respect of particular, ancient, weltanschauungen that have, over the centuries, proved most influential and which can still be of interest to those interested in certain metaphysical speculations and certain esoteric matters.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? Because current, and past interpretations - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - make them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions. Also, because I incline toward the view that such texts, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, are more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἀρρενόθηλυς (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ιδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as Ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1].

In respect, for example, of the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical

Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility /honesty, τὸ ἀγαθόν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals, and which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, including the ethos of Greco-Roman mysticism, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well have expressed. [2]

In respect of the texts, I incline toward the view that they generally represent the personal weltanschauung of their authors germane to their time. That is, that rather than being representative of some axiomatic pre-existing philosophy or of some religious school of thought, they reproduce the insight and the understanding of individuals regarding particular metaphysical matters; an insight and an understanding no doubt somewhat redolent of, and influenced by, and sometimes perhaps paraphrasing, some such existing philosophies and/or some such schools of thought; and an insight which often differs from tractate to tractate.

Regarding my translation, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - in relation to Plato, quite apposite:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασι ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ σημανομένου χρῆται.

For I have sometimes translated the same Greek word in two different ways in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text [exempli gratia: ἀπερίοριστον, as undefinable and unmeasurable] just as I have idiosyncratically translated certain Greek words [exempli gratia: ἅγιος, as numinous], differences and idiosyncrasies I have endeavoured to explain in my commentary.

The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus*

Hermeticum, Third Edition, 1972. Occasionally I have followed the reading of the MSS or the emendations of others rather than Nock's text with such variations noted in my commentary. Text enclosed in angled brackets < > indicates a conjectural editorial addition, and <...> indicates a lacuna.

David Myatt
2017

[1] a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

[2] I have endeavoured to explain such interpretations in various essays, including (i) *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, (ii) *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*; and (iii) *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

Ποιμάνδρης

Poemandres

Tractate I

Introduction

The Greek text of the tractate often referred to as the Poemandres/Pymander part of the Corpus Hermeticum was first published by Turnebus in Paris in 1554 and of the origin of the knowledge expounded in the text, the author declares at v.2 that

εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ὁ τῆς ἀθθεντίας νοῦς οἶδα δὲ βούλει καὶ σύνειμί σοι
πανταχοῦ

Which implies - qv. my translation, and notes and commentary on the text - that what Poemandres is about to reveal is an authentic perceiviation, and this supernatural being [or archetype] knows what is desired/wanted because, like the guardian daemons of classical and Hellenic culture, Poemandres is close by.

What is revealed is a summary of that weltanschauung that has been termed hermetic philosophy; a summary widely regarded as an important hermetic text and as dating from the second or the third century CE; and a summary which contains many interesting notions and allusions, such as logos, physis/Physis, the septenary system, the gospel of John, the feminine character of Physis/Nature, the doxology Agios o Theos, and θεός as being both male and female in one person - that is, either *ἀνδρόγυνος* or (more controversially) bisexual.

ooo

Translation

[1] Once, while concentrating on and pondering what is real, my intuitions freely flowed, and, my alertness dulled as from an excess of wearisome bodily toil or too much eating, it seemed as if a huge being - too large to measure -

chanced by calling out my name and asking what it was I wanted to see and hear about and learn and have knowledge of.

[2] Who are you, I asked.

I am Pøemandres, the perceiveration of authority, knowing your desires and eachwhere with you.

[3] I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos. That is what I want to hear.

So he said to me, remember all those things you wanted to learn, for I shall instruct you.

[4] So saying, his form altered whereupon I at once sensed everything; an indefinity of inner sight, with everything suffused in phaos - bright and clear - so that from this seeing, a desire. But all too soon there came down upon it a heavy darkness - stygian, strange - and slithering <as a serpent> until that darkness changed in physis: flowing, of an untellable disorder, with smoke as from a fire and an indescribable sound followed by some aphonous noise as if phaos was calling out.

[5] And then, from the phaos, a numinous logos came upon that physis with pure Fire going forth to the height of that physis; easily and effective and efficient. Since Air is agile, it followed the pneuma, up and above Earth and Water and as far as Fire, to be as if it were hanging from that, there.

Earth and Water remained, coagulating together such that <Earth> could not be seen apart from Water until they were stirred by the sound of the pneumal logos that came down upon them.

[6] Pøemandres asked, had I apprehended the sense of that inner seeing? And I said I shall have knowledge of it.

I am, he said, that phaos; perceiveration, your theos, and prior to the flowing physis brought forth from darkness. [And] the phaomal logos, from perceiveration, is the child of theos.

So I said for him to continue.

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceiveration is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life.

Thank you, I said.

Then discover phaos and become familiar with it.

[7] So saying, he stared at me for so long a duration that I shivered because of the way he looked. But, as he tilted his head back, I, observing, discovered the phaos of unmeasurable forces and an undefinable cosmic order coming-into-being. While the fire, embraced by a strong force, was subdued and kept in stasis.

Such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres. But, since I was vexed, he spoke to me again. From your seeing, an awareness of the quidditas of semblance; of the primal before the origin without an end.

This was what Pœmandres said to me, then.

[8] So I asked from what place, then, the parsements of physis?

To which he answered, from the deliberations of theos, who, having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it, and so became a cosmic order from their own parsements and by the birth of Psyche.

[9] Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

[10] Directly, from the downward parsements, the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceivation of that artisan, for it was of the same essence. Thus the descending parsements of Physis were left, devoid of logos, to be only substance.

[11] The perceivation of that artisan, in combination with logos, surrounded the spheres, spinning them around, a twizzling of artisements of some indefinite origin and some undeterminable end, finishing where they began. Turning around and around as perceivation decreed, the spheres produced, from those descending parsements, beings devoid of logos, for they were not given logos, while Air produced what flew, and Water what swam. Divided, one from the other, were Earth and Water, as perceivation had decreed, with Earth delivering from within herself beings four-footed and crawling, and animals savage and benign.

[12] Perceivation, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved. And theos, who loved his own image, bequeathed to him all his works of Art.

[13] Thus, having discovered what that artisan with that father's assistance had wrought, he too determined on such artisements, which the father agreed to. Ingressing to the artisan's realm, with full authority, he appreciated his

brother's artiselements, and they - loving him - each shared with him their own function.

Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres to discover the one who imposed their strength upon the Fire.

[14] With full authority over the ordered cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos.

When she beheld such unceasing beauty - he who possessed all the vigour of the viziers and was the image of theos - she lovingly smiled, for it was as if in that Water she had seen the semblance of that mortal's beautiful image and, on Earth, his shadow. And as he himself beheld in that Water her image, so similar to his own, he desired her and wanted to be with her.

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers, they were intimately joined together.

[15] Which is why, distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one. <...>

[16] <...> my perceivation, for I also love the logos. Then Pœmandres said, this is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean.

Pœmandres, I said, a great eagerness has now arrived in me so that I yearn to hear more. Do not go away.

Then, Pœmandres replied, be silent for this primary explanation is not yet complete.

I shall, I said, therefore, be silent.

[17] To continue, those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

[18] Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artiselements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

[19] Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death.

[20] But why, I asked, do the unknowing err so much that they are robbed of immortality.

You seem, he said, not to have understood what you heard, for did I not tell you to discover things?

I said I do recall and am discovering, for which I am obliged.

Then tell me, if you have discovered, why death is expected for those in death.

Because originally the body began with that stygian darkness, from whence the flowing physis which formed the body within the perceptible cosmic order which nourishes death.

[21] Your apprehension is correct. Yet why, according to the logos of theos, does the one of self-discovery progress within themselves?

To which I replied, phaos and Life formed the father of all beings, from whence that human came into being.

You express yourself well. For phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being. Therefore if you learn to be of Life and phaos - and that you perchance are of them - then you progress to return to Life. Thus spoke Pœmandres.

Can you - who are my perceiviation - therefore tell me how I may progress to Life? For does not theos say that the human of perceiviation should have self-knowledge?

[22] And do not all humans posses perceiviation?

Again you express yourself well. I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

Before they hand over their body to its death they loathe the influencing impressions, for they know their vigour. That is, I - perceivation - do not allow what the vigour of the body embraces to be achieved. For, as guardian, I close the entrance to the bad and the dishonourably vigorous, preventing their procrastinations.

[23] I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness - which tests them - and thus increase that fire even more.

[24] You, perceivation, have instructed me well about all those things I sought. But could you tell me how the Anados will occur?

To which Pœmandres replied, first, the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed with the semblance it had disappearing and its now non-functioning ethos handed over to the daimon, with the body's perceptions returning to their origin, then becoming separated with their purpose, transplanted, and with desire and eagerness journeying toward the physis devoid of logos.

[25] Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

[26] Thus, stripped of the activities of that structure, they enter into the ogdoadic physis, and, with those there, celebrate the father in song for they, together, rejoice at this arrival who, now akin to them, hears those forces beyond the ogdoadic physis celebrating theos in melodious song. Then, in order, they move toward the father to hand themselves over to those forces, and, becoming those forces, they become united with theos. For to so become of theos is the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge.

Why, therefore, hesitate? Should it not be that, having received all these things,

you should become a guide to those who are suitable so that, because of you, descendants of mortals may - through theos - escape?

[27] Having so spoken to me, Pœmandres joined with those forces, while I, having given thanks to and expressed my gratitude toward the father of all beings, went forth strengthened and informed regarding the physis of everything and with an insight of great importance.

So it was that I began to tell mortals about how beautiful knowledge and an awareness of the numinous were. You earth-bound mortals, you who have embraced intoxicating liquor, sleepfulness, and are unknowing of theos: soberize, stop your drunkenness, for you are beguiled by irrational sleepfulness.

[28] Hearing this, they, with the same purpose, gathered round. And I said, you who are earth-bound, why do you embrace death when you have the means to partake of immortality? Change your ways, you who have accompanied deception and who have kinship with the unknowing ones. Leave the dark phaos, partake of immortality, move away from your destruction.

[29] Then some of them, having ridiculed, went away, embracing as they did the way of death; although some others, desirous of being informed, threw themselves down at my feet. I asked them to stand, and thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them.

And with the arrival of evening with the rays of Helios beginning to completely wane, I bid they express their gratitude to theos, after which - with that expression of gratitude completed - they each retired to their own bed.

[30] Commemorating within myself the noble service of Pœmandres - replete with what I had desired - I was most pleased, for the sleep of the body engendered temperance of psyche, the closing of the eyes a genuine insight, with my silence pregnant with the noble, and the expression of the logos breeding nobility.

Such is what transpired for me, received from perceivration - that is, Pœmandres; for it was by being theos-inspired that I came upon this revealing. Therefore, from my psyche and with all my strength, I offer benedictions to theos, the father.

[31]

Agios o Theos, father of all beings.

Agios o Theos, whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts.

Agios o Theos, whose disposition is to be recognized and who is recognized by his own.

Agios es, you who by logos form all being.
Agios es, you who engender all physis as eikon.
Agios es, you whom the Physis did not morph.
Agios es, you who are mightier than all artifice.
Agios es, you who surpass all excellence.
Agios es, you who transcend all praise.

You - ineffable, inexpressible, to whom silence gives voice - receive these respectful wordful offerings from a psyche and a heart that reach out to you.

[32] I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in acquiring knowledge germane to our essence; to invigorate me, so that - by that favour - I may bring illumination to the unknowing who, kindred of my kind, are your children.

Such I testify and believe; to advance to Life and phaos. For you, father, a benediction. Your mortal's purpose is to share in your numinosity, for which you have provided every means.

ooo

Notes and Commentary on the Text

The numbers refer to the sections of the Greek text, 1-32.

1.

what is real. Regarding τῶν ὄντων cf. Plato, Republic, Book 7 (532c) - πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἐν ὕδασι φαντάσματα θεῖα καὶ σκιάς τῶν ὄντων ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰδώλων σκιάς δι' ἑτέρου τοιούτου φωτὸς ὡς πρὸς ἥλιον κρίνειν ἀποσκιαζομένας - where the φάντασμα (the appearance) of some-thing natural (god-given), such as the σκιά (image) that is reflected by water, is stated to be real, and contrasted with what is not considered to be real (what is an unsubstantial image) such as that cast by a fire rather than by the Sun.

intuition. For διανοίας. As with νοῦς (see 2. below) a term which deserves some scrutiny. Conventionally, it is translated as 'thought', or 'thinking', as if in reference to some sort of idealized faculty we human beings are said to possess and which faculty deals with ideations and their collocations and is considered as necessary to, or the foundation of, understanding and reason.

More accurately, in a classical context, διανοίας is (i) 'intelligence' (or intuition) in the sense of understanding some-thing or someone (i.e. in being able to perceive some-thing correctly or to correctly understand - to know - a person), or (ii) 'intention'.

I have opted for 'intuition' as suggesting, and as manifesting, insight, often from

contemplation, as the etymology, from the Latin *intueri*, suggests. For the English word 'thought' now conveys modern meanings which, in my view, are not relevant here. And an 'intuition' that is related to, but somewhat different from, the perceivment that is *νοῦς*.

Alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness here in the sense that the normal, alert, awareness of the physical senses is dulled by interior intuition, insight, or revelation. An appropriate alternative translation would thus be *awareness*, as in awareness of one's surroundings.

Huge. ὑπερμεγέθη - ον Plutarch *Romulus*, 16.5 ἐπὶ στρατοπέδου δρῶν ἔτεμεν ὑπερμεγέθη - chopped down a huge tree there in that encampment.

Huge, and too large to measure by ordinary means. I do not see any need to exaggerate what is implied, as some other translations do.

Have knowledge of. In the tractate, γινῶναι is related to νοῦς and διανοίας as an expression of what is perceived, or one is aware of. Here, of what one discerns in the sense of distinguishing some-thing from something else and thus 'knowing' of and about that thing.

2.

Pœmandres. Ποιμάνδρης. The older interpretation of 'shepherd of men' is unacceptable because speculative; the speculation being that it derives from ποιμήν, which has a variety of meanings other than shepherd, for example, chief, and owner.

A more recent etymology involves some ancient Egyptian term associated with the god Re. However, this etymology, first proposed by Francis Griffith in the 1920's [qv. W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson: *Hermetica: the ancient Greek and Latin writings which contain religious or philosophical teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936] was based on a linguistic and stylistic analysis of Coptic sources dating well over a millennia after the god Re was worshipped in ancient Egypt.

Also, the book *From Poimandres to Jacob Bohme: Hermetism, Gnosis and the Christian Tradition*, edited by Roelof van den Broek and published in 2000 (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica) which mentions this etymology by Griffiths and which is often cited as confirming this etymology, does not provide further context in the form of extant Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions or references to papyrus fragments from long before the Coptic period, but instead makes various conjectures, as for example in respect of an alternative Coptic form of the genitive n-re, and relies on other linguistic/stylistic analysis of much later texts.

Until a link can be established to such primary Egyptian sources, or to reliable

sources much earlier than such Coptic texts, I remain unconvinced in respect of the ancient Egyptian origins of the name Ποιμάνδρης, and therefore am inclined to leave it as a personal name, transliterated Pœmandres.

perceiveration. νοῦς. The conventional interpretation here is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Pœmandres.

In addition, one should ask what does a translation such as 'I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty' [*vide* Copenhagen] actually mean? That there is a disembodied 'mind' which calls itself Pœmandres? That this disembodied 'mind' is also some gargantuan supernatural shapeshifting being possessed of the faculty of human speech? That some-thing called 'sovereignty' has a mind?

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceivance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action. Hence why, in the Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has Creon voice his understanding of the incipient hubris of Oedipus, of his pride without a purpose, of his apparent inability to understand, to correctly perceive, the situation:

εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν ἀυθαδίαν
εἶναί τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

Translating νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation thus places it into the correct context, given ἀθεντίας - authority. For "I am Pœmandres, the perceivation of authority" implies "What [knowledge] I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Pœmandres, the authentic perceivation." [The English word authentic means 'of authority, authoritative' and is derived, via Latin, from the Greek ἀθεντία]

eachwhere. An unusual but expressive (c.15th century) English word, suited to such an esoteric text. The meaning here is that, like a guardian δαίμων of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is always close by: eachwhere with you.

3.

Apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'. Again, I have tried to make a subtle distinction here, as there is in the text between the related νοῦς, γνῶναι, and διανοίας.

physis. A transliteration, to suggest something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ των φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

γνῶναι τὸν θεόν. To have - to acquire - knowledge of θεός. Does θεός here mean God, a god, a deity, or the god? God, the supreme creator Being, the only real god, the father, as in Christianity? A deity, as in Hellenic and classical paganism? The god, as in an un-named deity - a god - who is above all other deities? Or possibly all of these? And if all, in equal measure, or otherwise?

The discourse of Pœmandres, as recounted in the tractate, suggests two things. First, that all are meant or suggested - for example, Τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ἔφη, ἐγὼ νοῦς ὁ σὸς θεός could be said of Pœmandres as a god, as a deity, as the god, and also possibly of God, although why God, the Father - as described in the Old and New Testaments - would call Himself Pœmandres, appear in such a vision, and declare what He declares about θεός being both male and female in one person, is interesting. Second, that the knowledge that is revealed is of a source, of a being, that encompasses, and explains, all three, and that it is this knowing of such a source, beyond those three conventional ones, that is the key to 'what is real' and to apprehending 'the physis of beings'.

Hence, it is better to transliterate θεός - or leave it as θεός - than to use god; and a mistake to use God, as some older translations do.

remember all those things you want to learn. Ἔχε νῶ: 'hold the awareness' [be aware] of what you said you wanted to learn - that is, 'remember' them; which is better, and more expressive, than the somewhat colloquial and modern 'keep in mind'.

4.

So saying, his form [ἰδέα] altered. For τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἠλλάγη τῆ ἰδέα. Or - more expressively - 'he shapeshifted'. A common theme in Greek mythology and literature, as in the ancient Hymn to Demeter:

ὥς εἰποῦσα θεὰ μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ἄμειψε γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη

Having so spoken, the goddess changed in height and cast off that aged appearance

[An] indefinity of inner sight [inner seeing]. ὁρῶ θεῶν ἀόριστον. The sense of ὁράω here is metaphorical, of an interior knowing or apprehension not occasioned by the faculty of sight; the inner knowing, for example, that the blind Tiresias has in respect of Oedipus in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles - his apprehension of what Oedipus has done and what he will do. Such an 'inner seeing' includes the Tiresian kind a prophetic knowing as well as the 'interior visions' of a mystic.

In respect of ἀόριστος, I have opted for indefinity, an unusual [read obscure] English word derived c.1600 from indefinite.

phaos. A transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος. Since φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which other translations use, and which English word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what *phaos* may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply; and hopefully thus conveys something about the original text.

Also, φῶς δὲ πάντα γεγεννημένα suggests '[with] everything *suffused in phaos*' and not 'everything *became* light' as if to imply that suddenly everything was transformed into 'light'.

clear and bright. εὐδιόν τε καὶ ἱλαρόν - if one accepts the emendation εὐδιόν [clear] then ἱλαρόν might suggest the metaphorical sense of 'bright' (rather

than the descriptive 'cheery') which fits well with the contrasting and following φοβερόν τε καὶ στυγνόν.

Downward. κατωφερές - cf. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, Book 4, chapter 13 - κατωφερές δ' ἐστὶ τὸ πεδίον.

stygian. For στυγνόν, for stygian is a word which in English imputes the sense of the original Greek, as both its common usage, and its literary usage (by Milton, Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson, et al) testify. Some-thing dark, gloomy, disliked, abhorred. One might, for example, write that "that river looks as stygian", and as unforgiving, as the water of Styx - ἀμείλικτον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ.

serpent. ὄφει is one of the emendations of Nock, for the meaning of the text here is difficult to discern. Given what follows - re the smoke and fire - it is tempting to agree with Reitzenstein that what may be meant is a not an ordinary serpent but a dragon, δράκοντι, qv. the Iliad (II, 308) and the seven-headed dragon of Revelation 12, 3-17.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here, since what follows - ἀφάτως τεταραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδιδοῦσαν - does not suggest either 'watery' or 'moist'. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποιοῦν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὄρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

aphonous ... phaos calling out. I follow the MSS which have φωτὸς, which Nock emended to πυρός. While the emendation, given the foregoing mention of fire, makes some sense, it does render what follows, with the mention of φωτὸς, rather disjointed. However, if - as I suggested above - φῶς is not translated as 'light', but, as with physis and λόγος [qv. 5. below], is transliterated, then φωτὸς here is fine, for it is as if "phaos was calling out" in an aphonous - an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless - way from beneath the covering of darkness that has descended down, and descended with an indescribable noise. And aphonous here because covered - smothered, obscured, muffled - by the indescribably noisy darkness. Which leads directly to the mention of φῶς and λόγος in the next part of the text; that is, to the ascension of φῶς and λόγος.

If one reads πυρός, then the interpretation would be that it is the fire which is calling out in an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless way.

5.

Logos. λόγος. A transliteration, which as with my other transliterations, requires the reader to pause and reflect upon what the term may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. The common translation as 'Word' does not express or even suggest all the meanings (possible or suggested) of the Greek, especially as Word - as in Word of God - now imputes so much (in so many different often

doctrinal ways) after two thousand years of Christianity and thus tends to lead to a retrospective re-interpretation of the text.

Numinous. ἅγιος. Numinous is better - more accurate - than 'holy' or 'sacred', since these latter English words have been much overused in connexion with Christianity and are redolent with meanings supplied from over a thousand years of exegesis; meanings which may or may not be relevant here.

Correctly understood, numinous is the unity beyond our perception of its two apparent aspects; aspects expressed by the Greek usage of ἅγιος which could be understood in a good (light) way as 'sacred', revered, of astonishing beauty; and in a bad (dark) way as redolent of the gods/wyrd/the fates/morai in these sense of the retributive or (more often) their balancing power/powers and thus giving rise to mortal 'awe' since such a restoration of the natural balance often involved or required the death (and sometimes the 'sacrifice') of mortals. It is the numinous - in its apparent duality, and as a manifestation of a restoration of the natural, divine, balance - which is evident in much of Greek tragedy, from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (and the *Orestia* in general) to the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles.

The two apparent aspects of the numinous are wonderfully expressed by Rilke:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäh,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich.

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

wenn ich schrie. 'Were I to sigh aloud' is far more poetically expressive, and more in tune with the metaphysical tone of the poem and the stress on *schrie*, than the simple, bland, 'if I cried out'. A sighing aloud - not a shout or a scream - of the sometimes involuntary kind sometimes experienced by those engaged in contemplative prayer or in deep, personal, metaphysical musings.

der Engel Ordnungen. The poetic emphasis is on Engel, and the usual translation here of 'orders' - or something equally abstract and harsh (such as hierarchies) - does not in my view express the poetic beauty

(and the almost supernatural sense of strangeness) of the original; hence my suggestion 'angelic beings' - of such a species of beings, so different from we mortals, who by virtue of their numinosity have the ability to both awe us and overpower us.

came upon that physis. Came upon that which had the physis of darkness and then changed to become fluidic.

Fire. A capitalization, since 'fire' here is suggestive of something possibly elemental.

Air. A capitalization, as with Fire; ditto with the following Water and Earth.

A possible alternative here might be to use the Homeric meaning of ἀήρ - mist - since 'air' is just too general, does not describe what is happening, and thus is confusing.

pnuema. For πνεύματι/πνεῦμα. A transliteration, given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text.

This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

coagulating. For συμμεμιγμένα, which suggests something more elemental - more actively joined - than just 'mixed or mingled' together.

pneumal logos. πνευματικὸν λόγον. The term *pneumal logos* is interesting and intended to be suggestive and thus open to and requiring interpretation. In contrast, the usual translation is verbo spirituali (spiritual word), as if what is meant or implied is some-thing theological and clearly distinct from the corporeal, as Thomas Aquinas wrote in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*: Ex quo patet quod nomen verbi magis proprie dicitur de verbo spirituali quam de

corporali. Sed omne illud quod magis proprie invenitur in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, propriissime Deo competit. Ergo verbum propriissime in Deo dicitur. (*De veritate, q. 4a. 1s. c2*).

6.

apprehended the sense of that inner seeing. Given what follows, the English word 'sense' is perhaps appropriate here, rather than the inflexible word 'meaning'.

phaomal logos. φωτεινὸς λόγος. As with *pneumal logos*, this is suggestive, and open to interpretation.

child of theos. υἱὸς θεοῦ. The scriptural sense - 'son of god', for example Mark 15.39, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν - is usually assumed; a sense which follows the general usage of υἱὸς (son) as in Homer et al. But the later (c.2nd/3rd century CE) usage 'child' is possible here, a usage known from some papyri (qv. *Papiri Greci e Latini*, edited by Girolamo Vitelli). This also has the advantage of being gender neutral, for which see the note under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

logos kyrios. λόγος κυρίου (cf. *pneumal logos* and *phaomal logos*). Invariably translated as 'word of the lord', echoing the formula found in LXX (qv. for example Jeremiah 1.4 ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς με) although, as attested by many papyri, *kyrios* was also used in the Hellenic world as an epithet both of a deity and of a powerful potentate [hence 'logos kyrios' rather than 'kyrios logos'] implying respect and an acknowledgement of their authority and power.

7.

duration. For reasons I outlined in the *The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time* section of Appendix I, I prefer to translate χρόνος as duration (or something akin) and not as 'time'. Briefly explained, the English word 'time' now denotes what the term χρόνος did not.

tilted his head back. Perhaps suggestive of looking up toward the heavens, qv. the c. 2nd century CE writer Achilles Tatius (writing around the time the *Corpus Hermeticum* was written) who, in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Book V, 3.3, wrote - ἀναεύσας εἰς οὐρανὸν ὧ Ζεῦ, τί τοῦτο' ἔφη 'φαίνεις ἡμῖν τέρας

unmeasurable. ἀπερίοριστον - beyond being countable, impossible to be counted; from ἀριθμητός - countable.

cosmic order. κόσμος. The word 'cosmos' by itself is probably insufficient here, for the Greek term κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure, an order evident in the observed regularity of heavenly bodies such as the moon, the constellations, and the planets.

undefinable. ἀπεριόριστον: A slightly different sense here to previously, and an interesting contrast with εὐπεριόριστον - well-defined - as used by Strabo when describing the process of measuring and defining, in geographical terms, a region of the Earth:

τὸ γὰρ σημειῶδες καὶ τὸ εὐπεριόριστον ἐκεῖθεν λαβεῖν ἔστιν, οὗ
χρείαν ἔχει ὁ γεωγράφος: εὐπεριόριστον δέ, ὅταν ἢ ποταμοῖς ἢ ὄρεσιν
ἢ θαλάττῃ δυνατὸν ᾗ (Geography, 2.1.30)

coming-into-being. γεγεννημένον. The meaning here is somewhat obscure. Is what is described a discovery of how the already existing and known cosmic order *came* into being, or the apprehension of a - or some sort of - cosmic order coming-into-being? Or does γεγεννημένον refer to phaos?

8.

quidditas of semblance. ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος. The transliteration 'archetype' here is, unfortunately, unsuitable, given what the term archetype now suggests and implies (vide Jungian psychology, for example) beyond what the Greek of the text means. Appropriate words or terms such as 'primal-pattern' or 'protoform' are awkward, clumsy. Hence quidditas (11th/12th century Latin), from whence came 'quiddity', a term originally from medieval scholasticism which was then used to mean the natural (primal) nature or form of some-thing, and thus hints at the original sense of ἀρχέτυπον. As used here, quidditas means exactly what ἀρχέτυπον does in the text, sans Jungian psychology; sans modern 'popular psychology'; sans expositions of hermetic/gnostic philosophy (or what is assumed to be a hermetic/gnostic philosophy) and sans expositions of Plato's philosophy.

The whole passage - τὸ ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος, τὸ προάρχον τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ἀπεράντου - is concerned with various shades of ἀρχή, and is rather obscure. ἀρχή as the origin - 'the beginning' - of beings and thus of their εἶδος (the ἀρχέτυπον), of their semblance, their type; and ἀρχή - the primal before (προάρχον) that beginning, of beings - as that origin (that beginning) which has no end, no known limits, ἀπεράντου.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον, and thus avoiding the word 'elements' whose meanings, being now many and varied, somewhat detract from the meaning of the text. By a parsement - an unusual variant of partiment (from the Latin partimentum) - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) components or principles of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times; and whether or not these are undescribed or described in terms of a particular philosophy or weltanschauung (for example, as Air, Fire, and so on).

deliberations of theos. βουλῆς θεοῦ. 'Deliberations' is the sense here; as in theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - having pondered upon, or considered, a

particular matter or many matters. cf. Herodotus [Histories, 9.10] - ὁ μὲν σφι ταῦτα συνεβούλευε: οἱ δὲ φρενὶ λαβόντες τὸν λόγον αὐτίκα - where a similar following expression (λαβόντες τὸν λόγον) occurs.

Translations such as 'will/decreed of god' are, in my view, far too presumptive.

ἤτις λαβοῦσα τὸν λόγον. This is suggestive of theos having fully comprehended - completely understood - logos [qv. the passage from Herodotus, where the result of the deliberations was understood, approved of: 'taken to heart'], rather than of God 'taking in the Word' or 'receiving the Word'. A 'taking in' from whence to where? A 'receiving' from where?

re-presented. In the sense of a divine mimesis - *μίμησις* - which is the Greek word used here, and which mimesis is an important theme in ancient pagan culture, from Art to religion. It is tempting therefore to consider the suggestion that this mimesis by theos is akin to a masterful, a sublime, work of Art.

Psyche. For ψυχή, and leaving untranslated so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being - is therefore open to debate, although I have used a capital P to intimate that it is, in the text, an important, and primal, principle, and might imply here the original sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' [or being] which [or who] animates beings making them 'alive'.

9.

male-and-female. ἀρρενόθηλος. The theos - or deity/divinity/God - is both male and female, which can be interpreted as implying a bisexual nature, or androgyny, or hermaphroditism, or a being with the unique ability to both give birth and inseminate, or a being beyond all such mortal (causal) categories and assumptions.

whose logos brought forth another perceiviation. ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν. An interesting phrase, possibly open to interpretation, for it might suggest 'whose utterance [who by speaking] brought forth...'

Consider, for example, Psalms 33.6:

τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν

בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעְשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ יְהוָה כָּל-צְבָאוֹת

with the Greek of LXX, literally translated, meaning "By the logos of the master [κύριος] the heavens were established and, by the pneuma from his mouth, all

their influence" [δύναμις], with the Hebrew stating it is יהוה [Yhvh - Jehovah] who has established שמים [shamayim, the heavens] and His רוח [ruach, pneuma] their power.

Hence, Pœmandres might well be saying that it was by speaking, by the act of uttering or declaiming a logos, that this theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - brought forth a[nother] perceiv[er]ation; that is, another way or means of apprehending - of knowing, understanding, and appreciating - the cosmic order.

artisan. δημιουργόν. It is tempting to transliterate - as demiourgos - so as not to impose a meaning on the text. Does the word here imply - as possibly with Fire, pneuma, etcetera - an assumed elemental force of principle? Or a demiurge who is a (or the) theos of Fire and pneuma? Or does it imply some creator, the Theos of Fire and Pnuema? Or is some sort of artisan meant? And is this an artisan who, possibly by memesis, can create/manufacture a sublime work of Art that at the very least enables us to perceive the cosmic order - the world - in a new way and who, being a theos, can also possibly create, perhaps as a work of Art, a new cosmic order?

However, I incline toward the view, given what follows - ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινὰς ἑπτὰ [see below, *fashioned seven viziers*] - that what is meant here is artisan, rather than demiurge.

fashioned seven viziers. ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινὰς ἑπτὰ.

The word ἐδημιούργησε occurs in Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (71) - ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὑπόδειγμα ἐν ἧν ἄφ' οὗ αὐτὸν ἐδημιούργησε] in the section concerned with Plato, where the meaning is what someone (such as a worker or artisan) has wrought, fashioned, or produced.

Viziers captures the meaning of διοικητάς (at the time the text was written) in a way that terms such as controllers, procurators, governors, do not, given the modern senses such terms now have and especially given the context, ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται: that their administration - how these viziers discharge their duties; how they operate given their powers - "is described as fate." That is, is understood, by we mortals, as fate or destiny.

Vizier is a term used in Persia (in its various older forms) and ancient Egypt (a transcription of a hieroglyph), and also later on in the Middle East and North Africa following the rise of Islam, to denote a person who governed or who ruled over - in the name of a higher authority - a particular region or territory or who had a particular sphere of influence; a role similar to the Viceroy of the British Empire.

The seven viziers are the seven classical planetary bodies, named Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn, and well-described in ancient

texts, from ancient Persia onwards. Copenhaver [*Hermetica, The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.105] refers to some of the scholarly literature regarding these 'seven'.

spheres. The context - the cosmic order, and especially the seven planetary viziers who surround or encompass - suggest the meaning of spheres (or orbs) rather than 'circles'. Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone*, 415-6 where κύκλος could suggest sphere, or orb, or circle, but where circle seems apposite:

χρόνον τάδ' ἦν τοσοῦτον, ἔστ' ἐν αἰθέρι μέσω κατέστη λαμπρὸς ἡλίου
κύκλος καὶ καῦμ' ἔθαλπε

And long this continued until Helios with his radiant circle had established himself in middle-sky, burning us

10.

downward parsements ... logos of theos. Given that the MSS have στοιχείων τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος the meaning here is conjectural.

'Downward parsements' implies that the fundamental (elemental, primal) components by their nature had a tendency to descend, rather as rain descends down by nature and not because it is 'heavy' [cf. Xenophon, *On Hunting*, 5.3: ἀφανίζει δὲ καὶ ἡ πολλὴ δρόσος καταφέρουσα αὐτά] Hence 'descending parsements' would also be an appropriate translation here.

Regarding θεοῦ λόγος, I have again opted for a transliteration since the common translation here of 'word of God' imposes a particular, Christian, interpretation on the text, (i) given that 'word of god' is most probably what Cyril of Alexandria meant by the phrase, since τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος interestingly occurs in *Cyrolli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*:

μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ
πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τά τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῆι

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine god from genuine god, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

and (ii) given that this paraphrases the Nicene creed of 325 CE, with the notable exception of μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος instead of τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, the latter conventionally translated as 'only begotten Son of God'.

Thus, were the translation of 'word of god' to be accepted, with the implied meaning from the *Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*, then Pœmandres is, apparently,

here stating that 'the Word of God' - Jesus of Nazareth, true god from true god, Light from Light, and the only begotten son of God by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being - somehow bounded up to be reunited with the work of the artisan-creator (presumably, in this context, God) who is of the same essence [ὁμοούσιος].

While this is a possible interpretation of the text given that Pœmandres uses the same word, in reference to logos, as Cyril of Alexandria - οὐσία (which correctly understood means the very being - the essential nature/physics, or essence - of someone or some-thing) - it does seem somewhat restrictive, considering (i) the many possible meanings, and shades of meaning, of both λόγος and θεός (before and after the advent of Christianity and especially in the context of pagan, Hellenic, weltanschauungen) and (ii) how theos is described by Pœmandres (for example, as being both male and female).

fine artisements of Physis. Fine - καθαρός; clean and free of defects. Artisement - the product of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship (cf. the 16th century English verb artize) and which artisements include beings of various kinds (including living and/or 'archetypal' ones).

It thus becomes clear, especially given what follows, why transliterating φύσις is better than translating it always as 'nature', as if φύσις here implied what we now, after hundreds years of scientific observation and theories such as that of Darwin, understand as 'the natural world', as a 'nature' that we are or can be or should be masters of and can and do and should control, and which we can (or believe we can) understand.

Physis is capitalized here, as in section 14, to suggest the objectification that the text here implies; and objectified as possibly a being - whomsoever or whatever such a being is - or possibly as some apprehension/emanation of theos (whomsoever or whatever theos is), or some fundamental principle, or some form such as what we now understand as an archetype. This Physis, therefore, might or might not be Nature (as Nature was understood in Hellenic times) although, given what follows about Earth delivering (from her womb) living beings [ἡ γῆ ἐξήνεγκεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἃ εἶχε ζῶα...] it might be that it is not Nature but something else, for example what may have been understood as the genesis of what we now denote by Nature.

It is interesting that here it is "the descending parsements of physis" (not Physis) who were "left, devoid of logos" while in section 14 it is Physis that is, by implication, described as 'devoid of logos' - ὤκησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν. This is often understood in the pejorative sense, as if this Physis, and the living beings devoid of logos - ζῶα ἥνεγκεν ἄλογα - in section 11, are somehow [to quote one translation] 'unreasoning' beings (or forms) - lacking in reason - and thus somehow [to quote another translation] 'irrational' compared to (and by extension somewhat inferior to) the 'son of theos', which mistaken and unnecessary value-judgements arise from interpreting and translating λόγος as

'Word' or as meaning/implying 'reason'. However, logos is just logos, and devoid of (without) logos - ἄλογος - could be, depending on how logos is interpreted, akin to ἀθάνατος said in respect, for example, of theos [Θεὸν δ' εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον] or implying 'cannot be reduced to something else' and thus heterogeneous [αἱ δὲ ταύτη ἀσύμμετροι ἄλογοι καλείσθωσαν], or lacking the faculty of human speech (as in animals, who are not all 'brutish') or (more esoterically) suggestive of *sans denotatum*, of not denoting things or beings by assigning names or terms to them and thus not distinguishing them or marking them as separate from the whole, the unity, of which one type of wholeness is Physis understood as the goddess of Nature, as the creative force that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth.

Substance. ὕλη. Since the Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (qv. the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence 'substance' - the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence.

11.

the perceiviation of that artisan. As previously, and like physis, both νοῦς and λόγος are here objectified.

spinning them around. δυνῶν ροίζω.

12.

brought forth...a mortal. ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον. The word ἀπεκύησεν in relation to πατήρ perhaps refers back to where theos, the perceiviation, is described as being both male and female [ἀρρενόθηλος] although whether the meaning here is the literal 'gave birth' or the descriptive 'brought forth' is interesting, especially a different word, ἐξήνεγκεν [which the English word delivered - in the sense of giving birth, of 'a woman having disburdened herself of a foetus' - usefully describes] is used in reference to the (female) Earth. This different usage, and the Epistle of James, written not long before the Pœmandres tractate where 'brought forth' is apposite [v.1.15 ἡ δὲ ἀμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον] incline me toward 'brought forth' here.

In respect of ἄνθρωπος (often emended to ἄνθρωπος) the sense here, as often, is the gender neutral 'human being' - a mortal - and not 'a man'.

image. μορφή. Image in both senses of the English term - as outward physical appearance, and as the impression (or concept) that others may have of, or see in, a person.

Image plays an important part in what follows; the image that the son of theos

has of himself and sees reflected back to him and which image he loves. The image Physis has of him and sees a reflection of, and the image which he has of her and which makes him desire her.

bequeathed to him all his works of Art. παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. This is a very interesting phrase; *theos* as artisan, as artist, whose works - whose creations, whose artiselements, whose divine re-presentations (μίμησις) - apparently include both the cosmic order, the artisan mentioned previously, and we mortals. Less suggestive of the meaning is 'bequeathed to him all his (various) artiselements'.

13.

that father. Reading πατρί, with the MSS, and not the emendation παρί.

Ingressing to the artisan's realm. γενόμενος ἐν τῇ δημιουργικῇ σφαίρᾳ. The realm of the artisan: where the artisan works, and produces artiselements and divine works of art, and where someone - here, the mortal, son of *theos* - can learn and master that skill and produce his own works. This realm is that of the seven spheres, the seven viziers.

function. τάξεως. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 809d - ἡμερῶν τάξεως εἰς μηνῶν περιόδους καὶ μηνῶν εἰς ἕκαστον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἵνα ὥραι καὶ θυσίαι καὶ ἑορταὶ τὰ προσήκοντ' ἀπολαμβάνουσαι ἑαυταῖς ἕκασται τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἄγεσθαι - where the sense is of the periodic, the orderly, functioning of things; of days into weeks, weeks into months, and of months into a year; and which functionality enables us to know when to celebrate and undertake the seasonal festivals and feasts.

limit. περιφέρεια. Not here the literal Euclidean meaning of circumference [for example, Euclid, *Elements*, Book 13, Proposition 10 - ἐπεὶ ἴση ἐστὶν ἡ ΑΒΓΗ περιφέρεια τῇ ΑΕΔΗ περιφερείᾳ] but rather of the limits, the boundary, set or marked by the seven spheres; a limit that the mortal, son of *theos*, is "determined to burst out past".

imposed their strength upon the Fire. Cf. section 7 - περισχεσθαι τὸ πῦρ δυνάμει μεγίστη (the fire, embraced by a strong force).

14.

burst through the strength of the spheres. I follow the reading of the MSS, which have ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, amended by Scott and Nock to ἀναρρήξας τὸ κύτος [burst through the container].

harmonious structure. Here, ἁρμονία implies the 'structure' of the κόσμος, the

cosmic order [qv. the note on κόσμος in section 7] and which structure is harmonious [qv. ἄρμονίας ἐναρμόνιος in section 15].

vigour. ἐνέργεια. The words 'force' and 'energy' bring too many irrelevant modern connotations to the text, and 'vigour' well expresses the meaning of ἐνέργεια here, with the suggestion, as often elsewhere, of 'vigorous activity'.

When she beheld. This, as what follows suggests, is Physis, personified. In respect of beholding such beauty, cf. section 8 - *having seen the beauty of the cosmic order*.

on Earth, his shadow. τὸ σκίασμα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Cf. Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.146, Zeno] not especially for the similarity - τὸ τῆς γῆς σκίασμα - but more for the interesting section, preceding this mention of the shadow of the moon on Earth during an eclipse, of how the cosmic order came into being [142] and for the equally interesting following discussion [147] which concerns the attributes and images of theos - the god - who is described as 'the father of all', who has both male and female aspects, and which aspects of the divinity are given their classical pagan names with their areas of authority specified. The interest lies in how the classical gods, and the creation of the cosmic order, and thus Hellenic paganism, were understood and remembered not long after the *Hermetica* was written, and thus how they echo in part some of the metaphysical themes in, and the cosmogony of, the *Pœmandres* tractate.

Physis grasped [...] *intimately joined together*. ἡ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν. The sense of μίγνυμι here is that of a physical union, a sexual joining together - not of some 'philosophical mingling' of 'forms'. Similarly, περιπλέκω is not some ordinary 'embrace' but a sexual twinning (of limbs). Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 375 - Κρίω δ' Εὐρυβίην τέκεν ἐν φιλότῃ μιγεῖσα Ἀστραῖόν.

jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or 'twofold'.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative

translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

of a wakeful one <...> There is some text missing, indicated by <...>, for after ἄυπνος ἀπὸ ἀύπνου the MSS have κρατεῖται [mastered/ruled by - cf. 4 Maccabees 2.9 ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου κρατεῖται διὰ τὸν λογισμὸν]. Although some suggestions have been made as to this missing text (such as "ruled by love and sleep" [ἔρωτος καὶ ὑπνου]) - they are purely conjectural.

16.

<...> *my perceivoration*. Again, the suggestions for the missing text are purely conjectural.

a mysterium esoteric. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term *mysterium* - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word *mystery* by itself does not). Likewise in respect of *esoteric* - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the *mysterium* in question is.

Hence why I write *a mysterium* here rather than *the mysterium*, and why "a *mysterium*, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the *mystery* kept hidden until this very day".

possessed the physis of the harmonious seven. The seven viziers. A more literal translation would be 'possessed the physis of the [harmonious] structure of the

seven'. Here, physis could mean 'character' (of a person) or some-thing more archetypal/elemental of which such character or personal characteristics are an outward manifestation.

seven male-and-female humans. These seven humans, born from Physis, are thus akin to both theos and the child of theos who also have a male (a masculous) and a female (a muliebral) aspect. That is, although mortal - having been brought forth by and from divinities - these humans are, in their very being, both male and female and thus, in their creation, dissimilar to ordinary mortals, for reasons which Pœmandres goes on to explain.

In addition, these seven mortals have the same or a similar physis as the 'harmonious seven'.

ætherean. For μεταρσίους. Ætherean is the metaphorical sense of μεταρσίους here, not 'exalted' or 'sublime' (which imply some sort of human admiration or some sort of religious attitude/apprehension). For the sense is similar to what Dio Chrysostom wrote, in his tract on leadership, about the sons of Boreas, who - semi-divine - have the attributes of their father and who are depicted in and belonging to their natural realm:

ὁποίους τοὺς Βορεάδας ἐνεθυμήθησάν τε καὶ ἔγραψαν οἱ γραφεῖς
ἐλαφρούς τε καὶ μεταρσίους ταῖς τοῦ πατρὸς αὔραις συνθέοντας
[Orationes, 4.1]

Ætherean is used in the poetic sense - that is, 'supernal', meaning of the harmonious - the heavenly - cosmic order and also refined: of the essence, οὐσία, and thus not just ὕλη, substance (qv. section 10).

Primary explanation. πρῶτον λόγον [cf. Plato, *Republic*, Book 3 [395b] εἰ ἄρα τὸν πρῶτον λόγον διασώσομεν]. An explanation of our origins, as mortals, and thus of the 'first principle' that forms the basis of the 'hermetic weltanschauung'.

17.

those seven came into being in this way. It is interesting to compare 'these seven' with 'the 'nine' and the seven spheres (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Moon) of the Somnium Scipionis described by Cicero:

Novem tibi orbibus vel potius globis conexas sunt omnia, quorum unus est caelestis, extimus, qui reliquos omnes complectitur, summus ipse deus arcens et continens ceteros; in quo sunt infixi illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni. Cui subiecti sunt septem, qui versantur retro contrario motu atque caelum. Ex quibus summum globum possidet illa, quam in terris Saturniam nominant. Deinde est hominum

generi prosperus et salutaris ille fulgor, qui dicitur Iovis; tum rutilus horribilisque terris, quem Martium dicitis; deinde subter mediam fere regionem Sol obtinet, dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio, tanta magnitudine, ut cuncta sua luce lustret et compleat. Hunc ut comites consequuntur Veneris alter, alter Mercurii cursus, in infimoque orbe Luna radiis solis accensa convertitur. Infra autem iam nihil est nisi mortale et caducum praeter animos munere deorum hominum generi datos; supra Lunam sunt aeterna omnia. Nam ea, quae est media et nona, Tellus, neque movetur et infima est, et in eam feruntur omnia nutu suo pondera. [*De Re Publica*, Book VI, 17]

Nine orbs - more correctly, spheres - connect the whole cosmic order, of which one - beyond the others but enfolding them - is where the uppermost deity dwells, enclosing and containing all. There - embedded - are the constant stars with their sempiternal movement, while below are seven spheres whose cyclicity is different, and one of which is the sphere given the name on Earth of Saturn [...]

Muliebral. For θηλυκή. The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and is used here to refer to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities, that are conventionally and historically associated with women. Muliebral is more expressive - and more redolent of the meaning of the Greek - than 'feminine', especially given how the word 'feminine' is so often misused (sometimes in a pejorative way).

It should be noted that the older reading of θηλυκή γὰρ ὁ ἀήρ makes Air - not Earth - the muliebral one.

Lustful. For ὀχευτικόν. The sense is similar to ἐπιθυμία as used, for example, in Romans 14.13 - τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιεῖσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας [make no intention regarding the flesh, to gratify its carnal desires]

From Æther, the pneuma. ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε. It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal.

cyclic until its completion. μέχρι περιόδου τέλους. I follow the reading of the Turnebus MS, taking περίοδος to refer to a posited cyclic - periodic - cosmic order, of Aeons, which periodicity continues until its purpose is achieved/fulfilled/completed.

18.

the connexions between all things. Compare this unbinding of the cosmic bonds with the 'connexions' that make up the nine spheres in the Somnium Scipionis

[qv. the quotation from Cicero, above].

bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. ἐγένετο τὰ μὲν ἀρρενικὰ ἐν μέρει τὰ δὲ θηλυκὰ ὁμοίως. The meaning of ἀρρενικὰ and θηλυκὰ are not 'male' and 'female' but rather masculous (masculine) and muliebral (of or considered appropriate to women).

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. The same Greek words - αὐξάνεσθε and πληθύνεσθε - occur in LXX, Genesis 1.22: ἡὐλόγησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεὸς λέγων αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε ["Theos praised them, saying: propagate and spawn"; Tyndale - "God blessed them saying, grow and multiply"; KJV - "God blessed them saying, Be fruitful and multiply"].

creations and artisements. κτίσματα καὶ δημιουργήματα. Although κτίσμα is generally translated here as 'creature' (as also for example in most translations of Revelation 5.13) I incline toward the view, given the context, that the more general sense of a 'creation' (or 'created thing') is meant - cf. Strabo, Geography, Book 16. 1 [ἧς ἐστὶ κτίσμα ἢ Βαβυλῶν] where what is described is a construct, a creation - a work constructed by or on behalf of someone. Here, what is described are the creations of theos.

In respect of 'artisements', see section 10.

the perceiver. ὁ ἔννοος.

Eros as responsible for death. τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα. The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from *Daphnis and Chloe*, written by Longus around the same time as the Corpus Hermeticum: πάντως γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύξεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

Eros - as some-thing similar to an archetypal principle, applicable to or of (existing in/part of) "all beings/creations/things" - might also go some way toward explaining the καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα that follows in the text (for example in the Turnebus MS) for which various emendations have been proposed,

including omitting it altogether.

19.

foreknowing, through wyrd.....coagulations. The foreknowing of theos, which enabled theos through wyrd and the cosmic structure to 'found the generations'. The coagulations, the copulation, of beings (created things).

self-knowledge. ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν. A pedantic aside: here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". In addition, it should be noted that the grammatical categorization of a word (male, female, gender neutral) is only a grammatical categorization and does not always reflect the nature of the being that that word denotes or refers to.

a particular benefit. τὸ περιούσιον ἀγαθόν. Literally, 'the particular benefit' [an alternative, possibly better, translation would be 'the esoteric benefit']. What the text refers to is not some abstract 'good' but rather what is good for, what benefits, the person. Thus, self-knowledge can lead to a particular, a specific, benefit.

perceptively. αἰσθητῶς - cf. Strabo, *Geography*, Book 3, chapter 5.1, a description of a high tide; of the sea, due to the moon, begin to perceptively/visibly both rise and go far onto the shore - ἀρχεσθαι διοιδεῖν τὴν θάλατταν καὶ ἐπιβαίνειν τῆς γῆς αἰσθητῶς μέχρι μεσουρανήσεως.

20.

to discover things. That is, discover/apprehend for yourself, to reveal (dis-cover) the nature of things, and thus fully understand them; cf. section 3 ('apprehend the physis of beings') and section 6 ('then discover phaos and become familiar with it') and section 7 ('such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres').

why death is expected for those who are in death. διὰ τί ἄξιοί εἰσι τοῦ θανάτου οἱ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ ὄντες. Somewhat obscure, given the phrase 'in death' and given that what follows - "because originally..." - does not really offer an explanation of it.

I take the meaning of ἀξιόω here to be 'expect' rather than 'worthy' given (i) what the English phrase 'they are worthy of death' (or 'they deserve death') implies, an implication - a moralizing attitude - that is not justified by either the immediate context or the rest of the text, and (ii) usages such as (a) νῦν παρ'

ὁμῶν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀξιούμεν κομίζεσθαι ['we now expect to receive the same from you'; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book 1, chapter 43] and (b) ὥστε οὐκ οἴκτου οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἀξιοί εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ τιμωρίας ['they are expected to be punished not pitied', Hyperides, *Orations Against Philippides*, 2.12]

Nourishes. ἀρδεύεται here is obviously metaphorical, as it literally means "is irrigated/watered" as in Diodorus Siculus when he describes India - τὰ πολλὰ δὲ τῆς χώρας ἀρδεύεται καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διττοὺς ἔχει τοὺς κατ' ἔτος καρπούς ['much of the land is irrigated which is why there are two yields a year'; *Bibliotheca Historica*, Book 2, 35.3]

21.

progress within themselves. εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ. Literally, 'progress to (or proceed/advance toward) him', with the usual assumption being that it is theos that is meant (hence, 'proceed toward theos'), with the alternative translation, of 'progress to themselves', ignored. However, given the immediate context - of a self-discovery - and given examples such as Mark 7.15 (εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς αὐτὸν, entering *into* him) and given that (insofar as I understand it) the tractate concerns (i) self-knowing, (ii) a 'mysterium' that is esoteric, and (iii) a desire to know and to understand 'the physis of beings', rather than a religious 'progressing toward god' à la Thomas à Kempis, then I am inclined to favour the somewhat radical translation of 'within themselves'.

the father of all beings. ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. The word 'all' by itself does not really capture the sense of ὅλων here, which is 'all beings'. The phrase ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων occurs in many other writings, some of which are Christian. For instance in the Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰουστίνου πρὸς Τρύφωνα Ἰουδαίου Διάλογος [The Dialogue of Justinus with Trypho, a Jew] where it is said in the context of Christ being crucified, dying, and then being raised again by 'the father of all' for the benefit of all human beings - τὸν ἑαυτοῦ Χριστὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκ παντὸς γένους ἀνθρώπων ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὰς πάντων κατάρως ἀναδέξασθαι ἐβουλήθη (xcv, 2).

However, interestingly and relevant here, the phrase also occurs in the polemic by Irenaeus against the 'heresy of gnosticism' - the *Adversus Haereses* [ἔλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως] - written not long before the Poemandres tractate:

μεταδοῦναί σοι θέλω τῆς ἐμῆς χάριτος ἐπειδὴ ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἄγγελόν σου διαπαντὸς βλέπει πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ὁ δὲ τόπος τοῦ μεγέθους ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ δι' ἡμᾶς ἐγκαταστήσαι (Book I, Chapter 13, 3)

I desire to pass on to you my Charis because the father of all beings has observed that your angel is constantly before him

These are the words Irenaeus ascribes to a person called Marcus, 'the heretic'; words used by this person skilled in the trickery of sorcery (μαγικῆς κυβείας ἐμπειρότατον) to, apparently, entice men and wealthy women to be his followers. Irenaeus then goes on, in a passage also quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (4.11.5), to describe some of the rites - the 'disgusting initiation into the mysteries' - of these people, and which rites include a 'mystical marriage' (πνευματικὸν γάμον) as well as a doxology to 'the father and the mother', εἰς ὄνομα ἀγνώστου πατρὸς τῶν ὄλων εἰς ἀλήθειαν μητέρα τῶν πάντων, and which doxology, with its contrast between ὄλων (ascribed to the father) and πάντων (ascribed to the mother) may go some way toward explaining the meaning of ὄλων as used here, in the Pœmandres tractate, given that μητέρα πάντων - as Γαία, Earth Mother - is the subject of, among other things, one of the Homeric hymns, Εἰς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, where She is described as πρέσβιστος, the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ.

Thus, πατρὸς τῶν ὄλων as the father of all beings, and μητέρα τῶν πάντων as the mother of being, of all Life, both mortal and immortal.

22.

respectful deeds. ὀσίοις. A difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as religious, pious, holy, devout, blessed, sinless, saintly, humble - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism; meanings which, in my view, are not or may not be relevant here, and whose use would distort one's understanding of the text.

The correct meaning is someone who, aware of or sensitive to the difference between the numinous and un-numinous [regarding 'numinous', see the note on ἅγιος in section 5], seeks to avoid, in their behaviour, what might cause them to hubriatically 'overstep the limits' and thus unbalance them, so taking them away from that natural balance and that respect for the numinous, which they personally, by their (or a particular) way of living (personal, religious, spiritual, mystical, or otherwise) seek or desire to cultivate, or which (and importantly) is a natural part of their admirable (and often admired) character. For example:

ἐκεῖνός γε μὴν ὑμῶν οὐποτ' ἔληγεν ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς οἶοιτο οὐδὲν ἦττον ὀσίοις ἔργοις ἢ ἀγνοῖς ἱεροῖς ἠδεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὅποτε εὐτυχοίη οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερεφρόνει ἀλλὰ θεοῖς χάριν ἦδει καὶ θαρρῶν πλείονα ἔθυσεν ἢ ὀκνῶν ἠΰχετο εἶθιστο δὲ φοβούμενος μὲν ἰλαρὸς φαίνεσθαι εὐτυχῶν δὲ πρῶτος εἶναι [Xenophon, *Agésilas*, 11.2]

this person, whom I praise, never ceased to believe that the gods delight in respectful deeds just as much as in consecrated temples,

and, when blessed with success, he was never prideful but rather gave thanks to the gods. He also made more offerings to them when he was confident than supplications when he felt hesitant, and, in appearance, it was his habit to be cheerful when doubtful and mild-mannered when successful.

For these reasons, I have translated not as one English word, but as the phrase 'respectful deeds'. See also the note on εὐσεβέω below.

honourable. ἀγαθός. The sense is not of being 'good' in some moralistic, sanctimonious, superior, way, but rather of being of noble character, as for example described in the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρῖναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [*De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus* 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company

refined. καθαροῖς. Literally it means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: cf. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασιλεία (in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic).

Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

compassionate. ἐλεήμοσι. Those who undertake merciful, charitable, humane, deeds; cf. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόητα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρὰ ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

aware of the numinous. εὐσεβοῦσι. As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this

awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds' [qv. ὀσίους, above].

soon acquire knowledge of the whole. εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι. Knowledge of 'the whole picture'; of what has been and is being discussed: perceivation; the cosmic structure; the nature of humans; the seven viziers; and so on. The sense is not "gnosis of all things", which - in its hubris - is incompatible with the immediately preceding mention of εὐσεβέω and ὀσίους.

affectionately gracious toward. There are two ways of interpreting τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and what follows. (i) As if it is some kind of Christian eulogy by the faithful, with mention of "lovingly propitiating the father" and the "singing of hymns" to him; and (ii) in a rather more religiously neutral way with phrases such as ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and words such as ὑμνεῦσιν suggesting the more Hellenic "affectionately gracious" and "celebrating in song". I have chosen the latter, as it is, in my view, more in harmony with the rest of the text.

the influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. What is meant here is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses, but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which influence a person in a way which is disliked because they do or they can affect a person in a manner detrimental to their immortality. That is, not all 'feelings' nor all 'sensations' are meant but only those which impresses upon [cf. Cicero, *Academica*, 2.6, impressum effictumque] a person in a certain way and thus affect that person also in a certain way, as 'impressionable feelings' do:

αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ ποιημάτων φιλοσοφεῖ, καθάπερ Ἡσίοδος τε καὶ
Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς κριτήριον δὲ τὸν λόγον εἶπε: τάς τε
αἰσθήσεις μὴ ἀκριβεῖς ὑπάρχειν φησὶ γοῦν [Diogenes Laertius,
Parmenides, 9.3]

he himself, through the form of verse, presented his knowledge, as did Hesiod, Xenophanes and Empedocles, stating that it was a way of judging what was reasonable since impressionable feelings were not an accurate enough starting point

This is the type of 'impression' - the type of influence - meant by some alchemical texts, for example, in the *Compound of Alchymy*, by Ripley, contained in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* ['the Body of the Spryte taketh impression' (ix. xi)] and also, some centuries later, by Hume in his *Treatise on Human Nature* ['those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions' (I. i. 12)]. Cf. also Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a - τοῦ δὲ μήκουσ ὄροσ ὁ μὲν πρὸσ τοὺσ ἀγῶνασ καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιω οὐ τῆσ τέχνησ ἔστίω - where what is meant is the 'impression' made upon an audience, which thus influences them.

the bad. The usual translation of κακόσ here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'.

However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does.

Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχρα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν (vv. 862-3)

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family – is a harsh misfortune

When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character; someone whose nature, for examples, inclines them toward doing harm and doing what is generally considered to be wrong.

This sense is still appropriate to Hellenic usage. For example, in respect of Romans 12.17 with its contrast of κακός and κάλος:

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all humans see is good

Similarly with the synonym σαπρός, as for example in Luke 6.43-5:

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκειται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

23.

hubriatic. ἀσεβέσι; someone lacking in or who is arrogantly disdainful of σέβομαι, of what is regarded as honourable, revered, respected. Someone who is thus 'hubriatic'. It is the opposite of εὐσεβέω, that is, the opposite of someone who is aware of and respectful of the numinous.

the avenging daemon. τῷ τιμωρῷ δαίμον.

Τιμωρῷ is an epithet of the god Mars, mentioned by Cassius Dio Cocceianus in his *Historiae Romanae* when he recounts how Caligula, celebrating the murder of someone, sent three daggers to the temple of Mars the Avenger, in Rome, as offerings to the god - ξιφίδια τρία τῷ Ἄρει τῷ Τιμωρῷ ἐς [Book 59, chapter 22 v.7].

Correctly understood, a δαίμων (daemon) is neither a 'demon' nor one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or to watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

which tests them. καὶ τοῦτον βασανίζει. The sense here is rather obscure, with some proposed emendations (for example, οὕτως, and τοῦτο for τοῦτον). I take the sense here of βασανίζω to be 'tested', as in being 'put to the test'; a sense in accord with what precedes and with what follows.

24.

Anados. ἄνοδος. A transliteration, as the word has specific meanings in ancient Greek 'mystery cults' and in Hellenic 'mysticism', one of which meanings is the ascent, or progress, or journey, of the initiate/individual toward their goal, however that goal/ascent/progress/journey is described and/or understood, and/or represented (symbolically, mythologically, or otherwise). Quite often, the journey - the 'way up' - is described as the one between the living and the dead (the next life) or as one from the chthonic (the underworld) to our mortal world; which journey sometimes involves a symbolic/mythological death and then a rebirth.

the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed. ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδωσ ἀπὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν. Literally, 'in the dissolution of the material body it hands over that body to alteration'.

ethos. ἦθος. Here, ethos in the personal sense; the 'spirit' - the personality - of an individual: their traits, character, disposition, nature, temperament.

25.

in the first realm. The sphere of the Moon, the first of the seven planetary/alchemical/astrological spheres, realms, or emanations - the ἑβδομάς; hebdomad, septenary system - that, in respect of the journey (ἄνοδος) of the mortal toward immortality, form the basis of, are emanations of, the harmonious cosmic structure (qv. sections 9 and 14). On this journey, the mortal passes through each realm - sphere - in turn.

which grows and which fades. Cf. Sextus Empiricus - ταύτην δὲ ἦτοι ἀύξειτικήν ἢ μειωτικήν [Adversus Mathematicos, IX, 393]

arrogance of command. Reading ὑπερηφανίαν not προφανίαν.

26.

ogdoadic physis. ὀγδοατικήν φύσιν. An interesting and important term, often overlooked and often misinterpreted. What is meant is not a realm - ζώνη - or sphere, similar to but 'beyond' the seven realms, but rather 'of what' the mortal has become, is reborn as, at the end of the journey: partaking in and being of 'the ogdoadic physis', and thus sharing the being/existence of those who have, or who have attained, that particular type of being/existence/physis. The existence, that is, of an immortal beyond the seven emanations.

with the others there, celebrates the father in song. ὑμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὔσι τὸν πατέρα. Again - qv. section 22 - not 'hymns' in the Christian sense but rather celebrating in song/verse/chant; celebrating the father of this mortal, the parent of all mortals, and ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὄλων, the 'grandfather' of all beings (qv. section 21).

force. δύναμις. Cf. section 7. Those forces, those particular powers - or, more precisely, that type (or those types) of being(s) or existence - that are not only beyond the septenary system but beyond the ogdoadic physis of those mortals who have, because of their journey (ἄνοδος) through the septenary system, achieved immortality.

It is therefore easy to understand why some considered there were, or represented their understanding/insight by, 'nine' (seven plus two) fundamental cosmic emanations, or by nine realms or spheres [qv. the quote from Cicero in section 17] - the seven of the hebdomad, plus the one of the 'ogdoadic physis' mentioned here, plus the one (also mentioned here) of what is beyond even this 'ogdoadic physis'. However, as this text describes, there are seven realms or spheres - a seven-fold path to immortality, accessible to living mortals - and then two types of existence (not spheres) beyond these, accessible only after the mortals has journeyed along that path and then, having 'offered up' certain things along the way (their mortal ethos), 'handed over their body to its death'. Ontologically, therefore, the seven might somewhat simplistically be described as partaking of what is 'causal' (of what is mortal) and the two types of

existence beyond the seven as partaking of - as being - 'acausal' (of what is immortal). Thus, Pœmandres goes on to say, the former mortal - now immortal - moves on (from this first type of 'acausal existence') to become these forces (beyond the ogdoadic physis) to thus finally 'unite with theos': αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοῦς παραδιδοῦσι καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται.

26.

become united with theos. ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Literally, '[they] become in theos', or '[they] enter into theos', although given what follows - θεωθῆναι - what is meant is 'become of/be united with theos', and thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both immortal and 'of theos'.

become of theos. θεωθῆναι. This does not mean 'made divine/god', or 'achieve divinity' or 'become god/a god', or deification, but rather, having become immortal, to be (re)united with theos and thus, by such a 'becoming', re-present (become-of) in that new (acausal) existence the numinosity of theos, and which return and re-presentation is the real aim of our mortal lives and the function of λόγος, and of the λόγοι (such as pneumatic logos and the phasical logos). That is, as explained in some of the rather neglected works of Maximus of Constantinople [qv. Migne Patrologiae Graeca, 90 and 91], Θεώσις in the sense of reunited with theos - ultimately because of ἀγάπη - without actually being or becoming 'a divinity' or 'God':

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ' οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. *Quæstiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra*, XXII [Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence

the noble goal. τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος. This might well be taken as an axiom of the 'hermetic' weltanschauung presented in this tractate. In respect of ἀγαθός as honourable/noble, see the note in section 22.

those who seek to acquire knowledge. Given the use here of the word γνῶσις, the sense could be interpreted, and has by others been interpreted, to mean 'those who seek to acquire/attain gnosis'.

other mortals can - through theos - escape. I take the sense of σώζω here be to 'escape', for the English word 'saved' now imposes, after nearly two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching, various religious preconceptions on the text. Also, the usual translation of 'saved by god' is somewhat at variance with the hermetic/gnostic weltanschauung which suggests a progression -

ἄνοδος - through the realms/spheres in order to attain immortality.

For the 'escape' is from the mortal to the immortal, and therefore to be 'saved', because of theos, so that (qv. section 21) they can "progress to return to Life"

27.

joined with those forces. The meaning here is somewhat obscure, although it possibly signifies that Pœmandres leaves the mortal realm and rejoins - returns to - his existence, beyond the hebdomad, where those forces/powers exist.

an insight of great importance. μεγίστην θέαν. An important 'insight into' the workings of the cosmos, immortality, and the nature of mortals, rather than 'a vision' or a 'revelation'.

awareness of the numinous. See the note on 'aware of the numinous'/εὐσεβέω in section 22.

earth-bound mortals. ἄνδρες γηγενεῖς. The literal meaning is 'earth-born mortals', which is rather obscure here, although what is meant is probably not the somewhat pejorative 'primordial/primitive' type [qv. ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλι ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθεὸς τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου εἶναι νηός, Herodotus, 8.55; and ἄλλοι δὲ γηγενεῖς καὶ χαλκᾶσπιδας, Strabo, 10.3] nor even the 'earthy/rural' type [qv. μὴ μισήσης ἐπίπονον ἐργασίαν καὶ γεωργίαν ὑπὸ Ὑψίστου ἐκτισμένην, LXX, Sirach 7.15] but rather the contrast, mentioned in section 15, between those 'deathful of body' and the 'deathlessness of the inner mortal'; with a similar contrast occurring in Plato [οὐδὲν γὰρ γηγενὲς Ὀλυμπίων ἐντιμότερον ἄλλ' ὁ περὶ ψυχῆς ἄλλως δοξάζων ἀγνοεῖ ὡς θαυμαστοῦ τούτου κτήματος ἀμελεῖ, Laws 727e]. Hence my suggestion of 'earth-bound', which is apposite considering what follows - οἱ μέθη καὶ ὕπνω ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδε δωκότες.

sleepfulness. To translate ὕπνος here as simply 'sleep' is not particularly helpful to the reader, as what seems to be implied is not normal everyday 'sleep' - a necessity for all humans - since such normal healthy sleep is a strange companion for 'intoxicating liquor'. Regarding ὕπνος, Jebb in his commentary on *Antigone* in respect of ὕπνος ὁ παντογῆρως (v.606) mentioned that "sleep, the renewer of vigour, could not be described as 'bringing old age to all'. Nor can the epithet be explained as 'enfeebling all', in the sense of 'subduing them'; nor, again, as 'attending on all, even to old age'," which led him to write that παντογῆρως was probably corrupt and to suggest, as some others had done, an emendation.

The fact that sleep personified, as Hypnos/Somnus, is the brother of Death [qv. ἔνθ' Ὑπνω ξύμβλητο κασιγνήτῳ Θανάτῳ, Iliad, 14.231] is also in favour of normal, healthy, sleep not being meant, as does what follows - θελγόμενοι ὕπνω ἀλόγῳ. Thus a possible alternative would be to interpret ὕπνος here somewhat metaphorically, either as a 'state of mind' (such as 'sleepwalking through life')

or as something akin to soporation (an underused English word, from the Latin) with the meaning here of 'an inclination or a tendency to sleep excessively or unnecessarily; to be inactive, drowsy, sleepful; disconnected from reality'. Hence my tentative interpretation - 'sleepfulness'.

unknowing of theos. ἀγνωσία τοῦ θεοῦ. Unknowing is a more suitable English word - given its meaning, usage (past and present) and given the context - than 'ignorance'

stop your drunkenness. παύσασθε δὲ κραιπαλῶντες. Literally, 'cease to be intoxicated'. It is interesting to compare this preaching to what Plutarch wrote about Demosthenes:

ὄδυρομένου δὲ τοῦ Δημοσθένους πρὸς αὐτόν ὅτι πάντων φιλοπονώτατος ὢν τῶν λεγόντων καὶ μικροῦ δέων καταναλωκένοι τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀκμὴν εἰς τοῦτο χάριν οὐκ ἔχει πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ἀλλὰ κραιπαλῶντες ἄνθρωποι ναῦται καὶ ἀμαθεῖς ἀκούονται καὶ κατέχουσι τὸ βῆμα, παρορᾶται δ' αὐτός [Demosthenes, 7.1]

To him, Demosthenes complained that although he was an industrious orator and had expended much bodily vigour in pursuing that duty, he was not favoured by the people who ignored him but listened to those who were intoxicated, the ignorant, and sailors, when they and their like held the floor.

28.

change your ways. μετανοήσατε. Not 'repent', which imposes a particular religious interpretation upon the text.

have kinship with the unknowing ones. συγκοινωνήσαντες τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ. Kinship in the sense of being 'kindred spirits', or 'fellow travellers'.

dark phaos. σκοτεινοῦ φωτός. An interesting phrase, lost in translation when φως is translated as 'light'. See the note on phaos in section 4.

29.

threw themselves down at my feet. ἑαυτοὺς πρὸ ποδῶν μου ῥίψαντε. A literal translation, although, given what follows, it seems unlikely that this is a metaphorical expression of their eagerness to learn. Indeed, this whole section seems rather at variance with the rest of the text - especially considering the following καθοδηγὸς ἐγενόμην τοῦ γένους - although perhaps 'the guide', having only just been informed of certain esoteric matters by Pœmandres, is here in this section somewhat obliquely revealing that he himself has yet (qv. section 25) to offer up "that eagerness which deceives; the arrogance of command; profane insolence."

became a guide to those of my kind. That is, not 'a guide to my race/mankind' but a guide to those who, seeking immortality, desire to undertake the journey through the seven spheres and thus are akin to - of the same type as - the guide.

informing them of the logoi. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων. The logoi [plural of logos] are - qv. the note on θεωθῆναι in section 26 - the various apparent forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumatic logos, the phasomal logos, and the logos kyrios, previously mentioned in the text. They are often considered to be how the logos is sometimes manifest to us, as mortals who are yet to begin or are yet to progress far along the septenary path toward immortality. Furthermore, those who are on the journey - following the way to theos - are also logoi.

logoi of sapientia. σοφίας λόγους. Something more than just 'words of [the] wisdom' is meant, especially as the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context, in this case of 'the opus mysterium'. The use here, in my translation, of the terms *logoi* and *sapientia* is intended - as with transliterations such as phaos - to cause the reader to pause and perhaps engender in them a certain curiosity as to what the terms may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply, and to thus (and hopefully) convey something about the original text.

celestial elixir. ἀμβροσίου ὕδατος. Literally, 'ambrosial water'; the food/drink that, in mythology, confers and maintains the immortality of the gods and chosen mortals.

30.

temperance of [the] psyche. τῆς ψυχῆς νῆψις. Again transliterating ψυχῆς, since the English word 'soul' imposes particular - religious/philosophical, and/or modern - meanings on the text, whereas it may well be used here in its classical/Hellenic sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; that is, as referring to that 'thing' (principle, or cause) which animates mortal beings making them 'alive', and which principle or cause was also personified as Psyche.

genuine insight. ἀληθινὴ ὄρασις. Cf. μεγίστην θέαν in section 27.

expression of the logos. It not clear how or in what form this manifestation of the logos occurs, although the context - of silence - might suggest that 'utterance' or 'speech' is not meant.

the logos of authority. τῆς ἀθεντίας λόγου. A similar expression occurs in section 3 also in reference to Pœmandres - τῆς ἀθεντίας νοῦς, the perceivization of authority.

this revealing. I take the sense of ἀληθείας here to be not some abstract

(undefined, probably contentious and thus possibly undefinable) 'truth' but rather as a revealing of what is 'genuine' as distinct from what is mere 'appearance'. Here, literally, '*the* revealing' - of the nature of mortals, of the way to immortality, of logos and of theos.

31.

Agios o theos, father of all beings. ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. For πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων, see the note in section 22.

I have given, as an intimation, a transliteration of the first part, as these are doxologies, similar to the Kyrie eleison [Κύριε ἐλέησον], and much (if not all) of their numinous/sacred/mystical/esoteric quality and meaning are lost when they are translated into plain - or into archaic, KJV type - English. Although they are best read/recited in the original Greek, the Latin preserves much of the numinosity of these and other such doxologies. The Latin of the nine doxologies given here is:

Sanctus deus pater universorum.
Sanctus deus, cuius consilium ad finem deducitur a propriis potentiis.
Sanctus deus, qui cognosci vult et cognoscitur a suis.
Sanctus es, qui verbo constituisti entia omnia.
Sanctus es, cuius universa natura imago nata est.
Sanctus es, quem natura non formavit.
Sanctus es, qui omni potentia es fortior.
Sanctus es, qui omni excellentia es maior.
Sanctus es, qui omnes superas laudes.

The Greek text is:

ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, οὗ ἡ βουλή τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται τοῖς ἰδίοις.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα.
ἅγιος εἶ, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφυ.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὃν ἡ φύσις οὐκ ἐμόρφωσεν.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως ἰσχυρότερος.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ κρείττων τῶν ἐπαίνων.

ἅγιος ὁ approximates to 'Numinous is' [theos] - qv. the note on ἅγιος in section 5 - and ἅγιος εἶ to 'Numinous are' [you].

As to why there are nine doxologies, it may be (and probably is) just a coincidence, or it may reflect the 7+2 structure of the 7 causal aspects (the hebdomad) and the 2 'acausal' modes of being beyond them (qv. the note on δύναμις in section 26).

his own arts. I take the sense of δυνάμεων here to be not 'powers', forces (or something similar) but 'arts'; that is, those abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths - of the 'artisan-creator' - which are inherent in theos and express the very nature of theos. Abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths, which an artisan - with assistance and help and instruction from theos, the chief artisan - uses, for example, to 'fashion seven viziers' and the 'fine artisements of physis'. See sections 9-13 and the notes thereon.

whose disposition is to be recognized. γνωσθῆναι here with γινώσκεται is not exactly the straightforward '[who] wills/desires to be known' but rather the more subtle '[whose] disposition is to be recognized', and (i) disposition/inclination as an expression of the nature, the very being, of theos, (ii) to be recognized in the sense of to be perceived for who and what theos is, in essence, in very being. Those who so recognize theos - who thus understand and 'appreciate' theos and are cognizant of the type of Being theos is - are those who partake in some way, or who re-present or emanate, or who 'imitate' [qv. Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ] the nature of that Being; and which Being is therefore 'recognized/understood by those who are of his [type of] being,' although the Greek literally means "is recognized by his own".

Agios es. For ἅγιος εἶ. Combining the Latin with the Greek, for readability and expressiveness.

form all being. In both senses of the term 'form' - constitute, and form being into beings and which beings are or can be re-united with Being (theos) by logos.

you who engender all physis as eikon. The meaning and significance of this are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pöemandres here, all physis - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the

seven spheres:

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. [Section 25]

you whom the Physis did not morph. Given the construction - ὄν ἡ φύσις - I have capitalized Physis here (see sections 14 and 17). By 'morph' is meant what the Greek term (ἐμόρφωσεν) implies, which is 'shape or transform' into some-thing-else, to give some-thing the 'semblance' of theos. That is, theos was, is, and remains, theos; there is no-thing resembling theos.

you who are mightier than all artifice. The artifice - the works, expedients, skill, manifestations, artissements, products, machinations, ingenuity, the 'domination', and the force - of others.

It is interesting to compare this might, the strength and power of theos, with what Epictetus writes about human strength in his *Discourses*:

οὔτε τύραννος κωλύσει με θέλοντα οὔτε δεσπότης οὔτε οἱ πολλοὶ τὸν ἕνα οὔθ' ὁ ἰσχυρότερος τὸν ἀσθενέστερον: τοῦτο γὰρ ἀκώλυτον δέδοται ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκάστω [4.5]

neither a tyrannos nor some Lord shall negate my intent; nor some crowd although I be just one; nor someone stronger although I be weaker, since such unhindrance is a gift, to everyone, from theos

wordful. The expressive term 'wordful' is more suitable here than 'speech', and also contrasts well with 'ineffable' and 'inexpressible'.

32.

the knowledge. For τῆς γνώσεως, although 'acquiring the knowledge' and 'the gnosis' are alternatives, so that with the latter it reads "I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in the gnosis germane to our essence", with the phrase 'our essence' referring to the essence - οὐσία - of both mortals and theos.

favour. χάρις. A gift, favour, or kindness, here from theos [χάρις θεοῦ] and which type of gift is also mentioned in the New Testament (for example, Luke, 2.40). See also the quotation from Irenaeus in the note on *the father of all beings* in section 21.

the unknowing. In respect of 'unknowing' see the note in section 27.

who are your children. In respect of υἱὸς as the gender neutral 'child', rather than 'son', see the note on υἱὸς θεοῦ in section 6, and also the note on gender neutrality under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

share in [your] numinosity. For συναγιάζειν.

Ἱερός Λόγος

An Esoteric Mythos

Tractate III

A Pagan And Esoteric Mythos

While the title - Ἱερός Λόγος - of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is generally translated as either "A Sacred Discourse" or "A Holy Sermon", it would perhaps be more accurate to translate as *An Esoteric Mythos* given (i) that it describes a numinous theogony of the kind recounted to initiates of the mystery traditions of ancient Greece, and thus recounts a mythos that pre-dates the Biblical story of Genesis, as given in the Septuagint (LXX), by centuries, and (ii) that Ἱερός Λόγος/Ἱεροί Λόγοι (an esoteric mythos/esoteric mythoi) were phrases often used to describe such mystery traditions, both Greek and Greco-Egyptian, as, for example, by Herodotus {1}.

For it is possible that the often-stated belief of the tractate being influenced by the story recounted in LXX is incorrect, and that whatever similarities there are between the text of the tractate and Greek text of the Biblical story of Genesis might be due either to the scribe of what was a previously esoteric aural tradition being familiar with LXX or some parts of it and borrowing a particular word or words to try and express an aspect of that pagan tradition (an opinion held by the Christian Byzantine historian Mikhael Psellus, d. 1078 CE), or to the Biblical story of creation itself being influenced by a more ancient Greek mythos or mythoi, just as it was influenced by similar, more ancient, mythoi from Sumeria and elsewhere. In addition, the overt polytheism of the tractate, and Greek concepts such as φύσις (physis) and Πνεῦμα (pneuma) {2}, are at odds with such influence and with that Biblical story.

Furthermore, far from it being (again, as has often been previously believed) a very corrupt, or overwritten text, the *Ἱερός Λόγος* most probably reasonably represents, like the *Pymander tractate*, a pagan metaphysical *weltanschauung* germane to the period of its composition and one which is based upon or recounts an earlier, and most probably aural, tradition. Furthermore, as Wildberg has suggested, the text might simply incorporate some marginalia {3}.

Such an esoteric mythos, as recorded in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* hermetic tractate, had - like the Biblical Genesis story - antecedents. Such as

οἱ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος

those who came-into-being from Gaia and the starry heavens {4}

from the theogony of Hesiod (106) - written c. 700 BCE - of which there is a remarkably similar expression in funerary inscriptions, from some four centuries later (c. 300 BCE) in Pharsalos, Thessalyon,

Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>

I am a child of Gaia and the starry heavens

and on a gold funerary tablet (c. 200 BCE) found at Eleutherna, Crete,

ΓΑΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος {5}

and also in a, purportedly Orphic, religious text (the *Derveni papyrus*) dating from c. 330 BCE {6} which contains the Hesiodian phrase οἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο [those who came-into-being from Zeus]. Thus, it is part of this ancient esoteric mythos, and/or its antecedents, that may well be echoed in LXX (Genesis, 1:1), written centuries later:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

In the beginning, Theos produced the heavens and the Earth {7}

and which Biblical text is, interestingly, given by Aquila - qv. the Hexapla {8} - as:

Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἔκτισεν ὁ Θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γῆν

As foundation, Theos formed the heavens and the Earth {9}

It is thus my view that the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is a valuable hermetic document, presenting as it does - probably after centuries of aural transmission as befitted ἱεροὶ λόγοι - an esoteric weltanschauung that pre-dates, and thus is independent of, not only Christianity but also of the myths, stories, and theology, manifest in the Old Testament.

Understood thus, the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum; and a text which the author of the Pœmandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Pœmandres* tractate are to my translation of and commentary on that text for I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases, used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text, some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pœmandres*, a certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

Purely for readability, I have arranged the translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations in the commentary and notes are mine.

Notes

{1} (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

{2} In ἱεροὶ λόγοι and in many hermetic texts, φύσις suggests something more than what the terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote. That is - γν. the Pœmandres tractate (see footnote 8) - it suggests to "know what is real" and to apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to thus have an understanding of ontology. For physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

In respect of pneuma, qv. DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

{3} Christian Wildberg: *The Genesis of a Genesis: Corpus Hermeticum, Tractate III*, in Lance Jenott and Sarit Kattan Gribetz: *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity* (pp.139-166). *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum*, 155. Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2013.

{4} Pedantically, a more accurate translation of ἀστερόεντος would be stelliferous - hence the 'stelliferous heavens' - but 'starry heavens' is far more poetic.

{5} Interestingly, some similar inscriptions - such as another one from Eleutherna - are gender neutral and simply say ΓΥΑΤΗΡΚΑΙΩΡΑΝΩΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ. That is, 'of Gaia and the starry heavens'.

{6} Bernabé, Alberto, and Francesc Casadesús. *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: Un reencuentro*. Madrid: Akal. 2008.

{7} Although I give here, for Ἐν ἀρχῇ, the conventional 'In the beginning', I am inclined to prefer 'In primacy' (the first thing/principle/origin of; cf. Anaximander, where there is also mention of the heavens and 'the world' or cosmos: πρῶτος τοῦτο τοῦνομα κομίσας τῆς ἀρχῆς λέγει δ' αὐτὴν μήτε ὕδωρ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν καλουμένων εἶναι στοιχείων ἀλλ' ἑτέραν τινὰ φύσιν ἄπειρον ἐξ ἧς ἅπαντας γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόσμους. Simplicius, *Physics*, 24:13-21).

An alternative, suggested by the Greek text of Aquila of Genesis 1:1, would be "As foundation, Theos produced..." Furthermore, instead of the 'creavit' of the Latin Vulgate, the older Vetus Latina has 'In principio *fecit* deus caelum et terram.'

{8} Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quæ Supersunt*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1875.

{9} Literally, "In foundation, Theos built/produced..."

The Latin of Jermone - who, according to certain sources, was acquainted with the text of Aquila - is *in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*.

Translation

[1] The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.
The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:
The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.
For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance.

In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen,
Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos.
Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground,
Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence.
And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

[2] With all beings unformed and not yet presenced,
What was lightsome was separated out, upward
And what was burdensome set in fluidic ground
With all defined through Fire, then elevated - and conveyed - by Pnuema.
Thus the heavens became perceivable in seven spheres,
Deities represented in the arrangements of the stars,
With the outer revolving in the æther, and circulating by the Pnuema of theos.

[3] Through their distinguishing influence, each deity did what was assigned to them
So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed and slithering
And those dwelling in water and those that fly,
And harvestable seeds and pastures and all kinds of verdant flowers,
<Seeding within> the semination of rebirth.
Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos, a living witness of physis,
So that the multitude of mortals can husband all that is below the heavens,
Appreciate honour, and propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning.

Thus, every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour.

[4] For this is the commencement of their living, of such learning
As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful, and the discoagulation of it,
For the great earthly artialized memorials they have left
Will, with the passing of the seasons, fade
Just as, for the generations of psyche-bearing flesh and fruitful seeds and artissements,
There will be renewance through incumbency, renewance through the divine
And by the circumferent coursing of Physis.

The divine is all of that mixion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

Commentary

1.

The numen of all beings is theos. Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός. The sense of δόξα here, especially given the following mention of θεῖος and φύσις, is of immanence and of transcendent sublimity, encompassing both (i) the interpretation given to the word in LXX and the New Testament, of a divine glory (qv. Exodus 16:10, Matthew 25:31, and Luke 2:9) and thus of what is considered to be - that is, is outwardly manifest as - glorious, or splendid, as in Matthew 4:8, a sense well-expressed in the Latin of Jerome: iterum adsumit eum diabolus in montem excelsum valde et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi et gloriam eorum, and (ii) the classical, more personal sense, of honour, and reputation or repute, the latter as for example referenced by Boethius: Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat: ὦ δόξα, δόξα, μυρίοισι δὴ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοτον ὠγκώσας μέγαν (Book III, vi).

Hence I have opted for 'numen', rather than the usual 'splendour' or 'glory' which do not, in my view given their modern connotations and common usage, express the sense of the Greek; with the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: "numinal and of numinal physis", where by numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculous) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism.

In this paganus context, the numinous is therefore what is, or what manifests (presences) or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) what is regarded or understood as sacred, numinal, sublime, awe-inspiring, beautiful, noble, esoteric, beyond the mundane, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control. Thus, in terms of ἱεροὶ λόγοι in general, the numen reminds us of 'the natural order of things' (the physis of theos, of theoi, of Nature and of the heavens), reminds us of our own physis, and thus of our duties and responsibilities as mortals (especially in relation to deities) and thence the need to avoid hubris.

In respect of hubris, Hesiod, in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218, wrote:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:

ὔβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Notes:

- a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.
- b. Mischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).
- c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.
- d. νήπιος. Literal – 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) – rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

Theos. θεὸς. As with the Pœmandres tractate, I have opted for a transliteration, for the Biblical 'God' is not what is meant here, given the title of the tractate and the content, while the word 'god' (singular, lower case) now has certain connotations (some of which are theological) not always relevant to ancient Greek deities. In terms of *theos*, what is most probably meant here – cf. Hesiod's Theogony – is the, or a, prime, first, or primordial deity (such as Οὐρανός) from whence came-into-being the other Greek deities, including Zeus (cf. the use of πρῶτον by Plato in *Timeas*, 69b).

Thus, in respect of this tractate, I translate θεοὶ not as 'gods' but as 'deities' in the hope of providing a more balanced view of this particular ancient pagan text.

Physis. As in my translation of Pœmandres tractate I have given a transliteration to suggest, as I wrote there, "something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being".

Occasionally I have capitalized physis, when the context merits it, such as when the physis of what we term Nature is meant or implied; or when - as here at the beginning - it is an attribute of theos.

τῶν ὄντων. What is real/what exists (Reality/Existence) - qv. the beginning of the Pœmandres tractate, and my commentary thereon.

νοῦς. *Perceiviation*, not 'mind', qv. Pœmandres 2.

substance. ὕλη, the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence. qv. Pœmandres 10.

sapientia. σοφία. qv. Pœmandres 29.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. In the sense of vitality and vigorous activity. See my note on ἡ εἰμαρμένη, Pœmandres 15.

incumbency. Often personified as Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency; that is, of *wyrd*: of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being. To render ἀνάγκη here somewhat blandly as 'necessity' is to miss both the subtle esotericism of an ἱερός λόγος and what Empedocles wrote:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
αἶδιον, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκοις·
εὐτέ τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μήνηι,
νεῖκει θ' ὅς κε ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσηι,
δαίμονες οἴτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρὶς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὐδας ἀπέπτυσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς
ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὁ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
Νεῖκει μαινομένωι πίσυρος.

There exists an insight by Ananke, an ancient resolution
Of the gods, immutable and sealed by vows,
Regarding when one of the daimons - those whose allotted portion of life is long -
Has their own hands stained from murder
Or who, once having sworn an oath, because of some feud breaks that oath.
For they shall for ten thousand tripled seasons wander away from the beautified,
Begotten during that period in all manner of mortal form
And exchanging during that voyage one vexation for another:

The fierce Ætherials chase them to the Sea,
The Sea spits them out onto dusty ground,
Gaia hurls them to the burning light of the Sun
Who flings them back to those swirling Ætherials.
Moved from one to the other, all detest them.

I am one of those, a vagabond in exile from the gods
Who has to rely on strongful Disagreement.

Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Diels-Kranz, B115

Notes:

νεῖκος (disagreement) is - according to what we can adduce of the philosophy of Empedocles from the fragments of his writings that we possess - a fundamental principle, and one understood in relation to another fundamental principle, Φιλότης, expressive as they both are of the logos (λόγος) by which we can possibly apprehend the workings of the cosmic order (κόσμος). However, the common translations - of 'strife' and 'love' respectively - do not in my view express what Empedocles seems to be trying to convey, which is 'disagreement' and 'fellowship' (a communal or kindred working-together in pursuit of a common interest or goal). For while disagreement sometimes disrupts fellowship, it is often necessary as the genesis of productive change.

Thus, just as Odysseus had to rely on the support of Athena, who disagreed with how Poseidon treated Odysseus, so does the 'vagabond in exile from the deities/the gods' have to rely on disagreements among the immortals to end their own exile.

Abyss. ἄβυσσος.

A delicate apprehending pneuma. πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν. In respect of νοερός, the sense here is not 'intelligent'/'intelligence' - as in "quickness or superiority of understanding, sagacity", etcetera - but rather of self-awareness; that is, of possessing a faculty to perceive, comprehend, and to rationally understand the external world. Which is why I have opted for 'apprehending'.

influence. δύναμις. Not here 'force' or 'power' per se but rather the influence arising from, inherent in, the numen by virtue of the numinosity of theos. The kind of influence which can nurture a 'delicate apprehending pneuma'.

Kaos. χάος.

numinous phaos. φῶς ἅγιον. Regarding the transliteration of φῶς - using the Homeric φάος (phaos) - see my commentary on Pœmandres 4; and regarding ἅγιος as 'numinous', rather than the conventional 'holy' or 'sacred', refer to the commentary on Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς above, and especially the note on the duality of the numinous in pagan weltanschauungen in my commentary on Pœmandres 5.

beneath (that) sandy ground. ὑφ' ἄμμῳ. Regarding ἄμμος, qv. Xenophon, *Apomnemoneumata* 3.3.6 - πότερον ἐπάγειν τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον κελεύσεις - for the reference, in context, seems to be to sandy ground or to sea marshes or, and perhaps more metaphorically, to waterlogged (boggy, unsuitable) land in general, and not necessarily (as some have theorized) to the sandy places and sand dunes in North Africa (such as in Egypt and Libya) as mentioned in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.50.2, τὴν δὲ χροᾶν ἄμμῳ παραπλησίαν ἔχουσι.

It is possible that ἄμμος, in regard to the ἱερός λόγος recounted in this tractate, had some esoteric or metaphysical meaning, now lost.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here and in Pœmandres 4.

essence. οὐσίας. qv. Pœmandres 14.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον. qv. Pœmandres 8.

Coagulated. πήγνυμι.

<particularize>. As in 'distinguish between'. The MSS have καταδιερῶσι. Various emendations have been proposed, including καταδιωρῶσι, while Wildberg has suggested that "and all of the deities..." - καὶ θεοὶ πάντες καταδιωρῶσι - was originally marginalia.

2.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced. ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων. An interesting phrase, with the English term 'presenced' perhaps expressing at least something of its philosophical implications derived as that term is from the noun 'presencing' (dating from c.1637) and meaning as it does "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established." For, as the tractate goes to explain, what becomes formed and manifest are 'the seven-fold heavens' and deities, manifest as stars, within them.

In respect of ἀκατασκευάστων, while some commentators have pointed to Genesis 1:2 - ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκευάστος, 'and the Earth was unperceived and formless' - as a parallel, σκευαστῶν occurs in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (5.1013b) in reference to the classification of differences in

causation, such as whether or not something is 'manufactured', as in produced by an artisan (such as a statue, ἀνδριάς) or by some other means, and, regardless, πάντα ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ στάσεως. Interestingly, in his commentary on the Metaphysics, Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Apposuit autem cum insit, ad differentiam privationis et contrarii: nam statua quidem fit ex aere, quod inest statuae iam factae; fit etiam ex infigurato, quod quidem non inest statuae iam factae. Unde aes est causa statuae, non autem infiguratum, cum sit principium per accidens tantum" (Commentaria, *In libros Physicorum*, 2, Lectio 5).

Thus, there is initially a 'privation of form', unformed being, which is then formed - as a statue from unshaped bronze - by theos as artisan-creator, and thus a possible metaphysical parallel in Pœmandres, such as in 31: πατήρ τῶν ὄλων... οὗ ἡ βουλή τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων...ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα [father of all beings...whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts...you who by logos form all being]. It is also interesting to compare all this with Plato's description in the Timaeus, 69b-c, in which his expression καὶ τῶν μὲν θεῶν αὐτὸς γίνεταί δημιουργός is noteworthy.

lightsome/burdensome. Used in preference to the less descriptive, ubiquitous, 'light' and 'heavy'. The whole passage is somewhat obscure, but if ἀποδιωρίσθη τὰ ἐλαφρὰ εἰς ὕψος was a metaphorical 'separating out' of what is 'light' from what is not light - rather than what is 'light' being somehow sent upwards, 'to the heights', or 'separated off upwards' - and, in particular, if ἀνακρεμασθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι was understood as referring to what - having been defined by, wrought in form through Fire, as bronze and iron are formed and shaped through fire - becomes elevated and conveyed by Pneuma, then philosophically it makes sense, especially given the Greek concept of the psyche (the immortal essence, or 'spirit') of sentient beings being conveyed through life and beyond (and presenced) by (or as) Pnuema, or by our mortal body (as mentioned by Plato).

seven spheres. qv. Pœmandres 9, 17, etcetera.

the outer revolving in the æther. The text is rather obscure, and one assumes 'the outer' refers to the outermost, the peripheral, sphere. Furthermore, I have here translated ἀήρ not as 'air' but as æther since ordinary, terrestrial, air is most certainly not what is meant and the ambiguous term æther (understood classically or otherwise) is suggestive of what may be meant. For whether ἀήρ here - as æther - refers to the fifth element as mentioned by Plato in *Epinomis* (981c) - πέντε οὖν ὄντων τῶν σωμάτων, πῦρ χρὴ φάναι καὶ ὕδωρ εἶναι καὶ τρίτον ἀέρα, τέταρτον δὲ γῆν, πέμπτον δὲ αἰθέρα - or whether it refers to a more mystical or esoteric, or hypothesized, substance that formed part of ἱεροί λόγοι, is an interesting question.

So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed. cf. Pœmandres 11.

<Seeding within them> *the semination of rebirth.* τὸ σπέρμα τῆς παλιγγενεσίας ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐσπερμολόγου. Although the text is obscure and has been variously emended by Reitzenstein, Nock, et al, the presumption is that this rebirth - or, alternatively, and more probably, this 'regeneration through offspring' - refers either to the deities themselves or (more probably) to the previously described living things which the deities brought-into-being.

My view is that what seems to be suggested by the text is that the deities seeded within living beings (human, animal, and otherwise) the ability to regenerate through offspring.

Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos. There is an interesting parallel here with some Quranic ayat, such as:

"The creations in Heaven and Earth, the very change of Night to Day, are Signs [from Allah] for those gifted with understanding, those who whether sitting, standing or reclining on their sides, give praise to Allah and who frequently recall those creations in Heaven and Earth." 3:189-191 Interpretation of Meaning

mortals should husband all that is below the heavens. I take the sense of δεσποτεία here - given what precedes and what follows - to suggest husbandry (of Earth) rather than to mean power in the sense of mastery (as in over a slave).

appreciate honour. Given the context - mortals, theos, deities, physis - I take the meaning of ἀγαθός here to refer to what is personal, not to some abstract concept of 'good'. Hence the personal virtue of honour; to behaving, to living, in a noble, a valourous, way, as opposed to being dishonourable or cowardly; a contrast mentioned in the Iliad, Book 17, 631-2: τῶν μὲν γὰρ πάντων βέλε' ἄπτεται ὅς τις ἀφήη ἢ κακὸς ἢ ἀγαθός [whether hurled by someone honourable or dishonourable, all of the missiles still strike their target].

The personal sense of ἀγαθός here also has the virtue of making what follows, at the end of section 3 - γνῶναι ἀγαθῶν καὶ φαύλων καὶ πᾶσαν ἀγαθῶν δαιδαλουργίαν εὐρεῖν - somewhat more understandable. Hence, a discovery or a learning of "all the arts of honour" in contrast to discovering "every artful workmanship of good things".

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. qv. Pœmandres 18.

a living witness of physis. The sense of ἐνεργοῦσαν here is poetically metaphysical, not literal. Hence a "living witness of physis" rather than an 'active' or 'working' one. An alternative would be 'presenced', suggested by Aristotle's Metaphysics: ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ τῆς κατὰ κίνησιν λεγομένης δυνάμεως

εἴρηται περὶ ἐνεργείας διορίσωμεν τί τέ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ποῖόν τι... ἔστι δὴ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα μὴ οὕτως ὥσπερ λέγομεν δυνάμει. (1048a)

with every psyche, embodied in flesh. The text following this is (to the end of the tractate) is often so obscure (or corrupted) that any interpretation is tentative. Wildberg's suggestion that διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας...καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργείας is marginalia, while interesting, does little to alleviate the obscurity of this part of the text.

mirificence. This rather neglected English word - from the post-classical Latin word mirificentia: the action or the fact of doing what is or appears to be wondrous, portentous - in my view expresses the meaning implicit in διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας εἰς κατοπτείαν οὐρανοῦ somewhat better than such turns of phrase as "the wonder-working course of..," or "by portent-sowings of the course of..."

presenced. qv. the previous note on ἐνεργοῦσαν.

understand divine influence as wyrdful change. γνῶσιν θείας δυνάμεως μοίρης ὀχλουμένης. This exceptionally obscure Greek phrase has been interpreted in a variety of ways, with my interpretation just one among many. 'Wyrd' rather than 'fate', given how the term 'fate' has acquired contemporary meanings not relevant here.

all the arts of honour. Less poetically, more literally, "the skills of all the honourable arts".

4.

As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful. This is open to three different interpretations, as perhaps was intended. First, that it is the deities themselves who determine the wyrd of mortals. Second, that a person's wyrd can be discovered - learned, possibly predicted - by astrological means; that is, by understanding the movement of the planets and the stars associated with the deities since the "deities are represented in the arrangements of the stars". Third, given the septenary nature of the deities - for "the heavens are perceivable in seven spheres" - one's wyrd can be discovered by an esoteric and septenary anados as described in the Pœmandres tractate.

artialized. From verb artize - qv. 'artisements' below - and meaning here produced or constructed by an artisan or skilled craftsman.

which the passing of the seasons will fade. Not χρόνος as some abstract 'time' measured by some human manufactured mechanism such as a clock (a relatively recent concept, in terms of aeonic ἱεροί λόγοι), but rather measured by the passing of the seasons, as determined - for example - by the appearance and the disappearance in the night sky of certain constellations and stars:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἑτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὀμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χεῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολάς τε τῶν.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,
This vigil a year in length, where I repose
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens
As stars when they come forth or pass away.

(Agamemnon, 1-7)

artisements. The products of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship; cf. the 16th century English verb *artize*: to exercise a skill, to pursue a skilled occupation such as that of an artisan.

the circumferent coursing of Physis. Given the context, I have - as at the beginning of the text - capitalized *physis* here.

mixon. Alternate (old) spelling of *mixtion*, meaning the condition or state of being mixed, melded, compounded, combined.

Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἢ μονάς

Chaldron Or Monas

Tractate IV

Introduction

The title given to the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἢ μονάς, requires some consideration if it is to be translated without using English words that have, in the centuries since the text was written, acquired meanings which are not or which may not be relevant to or representative of the metaphysics, and the cosmogony, of such an ancient text; with an injudicious choice of words more often than not resulting in the modern reader projecting certain interpretations upon the text, as might be the case in translating, without some comment, κρατῆρ as 'basin', cup, or 'mixing bowl', μονάς as 'monad', and Τάτ as Thoth.

In respect of κρατῆρ, a more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - translation, given the esoteric nature and antiquity of the text, would be chaldron (an alternative spelling of 'cauldron'), since basin, cup, and 'mixing bowl' are not only too prosaic but also do not conjure the appropriate archetypal imagery: of the primal artisan-creator coagulating and mixing primal substances - cf. tractate III, Ἱερός Λόγος - to produce, to bring-into-being by means of Logos, the cosmic order and thence mortal beings.

In respect of μονάς, the transliteration monas would be more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - than 'monad' given that the term monad is now so often associated with such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean/neo-Pythagorean and Gnostic, an association which may or may not be relevant here. Furthermore, monas has a long and interesting esoteric usage, including (somewhat recently) by John Dee in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi*

summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568 - a text included (on page 334) in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, Containing Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language*, published in London in 1652 - who wrote "our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law, both binde and lewse", and who also entitled one of his works *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564), in which work he described (in Theorem XVIII) a septenary system somewhat similar to that of the Poemandres tractate:

In respect of Τάτ, while there is no disputing that Thoth is meant, what may or may not be implied by the name Thoth is whether or not there is a primarily Egyptian genesis for the metaphysics and the cosmogony of this particular tractate. For what does 'Egyptian' mean in the context of the Corpus Hermeticum, written when Egypt was a post-Ptolemaic Roman province where Hellenism still thrived? That is, is the text propounding a metaphysics and a cosmogony primarily redolent of indigenous, pre-Alexandrian, times, with Hermes Trismegistus simply a Hellenic name for the ancient Dynastic deity Thoth, and thus with the Greek Hermes possibly being a son of that ancient Egyptian deity? Or is the text redolent of a classical metaphysics and a cosmogony; or of a Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony; or of some syncretism of Egyptian (pre-Alexandrian) weltanschauungen with Hellenic mysticism? Or has the author (or authors) of Ἐρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς simply used the name of an ancient deity - Thoth - in order to appeal to an audience of Hellenized Egyptians, or Greeks/Romans dwelling in Egypt, or because it seemed to add some esoteric gravitas to the text? Or, as the title might be taken to imply - of Hermes to Thoth - is it a text intended to inform Egyptians (Hellenized or expatriate Greeks/Romans, or otherwise) about Greek/Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony, with Thoth thus regarded, symbolically, esoterically, or otherwise, as the son of the Greek divinity Hermes?

In this matter, I incline toward the view - based on some forty years of study of the Corpus Hermeticum and similar mystical and esoteric texts, classical, Hellenic, medieval, Arabic and otherwise - that what is imparted in this tractate, as with the Poemandres and Ἰερός Λόγος, is primarily a mystical, and - for centuries - aural, Greek tradition, albeit one possibly influenced, over time and in some degree, by the metaphysical speculations of later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. That is, that in Ἐρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς and Ἰερός Λόγος and Ποιμάνδρης, we have an intimation of the metaphysics and the cosmogony taught to initiates of that (or those) ancient and aural and paganus Greek mystical tradition(s) mentioned by writers such as Herodotus. And an intimation that is not - a few borrowed illustrative terms notwithstanding - in any significant and metaphysical manner deriving from or influenced by Biblical stories or by early Christian theology or by indigenous Egyptian culture. In the matter of a paganus Greek mystical tradition, the opening of the fourth tractate is, metaphysically, very interesting:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργὸς οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ
λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ
πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἑνὸς μόνου τῆ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει
δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

For it is incorrect and misleading to write about those three tractates - and some other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum - as being in any way indigenously Egyptian. Rather, their genesis - the tradition they represented - was the Greek culture of post-Alexandrian Egypt, a cultural influence so evident in the numerous papyri found in places such as Oxyrhynchus, containing as such papyri do verses from Homer, Sappho, Menander, Sophocles, and other Greek authors.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Pœmandres* and Ἱερός Λόγος are to my translations of and commentary on those texts for, as I mentioned in my Ἱερός Λόγος,

I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases, used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text, some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pœmandres*, a certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

As with my Ἱερός Λόγος, I have here, purely for readability, arranged the translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations in the commentary are mine.

Translation

[1] Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos
You should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being,
As One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable
Or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma
Even though all such things are from that Being.
Since that Being is honourable, the desire was to entrust solely to that Being
Such a cosmic order on Earth:

[2] A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings,
For just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them
So did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos
Because of Logos and Perceiverance.
Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them,
Gaining knowledge of their creator.

[3] Thus, Thoth, to all mortals logos was assigned, but not perceiverance
Even though there was no ill-will, for such ill-will arrives not from there
But below, associated with mortals whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance.

On account of what, father, did theos not assign perceiverance to all?

Son, the desire was to position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward.

[4] Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down
With an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals:
If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.

The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceiveration
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceiveration
While the many who misunderstood that declaration,
Having logos without the addition of perceiveration,
Are unperceptive regarding how and why they came-into-being.

[5] For they have the alertness similar to that of unthinking animals
And, having an angry and restive disposition,
Have no respect for what is really valuable
But instead follow bodily pleasures and their own desires
Confident as they are that mortals were born for such things.

And yet, Thoth, those who parten to that gift from theos become,
When set against their deeds, immortal instead of mortal

For they with their perceivance apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly,
And what is beyond the Heavens.
Having gone so far, they perceive what is honourable, and, having so perceived,
They regard what preceded this as a delay, as a problem
And, with little regard for whatever is embodied and disembodied,
They strive toward the Monas.

[6] This, Thoth, is the episteme of perceivance,
Of <considering the divine> and of understanding divinity,
For the chaldron is numinous.

Father, I also desire to be so immersed.

My son, primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body
You cannot have affection for yourself, and when you have affection for yourself
You can acquire perceivance and, having perceivance,
You can participate in episteme.

Can you, father, explain that?

It is not possible, my son, to be of both the deathful and the divine.
For there are two kinds of existents, the bodily and the non-bodily,
Perceived as deathful and divine; a choice of one or of the other
Should there be a desire to do so. It cannot be both
With the decline of one uncovering the reality of the other.

[7] By choosing the higher not only is there a good ending - the apotheosis of the mortal -
For the one who chooses but also a numinous awareness of theos,
While, if the lower, although it has been the ruination of mortals
It is no termination against theos
But rather something garish that passes by amid us yet is unaffectionate
Even if an impediment to others
Just as those others are garishly worldly
Having been influenced by bodily pleasures.

[8] Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
With theos blameless in this.
Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse -
How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations -
So that we hasten to the Monas.

For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending
Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge.

[9] But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it
It yields to us the origin of our knowing.
Thus should we apprehend such an origin and hasten upon our journey
For it is not easy to abandon what we have become accustomed to
And go back to what is elden and in the past.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt
With what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed
Having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

Which is why it is akin to itself but different from everything else
For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied.

[10] This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Since the Monas is the origin and foundation of everything
It is within everything as origin and foundation
For if there is no origin there is nothing
And the origin is not from anything but itself
Since it is the origin of everything else,
Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos
Without itself being enfolded by any,
Begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any:

[11] Everything that is begotten is unfinished, partible,
Liable to decline, resurgence
Which do not befall what is complete
For what is resurgent is resurgence from Monas
But what is brought low is so by its own malady
Because unable to hold Monas.

This, then, Thoth, is the eikon of the theos
Insofar as it can be drawn:
If you - clearly, carefully - and with the eyes of your heart apprehend it
Then I assure you, my son, that you shall find the path to what is above:
In truth, the eikon will guide you
Since the seeing of it is uniquely your own,
For those who attain such a beholding are attentively held, pulled up,
Just as it is said lodestone does with iron.

Commentary

1.

artisan. δημιουργόν. See Poemandres 9. The theme of an artisan-creator, and their artisements, is common to the third tractate (Ἰερός Λόγος) as well. That the tractate begins by using the term artisan, rather than theos, is perhaps significant.

that Being. The conventional and grammatical interpretation is "you should understand *him* as..." although how such a human-type gender could be adduced from or manifest by how the 'body' of the artisan-creator is described in subsequent verses is an interesting and relevant metaphysical question.

Can, or should, a 'body' that cannot be touched, that cannot be seen, that

cannot be measured, that is not separable - οὐδὲ διαστατόν - and thus which is not conventionally 'human', be described as male? It is to suggest such metaphysical questions (and the limitations of ordinary language in describing and answering such metaphysical questions) that I have here departed from convention and used 'that Being' instead of 'him'. The term 'Being' also has the advantage that it avoids the gender bias implicit in translating θεός as 'god' given that 'god/God' implies a male entity.

There is also an interesting and perhaps relevant mention, in the second tractate of the Corpus, of the one, the being, who - like an artisan - constructs things: ὁ οὖν θεός <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἕτερα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατρὸς γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

However, in terms of gender and Hellenic mythos and metaphysics, it is sometimes overlooked that Γαῖα, Earth Mother, in one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, is described as πρέσβιστος: the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ. Thus, while it might be of "a father to construct" it is "of a mother to bring forth life", to give birth to beings, including the gods themselves.

presential. πάρειμι. Presential - from the classical Latin praesentia - means "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or with an individual, and is thus more apposite here than the rather bland word 'present'. Cf. the use of 'presenced' in Ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia.

One only. ἐνὸς μόνου. A formulaic mystic phrase, implying uniqueness. Cf. ordinary usage in Plato, *Crito* 47, ἢ ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου [...] ἐνὸς μόνου.

thelesis. θέλησις. Given what follows - τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὄρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν - a transliteration to suggest something other than a human type 'will' or 'desire'; such as 'disposition'. That is, Being (whatsoever of whomsoever Being is, in terms of gender and otherwise) is predisposed to craft - to presence - being as beings: as immortals (deities), as mortals (humans) and otherwise, qv. Ἱερός Λόγος, Poemandres 8 ff, and Poemandres 31: οὐ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων (whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts).

formed. As an artisan forms their artisements, and thus manifests their skill, their artistry, in what they produce. That is, the artisan-creator has formed, crafted, being (all existence) as beings.

(not) *separable.* οὐδὲ διαστατόν. What is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise.

Pneuma. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on

the text of Poemandres 5:

given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text. This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

Even though all such things are from that Being. ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.
Literally, 'even though all are from that'. One therefore might understand it to imply 'even though all beings/things are from that Being.'

honourable. ἀγαθός. qv. Poemandres 22, where I referenced a quotation from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρῖναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

Honourable - noble - rather than some abstract or dogmatically defined 'good'. That is, the Hellenic distinction is between good (honourable) personal character and bad (dishonourable) personal character rather than - as for example in Christianity - referencing some abstract, or God-given or dogmatically (Church) defined 'good'.

entrust solely to. I follow the MSS, which have μόνῳ, with οὐ μόνῳ being a fairly recent emendation which completely changes the meaning.

orderly arrangement. κοσμέω. In esoteric terms, a presencing, on Earth, of the cosmic order itself, qv. Poemandres 8: "having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it..."

Regarding 'presencing', qv. my translation of and commentary on section two of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ιερός Λόγος:

ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced.

2.

a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings. κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine.

Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Also, in respect of ἄνθρωπος I have used here - as in my Poemandres - the gender neutral 'human being' instead of the more usual 'man', and also - as there - occasionally used the term 'mortal' when the context suggests it.

Regarding 'the cosmic order' (κόσμος) itself qv. Poemandres 7; 14, and Ιερός Λόγος 4:

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

a deathful life and yet a deathless life. This (including the borrowing of the terms deathful and deathless, in juxtaposition, from Chapman) is explained in section 14 of the Poemandres tractate:

θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal.

Logos and Perceivance. In my commentary on the Poemandres tractate I have explained my reasons for transliterating (and sometimes capitalizing) λόγος as logos (qv. the commentary on section 5) - rather than as 'Word' or 'Speech' - and for translating νοῦς as perceivance/perceivance rather than as the conventional 'mind' (see for example the commentary on sections 2 and 10). Refer also to comments there regarding terms such as pneumatic logos (πνευματικὸν λόγον), phasal logos (φωτεινὸς λόγος) and θεοῦ λόγος.

Here Logos suggests 'reasoning', with perceivance having its usual sense of 'awareness', of comprehending what is perceived, as for example, in being able to rationally or intuitively assess a situation, a person, or persons. As with (and for example) Logos, Psyche, and Physis, perceivance - capitalized as Perceivance - can also be personified and thus regarded as a fundamental quality germane to the life of deathful mortals.

3.

whose Psyche does not convey Perceivance. It is possible to see in this an esoteric allusion to psyche personified, especially given what follows: τοῦτον ἐν μέσῳ ταῖς ψυχῶν ὡσπερ ἄθλον ἰδρυῖσθαι. In ancient mythology - such as the ancient myth of Psyche and Eros, retold by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*, which was written around the same time as this Hermetic tractate, and which story also involves Hermes - Psyche initially lacked perceivance but through striving to succeed in the trials given to her by Aphrodite she acquires it.

Hence why here I have personified both psyche and perceivance. I have also transliterated ψυχή so as, as I noted in my Poemandres, to not impose a particular meaning on the text. For whether what is meant is anima mundi, or the ancient pagan sense of the 'spark' - the source, or breath - of life, or what we now denote by the terms 'soul' and 'spirit', is open to debate, especially as the terms soul and spirit possess much later and modern connotations that may not be relevant to such an ancient text. Connotations such as suggesting the incorporeal, or immaterial being, as distinct from body or matter; or the Christian concept of the soul.

As an illustration of matters of interpretation, two subtly different senses of ψυχή are evident in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles:

τῶνδε γὰρ πλέον φέρω
τὸ πένθος ἢ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

For my concern for their suffering

Is more than even that for my own psyche.

vv.93-4

ἀλλά μοι δυσμόρω γὰ φθινὰς
τρύχει ψυχάν, τάδ' εἰ κακοῖς κακὰ
προσάψει τοῖς πάλαι τὰ πρὸς σφῶν.

But ill-fated would be my breath of life - which the decay in this soil
Already wears down - if to those troubles of old
There was joined this trouble between you and him.

vv.665-667

In respect of ψυχή, the Hermetic text here implies that ill-will is associated with those whose nature is such that they lack the ability to rationally or intuitively assess and comprehend a situation or other people.

father. ὦ πάτερ is a traditional way of showing respect for an elder, in this case of Thoth for Hermes.

position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward. Thus, while Logos is a gift to all mortals from theos, Perceivance is not and has to be earned, striven for, as an athlete has to strive to earn a prize. [The English word athlete is related to the Greek word used here - ἄθλον - via the Greek ἀθλητής and thence the classical Latin athleta.]

chaldron. κρατήρ. See the Introduction.

envoy. While the conventional translation here of κῆρυξ is 'herald', I consider it unsatisfactory given what that English term now often denotes: either the type of herald familiar from the New Testament or the herald of medieval literature and stories (qv. Morte Arthure, and The Knights Tale by Chaucer). Given the Greco-Roman context (Hermes, Thoth) and classical antecedents (such as Hermes as the protector of mortal envoys and messengers) then 'envoy' is more accurate especially given that this is an envoy from the artisan-creator assigned to impart information to mortals.

Ascend to the one [...] how you came-into-being. There are similarities here to the Poemandres tractate in relation to the anados - the journey up through the spheres (Poemandres 24) toward theos - and the desire "to apprehend the physis of beings" (Poemandres 3).

and were immersive with perceivance. καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός. That is, were or became characterized by having become immersed with - suffused by -

perceivation.

Here, as elsewhere the understanding of νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation rather than as 'mind' makes the text understandable: for the mortals became suffused with a particular (and, for most, probably a new type of) perception, a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals, and thus acquire a particular type of knowing, whereas an expression such as "immersed themselves with mind" is obscure to the point of being either unintelligible or requiring a long discourse on the nature of "mind" based as such discourses invariably are on certain philosophical assumptions.

The sense of acquiring a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals is evident in the text that follows: οὔτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως (gained, acquired, partook of, a knowing).

more complete mortals. The sense of τέλειος here is not that of being 'perfect' but rather of being 'entire', more completed, 'more rounded', than others. Thus there is no sense of "perfect people" or "perfect humans" - with implied moral, and other, superiority - but rather of those who, having a different perception of things to most others, were akin to initiates of a mystical or an esoteric tradition: apart from others because of that particular knowledge that their new, initiated, perception, has brought, but still mortal. This sense is evident in the text that follows: τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι.

received the perceivation. It is possible that this is an allusion to 'the perceivance' - the gnosis - that initiates of a particular mystic or esoteric tradition acquire when certain esoteric, mystic, knowledge is imparted to them.

4.

declaim to the hearts of mortals. A figurative usage of 'heart', referring here as often elsewhere in Greek and Hellenic culture to the feelings, the emotions (qv. Iliad, Book IX, 646 and The Odyssey, Book XVII, 489) as well as to the ethos, the nature, and the understanding, of the individual.

See also "with the eyes of the heart" in section 11.

5.

alertness. αἴσθησις. For which see Poemandres 1. The sense is that they are always alert, and - like animals - react instinctively because they lack the objective awareness that perceivance (νοῦς) brings and which objective awareness (of themselves and others) makes mortals into complete human beings.

Confident. Given the context, πιστεύω here suggests 'confidence' rather than 'belief'; for this is the arrogant instinctive confidence of those who lack

perceivance and who have no firm belief in anything other than their own bodily pleasure and fulfilling their desires and who thus reject - or who cannot intuit - the numinous perspective of the divine, a perspective which would reveal the possibility of immortality.

parten to that gift [...] when set against their deeds. The text suggests that the gift of immortality which theos gives is freely bestowed among those whose deeds reveal that they have understood what the chaldron is and does, with the fourteenth century English word *parten* [to have something in common with something or someone else] expressing the meaning here of the Greek *μετέχω*.

apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly, and what is beyond the Heavens. An alternative - following the Latin version of the text - *omnia complexi sua mente, et terrena et caelestia et si quid est supra caelum* - would be "apprehend the terran, the celestial, and what is beyond the celestial."

(as a) problem. The context suggests that what is meant is that life before "having so perceived" was a problem, not that it was a 'misfortune' or a calamity. A problem - a challenge - to overcome, which challenge they accepted leading to them gaining the prize, for theos had positioned that prize "half-way between those psyches, as a reward."

The same sense in respect of *συμφορά* is apparent in *Oedipus Tyrannus* by Sophocles:

θεοῖσι μὲν νυν οὐκ ἰσοῦμένον σ' ἐγὼ
οὐδ' οἶδε παῖδες ἐζόμεσθ' ἐφέστιοι,
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου
κρίνοντες ἔν τε δαιμόνων συναλλαγαῖς

Not as an equal of the gods do I,
And these children who sit by your altar, behold you -
But as the prime man in our problems of life
And in our dealings and agreements with daimons.

vv. 31-34

disembodied. ἀσώματος - etymologically, a privation of σωματικός - occurs in works by Aristotle and, perhaps more relevant here, in writers such as Iamblichus who in *De Mysteriis*, V, 16 writes in general terms about the body in relation to offering to the gods and daimons that which, or those things which, might free the body from ailments and bring health, and the necessity in such matters as offerings of not considering the body in either non-bodily or noetic terms:

τότε δὴ οὖν οὐ δήπου νοερῶς καὶ ἀσωμάτως τὸ σῶμα

μεταχειριζόμεθα· οὐ γὰρ πέφυκε τῶν τοιούτων τρόπων τὸ σῶμα μετέχειν· τῶν δὲ συγγενῶν ἑαυτῷ μεταλαγχάνον, σώμασι σῶμα θεραπεύεται τε καὶ ἀποκαθαίρεται.

Thus the sense of καταφρονήσαντες πάντων τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἀσωμάτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἓν seems to be that what is important is a striving for the monas not a noetic concern for the difference between whatever is embodied and whatever is considered disembodied.

Monas. μονάς. A transliteration since it here does not necessarily, as I noted in the Introduction, signify "The One, The Only" (τὸ ἓν) of such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean, neo-Pythagorean, or Gnostic; or 'the one God' of religious monotheisms such as Christianity.

6.

episteme. A transliteration of ἐπιστήμη, which could be - and has been - accented thus: épistémé. The meaning is 'a way', or a means or a method, by which something can be known, understood, and appreciated. In this case, perceiviation, which the artisan-creator has positioned "half-way between psyches, as a reward."

Episteme, therefore, should be considered a technical, esoteric, term associated with some of the weltanschauungen that are described in the Corpus Hermeticum. Thus, in the Poemandres tractate, the anados through the seven spheres is an episteme.

considering the divine. The MSS have ἐντορία and various emendations, recent and otherwise, have been proposed including ἐντορία and ιστορία. Interestingly, the Renaissance Latin text published in 1554 has, for the line, 'scientia mentis est diuinorum contemplatio & intelligentia dei, diuino existente cratere' with Parthey's 1854 edition reading 'mentis scientia, diuinorum inspectio et dei comprehensio, quia diuinus est crater.'

I am inclined toward ιστορία, which conveys the sense here of considering, of obtaining information about - of contemplating - divinity, the numinous, and thus the relation of mortals to divinity. A sense which fits well with the following καὶ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κατανόησις.

For the chaldron is numinous. θείου ὄντος τοῦ κρατῆρος. For θεῖος here I have opted for the English word numinous (dating from 1647 and from the classical Latin term numen) to express the sense of inclusion - of/from the divinity and of itself being divine - that the word 'divine' by itself does not, particularly given the previous "considering the divine and of understanding divinity."

Primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body. 'Εὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸ σῶμά σου μισήσης. To always - regardless of textual context and milieu - translate

μισέω/μῖσος as "hate" is or can be misleading, given how the English word hate implies (and is understood as meaning) an extreme personal emotion, an intense personal aversion to something, and also a certain malevolence. Consider, for example, the following from Thucydides:

ἀπὸ τούτου τε πρῶτον Περδίκκας Βρασίδαν τε πολέμιον ἐνόμισε καὶ ἔς τὸ λοιπὸν Πελοποννησίων τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους οὐ ζύνηθες μῖσος εἶχε, τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαίων ξυμφόρων διαναστὰς ἔπρασσε ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τάχιστα τοῖς μὲν ξυμβήσεται, τῶν δὲ ἀπαλλάξεται. (4.128)

His reaching an agreement with the Peloponnesians while at the same time still being determined to be rid of his foe does not imply an implacable, intense, personal hatred in the first place, but rather a generalized dislike (in this case just a certain prejudice) of the kind that can be dispensed with if it is personally - or strategically - advantageous to do so. Thus to translate the relevant part as "it was then that Perdiccas first considered Brasidas his foe and felt a prejudice toward the Peloponnesians" seems apt, especially given the qualification mentioned in the text: τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους.

The preference for the metaphysical, for striving for immortality and for understanding the numinous, that this tractate describes is not, as some have assumed, an ascetic "hatred" of the physical body. Instead, it is just a positive bias in favour of such metaphysical, spiritual matters, and a prejudice against a fixation on bodily and material things.

This preference is also evident in Poemandres 19:

"they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death."

For, as noted in my commentary on τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα in Poemandres 19:

The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from Daphnis and Chloe, written by Longus around the same time as the Corpus Hermeticum: πάντως

γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἢ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

There are two kinds of existents, bodily and non-bodily. δύο γὰρ ὄντων τῶν ὄντων. This duality, in respect of mortals, is evident in the Poemandres tractate:

διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον

distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal

(Poemandres 15)

This contrast between the deathful body and the immortality that is possible (the potential for immortality that lies within mortals) is essentially the same as the one described here: the bodily and the divine, the embodied and the disembodied.

7.

apotheosis of the mortal. Not here a literal making of "the mortal into a god" or even an actual "deification of the mortal" (by whomsoever) but rather a bringing about in the mortal an apotheosis - ἀποθέωσις - in the sense of an ascension toward immortality, a spiritual journey from earthly life, a figurative resurrection of, or actual elevation in, the life of the mortal.

This latter sense is evident in the use of ἀποθέωσις by Cicero in his Epistularum Ad Atticum - videsne consulatum illum nostrum, quem Curio antea ἀποθέωσιν vocabat, si hic factus erit, fabam mimum futurum (Liber Primus, XVI, 13) - for this early use of the Greek word concerns the elevated rank of Consul, and thus the honour and privileges that such a privileged rank brings.

a numinous awareness of theos. In respect of εὐσεβέω as an "awareness of the numinous" qv. my Poemandres, 22.

termeration. From the Latin *termero* and thus appropriate here, given the context, in respect of πλημμελέω, suggesting as it can both a violation and a profanation, while avoiding the interpretation that words such as "transgression" (toward god), "trespassed (against god) and "offence" (against god) impute, especially given the usual translations of Christian texts written in

Greek, such as translations of the following from the Septuagint: ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ περὶ ἐνὸς ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπλημμέλησεν αὐτῷ (Leviticus 5, 26).

something garish that passes by. The exact meaning of πομπή here is unclear, with suggestions ranging from parade, pageant, to procession (religious or otherwise), which all seem out of context since they all can have an affect, a purpose, and can achieve things other than just being a hindrance to passers-by.

The context suggests something metaphorical and similar to what Cicero wrote:

quem tu mihi addidisti sane ad illum σύλλογον personam idoneam.
Videbis igitur, si poteris, ceteros, ut possimus πομπεῦσαι καὶ τοῖς
προσώποις (Epistularum Ad Atticum, Liber Tertius Decimus, 32:3)

That is, similar to a showy or affected countenance or facade or personae, or an act, or some pompous attempt to impress which however is not effective as in Oedipus Tyrannus:

εἰπὼν ἄπειμ' ὧν οὖνεκ' ἦλθον οὐ τὸ σὸν
δείσας πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου μ' ὀλεῖς

I shall go but speak that for which I was fetched, with no dread
Because of your countenance. For you cannot harm me. (448)

garishly worldly. I take the sense of κόσμος here to refer to 'that cosmos' - the world of mortals - previously described as "the cosmos of the divine body": the microcosm which the artisan-creator crafted and in which we mortals have our being. See the commentary in section 2 on the phrase *a cosmos of the divine body*.

Hence the poetic metaphor here: garishly worldly. Of living a garish - facile - life in our microcosm even though the artisan-creator has provided a means for us to attain immortality and thus, as described in the Poemandres tractate, become a part of a higher, a divine, cosmic order.

8.

select dishonour For κακός as 'bad' and 'dishonourable' rather than 'evil' refer to my commentary on Poemandres 22 from which this is an extract:

"The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'. However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological

dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does. Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious [...] When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character."

theos blameless in this. In respect of ἀναίτιος, compare Agamemnon 1505:

ὡς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων

Is there anyone who will bear witness
That you are blameless in this killing?

celestial body. By σῶμα (body) here is meant the celestial body, the 'harmonious structure', which is described in terms of seven spheres in the Poemandres tractate and which mortals must ascend through in sequence in order to attain immortality and thus be in the company of theos. This ascension through the spheres is there described as an anados - ἔτι δέ μοι εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἀνόδου τῆς γινομένης - with Poemandres (in section 25) describing the journey in detail, with each sphere represented by one of the seven classical planets:

καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν ἀύξειτικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν
μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρῃ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλου
ἀνενέργητον [...]

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure,
offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which
fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no
longer functioning [...]

Plato, in Timaeus 32c, uses σῶμα to refer to the substance - the body - of the cosmos as being formed from fire, water, air and earth:

ὄν ἀριθμὸν τεττάρων τὸ τοῦ κόσμου σῶμα ἐγεννήθη δι' ἀναλογίας
ὁμολογήσαν

sequential constellations. In context, συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρω suggests a type of movement, a path, through certain stars or constellations. That is, a particular or ordered sequence: the anados through the septenary system, with it being possible that the use here of ἀστήρ (star) - rather than κύκλος (sphere,

orb) as in Poemandres - implied an aural esoteric tradition associating each sphere with a corresponding star or constellation, an ancient tradition found in Renaissance alchemical and magical texts.

the honourable is unpassable. Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελής - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceiviation," having won that prize gifted by theos.

9.

Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

The word translated here as origin is ἀρχή and which Greek term has various philosophical connotations in Anaximander, Plato, et al. What it here denotes, as evident in the text that follows (sections 10 and 11), is origin, beginning, source.

not the origin of it. Referring to what is honourable and its origin/beginning.

hasten upon our journey. While the text - λαβώμεθα οὖν τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ὁδεύσωμεν τάχει ἅπαντα - is somewhat obscure it seems reasonable to assume that what is meant or implied is the necessity of beginning - of hastening upon - the complete, the entire, journey toward the Monas with all that implies in terms of everything encountered along the way.

not easy. The sense of σκολιόν here - in the context of leaving what one has become accustomed to and is comfortable with - suggests 'tangled', indirect, 'not straightforward', 'tortuous', and thus 'not easy'.

elden. A rather obscure English word meaning 'belonging to earlier times', and used to avoid the negative connotations that words such as 'ancient' can imply.

What is apparent can please [...] neither pattern nor guise. τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ. φανερώτερα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς

This is an interesting passage, often interpreted in terms of moral abstractions, of 'good' and 'evil'. However, as previously mentioned, I incline toward the somewhat iconoclastic view that there is a more Greek, a more Hellenic, and an essentially pagan, interpretation of ἀγαθός consistent with the Greek mystery traditions, with Homer, with the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and with how theos was generally understood in ancient Greece and in Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, times. Which is of ἀγαθός - and of κακός - (i) when referring to mortals as referring to personal character, of character being most often revealed by deeds, by what has been observed because done visibly, or to outward appearance in terms of τὸ καλόν, of what is considered beautiful or not beautiful; and (ii) when used of things - living or dead - as referring to the difference between 'rotten', 'bad', and what is not rotten, as in a rotten tree or a piece of food.

What is expressed here is of how outward appearances can please, how we can be suspicious - doubtful - about what is concealed, what has not yet been revealed; with what is bad often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a rotten person) but with what is good, honourable, often being concealed because it has no particular pattern or guise until it has been revealed, for example by noble, honourable deeds. Thus the suggestion seems to be that there is or can be a revealing of what is good when mortals seek the theos-gifted prize of perceivration, which seeking of that prize, and winning it, is of itself a good, a necessary, an honourable, thing to do, leading at it does to a hastening toward the Monas.

The passage also invites comparison with one in Plato's Republic and one in Aristotle's Metaphysics.

In Book XII, 1074b, Aristotle wrote:

τὰ δὲ περὶ τὸν νοῦν ἔχει τιναὶς ἀπορίας: δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν
φαινομένων θειότατον, πῶς δ' ἔχων τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη, ἔχει τιναὶς
δυσκολίας

The expression δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν φαινομένων θειότατον has led to disputations among some scholars with some considering the passage corrupt and in need of emendation, for their difficulty lies in Aristotle apparently stating that 'Mind' is, like other phenomena, perceptible to our senses. However, if one does not translate νοῦς as 'Mind' - with all the preconceptions, philosophical and otherwise, that have over centuries become attached to that term - and one also appreciates that φαίνω here as sometimes elsewhere is not a simple 'observing' - of seeing, of observing, phenomena - but rather a revealing, then there is little if any difficulty. For instance, does the following interpretation of part of that passage make sense with respect to phenomena? "Perceivration, of all revealing, appears to be the most numinous."

Indeed so, because perceivration is a perception involving a certain

awareness, a revealing to us, of what is observed; that is, an apprehension, and Aristotle's reasoning (insofar as I understand it) is that this awareness - νοῦς - is the most numinous, 'the most divine', revealing because we mortals can apprehended, be or become aware of, and thus have knowledge of, theos. Which is basically what Hermes has in this tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum imparted to Thoth.

In Book VII, 517β - 517ξ, of the Republic, Plato wrote:

τὰ δ' οὖν ἐμοὶ φαινόμενα οὕτω φαίνεται, ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ τελευταία ἢ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὀρᾶσθαι

Which brings us, again, to ἀγαθός invariably translated as it hitherto has been - in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, and many of the writings of Aristotle and Plato - as an abstraction termed 'good', as well it might be in respect of Plato given that he posits an abstract (a true, ideal) beauty and an abstract (true, ideal) being, as in Phaedo 78b where he writes about αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and about αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, and why in Symposium 210e - 211a he states regarding his ideal, his form, his ἰδέα/εἶδος, which he sometimes and confusingly uses interchangeably, that:

πρῶτον μὲν ἀεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε ἀξανάμενον οὔτε φθίνον

Firstly, it always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay.

What, therefore, seems to have occurred, in respect of this and other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, is the assumption that ἀγαθός always refers back to Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος (and to those influenced by him or are assumed to be his precursors) leading to moralistic interpretations such as that of Mead where ἀγαθός is divorced from the physis (φύσις), the character, the individuality, of mortals: "evils are the more apparent things, whereas the Good can never show Itself unto the eyes, for It hath neither form nor figure." Thus, that in respect of mortals, ἀγαθός, rather than having its genesis, its origin, its very being, in some individual mortals - and attainable by others because of the prize of perceivance offered by theos - is considered as something external which could be attained by, which has its being in, is embodied by, such abstractions (the 'politics') as Plato delineates in his theorized Republic and in such abstractions as were posited by the early Christian Church.

For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied. ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἀσώματον σώματι φανῆναι. That is, it is not possible to discern who is honourable from their outward appearance, for what is honourable is manifest, revealed, through personal deeds.

enfolds every arithmos [...] begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any. This passage, with its mention of ἀριθμός, is often assumed to refer to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding numbers since ἀριθμός is invariably translated as 'number' - thus implying what the English word implies, especially in mathematical terms - even though Aristotle, in discussing ἀριθμός, wrote: ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶνα (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20).

Given such a necessary distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq - as well as the fact that what ἀριθμός means here, in this tractate, and what it implies - such as the mathematical numbers 2 and 3 developing from the One - is not mentioned, I have transliterated ἀριθμός thus leaving open what it may or may not mean in relation to the particular weltanschauung being described. However, the context seems to suggest a metaphysical rather than an abstract mathematical notion, especially given what follows at the beginning of section 11: πᾶν δὲ τὸ γεννώμενον ἀτελές καὶ διαιρετόν.

begetting/begotten. It is interesting to compare the use here of γεννάω (beget/engender) with the use of γέννημα in Poemandres 8 (the birth of Psyche) and 30 (of Logos breeding nobility).

11.

resurgence [...] decline. The sense here, in context, is not as abstract, as impersonal, as a translation such as "increase and decrease" implies. Rather it suggests "resurgence and decline", as happens with living things.

what is complete. The reference is to the Monas.

eikon of theos. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as eikon since - for reasons mentioned in my commentary on Poemandres 31 - it implies more, in some ancient mystical tractates, than what the word 'image' now denotes.

eyes of your heart. A similar expression occurs in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians - πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας <ὕμῶν> (1.18) - although, as some scholars have noted (qv. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, Baker Academic, 2002. p.260f) the Greek syntax there is problematic.

the path to what is above. That is, the anados (ἄνοδος) mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, composed as the word ἄνοδος is from ἀνά (above) and ὁδός (path), the two Greek words used here.

the seeing of it is uniquely your own. What is being conveyed is that the eikon is of itself mystical - not an ordinary image or painting - and can impart to the

person, who "with the eyes of their heart" views it, something unique, personal, numinous.

lodestone. μαγνητις λίθος. Lodestone, and not a 'magnet' in the modern sense.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ.

That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else

Tractate VI

o o o

Introduction

The sixth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concentrating as it does on τὸ ἀγαθὸν in relation to theos and mortals, is - in respect of the milieu of ancient Greco-Roman culture - metaphysically interesting even though existing translations, given that they invariably translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the good' and θεός as 'god', impart "the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity." [1]

Since, for reasons explained elsewhere [1], I translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' - implying nobility, honour, as expressed for example by Seneca, summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt [2] - and also transliterate θεός as theos, then what emerges from this tractate is something redolent of Greco-Roman mysticism and thus of how τὸ ἀγαθὸν was understood by learned men such as Cicero: in terms of personal character [3] rather than as an impersonal moral abstraction leading as such an abstraction invariably does to dogmatic interpretations and thence to disputations and dissent and thence to the accusations of religious 'heresy' that bedevilled Christian churches for centuries, redolent as such moral abstractions, such dogmatism and accusations, are of an ethos that is rather un-Hellenic.

Such an understanding of τὸ ἀγαθὸν is evident in a passage in section nine of the fourth tractate:

τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ.
φανερώτερα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt with what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

For what is expressed in that fourth tractate is that while what is bad is often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a bad person) what is good, honourable, is often being concealed because it has no guise, no particular, discernable, pattern - no outward sign or appearance - becoming revealed only through noble, honourable, personal, deeds.

In respect of tractate six, the choice of τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' (instead of the conventional 'the good') and κακός as 'bad' (instead of the conventional 'evil') elevates the text from a type of pious sermon to a metaphysical weltanschauung, something especially evident at the beginning of section three:

In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad.

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ σύγκρισιν τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ κακοῦ τέτακται τὸ γὰρ μὴ λίαν κακὸν ἐνθάδε τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶ τὸ δὲ ἐνθάδε ἀγαθὸν μόριον τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἐλάχιστον

Also, while the language of this sixth tractate is on occasions somewhat convoluted and apparently contradictory - as for example in the description in section two of Kosmos having nobility (τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀγαθὸς ὁ κόσμος καθὰ καὶ αὐτὸς πάντα ποιεῖ) and yet being not noble in other ways (ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν οὐκ ἀγαθός) what is expressed metaphysically differs somewhat from some other tractates, revealing just how diverse the pagan mystical traditions represented in the Corpus Hermeticum are.

Despite the differences, most obvious when this tractate - with its rather negative portrayal of mortals and the insistence that beauty and nobility cannot be found in this world - is compared to the Poemandres tractate and the third (Ἱερός Λόγος) tractate, what emerges is a hermetic weltanschauung and one that can best be summarized by the following lines from the last two sections:

"[an] apprehension of theos [is] an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble... [and] a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge [...]"

Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is."

This goes some way toward resolving the apparently contradictory nature of the text, asserting as it does at the beginning that "the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone" and yet also asserting toward the end not only that "if you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble." This is the ethos of a contemplative pagan, and a cultured, mysticism that seems to have been much neglected.

Notes

[1] Myatt, David. *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*.

[2] Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

[3] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum: that honestum (honourable conduct) is its foundation and that it can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia).

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals.

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum - what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθὸν - depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses, as does Seneca, the

Greco-Roman view, with a perhaps more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum thus being "the highest nobility."

Translation

[1] Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. If so, then it can only be the quidditas of all changement and of geniture since nothing is deserted by it but has about itself a stability of vigour, neither excessive nor lacking, a replenishable provider, there at the origin of all things. When saying the provider to all-things is noble, that nobility always exists, an attribute of theos alone and of no one else.

He is not in need of anything since for him to desire something would be bad. Nothing that has come into being is lost to him, for such loss would be vexing with vexation a division of badness. Nothing is superior to him so as to be an enemy, nor is there a partner who might harm him through him having a passionate desire. Nor any-thing so unheeding of him that he becomes enraged; nor anyone of better judgement to be jealous of.

[2] Because none of those have being in his quidditas then only nobility is left, and since nothing of what is bad is in that quidditas then nothing of what is noble will be found in those other things, since, in all others be they big or small, those things exist, in each of them and also in that living being which is bigger and mightier than them all. For what is begotten is replete with physicality with breeding itself being physical. Yet where physicality is, nobility is not, and where nobility is there is no physicality just as when there is night there is no day. It is impracticable regarding breeding for nobility to be there for that is only of what is not begotten.

But as substance has been assigned to partake of all being so it does of nobility which is how Kosmos has nobility because of the construction done regarding all things, even though not noble in other ways since there is physicality, and changement: the construction of the physical.

[3] In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad. But it is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad, for in this place the noble deteriorate and, deteriorating, become

rotten and no longer noble. Thus the noble is of theos alone or rather it is theos who is the noble one.

Thus it is, Asclepius, that among mortals they are noble in name only and not in the matter itself for that would be impracticable since the physical body cannot hold on to it, restrained on all sides as it is by badness, by toil, by grief, by desire, by rage, by dishonesty, and by unreasonable opinions; and, Asclepius, most ignoble of all, in this place each such thing is believed to be most noble even though unsurpassably bad.

The mistake, the patron of all things rotten, is the absence in this place of nobility.

[4] For myself, I am beholden to theos who has directed my perceivation toward a knowing of nobility; that it is impracticable for it to be in this world replete as it is with badness just as it is with the nobility of theos or as theos is with nobility.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas so perhaps revealing that quiddity as certainly unmixed and most refined, and I venture to say, Asclepius, that the quidditas of theos - if he has quidditas - is the beautiful and yet the beautiful and the noble cannot be discerned in the things of the world for everything exposed to the eye are as tenuous depictions, and what is not exposed to it, particularly the beautiful and the noble <...> and since the eye is unable to perceive theos so it is with the beautiful and the noble. For they are intrinsically part of theos, of him alone, belonging to him, unseverable, most fair; loved by theos or by those who love theos.

[5] If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble, the exceptionally radiant, but a radiance surpassed by theos, and with that beauty unequalled with the noble defying imitation, as it is with theos. Such is the apprehension of theos, and thus is there an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble, and since they are inseparable from theos they cannot be shared among other living beings. Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

[6] Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is. Believing that what is bad is noble, they are subsumed by every badness and, thus glutted with it, are fearful of being robbed of it so that they in whatever way fight to not only keep it but to increase it.

Such are, Asclepius, for mortals the beautiful and the noble and from which we are unable to flee or despise. But what is most grievous to bear is that we are unable to live without them.

Commentary

Title.

᾽Οτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else.

The consensus is that the title is not original and was added by some scribe.

1.

The noble. τὸ ἀγαθὸν. As mentioned in the Introduction, I translate ἀγαθός not as some abstract (impersonal) and disputable 'good' but as, and according to context, nobility, noble, honourable.

no-thing. In respect of ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν I have here (and occasionally elsewhere) used 'no-thing' - "no entity of any kind" - instead of 'nothing' or 'naught' to emphasize the ontological nature of what is expressed. In addition, as often in the Corpus Hermeticum, what is transliterated here as 'theos' - and by others translated as 'god' - can be taken literally to refer to 'the theos', 'the deity'.

...theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. The suggestion of the first sentence seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin of what is noble, and thus the origin of nobility, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

then it... Referring to "what is noble".

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, a more appropriate translation of οὐσία - instead of 'essence' or 'substance' - is quidditas, as in tractate XI:2: "it is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful..."

As I noted in my commentary on XI:2,

Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity - is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἢ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

One interpretation of quidditas here is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived via or as - physis.

changement...geniture. κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως. cf. tractate XI:2 and my note above regarding οὐσία. As mentioned in my commentary on XI:2, "the unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

nothing that has come into being. In respect of τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 191a27f: φασιν οὔτε γίνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν οὔτε φθείρεσθαι, διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μὲν εἶναι γίνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον ἢ ἐξ ὄντος ἢ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. qv. the title of tractate VIII, and my note regarding it.

bad...badness. κακός, κακίας. As with ἀγαθός not some moral impersonal disputable abstraction - in this case 'evil' - but the personal sense of something or someone being bad, rotten, ignoble.

a partner who might harm him. Literally, "a partner to be harmed by." The exact nature of this partnership is not specified, although the following καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ ἐρασθήσεται indicates a certain scenario. I have omitted the editorial emendation of οὔτε κάλλιον - "nothing is as beautiful."

2.

nothing of what is bad. Reading κακῶν with the MSS and not the emendation ἄλλων.

physicality. Given the context - ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἐν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ζῶν τῷ πάντων μείζονι καὶ δυνατωτάτῳ - here πάθος, παθῶν, παθητῆς suggest a physicality, a physical actuality/occurrence, which the English word 'passion', with its often implicit anthropomorphism, does not quite express.

The author, in these first two sections, is making a distinction between their hermetic concept of theos and other living beings, especially mortals; of theos as detached from all those things - such as physicality, jealousy, anger - which mortals are subject to and with theos as described here is thus not only very different from the vengeful, angry, Jehovah of the Old Testament but also quite similar to, if not in perhaps some manner based on, the Hellenic concept as mentioned by Aristotle:

ὥστε ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια, μακαριότητι διαφέρουσα, θεωρητικὴ ἂν εἴη: καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δὴ ἡ ταύτη συγγενεστάτη εὐδαιμονικωτάτη. σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα εὐδαιμονίας.
Nicomachean Ethics (Book X) 1178b.22

Therefore the activity of theos, excelling others in bliss, is wordless-awareness [θεωρέω] and the nearest thing to that among mortals arises from good-fortune [εὐδαιμονία].

construction. cf. tractate II, ὁ οὖν θεὸς <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἕτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατὴρ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

not noble in other ways. That is, while Kosmos - qv. tractate XI for what or who this Kosmos may be - has nobility by the act of construction, of forming substance into beings, because some of those beings possess physicality then Kosmos unlike theos is not completely noble.

3.

in this place. I incline toward the view that ἐνθάδε here does not refer, as some have conjectured, to "here below" (qv. Plato, Gorgias, 525b: ὅμως δὲ δι' ἀληθῶν καὶ ὄδων γίνεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ὠφελία καὶ ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου) but rather just to "this place, here."

refine. καθαροῖς. cf. Poemandres 10, and 22. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

Literally [καθαροῖς] means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθάρᾳ χθονίων βασίλεια ("in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic"). Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

Here however, the choice of refine seems apposite, given the text:

ἀδύνατον οὖν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐνθάδε καθαρεύειν τῆς κακίας

It is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad

This makes perfect (and practical) sense, in contrast to the fairly recent, conventional, and somewhat moralistic translation of Copenhaver: "the good cannot be cleansed of vice here below."

Interestingly, the Greek word καθαροῖς formed the basis for the relatively modern (c.1803) English term 'catharsis'.

physical body. cf. Poemandres 24: ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδωσ ἀντὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν (the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed).

restrained on all sides. παντόθεν ἐσφιγμένον.

each such thing. This might well be a reference to "restrained on all sides as it is by badness" - to bad things in general - and not to the immediately preceding "toil, grief, desire, rage, dishonesty, and unreasonable opinion."

the patron of all things rotten. I have omitted the very odd reference to "gluttony" - ἡ γαστριμαργία - which follows τὸ μᾶλλον ἀνυπερβλητον κακόν, as in all probability it is a gloss. Nock, in his text, indicates a lacuna between the following χορηγὸς and ἡ πλάνη.

If the reference to gluttony is not omitted then a possible interpretation of the text would be: "Gluttony is the patron of all things rotten <...> the mistake in this place is the absence of nobility."

4.

or as theos is with nobility. In order to try and express in English something of the meaning of the Greek - and to avoid repeating "replete" (πλήρωμά), which repetition is not in the Greek text - I have slightly amended the word order. Nock indicates a lacuna between ἀγαθὸν τοῦ θεοῦ and αἱ γὰρ ἔξοχαί. The

transition between "replete with" and "the beautiful" is certainly abrupt.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas. Although the Greek text here is rather obscure and various emendations have been proposed - none of which are entirely satisfactory - the general sense, of the beautiful surrounding or being near to the quidditas (οὐσία) of theos, seems clear.

tenuous depictions. The Greek words εἶδωλον and σκιαγραφία require careful consideration if one is not to read into the text philosophical meanings from other ancient authors which may not be relevant here, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose the word 'image'. In addition, if the English word chosen has other, perhaps more modern, associations then there may well be a 'retrospective re-interpretation' of the text, reading into it a meaning or meanings which also might not be relevant, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose 'phantom' given what that word now often imputes. Hence I have chosen 'tenuous' and 'depiction' respectively.

particularly the beautiful and the noble. Some text is missing in the MSS so that what follows οὐδὲ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν unfortunately remains unknown.

5.

quest. The sense of ζητέω here is more than that of a simple 'inquiry' or an 'asking'. It is to 'seek after' something with an earnest purpose, as in Matthew 2:13 where there is a desire by Herod to seek out and kill the infant Jesus:

Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἂν εἶπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό.

awareness of the numinous. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

As with ὁσίοις, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds'.

6.

semblance. Here, ὄναρ suggests 'semblance' rather than 'dream'.

o o o

Appendix

Concerning Personal Pronouns

Regarding the interpretation of ancient texts - of translating an ancient language into English - there is the matter of personal pronouns with the convention being to default to the masculine singular (Man, his, he) even when the gender is not specified but only assumed, as in the matter of θεός in the sixth tractate where unlike some other tractates (such as Poemandres and tractate VIII) the term πατήρ does not occur.

Thus, conventionally defaulting to the masculine singular in sections 12 and 13 of tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum - based on the assumption that the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων [1] and the title πρόδρομος refer to a man - one translates as:

He creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things. [2]

πάντα οὖν αὐτὸς ποιεῖ [...] εἰ γὰρ ἀποδέδεικται μηδὲν δυνάμενον εἶναι, πόσω μᾶλλον ὁ θεός; εἰ γὰρ τί ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ποιεῖ, ὃ μὴ θέμις εἰπεῖν, ἀτελής ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μήτε ἀργός ἐστι, τέλειος δέ, ἄρα πάντα ποιεῖ.

However, if one uses the plural - non-gender specific - "they" as a personal pronoun then one has:

"They create all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything they have not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - they are incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then they create all things."

Which somewhat changes the meaning and is perhaps confusing for some, although the non-literal alternatives of "the theos" or "the divinity" are rather cumbersome:

"The divinity creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for the divinity? If there is anything the divinity has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - the divinity is incomplete, while if the divinity is complete and not otiose then the divinity creates all things."

An alternative would be the neutral if even more cumbersome phrase "that Being":

"That Being creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for that Being? If there is anything that Being has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - that Being is incomplete, while if that Being is complete and not otiose then that Being creates all things."

As I noted in my commentary on the phrase ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, given that in that tractate theos is not only referred to using the ancient honorific πατήρ [3] but also described as ἀρρενόθηλος, as both male and female:

"here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". [2]

While I have in my translation here of tractate six used the conventional default of the masculine singular pronoun it might be an interesting exercise for those interested to provide a version using, where appropriate, gender-neutral personal pronouns, which undoubtedly would result in an interpretation of the text quite different from other translations available, my own included.

ooo

[1] Nock - *Corpus Hermeticum*, Third Edition, 1972 - has the emendation ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος.

[2] Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum I, III, IV, VIII, XI*. 2017.

[3] cf. τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων (Epistle of James, I, 17), "the father of phaos". In respect of phaos, cf. Poemandres 4-6; tractate III, 1 (φῶς ἅγιον), and tractate XI, 7.

**Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται
ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν**

That no beings are lost,
despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

Tractate VIII

οοο

Introduction

The eighth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concise as it is, provides an interesting summary of some of the tenets of the Hermetic weltanschauung. As, for example, in the mention of a first being (the primary theos) and of a second being (a theos) who is an eikon (εἰκὼν) of the first, and which first being - theos - is the artisan of all beings; and as, for example, in the mention of mortals having a natural empathy (συμπάθεια) with this eikon, this second being, who is identified as κόσμος, with κόσμος understood here, as in tractate XI, either as a personification, as a divinity, the theos - a deathless living being, ζῶον ἀθάνατον - who is the living cosmic order, or, as in the Poemandres tractate as simply referring in an impersonal manner to 'the cosmic order' itself.

While most other translators have opted here, as in other tractates, to translate κόσμος as cosmos (which English term suggests that the physical universe is meant) I incline toward the view that here - as in tractate XI - a divinity is meant, especially given how κόσμος is described: as "a second theos and a deathless living being," and as an eikon of the primary theos.

There are certain parallels with tractate XI and in which tractate it is stated that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible," (section 15) and, in section 14, that "Life is the enosis of perceivance and psyche, while death is not the loss of what was joined but the end of enosis."

What therefore emerges from this, the eighth, tractate are two things: how we mortals are part of, and connected to, Kosmos and thence - since Kosmos is an eikon - to the first, the primary, theos, and how diverse the Hermetic weltanschauung is in respect of some details while nevertheless retaining an

underlying ethos.

ooo

Translation

[1] It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that, my son, we now must speak: of why psyche is deathless and how its vigour assembles and separates the corporeal. For there is no death of what-is, only an apprehension grounded in the denotatum 'deathless', either through unavailing toil or, by discarding the important part, that what is called deathless is deathful. That is, for the deathful there is a loss. But nothing of the Kosmos is ever lost, for if Kosmos is a second theos and a deathless living being then it is not possible for any portion of such a deathless living being to be lost since all beings of Kosmos are part of Kosmos, as most certainly are mortals, the noetic living being.

[2] In truth, the first is theos; the eternal, unborn. The second was engendered from, nurtured by, that being and rendered deathless and eikon of that being, as by an everlasting father, never-dying because deathless.

For never-dying is unlike everlasting. For that one was not a bringing-into-being by another although if there was a bringing-into-being it was his own bringing-into-being since he is always a bringing-into-being. For the everlasting - because it is everlasting - is all that is, with the father everlasting because of himself while Kosmos became everlasting and deathless because of the father.

[3] And the father endowed such substance as he gathered, extending it all to create something spherical, conferring upon it a particular quality, deathless and of substance everlasting. Having seeded such qualities and replete with semblances, the father enclosed them in the sphere as if in a cavern. His deliberation was to equip with each quality what would follow; to encompass with deathlessness everything corporeal so that substance would not by thesis be separated from that bringing-together to thereby dissolve into its own disorder.

For when, my son, substance was incorporeal it was disordered even though that was restricted to other smaller qualities, to the kind of increase and decrease that mortals name death.

[4] For such disorder occurs with earthly-living beings, with celestial beings having one order allotted to them by the father from the beginning and maintained from disintegration by the periodicity of each of them, while the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together

and of the indissoluble corporeal; that is, of the deathless. Thus there is the loss of those influencing impressions and not the destruction of what is embodied.

[5] Now, as to the third living being, mortals, brought-into-being as eikon of Kosmos and who, because of the deliberations of the father and beyond the other living beings on Earth, have perceivance and also empathy with the second theos and perception of the first.

For of the one there is apprehension as of the corporeal, while of the other there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and as of a noble perceivance.

Then this life is not lost?

Speak softly, my son, and apprehend who theos is, who Kosmos is, what a deathless living being is, what a dissoluble living being is, and apprehend also that Kosmos is of theos and within theos and that mortals are of Kosmos and within Kosmos and thus that theos is the origin of, encompasses, and constitutes, everything.

ooo

Commentary

Title.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. Lost, rather than 'destroyed' or 'perished'. They are not 'lost' because beings - entities/things - once brought-into-being - are still emanations of Being, of theos, even if their presencing, their form, is changed, transformed, morphed, as happens for example with those mortals who, via the anados mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, go beyond the seven spheres to, and then beyond, the ogdoadic physis.

1.

corporeal. σῶμα. Here, the context - qv. for example the following τῶν γὰρ οὐρανίων τὰ σώματα μίαν τάξιν ἔχει in section 4 and τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἄσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in section 5 - suggests corporeal rather than a literal body. A subtle distinction, between "of the nature of matter" and a specific type of "physical body". Compare also the fourth tractate: ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ

πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὀρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλω τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. qv. Poemandres 14, tractate XI: 2, etcetera.

assembles. σύστασις. cf. Euripides, Andromache, 1088: τοῦθ' ὑποπτον ἦν ἄρ' ἐς δὲ συστάσεις κύκλους τ' ἐχώρει λαὸς οἰκήτωρ θεοῦ.

In Poemandres 10 it is mentioned how "the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceiveration of that artisan." Thus a theme shared by several tractates is how the various 'artisans' of theos - and theos - skillfully craft beings from Being, as in tractate IV, Chaldron or Monas:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

apprehension. νόημα. cf. Poemandres 3, "I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings."

denotatum. For προσηγορία. In this case, the denotatum - the naming - is the word 'deathless'.

or by discarding the important part [...] what is called deathless is deathful. ἢ κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος λεγόμενος θάνατος ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀθάνατος. Literally, "by discarding the first letter it is called θάνατος [deathful] instead of ἀθάνατος [deathless].

Regarding τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος, what seems to be implied is that the mortal apprehension of 'deathless' does not include the most important - the correct - apprehension regarding death, which correct apprehension is explained by what follows.

Kosmos. κόσμος. As at Poemandres 7, κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure. However, here I construe κόσμος, as in tractate XI, as a divinity, the theos who is the living, deathless, cosmic order.

the noetic living being. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον. The word λογικός imputes the sense of both the faculty of speech and the faculty of thought, something well-expressed by Sophocles: φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο

καὶ δυσάυλων πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη παντοπόρος,
(Antigone, 355f).

2.

artisan of all beings. In respect of artisan (δημιουργόν) cf. Poemandres 9, and tractate IV: 1. Regarding "of all beings", cf. Poemandres 31, ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων.

eikon. εἰκὼν, γν. Poemandres 21 and 31, and tractate XI:15. Thus the suggestion is that is this eikon represents - presences, manifests - theos, the artisan.

never-dying...everlasting. In order to try and express the dissimilarity between ἀείζωος and ἀίδιος I have translated the former as never-dying (a sense suggested by ἀείζωον ὡς ἀθάνατος) and the latter as everlasting, a dissimilarity that is not immediately apparent from translations such as "the everliving is different from the eternal."

That one. Referring to 'the first' who engendered Kosmos as eikon.

not a bringing-into-being by another ... always a bringing-into-being. The text - with its repetition of ἐγένετο - is somewhat obscure, and various emendations have been proposed, none of which are entirely satisfactory. The sense seems to be of "that one" - the first - always having been, and is, and always will be, "a coming-into-being".

3.

such substance ... particular quality. The text is quite obscure and several emendations have been suggested, with Nock indicating that some text may be missing after τῷ ἑαυτοῦ, although ὑπ' αὐτόν seems reasonable. Any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

The sphere may refer to Kosmos, cf. Poemandres 9,

"Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate."

The suggestion might thus be that these seven spheres are themselves enclosed within a sphere, which might explain Poemandres 13-14, "Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres [and] with full authority over the ordered

cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos."

substance. ὕλη, qv. Poemandres 19, tractate III:1, tractate XI:3.

create. ποιέω, qv. tractate XI:5

semblances. Does ἰδέα here equate with the concept of 'form' as described by Plato? The consensus is that it does, even though such an assumption imposes a specific philosophical meaning on the text and even though the cosmogonic context - of the living Kosmos as eikon, of Kosmos made deathless by the father, and of theos, the father, conferring upon the sphere a particular quality - does not seem to support such an abstract, definite, concept. Thus, to avoid imposing a very particular meaning on the text, and given that the hermeticism described in this and in the other tractates represent varied weltanschauungen (albeit having a similar underlying ethos) rather than one well-defined philosophy, I have translated not as 'forms' but as semblances.

as if in a cavern. Does this refer to Plato's allegory of the cave, as so many seem to have assumed? Probably not, since - to give just one example - in the Βιβλιοθήκη of Pseudo-Apollodorus - written around the same time as this tractate - ἐν ἄντρῳ refers to a cave, or cavern, in which Maia, one of the seven Pleiades, gave birth to Hermes: Μαῖα μὲν οὖν ἡ πρεσβυτάτη Διὶ συνελθοῦσα ἐν ἄντρῳ τῆς Κυλλήνης Ἑρμῆν τίκτει. οὗτος ἐν σπαργάνοις ἐπὶ τοῦ λίκνου κείμενος.

deliberation. qv. Poemandres 8. As with the preceding *such substance ... particular quality*, the text here is quite obscure, and any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

thelesis. θέλησις, qv. tractate IV:1. As noted in the commentary there, a transliteration to suggest something more metaphysical than a human type wish or desire. Such as that the physis - the being - of substance (ὕλη) might be such that without the intervention of theos it might naturally dissolve into disorderliness (ἄταξία).

4.

one order allotted to them. That is, celestial beings - those resident in and of the heavens - have a particular order distinct from that of ordinary mortals, but which order mortals can, via an anados such as described in the Poemandres tractate, journey to, discover, and become a part of.

the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together and of the indissoluble corporeal. While the periodicity of celestial beings is unchanging and is maintained from disintegration, the periodicity of

mortals is varied and involves the cycle, the separation, of life and death and yet also involves the reality of death not being an end - since what is deathless, the indissoluble part of what is corporeal, cannot suffer from disintegration.

influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. qv. Poemandres 22, and my commentary thereon, for what is meant is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which may influence a person in a particular way.

what is embodied. The indissoluble part of what is apprehended as corporeal.

5.

perceivance. νοῦς. Not 'mind', qv. Poemandres 2, tractate III:1, etcetera. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 2:

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceivance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action.

empathy. συμπάθεια.

perception. cf. Poemandres 18. An apprehension of the numinous, and thus of theos, of Kosmos as eikon, and so on.

there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and of a noble perceivance. This refers to 'the first', to theos, the father; with the preceding "apprehension as of the corporeal" referring to 'the second', that is, to Kosmos.

Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22. and especially the commentary on φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς in tractate IV:9.

Thus theos is apprehended - understood, felt - in the same, mystical, numinous, way not only as the incorporeal is, but also as inherently noble.

Speak softly. εὐφήμησον. qv tractate XI:22.

(Kosmos is ...) within theos. ἐν τῷ θεῷ. Literally, 'within the theos'.

Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν

From Perceivance To Hermes

Tractate XI

The eleventh tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, the cosmogony in which Aion, Kronos, and Sophia feature. Second, possible links to the Poemandres tractate, given - for example - the mention of a septenary system and the supposition that Perceivance - νοῦς - who addresses Hermes Trismegistus may well be Poemandres himself.

As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus Hermeticum, I here transliterate certain Greek words, such as theos, in order to avoid what I have described as 'retrospective re-interpretation'.

ooo

Translation

[1] Take account of this discourse, Hermes Trismegistus, remembering what is said for I shall not refrain from mentioning what occurs to me.

Because there is much difference among the many who speak about theos and all other things, I have not uncovered the actuality. Therefore, my Lord, make it unambiguous for me, for you are the one I trust in this.

[2] Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

The vigour of theos is perceivation and Psyche; but of Aion: continuance and exemption from death; of Kosmos, a cyclic return and renewal; of Kronos, growth and abatement; of geniture, capability. Aion, thus, is of theos; Kosmos of Aion; Kronos of Kosmos; and geniture of Kronos.

[3] The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

[4] For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivation, with perceivation presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivation and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

[5] Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine.

Therefore, Hermes, never presume that what is above or below is similar to theos since you will descend down from actuality. For nothing is similar to that which, as the one and only, has no similitude. Never presume that he would delegate his work to someone else, for who else is the cause of life, of exemption from death, of Changement? What else but create?

Theos is not inactive for otherwise everything would be inactive; instead they are replete with theos, and there is nowhere in the cosmos nor anywhere else where there is inaction. Inactive is thus a vacant nomen in regard to a creator and what is brought into being.

[6] For every being there is a coming-into-being, each one in balance with its place, with the creator in all that exists, not found in just some nor creating only some but everything. His craft is in what he creates so that their coming-into

being is not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him.

o o o

Correctly consider and observe Kosmos as suggested by me and thus the beauty thereof, a body undecayable and nothing more eldern and yet always vigorous and fresh, even more now than before.

[7] Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos.

The Moon, prodomus of all of those, an instrument of Physis, of the changement of the substance below - with the Earth amid them all, a settled foundation of the beautiful Kosmos - and nourisher and nurturer of those on Earth.

Consider also the numerous deathless, and just how many, as well as deathful lives there are. And amid both the deathless and the deathful, the travelling Moon.

[8] All are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth, with those on the right not toward to the left and those on the left not toward the right, not those above to below nor below to above. That all have come-into-being you do not, dear Hermes, have to learn from me, for they have bodies, psyche, motion, and to meld them into one is not possible without someone to bring them together. Such a one must exist and be, in every way, a unity.

[9] For, given dissimilar objects, motion is different and diverse with one hastiness appointed to them all, and thus it is not possible for there to be two or more creators for if there are many then such an arrangement cannot be kept. For the result of many is strifeful emulation of the stronger, and if one of two was the creator of changeable mortal living beings they would covet creating deathless ones even as the creator of the deathless would deathful ones.

If indeed there were two with one substance and the other psyche who would provide the creations? If both of them, which would have the larger part?

[10] Consider that every living being, deathful and deathless, and whether devoid of logos, is formed of substance and psyche, for all living beings presence life while the non-living are substance only. Similarly, psyche of itself from its creator is the cause of the living while the cause of all life is the creator of deathless beings.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? For why does the deathless one who creates deathless beings not create other living beings so?

[11] It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presenced is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

[12] He creates all beings, and how supreme it is for the theos to create life and psyche and the deathless and changement, with you doing so many things, for you see, hear, speak, smell, touch, walk, perceive, and breathe. Yet it is not someone else who is seeing and another who is hearing and another who is speaking and another who is touching and another who is hearing and another who is smelling and another who is walking and another who is perceiving and another who is breathing, but one being doing all such things.

None of which are separate from theos. Just as you are not really living if you are otiose so would theos, if otiose - and it is not the custom to say this - no longer be theos.

[13] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things.

For a little longer, Hermes, give way to me and you will more readily apprehend that the work of theos is one: of everything brought-into-being; what is coming-into-being, what has come-into-being, and what will come-into-being. This, my friend, is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos.

[14] If you maintain this should be apprehended in deeds, consider when you seek to procreate, for it not the same for him since there is no delight, no colleague. Instead, a working alone, and forever working for he is what he creates. If ever isolated from it, everything would - because of Necessitas - fall apart, with everything dying because there would be no Life. But if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. While if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. Also, if everything is alive both in the heavens and on Earth and Life is One for them all as brought-into-being by theos and theos is that, then all are brought-into-being by theos.

Life is the enosis of perceivance and psyche, while death is not the loss of

what was joined but the end of enosis.

[15] Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible. My dear Hermes, while I state there is changement in Kosmos because every day portions of it come-into-being in the unperceptible, it never disintegrates. These are the occurrences of the Kosmos, cyclicity and occultations; the cyclic a turning and occultation renewal.

[16] The Kosmos is polymorphous and forms are not imposed on it but rather, within itself, it is such changement. Since the Kosmos is polymorphous who created it and who would that be? Whomsoever cannot be without-form and yet if polymorphous would be akin to Kosmos and if only one form would be lower than Kosmos.

What therefore can be said without confusion given that there should be no confusion concerning apprehending theos? If there is a kind then it is a singular kind, incorporeal, and not subject to perception but revealed through the corporeal.

[17] And do not wonder about an incorporeal kind since it is akin to words, mountains which appear in depictions to be rugged but which when examined are flat and smooth. So heed these words of mine bold as they are but honest, for as mortals cannot be separate from Life, theos cannot be separate from creating nobility since for theos this creating is Life and motion, the movement of everything and the giving of life.

[18] Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

[19] And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered

system - then it is possible for you.

[20] Thus see how much might and swiftness you have. If you can do all those things then cannot theos? In such a manner you should consider theos as having all - Kosmos, The Entirety - as purposes within himself. For until you compare yourself with theos you cannot apprehend theos because what is similar can understand the similar.

Extend yourself greatly, immeasurably; leap beyond every body, surpass Kronos, become Aion, and you can apprehend theos. Having supposed that for you there is nothing that is not possible, regard yourself as deathless, capable of apprehending everything: every craft, all learning, the nature of every living being. Become elevated above every elevation, deeper than every depth. Gather within yourself awareness of every creation; of Fire and Water; the Dry and the Moist; and jointly be at all places on land, at sea, in the heavens. Be not yet born; in the womb; young; old; having died; what is beyond death.

And if you apprehend all that together - durations, places, occurrences, quality, quantity - you will be capable of apprehending theos.

[21] But if you enclose your psyche in your body and lessen it, saying "I comprehend nothing; have no power; fear the sea; am unable to go up into the heavens; do not know who I was and cannot know what I will be," then what is there with you and also with the god?

For, indulging the body and rotten, you are unable to apprehend the beautiful, the noble. To be completely rotten is to be unaware of the numinous, while having the ability to discover, to have volition, to have expectations, is the direct, the better - its own - way to nobility, and which you will encounter everywhere and which will everywhere be perceived whether you anticipate it or not: awake, asleep, at sea; whether journeying by night, by day, when speaking or when silent. For there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos.

[22] Do you affirm that theos is unperceived?

Speak softly. Who is more clearly revealed? He created everything such that in them you might discern him, for such is the nobility, such is the arête, of the theos, that he is revealed in everything. For nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with perceivability evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

So Trismegistus, let what has been revealed so far be apprehended by you, and if you consider other things in the same way you will not be deceived.

Commentary

Title.

perceivance. νοῦς. qv. my commentary on the term in Poemandres where I wrote:

"The conventional interpretation [of νοῦς] is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres [...]

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceivance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action."

1.

The first paragraph of this section is spoken by Perceivance [Noῦς], the second by Hermes Trismegistus.

theos. As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus

Hermeticum, I here transliterate θεός rather than translate as God (as most others do) which translation in my opinion imposes a particular and Christian interpretation on the text given two thousand years of Christian exegesis regarding both God and the Old and New Testaments. A suitable alternative to 'theos' might be 'the god', which emphasizes that the theos described in this tractate is, like Zeus in classical times, the pre-eminent divinity. Occasionally, when the text warrants it - for example τῷ θεῷ and εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός - I have used 'the theos' instead of theos.

I have not uncovered the actuality. ἐγὼ τὸ ἀληθές οὐκ ἔμαθον. I incline toward the view that the sense of ἀληθής here is not some abstract (disputable) 'truth' but rather of the reality, the actuality, beyond the conflicting views, beyond appearance, and thus of uncovering - of learning - the reality of theos and other things.

2.

Aion. αἰών. A transliteration since the usual translation of 'eternity' imposes modern (cosmological and theological) meanings on the text, especially as αἰών can also imply a personification of a 'divine being', and 'an age or era' of long duration, or the lifespan of a mortal (as in Herodotus: πρὶν τελευτήσαντα καλῶς τὸν αἰῶνα πύθωμαι, Book 1, 32.5). In Aristotle, αἰών has specific meanings which the English term 'eternity' does not describe. For instance, in Περὶ Ουρανοῦ where he writes: Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε γέγονεν ὁ πᾶς οὐρανὸς οὔτ' ἐνδέχεται φθαρῆναι, καθάπερ τινές φασιν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν εἷς καὶ αἰδίος, ἀρχὴν μὲν καὶ τελευτὴν οὐκ ἔχων τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος, ἔχων δὲ καὶ περιέχων ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον (Book 2, 1).

Which is somewhat echoed in this tractate in respect of Kosmos which is not just a coming-into-being but always just *is*, from Aion (γενόμενος οὔποτε καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος).

Interestingly, Jung used the term to describe a particular archetype, one which provides "intimations of a kind of enantiodromian reversal of dominants" as he writes in his *Aion: Researches Into The Phenomenology Of The Self*.

In addition, αἰών - as with the following χρόνος - might well be a personification, or an esoteric/philosophical term or principle which requires interpretation, as might κόσμος (Kosmos). Since κόσμος here does not necessarily imply what we now understand, via sciences such as astronomy, as the physical cosmos/universe it seems inappropriate to translate it as 'the cosmos', especially given expressions such as οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

Kronos. χρόνος. For reasons I have explained many times in my writings (for instance in Appendix I), I do not translate χρόνος as 'time', which translation seems to me to impose a particular modern meaning on the text given that for

centuries the term 'time' has denoted a certain regularity (hours, minutes) measured by a mechanism such as a clock and given that the term 'duration' is usually more appropriate in relation to ancient Greek texts where the duration between, for example, the season of Summer and the season of Autumn was determined by the observations (the appearance in the night sky) of certain constellations and stars.

geniture. γένεσις. The unusual English word *geniture* expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Alongside χρόνος, αἰών, and κόσμος, here γένεσις could well be a personification.

It is as if the quidditas of theos is [...] τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡσπερ οὐσία ἐστὶ... Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity - is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a: ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἢ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἢ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἢ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ. [Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are change predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.]

In addition, I follow the MSS, which have τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἢ εὐδαιμονία.

honour. ἀγαθός. That is, the substance of theos - in mortals - is manifest in the brave, in nobility of character, in what being noble means. Regarding ἀγαθός as honour rather than some abstract, disputable 'good', qv. my commentary (i) on *Poemandres* 22 and (ii) on τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει [...] φανεροῖς in section 9 of *Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἢ μονάς* (tractate IV), and (iii) Appendix II and III.

good fortune. εὐδαιμονία.

Sophia. σοφία. A transliteration, because - just like ἀληθής - it is not necessarily here something abstract, something disputable, such as 'wisdom' or 'good judgement'. Just as with Aion and Kronos, it might be a personification or used here as an esoteric term which thus requires contextual interpretation.

identity...arrangement. ταυτότης...τάξις. An alternative for 'identity' would be

'form' (but not necessarily in the sense used by Plato and Aristotle) for the meaning seems to be that Aion provides the form, the identity, of beings with Kosmos arranging these forms into a particular order.

of Kronos, variation. See the note on Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a, above.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. As at Poemandres 14, not 'energy' given that the word energy has too many modern connotations and thus distracts from the meaning here. See also the note on 'activity' in section 5 where 'activity' is a more perspicacious translation.

cyclic return and renewal. ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις. I take this expression as implying something metaphysical rather than astronomical; an astronomical meaning as described, for example, in the Greek fragments of a book on astrology by Dorotheus of Sidon (qv. *Dorothei Sidonii carmen astrologicum. Interpretationem Arabicam in linguam Anglicam versam una cum Dorothei fragmentis et Graecis et Latinis*, edited by Pingree, Teubner, Leipzig, 1976).

For there is a similar metaphysical theme in Poemandres 17 - μέχρι περιόδου τέλους (cyclic until its completion) - with apokatastasis becoming (possibly as an echo of Greek Stoicism) a part of early Christian exegesis as exemplified by Gregory of Nyssa who wrote ἀνάστασις ἐστὶν ἢ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀποκατάστασις (*De Anima et Resurrectione*, 156C) where apokatastasis implies a return to, a resurrection of, the former state of being (physis) of mortals lost through 'original sin' and in respect of which returning baptism is a beginning.

3.

substance. ὕλη. qv. Poemandres 10. Given that the ancient Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (as in the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence substance, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Thus 'materia' would be another suitable translation here of ὕλη.

The craft of theos: Aion. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών. Aion as artisan who has, through theos, the power to not only craft Kosmos but also renew it, for Kosmos was/is not just a once occurring coming-into-being but is forever renewed: γενόμενος οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνο.

On δύναμις as implying an 'artisan-creator' rather than just the 'power/strength' of a divinity, qv. the doxology in Poemandres 31.

From Aion to Kosmos. The suggestion is that 'the cosmic order' - Kosmos - is the work of Aion who/which is the source of, provides, 'the exemption from death' and the continuance of materia/substantia, the cyclic return and renewal.

4.

jumelle. διπλοῦς. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 14, "The much underused and descriptive English word *jumelle* - from the Latin *gemellus* - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

psyche. ψυχή. Avoiding the usual translation of 'soul' which imposes various, disputable, religious and philosophical meanings (including modern ones) on the text. A useful summary of the use of ψυχή from classical to Greco-Roman times is given in DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

Theos is presenced in perceivation... The term 'presenced' expresses the esoteric meaning of the text better than something such as "theos is in perceivation", especially given what follows: a description of the layers of being, of the whole, complete, cosmic, Body having within it other bodies, other layers or types of being, such as Kronos.

Within, it is filled; outside, it is enclosed ... a vast, fully-formed, life. The suggestion is that it - the cosmic Body - is enclosed, encircled, by psyche which fills the cosmos with Life.

It is possible to understand this mystically as an allusion to the difference between what is esoteric and what is exoteric, with 'within' referring to an inner/esoteric perception and understanding, and 'outer' as referring to the exoteric. That is, the exoteric understanding is of something vast, fully-formed, complete, and living (μέγα καὶ τέλειον ζῶον) while the inner understanding is of living beings who, "replete with psyche", are connected to theos through perceivation. The exoteric perception is also described in the preceding "unchanging and undecaying" aspect of the heavens, with the esoteric referring to the "changeable and decayable" nature of living things on Earth.

5.

Necessitas. Although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable (although less readable), because even if what is meant is not 'wyrd' - ἡ Ἐνάγκη, the primordial goddess of incumbency, of wyrd, of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being [cf. Empedocles, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Diels-Kranz, 31, B115] - English terms such as 'necessity' and 'constraint' are somewhat inadequate, vague, especially given what follows: εἴτε

πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἴεται ἢ οἴησεται τις.

Thus the term requires contextual interpretation.

physis. φύσις. An important theme/principle in the Poemandres tractate and in Aristotle, and a term which suggests more than what the English terms Nature - and the 'nature' or 'character' of a thing or person - denote. In respect of Aristotle, cf. *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α, quoted above in respect of my use of the term quidditas.

What *physis* denotes is something ontological: a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

activity. For ἐνέργεια here since the term 'energy' is - given its modern and scientific connotations - inappropriate and misleading.

crafting. See the note on δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών above.

descend down. In respect of ἐκπεσῆ, cf. Basil of Caesarea, *Epistulae*, Γλυκερίω: ἐκπεσῆ δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ τῆς στολῆς.

change. μεταβολή. I have here chosen 'change' in preference to 'change' since *change* (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation.

Inactive is thus a vacant nomen. ἀργία γὰρ ὄνομα κενόν ἐστι. The unusual English word *nomen* - a direct borrowing from the Latin - is more appropriate than 'word' since *nomen* can mean a name and also a designation, for what is suggested is that in respect of someone who crafts, creates, things - *theos* - and what is created, brought-into-being, the designation and the name 'inactive' are not there. A suitable simile might be that of the second personal name (*nomen*) of a Roman citizen which designated their *gens* and, later, their status. Thus *theos* has no *gens* because *theos* is unique, and the status of *theos* cannot be compared to that of any other being because the status of *theos* is also unique.

In respect of ποιέω, I prefer 'create' rather than the somewhat prosaic 'make'.

6.

I am inclined to agree with Scott - *Hermetica*, Volume I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, p.210 - that after the end of the first paragraph of section 6 [For every being there is a coming-into-being ... not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him] the tractate should be divided. Indeed, there might even have been a melding of two different tractates (or two different authors) given the contrast between the first and the second part.

undecayable. ἀκήρατος. That is, a privation of κηραίνω: decay, spoiled, perish. Undecayable is more apt here than 'undefiled' or 'pure' especially as Thomas More, in 1534 in his A Treatise On The Passion, wrote of "the infinite perfection of their undecayable glory."

eldern. For παλαιός. The Middle English forms of eldern include elldern and eldrin, and the etymology is 'elder' plus the suffix 'en'. In comparison to this rather evocative English word, alternatives such as 'ancient' seem somewhat prosaic.

7.

Observe also the septenary cosmos ... separate aeonic orbits. Nock - who as Copenhaver et al - renders αἰών as 'eternity' translates this passage as: Vois aussi la hiérache des sept cieux, formés en bon ordre suivant une disposition éternelle, remplissant, chacun par une différente, l'éternité.

phaos. As in my Poemandres - and for reasons explained there - a transliteration of φῶς, using the Homeric φάος. To translate simply as 'light' obscures the elemental nature of phaos.

no fire anywhere. As in the Poemandres tractate (qv. sections 4, 5, et seq.) not 'fire' in the literal sense but fire as an elemental principle. In the Poemandres tractate - which describes the origins of beings - Fire plays an important role, as at section 17,

"those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceiveration; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceiveration; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion."

fellowship. The meaning of φιλία here is debatable, as usual renderings such as 'love' and 'friendship' seem somewhat inappropriate given the context. It is possible it refers to a principle such as the one suggested by Empedocles where it is the apparent opposite of νεῖκος, qv. the mention of Empedocles by Isocrates (Antidosis, 15.268) - Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ τέτταρα, καὶ νεῖκος καὶ φιλίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς - and fragments such as 31, B35 and 31, B115 (Diels-Kranz: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker) with νεῖκος implying 'disagreement' and φιλότης something akin to 'fellowship'.

The contrast between νεῖκος and φιλότης is also mentioned - interestingly in regard to the source of motion - by Aristotle in Metaphysics, Book 12, 1072a:

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς φιλίαν καὶ τὸ νεῖκος.

archon and hegemon. I follow the MSS which have ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων. Since both ἄρχων and ἡγέμων have been assimilated into the English language (ἄρχων c. 1755 and ἡγέμων c. 1829) and retain their original meaning it seemed unnecessary to translate them.

prodromus. πρόδρομος. Another Greek word assimilated into the English language (c. 1602 and appearing in a translation of Ovid's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus) and which retains the meaning of the Greek here: a forerunner, a precursor; a moving ahead and in front of.

the Earth amid them all. I incline toward the view that τὴν τε γῆν μέσην τοῦ παντός does not mean that 'the Earth is at the centre of the universe' (or something similar) - since κόσμος is not directly mentioned - but rather that the Earth is in the midst of - among - all, the whole, (παντός) that exists.

foundation. I take the sense of ὑποστάθμη here to be 'foundation' rather than implying some sort of 'sediment', gross or otherwise.

nurturer. τιθήνη.

deathless, deathful. γν. Poemandres 14: θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. As there, I take the English words from Chapman's *Hymn to Venus* from the Homeric Hymns: "That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man."

travelling. ὑποστάθμη. The context suggests 'travelling', and 'going around or about' in a general sense, rather than 'circling' in some defined astronomical sense.

8.

all in motion. In a passage critical of Plato and in respect of motion, psyche and the heavens, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* wrote: τὸ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ κινοῦν: ὕστερον γὰρ καὶ ἅμα τῷ οὐρανῷ ἢ ψυχῇ, ὡς φησί. (Book 12, 1072a)

in every way, a unity. cf. sections 10 and 11 of the Ἐρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς tractate (IV) with their mention of μονάς.

hastiness. ταχυτής. To translate as either 'speed' or 'velocity' is to leave the text open to misinterpretation, since the concept of speed/velocity as a measure (precise or otherwise) of the time taken to travel a certain distance was unknown in the ancient world.

10.

devoid of logos. γν. Poemander 10. As there, ἄλογος is simply 'without/devoid of or lacking in logos'. It does not necessarily here, or there, imply 'irrational' or 'unreasoning'. It might, for example, be referring to how logos is explained in texts such as Poemandres where distinctions are made between logoi, such as pneumal logos and phaomal logos.

In addition, I follow the MSS which have only καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου.

presence life. ἔμψυχος. That is, are living; have life; embody, are animated by, life; and thus are not lifelessly cold.

psyche of itself [...] the creator of deathless being. Although the Greek wording is somewhat convoluted the meaning is that while psyche is the "cause of the life" of beings which are animated with life, it is the creator of deathless life who is the cause of all life.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? I follow the emendation of Tiedemann who has ἀθάνατων in place of θνητῶν.

11.

if not One, the theos. The phrase εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός occurs in Mark 10.18 and Luke 18.19. I have translated literally in an attempt to preserve the meaning, lost if one translates as The One God.

Theos therefore is One. I have omitted the following γελοιώτατον - "most absurd" - as a gloss. In respect of 'One' here - εἷς - what is implied is not the numeral one but rather "not composed of separate parts", complete of itself, the opposite of 'many', and so on. That is, an undivided unity.

divinity-presenced. θεϊότης. This word imputes the sense of 'the divine (made) manifest' or less literally 'divine-ness' whence the usual translation of 'divinity'. I have opted for divinity-presenced to express something of its original meaning and its uncommonality.

12.

He creates all things. I have omitted the following ἐν πολλῶ γελοιώτατον as an untranslatable gloss.

otiose. καταργέω. Since otiose implies more than being 'idle' or 'unoccupied' it is apt, implying as it does "having no practical function; redundant; superfluous".

13.

no one really exists without producing... Following the emendations of Nock, who has σε μηδὲν ποιῶντα μὴ δυνάμενον εἶναι.

apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'.

this is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο [...] ζωή, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ καλόν, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ θεός. A succinct expression of the main theme of the tractate and of one of the main themes of the hermetic weltanschauung.

14.

enosis. ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - cf. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

15.

eikon. εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [*Patrologiae Graeca*, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

My dear Hermes. Omitting the following δεισιδαίμων ὡς ἀκούεις as a gloss.

occurrences. πάθη. I interpret this not in some anthropomorphic way - as 'passions' - but metaphysically (as akin to πάθημα), and thus as occurrences, events, happenings, that here regularly occur to Kosmos and which change and renew it despite (or perhaps because of) the change it undergoes. cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, 982b: οἷον περὶ τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως.

the cyclic a turning. The meaning here of στροφή is problematic. Given the context, my suggestion is 'turning' in the sense of a change that is positive and

possibility evolutionary, as πάθη can lead to positive change, in humans, in Nature, and in things.

16.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. As for the rest of the sentence, vis-a-vis 'form', there is no adequate, unambiguous, word to re-present μορφή given how, for example, the English term 'morph' has acquired various meanings irrelevant here and given that the English term 'form' has associations with Plato when used to translate ἰδέα.

without-form. ἄμορφος.

kind. For ἰδέα. To avoid confusion with 'form' and because it is apposite here.

17.

incorporeal kind. In respect of ἀσώματος, cf. the comment about Socrates and Plato in Placita Philosophorum by Pseudo-Plutarch: τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἰδέαν. ὁ δὲ θεὸς νοῦς ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου, ὕλη δὲ τὸ ὑποκείμενον πρῶτον γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δ' οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ θεοῦ. (1.3)

mountains which appear in depictions. I have chosen 'depictions' because depiction could refer to paintings on vases or to wall-paintings or to some other medium or art-form where mountains might be depicted, and it is not clear from the context which is meant.

18.

φαντασία. Not here simply 'appearance' in the ordinary sense of the term but a 'making visible' such that it is apprehended by us in a particular way, as a re-presentation of what it actually is. Hence: "an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise."

19.

urge your psyche to go to... The whole passage is interesting and evocative, with psyche here signifying 'spirit' as in "let your spirit wander to other places" and thus invoking something akin to what we now might describe as conscious imagination.

go to any land. Following the MSS rather than the emendation Nock accepts which is εἰς Ἰνδικήν. There seems to me no justification for jarringly introducing India here.

Ocean. Ὠκεανός. That is, a sea beyond the Mediterranean, such as the Atlantic.

Aether. cf. Poemandres 17, ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε, where I noted in my commentary: "It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal."

nor the vortex. οὐχ ἡ δίνη. Presumably δίνη here refers to the celestial movement of the planets and stars as observed from Earth.

burst through. cf. Poemandres 14: ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, "burst through the strength of the spheres."

The Entirety. Even though 'universe' is implied, I have refrained from using that English word given its modern astronomical and cosmological connotations, and have instead opted for a literal translation of ὅλος.

ordered system. κόσμος here as 'the ordered system' just described: the land, ocean, Sun, the heavens, the bodies of the stars.

20.

purposes. νοήματα.

21.

enclose your psyche in your body. cf. section I of tractate VII where enclosing the psyche in the body is also mentioned.

indulging the body and rotten. φιλοσώματος here implies 'indulging the body' rather than 'loving the body' just as κακός implies 'rotten', 'base', rather than some abstract, disputable 'evil' or (vide Nock) "le vice suprême."

the numinous. τὸ θεῖον. In other words, 'the divine'.

its own (way). Following the MSS which have ἰδία, omitted by Nock.

eikon. Tentatively reading οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ὃ οὐκ εἰκὼν θείου, which is not altogether satisfactory. The MSS have εἰκόνι. Nock emends to οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν (there is nothing that it is not) which seems somewhat at odds with the preceding "to be completely rotten is..." and with theos/the numinous being evident, presenced, in τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία.

Regarding eikon, qv. the note in the commentary on section 15.

22.

Speak softly. εὐφήμησον is a formulaic phrase (cf. Tractate XIII:8, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ εὐφήμησον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ καταπαύσει τὸ ἔλεος εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) suggesting "speak softly" and with reverence.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ

To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation

Tractate XII

o o o

Introduction

While the first few sentences of the twelfth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum have some similarity to what Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote in a polemic a century or two later [1], the rest of the twelfth tractate - with its mention of the Ἄγαθος Δαίμων (the Noble Daimon), with its echo of Heraclitus, with its mention that "some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity," and with its themes of ψυχή (psyche) and ἀνάγκη (wyrd, 'necessity', 'fate') - is ineluctably part of Greco-Roman paganism, where by the term paganism I personally - following Cicero [3] - mean "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." [3] Furthermore, this unity derives from 'the theos', the primary divinity, who gifted we mortals with life, and is manifest in - presenced by - other divinities, by daimons [4], and by what we have come to describe as Nature, that is, as the natural world existing on Earth with its diversity of living beings.

Furthermore, although, as with several other tractates, the name of Τάτ (Thoth) appears in the title, there is nothing in the text, or in the other texts of the Corpus, which points to native Egyptian influence; a lack of influence supported

by the recent scholarly edition of the ancient *Book of Thoth* edited by Jasnow and Zauzich [5], and by the earlier work of A-J. Festugiere [6].

ooo

[1] *Epistula de Decretis Nycaenae Synodi*, II, 3f, and IV, 22ff.

[2] "Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quoi nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum - nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." M. Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Liber Secundus, xiii, xiv, 37

[3] The quotation is from my 2014 essay *Education And the Culture of Patheismathos*, and paraphrases what Cicero wrote in Book II (xiii and xiv) of his *De Natura Deorum*.

As I noted in the aforementioned essay,

"it is my considered opinion that the English term 'balanced' (a natural completeness, a natural equilibrium) is often a better translation of the classical Latin *perfectus* than the commonly accepted translation of 'perfect', given what the English word 'perfect' now imputes (as in, for example, 'cannot be improved upon'), and given the association of the word 'perfect' with Christian theology and exegesis (as, for example, in suggesting a moral perfection)."

[4] A δαίμων was considered to be a divinity who undertook to protect places 'sacred to the gods' or who - following the deliberations of a particular deity or of various deities - undertook to intercede in the lives of mortals by, for example, bringing them good fortune or misfortune. It was thus a tradition in ancient Greece and Rome to, at a meal, toast with wine the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων in the hope that he would bring them good fortune. Similarly, the Romans especially would offer a toast to the Ἄγνωστος Θεός (the Unknown Theos) and/or to the Ἄγνωστος Δαίμων (the Unknown Daemon) in the hope of not offending a deity or daimon whose name they did not know.

To translate δαίμων as 'demon' - as some do - is misleading, and can lead to a retrospective reinterpretation of the text given what the English term 'demon' now imputes as a result of over a thousand years of Christianity.

[5] Richard Jasnow & Karl-Theodore Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth: A Demotic Discourse on Knowledge and Pendant to the Classical Hermetica*. Volume 1: Text. Harrassowitz, 2005.

[6] A.J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 volumes. J. Gabalda, 1944-1954

Translation

[1] Perceiveration, Thoth, is of the quidditas of theos, if there is a quidditas of theos, and if so then only theos completely understands what that quidditas is. Perceiveration is thus not separated from the quiddity of theos but rather expands forth, as does the light of the Sun, with this perceiveration, in mortals, theos so that some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity.

For the noble daimon spoke of deities as deathless mortals and of mortals as deathful deities, while in living beings deprived of logos perceiverance is their physis.

[2] Where psyche is, there also is perceiveration just as where Life is there also is psyche. But in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life empty of perceiverance while perceiveration is the patron of the psyche of mortals labouring for their nobility. For those deprived of logos it co-operates with the physis of each, while for mortals it works against that.

Every psyche presented in a body is naturally rotted by pleasure and pain for in that mixtion of a body the pleasure and the pain boil as profluvia into which the psyche is immersed.

[3] Whatever psyches perceiveration governs it manifests its own resplendence, working as it does against their predispositions. Just as an honourable physician painfully uses cautery or a knife on a body seized by sickness so does perceiveration distress psyche, extracting from it that pleasure which is the genesis of all psyche's sickness.

A serious sickness of psyche is neglect of the divine from whence prognostications and thence all rottenness and nothing noble. Yet perceiveration can work against this to secure nobility for psyche as the physician does for soundness of body.

[4] But the psyche of mortals who do not have perceiveration as their guide suffer the same as living beings deprived of logos, for when there is co-operation with them and a letting-loose of yearnings they are dragged along

by their cravings to be voided of logos, and - akin to living beings deprived of logos - they cannot stop their anger nor their emotive yearnings nor become disgusted by rottenness.

For such yearnings and anger are overwhelmingly bad. And on those ones, the theos - avenger, confutant - will impose what custom demands.

[5] Father, if that is so, then your previous discourse regarding Meiros seems at risk of being altered. For if it is indeed Meiros-decreed for someone to be unfaithful or desecrate what is sacred or be otherwise bad, then why is that person punished when they have been constrained by Meiros to do the deed?

My son, all that is done is Meiros-decreed with nothing corporeal independent of that. For neither nobility nor rottenness are produced by accident. It is Meiros-decreed that they having done what is bad are afflicted which is why it was done: to be afflicted by what afflicts them.

[6] But for now let the discourse not be about badness or Meiros; they are spoken about elsewhere. Instead, let us discourse about perceivation; what it is able to do and how it varies. For mortals, it is a particular thing while for living beings deprived of logos it is something else. Also, in those other living beings it does not produce benefits. But because it can control the irritable, the covetous, it is not the same for everyone with it being appreciated that some of those persons are reasonable while others are unreasonable.

All mortals are subjected to Meiros as well as to geniture and changement, which are the origin and the consummation of Meiros,

[7] with all mortals afflicted by what is Meiros-decreed, although those gifted with sentience who - as mentioned - are governed by perceivation are not afflicted in the same way as others. Because they are distanced from rottenness, they are not afflicted by the rotten.

What, father, are you then saying? That the unfaithful one, that the killer, and all other such ones, are not bad?

My son, the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted as if they had been unfaithful just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. It is not possible to avoid geniture nor the disposition of changement although the one of perceivation can avoid rottenness.

[8] I heard that from of old the noble daimon spoke of - and would that he had written it for that would have greatly benefited the race of mortals since he alone, my son, as first-born divinity beholding everything, certainly gave voice to divine logoi - but, whatever, I heard him to say that all that exists is one, particularly conceptible things.

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion, whose perceivance is noble as is his psyche, and with this as it is, there is nothing separable among what is conceivable. Thus perceivance, Archon of everything and also the psyche of theos, can do whatever it desires.

[9] Therefore you should understand, relating these words to your previous question when you asked about Meiros. For if, my son, you diligently eliminate disputatious argument you will discover that perceivance - psyche of theos - does in truth rule over Meiros and Custom and everything else. There is nothing he is unable to do: not placing a mortal psyche over Meiros, nor, if negligent of what comes to pass, placing it under Meiros. And of what the noble daimon said, these were the most excellent about all this.

How numinous, father; and how true, how beneficial.

[10] And now, can you explain this to me. You said that perceivance in living beings deprived of logos is in accordance with their physis and in consort with their cravings. Yet the cravings of living beings deprived of logos are, I assume, somatic, and if perceivance co-operates with the cravings and if the cravings of those deprived of logos are somatic then is not perceivance also somatic, in alliance with the somatic?

Excellent, my son. A good question which I have to answer.

[11] Everything incorporeal when corporified is somatical, although it is properly of the somatic. For all that changes is incorporeal with all that is changed corporeal. The incorporeal is changed by perceivance, with changeability somatic. Both the changing and the changed are affected, with one leading, the other following. If released from the corporeal, there is release from the somatic. In particular, my son, there is nothing that is asomatic with everything somatic with the somatic being different from the somatical. For one is vigorous, the other non-active. The corporeal, in itself, is vigorous, either when changed or when not changing, and whichever it is, it is somatic, However, the incorporeal is always acted upon which is why it is somatical.

But do not allow such denotata to vex you, for vigour and the somatic are the same, although there is nothing wrong in using the better-sounding denotatum.

[12] Father, that was a clear answer that you gave.

Take note, my son, of the two things that theos has favoured mortals with, over and above all other deathful living beings: perceivance and logos, equal in value to deathlessness, and if they use those as required then there is no difference between them and the deathless. And when they depart from the corporeal they will be escorted by both to the assembly of the gods and the fortunate ones.

[13] And yet, father, do other living beings not have language?

No, my son, they have sounds, and language is quite different from sounds. Language is shared among all mortals while each kind of living being has its own sounds.

And also, father, among mortals for each folk have a different language.

Yes, my son, different but since mortal nature is One then language is also One, for when interpreted they are found to be the same whether in Egypt or in Persia or in Hellas. Thus it seems, my child, that you are unaware of the significance and the merit of language.

That hallowed divinity, the noble daimon, spoke of psyche in corporeality, of perceivation in psyche, of logos in perceivation, of perceivation in the theos, and of the theos as the father of those.

[14] For logos is eikon of perceivation, perceivation that of theos, with corporeality that of outward form, and outward form that of psyche. The finest part of Substance is Air. Of Air, psyche. Of psyche, perceivation. Of perceivation, theos, with theos encompassing all things and within all things; with perceivation encompassing psyche, psyche encompassing Air, and Air encompassing Substance.

Necessitas, forseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos, and of the arrangement of Substance, and whatever is apprehended is essence with that essence of each their ipseity. Of the corpora that exist, each is a multiplicity, and since the ipseity of combined corpora is the changement of one corpus to another they always retain the imputrescence of ipseity.

[15] Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

Substance is One, and the complete cosmic order - a mighty theos and eikon of and in unison with a mightier one - is, in maintaining the arrangements and the purpose of the father, replete with Life. And through the paternally given cyclic return of Aion there is nothing within it - in whole or in part - which is not alive.

For nothing of the cosmic order that has come-into-being is - or is now or will be - necrotic since the father has determined that Life shall be there while it exists. And thus, because of Necessitas, it is divine.

[16] Thus, how - my son - in that eikon of all things with its repletion of Life can there be necrosis? For necrosis is putritude and putritude is perishment. How then is it possible for any portion of what is not putrid be be putrid or for

anything of theos to perish?

Therefore, father, do not the living beings - who have their being there - not perish?

Speak wisely, my son, and do not be led away by the denotata of being-becoming. For, my son, they do not perish but as combined corpora are dissolved with such a dissolving not death but the dissolution of the melding, and dissolved not so as to perish but for a new coming-into-being. For what is the vigour of Life if not change?

What then, of Kosmos, does not change? Nothing, my child.

[17] Does the Earth seem to you, father, to not change?

No, my son. But she is alone in that there are many changes but also stasis. For would it not be illogical if the nourisher - she who brings-forth everything - never changed? It is not possible for she, the bringer-forth, to bring-forth without being changed. It is illogical for you to enquire if the fourth parsement is inactive, since an unchanging corpus is indicative of inactivity.

[18] You should therefore understand that what exists of Kosmos is everywhere changing, either growing or declining, and that what is changing is living with all that lives not, because of Necessitas, the same. For Kosmos, in the entirety of its being, is not changeable even though its parts can be changeable, with nothing putrefiable or perishable, although such denotata can confuse we mortals. For geniture is not Life but rather alertness, nor is changement death but rather a forgetting.

Since this is so, Substance, Life, Pneuma, Psyche, Perceiveration, are all deathless, with every living being some combination of them.

[19] Because of perceiveration all living beings are deathless, and most certain of all is that mortals are, for they - receptive to theos - can interact with theos. For only with this living being does theos commune in nightful dreams and daylight auguration, forewarning what is possible through birds, through entrails, through the movements of air, and through trees of Oak. And thus do mortals profess to know what was past, what is now, what will be.

[20] Observe, my son, that every other living being inhabits a certain part of the world; in water for those of the water, on dry land for those on land, and above the ground for those of the air. But mortals employ them all; land, water, air, fire. They observe the heavens, and touch it through their senses, and theos encompasses and is within all such things, for he is Change and Capability.

Thus, my son, it is not difficult to apprehend theos.

[21] If you are disposed to consider him, then perceive the arrangement of Kosmos and how that arrangement is well-ordered. Perceive Necessitas in what is apparent and the foreseeing in what has come-into-being and what is coming-into-being. Perceive Substance replete with Life, and the great, the influentive, theos together with all the noble and the beautiful divinities, daimons, and mortals.

But those, father, are actualities.

Yet, my son, if they are only actualities then by whom - other than theos - are they actualized? Or do you not know that just as aspects of the world are the heavens, the land, the Water, and the Air, then in the same way his aspects are deathlessness, blood, Necessitas, Foreseeing, Physis, Psyche, Perceivation, and that the continuance of all these is what is called nobility? And that there is not anything that has come-into-being or which is coming-into-being that is or will be without theos?

[22] He is within Substance, then, father?

If, my son, Substance was separate from theos then where, to what place, would you assign it? To some heap that is not actualized? But if it is actualized, then by whom is it actualized? And we spoke of actualities as aspects of theos.

So who then brings life to living beings? Who deathlessness to the deathless? Who change to those changed? And if you say Substance or corpus or essence, then understand that they also are actualities of theos, so that the substantiality is the actuality of Substance, corporeality the actuality of corpora, and essentiality the actuality of essence. And this is theos, All That Exists.

[23] For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not. Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything.

This, my son, is the Logos, to be respected and followed. And if there is one way to follow theos, it is not to be bad.

o o o

Commentary

Title.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation.

1.

perceivation. As with my other translations of Corpus Hermeticum texts I translate νοῦς not as 'mind' but as perceivation/perceivance, qv. my commentary on Poemandres, 2.

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, as with tractates VI and XI, 'essence' in respect of theos is not an entirely satisfactory translation given what the English term essence often now imputes. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and requires contextual interpretation. As in tractate VI, one interpretation of quidditas is ontological, as 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived by we mortals via or as - φύσις (physis). Which interpretation has the virtue of avoiding assumptions as to whether the author is here presenting something similar to the Stoic weltanschauung or to other ancient weltanschauungen.

understands. In respect of οἶδεν as 'understand' rather than 'know' qv. 1 Corinthians 14:16, ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν: "since he does not understand what you say." Furthermore, in Plato, Meno, 80e 'understanding' and 'understand' make more sense than the conventional 'knowing' and 'know':

ὁρᾶς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις ὡς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ζητεῖν ἀνθρώπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδε οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδε; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὃ γε οἶδεν ζητοῖ οἶδεν γὰρ καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι ζητήσει.

Do you realize what a contestable argument you introduce? That a mortal cannot inquire either about what he understands or about what he does not understand? That he cannot inquire about what he understands because he understands it with an inquiry thus not necessary; and that he cannot inquire about what he does not understand because he does not understand what he should inquire about.

quiddity of theos. οὐσιότητος τοῦ θεοῦ. Using the word quiddity here not as a

synonym of quidditas but as a synonym of 'quidditativeness', where quidditative is "of or relating to the essential quidditas of some-thing", in this case theos.

mortal nature. ἀνθρωπότης. I incline toward the view that the neutral term 'mortal nature' is appropriate here, given what the English word 'humanity' now so often implies; a neutral term suggested not only by the scholia to the first verses of Orestes by Euripides:

κατασκευὴν ποιούμενος ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας προτάσεως τῆς ὅτι πάντα φέρει τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ἀνθρωπότης, ἐπιφέρει ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μακάριοι καὶ ὄλβιοι δόξαντες ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἄμοιροι συμφορῶν καὶ παθῶν γεγόνασιν· ἐξ ἐνὸς δὲ τοῦ Ταντάλου καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους παραδηλοῖ. τὸν Τάνταλον δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλον τῇ ὑποθέσει προσείληφε διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ γένους καὶ τὸν Ὀρέστην κατάγεσθαι

but also by *De Sancta Trinitate Dialogus* of Athanasius (Migne, *Patrologiæ Græcæ*, 28, 1115), with the first verse of the Orestes expressing what is meant and implied:

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ' εἰπεῖν ἔπος οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ' ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις.

There is nothing that can be described, no suffering, and nothing sent by the gods, which is so terrifyingly strange that mortal nature cannot endure it.

the noble daimon. Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων. The daimon who can bring good fortune (health, wealth, happiness, honour) and other benefits to mortals and who thus is considered to be noble. As mentioned in the Introduction, a daimon is not a 'demon'.

deathless...deathful. For these in respect of ἀθάνατος and θνητὸς qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14, tractate VIII:1, and tractate XI:7ff.

The phrase spoken by the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων is similar to one attributed to Heraclitus:

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. (Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz)

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life.

deprived of logos. ἄλογος. As at Poemandres 10 and tractate XI:10, a literal translation suggested by the context which thus avoids rather awkward expressions such as "animals without reason" and "irrational animals", and

which might also suggest not only various other meanings of logos such as "lacking (the faculty of) speech, lacking in sentience," but also that such living beings have not been gifted by theos with logos:

τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἕνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωὴ

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivance is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life. (Poemandres 6)

perceivance is their physis. Reading ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις. Here φύσις implies their being - the type of being (the 'character') they have, and are - and thus means their quidditas, which quidditas is in contrast to that of theos, deities, and mortals.

2.

psyche. A transliteration, as in my translations of other tractates. It is possible to read the line as referring to personifications: "Where Psyche is, there also is Perceivance just as where Life is there also is Psyche." Classically understood, psyche is the anima mundi, the power that animates - gives life to and which orders - the world.

in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life. On first reading there seems to be a contradiction between what follows - ἡ ψυχὴ ζωὴ ἐστὶ κενὴ τοῦ νοῦ, [in living beings deprived of logos] psyche is Life empty of perceivance - and the preceding ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζώοις ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις ἐστὶν, which states that "in living beings deprived of logos perceivance is their physis." The sense of the Greek therefore seems to suggest that the perceivance of living beings deprived of logos is a vacuous, empty, one: they perceive but it does not benefit them in the same manner as perceivance benefits mortals because there is no understanding of, no rational apprehension of, what is perceived.

mixtion. σύνθετος. Mixtion is more appropriate here in such a metaphysical text than either 'composite' or 'compound', meaning as mixtion does compounded, combined; the condition or state of being mixed, melded, or composed of various parts.

profluvia. χυμός. That is, the bodily 'humours', anciently named as blood, phlegm, cholera (χολέρα), and bile. Since the English word 'humour' now often suggests an entirely different meaning, I have chosen profluvia - from the Latin profluvium - in order to try and convey something of the meaning of the Greek, qv. Coleridge: "The same deadly sweats - the same frightful Profluvium of burning Dregs, like melted Lead - with quantities of bloody mucus from the Coats of the Intestines." *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1956. Volume II, 911: Letter dated 8th Jan.

immersed. βαπτίζω. Cf. tractate IV:3: καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός, "and were immersive with perceivation."

3.

cautery or a knife. καίω ἢ τέμνων. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 848-850,

ὄτω δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,
ἦτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως
πειρασόμεσθα πῆμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου

Whomsoever needs a healing potion
By a burning-out or a well-judged cutting-away
I shall seek to defeat the sickness of that injury.

neglect of the divine. ἀθεότης. The usual translation, atheism, seems to me to impose a particular and rigid meaning on the text given the association the word atheism now has with Christianity and in modern philosophy. The phrase 'neglect of the divine' expresses a more Hellenistic view, qv. the term ἀθεράπευτος and also Plutarch, who wrote:

Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ ὧν ὁ λόγος, ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης κρίσις οὔσα φαύλη τοῦ μηδὲν εἶναι μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον εἰς ἀπάθειάν τινα δοκεῖ τῆ ἀπιστίας τοῦ θείου περιφέρειν, καὶ τέλος ἐστὶν αὐτῆ τοῦ μὴ νομίζειν θεοὺς τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι, *De Superstitione*, 165b

Thus we return to our topic, neglect of the divine, which is the bad decision that nothing is hallowed or everlasting, which with its disbelief in the divine seems to lead to a type of apathy with the result that there is no fear of divinity since it does not exist.

4.

for when there is co-operation with them...voided of logos. The Greek here is somewhat obscure, although the meaning seems to be along the following lines: when perceivation co-operates with a serious sickness such as neglect of the divine then yearnings, desires, are given free reign so that those mortals, haplessly carried away by their cravings, become just like animals, voided of what makes them human.

what custom demands. In respect of νομός the term 'law' - with all its modern and Old Testament associations (as in 'the law of God') - is inappropriate since the Greek term implies what it is the customary thing to do. Hence, "what custom demands."

5.

Meiros. While μείρομαι here is conventionally understood as referring to 'fate', given the variety of meanings attributed to that term - a useful summary of classical usage is given in Book I, chapter XXVII of *Placita Philosophorum* attributed to the Pseudo-Plutarch - it seems apposite to suggest an alternative, especially as the text apparently does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question which Thoth goes on to ask: if 'fate' does compel someone to do something bad then why are they punished?

The mention of ἀνάγκης - 'Necessity', Ananke - in what follows (section 14: ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς τάξεως τῆς ὕλης) might indicate the Heraclitean sense of μείρομαι, as summarized by the Pseudo-Plutarch,

Ἡράκλειτος πάντα καθ' εἰμαρμένην, τὴν δ' αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀνάγκην.

Yet the immediate context - ἔλεγχον ὁ θεὸς ἐπέστησε τὸν νόμον - might seem to suggest θέσφατον (divine decree), as for example in Sophocles:

"εἴ τι θέσφατον πατρὶ χρησιμοῖσιν ἰκνεῖθ' ὥστε πρὸς παίδων θανεῖν."
Oedipus at Colonus, 969-970

However, given that what follows - Εἰμαρμένης γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἔργα [...] καὶ χωρὶς ἐκείνης οὐδὲν ἐστι τῶν σωματικῶν - I have chosen to use a transliteration, *Meiros*, based on the personification *Moros* in Hesiod's *Theogony*:

νύξ δ' ἔτεκεν στυγερὸν τε Μόρον καὶ Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον,
τέκε δ' Ὕπνον, ἔτικτε δὲ φῶλον Ὀνειρῶν (211-212)

And Night gave birth to odious *Moros*, to darksome *Kir* and to Death, and also brought-into-being *Hypnos* and the folk of Dreams.

While the transliteration *Meiros* has the undoubted advantage - as with *logos*, *theos*, *physis*, καὶ τὰ λοιπά - of requiring contextual interpretation and thus avoiding whatever presumptions the reader might have in respect of the meaning of the English term 'fate', it has the disadvantage of not having, in English, an appropriate suffix such as, in respect of fate, -ed allowing as that does εἰμαρτός to be translated by 'fated'. The only solution - somewhat awkward as it is - is to translate such a word by a term such as 'Meiros-decreed' (or Meiros-appointed) so that the phrase εἰ δ' ἄρα τις οὗτος εἰμαρτός ἤκει χρόνος (Plutarch, Alexander, 30.6) would approximate to "if indeed a Meiros appointed moment has now arrived."

unfaithful. The sense of μοιχεύω is not stridently moralistic, as the English term adultery - with all its Old Testament associations - now often still denotes and

has for centuries denoted with its implication of 'sin'. Rather, the sense is more anciently pagan: of marital unfaithfulness, of a personal (and thus dishonourable) betrayal, as in Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1374a, συγγενέσθαι ἄλλ' οὐ μοιχεῦσαι (not unfaithful in the matter of [sexual] intercourse). Similarly in Aristophanes:

ὁ δ' ἄλους γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται. (Plutus, 170)

it will be because of you if the unfaithful one is caught, and their head shaved.

In addition, in origin the Anglo-Norman word *adulterie* - derived as it was from the Latin *adulterium* (adulteration, contaminating or debasing something) - simply meant marital unfaithfulness without the later religious associations such as voiced by Thomas More in his 1532 work *The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answer*: "wedlokke [...] whyche god hym selfe bothe blessed and commaunded in paradyse and whyche holy scrypture commendeth where it sayth that wedlokke is honorable where the bedde is vndefyled wyth auowtry." (ccliiv)

what is bad. Reading τὸ κακὸν and not τὸ καλόν.

6.

geniture and changement. γενέσει καὶ μεταβολῆι. In respect of *geniture*, qv. my commentary on tractate XI:2, that "the unusual English word *geniture* expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

In respect of *changement*, as I noted in a comment on tractate XI:4, "I have here chosen 'changement' in preference to 'change' since *changement* (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation."

7.

gifted with sentience. ἔλλογος. The Greek term occurs in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle where he discusses the views of Eudoxus:

εὐδοξος μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡδονὴν τάγαθὸν ᾧετ' εἶναι διὰ τὸ πάνθ' ὀρᾶν ἐφιέμενα αὐτῆς καὶ ἔλλογα καὶ ἄλογα (1172b.10)

Eudoxus considered that delight was the beneficent since his perception was that all, sentient or not sentient, sought it.

In a comment on this passage from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas wrote:

quod Eudoxus existimabat delectationem esse de genere bonorum,

quia videbat quod omnia desiderant ipsam, tam rationalia scilicet homines, quam irrationalia, scilicet bruta animalia. (*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, Book X, l. 2 n. 2)

where the contrast, as in Aristotle, is between those gifted with sentience and those lacking sentience, but with Aquinas adding that the latter are 'dumb' animals (*brutis animalibus*), a difference between humans and animals that he considers in detail in his *Summa Theologiae* (*Prima Secundae, Quaestiones 6-17*).

killer. φονεὺς. To use the English word 'murderer' as a translation of the Greek carries with it relatively modern connotations that in my opinion are inappropriate, given that the word 'murder' can impute the sense of "the deliberate and unlawful killing of a human being" and "the action of killing or causing destruction of life, regarded as wicked and morally reprehensible irrespective of its legality."

The classical sense is evident, for example, in Sophocles:

φονέα σε φημι τάνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 362)

I said you are the killer and thus the man you seek

κάνταῦθ' Ἀπόλλων οὔτ' ἐκεῖνον ἤνυσεν
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρὸς οὔτε Λαΐιον
τὸ δεινὸν οὐφοβεῖτο πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 720-702)

So, in those days, Apollo did not bring about, for him,
That he slay the father who begot him - nor, for Laius,
That horror which he feared - being killed by his son.

Thus the choice is between two relatively neutral terms: killer, and slayer. Neither of which imputes the moralistic or legal sense of "unlawful killing" or of the act being "wicked and morally reprehensible." Instead, it is a statement of fact.

the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted... just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. An interesting passage which might be taken to mean that those gifted with sentience - who presumably are also, as the tractate states, "governed/guided by their perceiviation" - have the ability because of such things to know, understand, to intuit, what killing and unfaithfulness mean and imply (especially in terms of affliction) as if they themselves had done such things. That is, they have empathy, and thus can avoid doing what is bad.

disposition. See the note regarding ποιότης in section 23 below.

8.

the noble daimon spoke of...would that he had written it. This seems to allude to an aural tradition, perhaps (qv. my introduction to tractate III) an Ἱερός Λόγος, which was never written down, with the suggestion that what is being recounted in this tractate is such a tradition.

first-born divinity. πρωτόγονος θεός. While some assume that this refers to something Egyptian - for example, to the deity Khnum - I incline toward the view that it may be (i) a reference to an Orphic tradition, given that there is an Orphic poem which beings Πρωτόγονον καλέω διφυῆ μέγαν αἰθερόπλαγκτον, or (ii) more probably a term still in general use in Hellenic culture given it that was, for example, an epithet of the goddess Persephone, and given that it occurs in the commentary on Plato's Timaeus by Proclus.

divine logoi. θείους λόγους. Cf. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων and σοφίας λόγους in Poemandres 29. There, the logoi are the various forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumatic logos, the phasical logos, and the logos kyrios.

I [...] thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them. (Poemandres 29)

conceptible things. νοητὰ σώματα. That is, objects - things, materia, 'bodies' - which can be conceived of, which are conceptible, rather than having been physically seen, qv. the 'atoms' of Democritus: ἔτερι δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν. See also Sextus Empiricus: οἱ γὰρ ἀτόμους εἰπόντες ἢ ὁμοιομερείας ἢ ὄγκους ἢ κοινῶς νοητὰ σώματα πάντων τῶν ὄντων κατώρθωσαν πῆ δὲ διέπεσον (Adversus Mathematicos, X, 252).

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion. ζῶμεν δὲ δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ Αἰῶνι. In respect of Aion, qv. tractate XI:3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰών, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος·

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion.

nothing separable. οὐδὲν διαστατόν. As noted in respect of διαστατός in the commentary on tractate IV:1, "what is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise."

Archon. Cf. the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων (archon and hegemon) in tractate XI:7. Since ἄρχων has been assimilated into the English language and

retained (c. 1755) its original meaning (ruler, governor, regent) it seems unnecessary to translate the term.

perceiveration...whatever it desires. Cf Poemandres 12: ὁ δὲ πάντων πατήρ ὁ Νοῦς ὦν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς... Perceiveration, as Life and phaos, father of all...

9.

Numinous. θεῖος. As at tractate IV:6 I have opted for the English word numinous - which dates from 1647, derived from the classical Latin *numen* - to express the meaning of θεῖος here.

10.

somatic. πάθος. The English word somatic - from the Greek σῶμα - means "of or relating to the body; physical, corporeal". As in tractate VI:2 the sense of πάθος here is one of physicality, as in being physically afflicted or affected such that a 'living being deprived of logos' cannot control or affect the affliction, in this instance their cravings. As such, the English word 'passion' is inappropriate here as a translation of πάθος because it implies strong or deep feelings or emotions generally in human beings and thus is somewhat anthropomorphic, especially as a distinction is being made, as in sections 2 and 5, between mortals and those living beings, such as animals, who lack logos, which logos together with perceiveration, are - as mentioned in section 12 - the two most precious gifts theos has given to mortals: ὅτι δύο ταῦτα τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ θεὸς παρὰ πάντα τὰ θνητὰ ζῶια ἔχαρίσατο τὸν τε νοῦν καὶ τὸν λόγον, σότιμα τῇ ἀθανασίᾳ.

in alliance with the somatic. Reading συγχρηματίζων with the MSS and not the emendation συγχρωτίζων.

11.

corporeal, incorporeal. σῶμα, ἀσώματος. To try and express at least something of the meaning of the Greek here - which is somewhat metaphysically obscure - I have occasionally resorted to obsolete forms of those two English terms, such as 'corporified' (from corporify) implying "having a material or a bodily form".

In respect of the corporeal and the incorporeal, see tractates VIII and XI. In VIII one of the main themes is the corporeal: "It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that we now must speak..." In XI:22 it is stated that

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀόρατον, οὐδὲ τῶν ἀσωμάτων· νοῦς ὁρᾶται ἐν τῷ νοεῖν, ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ ποιεῖν

nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with perceiveration evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

somatical. παθητά. The sense is of being affected by, or subject to, what is somatic. As what follows - καὶ κυρίως αὐτά ἐστι πάθη - attempts to explain, and as is made clear later on in this section (διαφέρει δὲ πάθος παθητοῦ) somatical should not be confused with somatic.

changes, changed. Given the context, the various senses of κίνησις here are change, not motion - moving, move - in the physical sense as at tractate XI:8, πάντα δὲ πλήρη ψυχῆς καὶ πάντα κινούμενα, τὰ μὲν περὶ τὸν οὐρανόν, τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν γῆν, all are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. Qv. Poemandres 14 and 15. The English terms energy and energize have too many modern, irrelevant, connotations, in respect of the science of physics and otherwise.

12.

perceiviation and logos. Omitting - with Patrizi - the following τὸν δὲ προφορικὸν λόγον ἔχει as a gloss.

deathlessness. In respect of this unusual English word, qv. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Soul's Travelling* (IX),

"And as they touch your soul, they borrow
Both of its grandeur and its sorrow,
That deathly odour with which the clay
Leaves on its deathlessness away."

denotata, denotatum. προσηγορία here implies more than 'name'. That is, a terminology; a specialized vocabulary, in this case one related to metaphysics (qv. πλανώμενος τῆι προσηγορίαι τοῦ γινομένου in section 16). Hence the translations 'denotata' and denotatum (singular) to suggest this.

13.

And yet, do other livings not have language. τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα ζῶια λόγῳ οὐ χρᾶται. While λόγος here is generally taken to mean 'speech', given what follows with its mention of animals making 'sounds' and the exposition regarding the different languages spoken by mortals, the translation 'language' is more apt, as in being able to communicate, to say something specific the meaning of which can be explained and understood by diverse others. A usage of λόγος as for example in the following exchange between Oedipus and the Chorus:

Οἰδίπους:

οἷσθ' οὖν ἃ χρῆζεις.

Χορός:

οἶδα.

Οιδίπους:

φράζε δὴ τί φής.

Χορός:

τὸν ἐναγῆ φίλον μήποτ' ἐν αἰτία σὺν ἀφανεῖ λόγῳ σ' ἄτιμον βαλεῖν.

Oedipus:

Do you know what it is that you so desire?

Chorus:

I do know.

Oedipus:

Then explain what you believe it to be.

Chorus:

When a comrade is under oath, you should never accuse him because of unproved rumours and brand him as being without honour.

(Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 653-657)

folk. ἔθνος. Since the English term 'nation' now implies things which the Greek word does not - such as a modern political State - it is inappropriate here. A suitable alternative to folk would be 'people'.

mortal nature, Qv. section 1.

one. εἷς. It is probable that this refers to a metaphysical concept such as described in tractate XI:11,

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς,
φανερῶτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ
οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἂν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίς γὰρ ἄλλῳ ἂν καὶ πρέποι
ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός καὶ τὸν μὲν
κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἕνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν
καὶ θειότητα μίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one. But who is it? Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if

not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings? Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presented is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

psyche in corporeality. The context is indicative of σώματι here referring to corporeality in general; that is, the quality or state of being corporeal; bodily form or nature; materiality.

14.

eikon. εἰκὼν, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 21 and 31, and also see tractate VIII:2 and tractate XI:15.

outward form. ἰδέα. To translate here simply as 'form' (or idea) may give the impression that the ἰδέα of Plato may be meant with the text thus interpreted in accord with his philosophy and especially with what has been termed his 'theory of forms'. However, since the reference here is to corporeality in the context of perceivment as εἰκὼν of theos, a more metaphysical sense is suggested. Hence, my interpretation as 'outward form', which thus leaves open the question as to whether or not there is any correlation with 'the theory of forms'.

substance. ὕλη. That is, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Qv. Poemandres 10 and tractate III:1.

Air. ἀήρ. Air as a fundamental element, hence the capitalization as with the preceding Substance.

necessitas. ἀνάγκη. In myth, Ananke was the ancient goddess of wyrd, thus having power over Meiros ('fate') and of what is considered necessary for mortals (such as death), hence the translation of 'necessity'. As mentioned in my commentary on tractate XII:5, although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable although less readable.

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos. Qv. tractate XII:5 where a similar expression occurs:

συνέχει δὲ τοῦτον ὁ αἰὼν, εἴτε δι' ἀνάγκην εἴτε πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν
καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶεται ἢ οἰήσεται τις

Aion maintains this through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume

foreseeing. πρόνοια. Foreseeing includes such arts as prophecy.

apprehended. Cf. Poemandres 3: νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ των φύσιν, to apprehend the physis of beings; that is to discern, discover, their being, their relation to other beings, and to Being.

corpus, corpora. I have here used a Latin term for σώμα (corpus, plural corpora) in order to try to give some intimation of the meaning of the text (the Greek is somewhat obscure), and to avoid using the rather prosaic terms 'body' and 'bodies', and to thus suggest technical terms which expound and befit a metaphysical weltanschauung, implying as they do here 'materia' in general; the stuff, the material, that exists in the Universe, and how such corpora including mortals relate to theos.

15.

arithmos. I have detailed the reasons for transliterating ἀριθμὸς in my commentary on tractate IV:10. In essence, the translation 'number' does not express the metaphysical meaning here, qv. Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book XIII, 1080b.20 and 1083b.10 et seq.

In addition, Proclus (in his Στοιχείωσις θεολογική, propositions 113f) wrote of ἀριθμὸς and ἐνάδες (henads) as essential parts of a cosmogony involving the gods, with Proclus equating ἐνάδες with those gods (op.cit., propositions 114ff),

εἰ γὰρ τῶν ἐνάδων διττὸς ὁ ἀριθμὸς, ὡς δέδεικται πρότερον, καὶ αἱ μὲν αὐτοτελεῖς εἰσιν αἱ δὲ ἐλλάμπεις ἀπ' ἐκείνων, τῷ δὲ ἐνὶ καὶ τάγαθῷ συγγενῆς καὶ ὁμοφυῆς ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμὸς, ἐνάδες εἰσὶν αὐτοτελεῖς οἱ θεοί. (114)

There is also an interesting passage in a fragment of the commentary on Aristotle by Andronicus of Rhodes where psyche is said to have been described as ἀριθμὸς:

ἀριθμὸν γὰρ ἐκάλουν φησὶ 'τὴν ψυχὴν ὅτι μηδὲν ζῶον ἐξ ἀπλοῦ σώματος ἀλλὰ κατὰ τινὰς λόγους καὶ ἀριθμοὺς κραθέντων τῶν πρώτων στοιχείων. (Themistii in libros Aristotelis De anima paraphrasis, XXXII, 23)

Regarding ἀριθμὸς in tractate IV:10, the relevant part is:

μονὰς οὐσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any.

henads. ἐνάδες. A transliteration in common use since the concept of the ἐνάς - the Unity, often equated with μονὰς - is metaphysical and has various interpretations in Plato, Iamblichus, Proclus, and others.

cosmic order. κόσμος. Cf. Poemandres 7.

a mighty theos. In respect of the term μέγας θεός it is interesting to note that frescoes in a Minoan settlement in Akrotiri on the island of Santorini depict η μεγάλη θεά (the mighty goddess) among women holding bunches of flowers and a woman holding a net which, given the presence of birds in the fresco, is possibly for catching birds as gifts for the goddess.

The term μέγας θεός also occurs in Acts 19:17 in reference to the Temple of Artemis - μεγάλης θεᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερὸν - with Artemis mentioned again in v.28, Μεγάλη ἡ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσίων (Powerful is Artemis of the Ephesians).

cyclic return. Qv. tractate XI:2, ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις, cyclic return and renewal.

while it exists. Referring to the 'cosmic order' and thus to Kosmos, eikon of a more mighty divinity.

16.

the denotata of being-becoming. Qv. the comment in section 11 regarding denotata and denotatum.

17.

nurturer. τιθήνη. Cf. tractate XI:7, τροφὸν καὶ τιθήνην, nourisher and nurturer.

fourth parsement. τέταρτον μέρος. By a parsement - partiment, from the Latin partimentum - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) component or principle of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times. Here Earth is described as the fourth part, the other three being Air, Water, and Fire. Cf. Poemandres 8.

18.

alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness as in being perceptively aware of one's surroundings. Cf. Poemandres 5.

pnuema. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on the text of Poemandres 5. In sum, the usual translation of 'spirit' is too restrictive and has too many modern and Christian associations. The various senses of πνεῦμα in classical times are summarized in DeWitt Burton, *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

19.

Therefore all living beings [...] perceiv[er]ation. Reading διὰ τὸν νοῦν and not δι' αὐτόν.

20.

capability. δύναμις. Not 'strength' or 'power' per se, but rather having the capacity, the capability, to do - to change, to craft, to bring-into-being - anything. Cf. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών in tractate XI: 3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰών, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὔποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος· διὸ οὐδὲ φθαρήσεται ποτε
αἰών γὰρ ἄφθαρτος οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, τοῦ κόσμου
ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

21.

influencive. κινέω. That is, to affect things, to set things in motion, to cause change.

actuosities. ἐνέργεια. The sense of the Greek here is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons. To try and convey something of this, I have chosen the English term 'actuosities' rather than 'energies' which - given what the English term 'energy' now often imputes - does not in my view express the metaphysical meaning here. The English word actuosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus, with the adjective actuose occurring in a 1677 book by Theophilus Gale: " Ἐνεργεῖν, as applied to God, notes his actuose, efficacious, and predeterminate concurse in and with althings." (The Court of The Gentiles. Part III, London, 1677).

A more recent usage was by Ferrarin in chapter 8 - Aristotle's De anima and Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit - of his book *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) where he wrote: "Hegel appropriates and transforms the meaning of *energeia* to define spirit. Spirit is actuosity..."

aspects. Reading μέρη ἐστὶ not μέλη ἐστὶ.

blood. Reading καὶ αἷμα with the MSS. In the metaphysical context of the tractate, blood as an 'aspect of theos' makes sense.

22.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe.

23.

disposition. ποιότης. As in section 7, not signifying here 'quality' but rather 'disposition,' γν. ποιός, what kind, nature, type, character.

What is being enumerated - οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος - are not abstractions (such as 'time') but rather mortal-type attributes and appellations that are irrelevant in respect of theos.

respected and followed. Given the metaphysical - not religious - tone and content of the tractate, I incline toward the view that προσκύνει καὶ θρήσκευε here does not imply a Christian-type reverence or worship or even being religious, but rather respect and following, as various Hellenic weltanschauungen or philosophies were respected and followed.

Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ
εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας

On A Mountain:
Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth,
An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis
And The Requirement of Silence

Tractate XIII

•••

Translation

[1] When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure. There was, from you, no disclosure; instead, you said no one can be rescued before the Palingenesis. Now, following our discussion as we were passing over the mountain I became your supplicant, inquiring into learning the discourse on Palingenesis since that, out of all of them, is the only one unknown to me, with you saying it would be imparted to me when I became separated from the world.

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world. Therefore - by explaining it either aloud or in secret - rectify my insufficiencies since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me.

Trismegistus, I am unknowing of what source a mortal is begotten and from what sown.

[2] My son, noetic sapientia is in silence, with the sowing the genuinely noble.

Father, that is completely impenetrable. So, of whom dispersed?

Of, my son, the desire of theos.

Father, of what kind then the begotten? For I do not share in such a quidditas and such a perceiveration.

Those begotten of theos are other than theos: young but entirely whole, mixon of all abilities.

Father, you speak enigmatically to me, not in the language of a teacher to a pupil.

My son, this emanation is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires.

[3] Father, while you speak of what is impractical and forced, I on my part seek what is straightforward. Was I produced as a foreign son of the paternal emanation? Do not repine me, father: I am a rightful son. Relate - plainly - the way of palingenesis.

My son, what is there to say? All that can be told is this: I saw an unshaped vista, brought-into-being through the generosity of theos, of me setting forth to a deathless body, and now I am not that before because engendered by perceiviation.

This matter is not taught: not through that shaped part through which is seeing. Thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. It is not as if I am biochrome and have tactility and definity: I am a stranger to them. You, my son, now observe me with your eyes and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. And yet, my son, I am now not understandable with those eyes.

[4] Father, you have stung the heart, causing no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself.

Would that you, my son, would - while not asleep - go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream.

Inform me also of this: who is the essentiator of the Palingenesis?

Through the desire of theos: The Mortal One, child of theos.

[5] Father, what you have now presented has silenced me, with a forsaking of what was previously in my heart <...> since I perceive that your stature and your likeness are still the same.

In that you have been deceived, for the form of the deathful alters every day: changed by the seasons, it grows then withers and so deceives.

[6] What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality?

My son: the imperturbable, the indistinguishable, the un-complexioned, the figureless, the steadfast, the unadorned, the revealed, the self-perceiving, the unwaveringly noble, the unmaterial.

Father, I am completely confused. Just when I considered you were engendering learning in me, the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed.

Thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does, and

flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. But how can you apprehend through perception what is insubstantial, what is not flowing, what is unmixturous, what is undissolved; that which is only apprehensible through influence and actusity, requiring someone able to apprehend that bringing-into-being within theos?

[7] Father, am I then deficient?

Not so, my son. Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being. Refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies.

Alastoras are within me, then, father?

Not just a few, my son, but many and terrifying.

I do not apprehend them, father.

My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity.

In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of.

[8] Henceforward, speak quietly, my son, and keep this secret. For thus may the generosity of theos toward us continue.

Henceforward, my son, be pleased, having refinement through the cræfts of theos to thus comprehend the Logos.

My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Theos. On arrival: Unknowing is banished. My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Delightfulness: on arriving, Grief runs away to those who have the room.

[9] The influence invoked following Delightfulness is Self-Restraint: a most pleasant influence. Let us, my son, readily welcome her: arriving, she immediately pushes Unrestraint aside.

The fourth invoked is Perseverance who is influxious against Lascivity. Which Grade, my son, is the foundation of Ancestral Custom: observe how without any deliberation Unfairness was cast out. My son, we are vindicated since Unfairness has departed.

The sixth influence invoked for us - against Coveter - is community. With that departed, the next invocation: Actualis, and thus - with Actualis presenced - does Deceit run away. Observe, my son, how with Actualis presenced and Envy absent, the noble has been returned. For, following Actualis, there is the noble, together with Life and Phaos.

No more does the retribution of Skotos supervene, for, vanquished, they whirlingly rush away.

[10] Thus, my son, you know the Way of Palingenesis. By the Dekad brought-into-being, geniture of apprehension was produced, banishing those twelve; and by this geniture we are of theos.

Thus whomsoever because of that generosity obtains divine geniture, having gone beyond physical perceptibility, discovers that they consist of such, and are pleased.

[11] With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere.

But speak to me about how the retributions of Skotos - which are twelve in number - are pushed aside by ten influences. What is that Way, Trismegistus?

[12] My son, this body which we have passed beyond is constituted from the circular Zodiac which is composed of beings, twelve in number and of the same physis, yet polymorphous in appearance so as to lead mortals astray. The difference between them, my son, becomes one when they act <...> Temerity united with Wrath, and indistinguishable.

It is probably correct to say that all of them withdraw when pushed away by those ten influences: that is, by the Dekad. For, my son, the Dekad is an effector of psyche, with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the Henad is brought forth from the pneuma. Thus it is reasonable that the Henad contains the Dekad and the Dekad the Henad.

[13] Father, I observe All That Exists, and myself, in the perceivation.

My son, this is the Palingenesis: to no more present the body in three separations, through this disclosure regarding Palingenesis, which I have written about for you alone so as not to be rouners of all these things to the many but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires.

[14] Inform me, father, if this body - constituted of such cræfts - is liable to dissipation.

Speak quietly and do not talk of deficiencies or you shall be in error with the eye of your perceivation disrespectful. The perceptible body of physis is far away from the quidditas of geniture, for one is dissipative, the other is not-dissipative; one is deathful, the other deathless.

Do you not know that you are engendered of theos, as a child of The One, as am I?

[15] Father, my inclination is for the laudation of the song you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad.

Just as, my son, Poemandres divined about the Ogdoad. It is noble of you to hasten to leave that dwelling for you are now refined. Poemandres, the perceivation of authority, did not impart to me anything other than what is written, understanding that I would apprehended the entirety; hearing what I was inclined to, observing the entirety, and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. Thus do all those influences within me chant.

Father, I desire to hear them so that I might apprehend.

[16] Be quiet my son: now hear that most fitting laudation, the song of Palingenesis which I had chosen not to openly divulge except to you at your completion and which is not taught but concealed through silence.

Thus, my son, on your feet in a place open to the air look respectfully to the Southwind as Helios descends, as at the ascending and toward the Eastwind.

Be quiet my son.

Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song

[17] Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;
Trees: do not incurvate;
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,
For All That Exists, and for The One.

Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.
For I shall sing of the maker of everything;
Of who established the Earth,
Of who affixed the Heavens,

Of who decreed that Oceanus should bring forth sweet water
To where was inhabited and where was uninhabited
To so sustain all mortals;
Of who decreed that Fire should bring light
To divinities and mortals for their every use.

Let us all join in fond celebration of who is far beyond the Heavens:
That artisan of every Physis.

May the one who is the eye of perceivation accept this fond celebration
From my Arts.

[18] Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists
As I desire all those Arts within me to blend, together.

Numinous knowledge, from you a numinal understanding:
Through you, a song of apprehended phaos,
Delighted with delightful perceivance.
Join me, all you Arts, in song.

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,
Through me sing of such respect.
Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusity of those my Arts.
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actusities;
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.
Through me, may Kosmos accept
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

[19] Such is what the Arts within me loudly call out. They sing of All That Exists;
they accomplish your desire. From you: deliberations; then to you, from All That
Exists.

Accept from Kosmos - the Kosmos within us - respectful wordful offerings. Life,
recure! Phaos, reveal! Theos, spiritus! For - Breath-Giver, Artisan - it is your
Logos that Perceivation guides.

[20] You are theos. Your mortal loudly calls out: through Fire, through Air,
through Earth, through Water, through Pneuma, through your created beings.

To me, from your Aion, a laudation. And, through your deliberations, I
discovered the repose that I seek. Because of your desire, I perceived.

[21] Father, I also have assigned the laudation you spoke of to my Kosmos.

My son, speak of "in the apprehended."

In the apprehended I am able to do, father. For me, through your song and your laudation, a more numinal perceivance. And yet, there is a desire for me to convey from my own heart a laudation to theos.

My son, do not be incautious.

Father, what I behold in the perceivance, I say. It is to theos, to you - essentiation of engenderment - that I, Thoth, convey wordful offerings. Theos, you the Father; you the Kyrios, you the Perceivance, accept the respectful wordful offerings you desire. For, by your deliberations, all is accomplished.

My son, you convey an agreeable offering to theos, father of all. But you should add "through the Logos."

[22] My thanks to you, father, for your advice regarding the invocation.

My son, I am glad that the actuality has borne good fruit, the unrottable produce. Having learned of this from me, profess silence my son about this wonder, revealing to no one the tradition of the Palingenesis, for otherwise we will be regarded as rouners. Each of us has had a sufficiency of interest: I in speaking, you in listening. Through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father

ooo

Commentary

Title.

Ερμού του τρισμεγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence.

Thoth. As in other tractates I translate Τάτ by Thoth, avoiding the conventional *Tat* which, in English, has a colloquial meaning inappropriate here. As to which 'Thoth' is meant, the consensus is that in this and some other tractates it refers to the son (possibly biologically or more probably metaphorically) of Hermes

Trismegistus who himself was named by the Greeks as Thoth, with the Τάτ of some other tractates being a scribal corruption of the name Thoth.

Esoteric Discourse. λόγος απόκρυφος. While 'esoteric' is an apt translation in regard to απόκρυφος, 'discourse' is not entirely satisfactory in respect of λόγος since it could be here interpreted to mean 'disclosure' or 'explanation'. However, given what follows in section 1 - πυθομένου τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν...παραδιδόναι μοι - 'discourse' seems appropriate.

Palingenesis. Rather than ascribe a particular meaning to παλιγγενεσία - such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' - I have chosen the English word palingenesis (from the Latin palingenesia) with that term explained by what follows in this particular discourse, qv. vv. 12 and 13.

Requirement. The sense of ἐπαγγελία here, given what is discussed in this tractate, is 'requirement' rather than the strident 'command' or what is implied by the rather vague word 'promise'.

1.

Father. The Greek ὦ πάτερ - literally 'my father' - is a polite form of address, akin to the English 'sir'. Similarly, ὦ τέκνον - 'my son' - is a polite reply. Given the esoteric nature of the text, a possible interpretation here of ὦ πάτερ would be 'Master', and of ὦ τέκνον 'my pupil'.

in the Exoterica. Ἐν τοῖς γενικοῖς. Since the term γενικῶν λόγων occurs in tractate X it is reasonable to assume that γενικός here refers to the same thing although the meaning of the term is moot given that no details are provided in this tractate nor in tractate X, nor in Stobaeus (Excerpts, III, 1 and VI, 1) where the terms also occurs. While most translators have assumed that it refers to 'generic' things or 'generalities' and thus (by adding λόγοι) have opted for an expression such as 'General Discourses', and given that a transliteration - such as genikois or genikoi - is awkward, I have in respect of the γενικοὶ opted for exoterica (from the Latin via the Greek τὰ ἐξωτερικά) with the meaning of "exoteric treatises designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples or students," with the plausible suggestion thus being that there are exoteric Hermetic treatises and esoteric Hermetic treatises, with Reitzenstein describing these other treatises as διεξοδικοὶ λόγοι (R.A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres*. Teubner, Leipzig. 1904. p.118) a distinction he also mentioned in his later work *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*.

passing over the mountain. I follow the MSS and read μεταβάσεως rather than the emendation καταβάσεως, taking the sense of μεταβάσεως here as "passing over" - walking on and over - the mountain. There seems no need for the emendation - which implies a descent from the mountain - with its possible suggestion of something more symbolic, more religious or mystical, having

occurred, as for example might be implied in the Gospel of John with the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη in chapter one vv.12-13, with Thomas Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, Caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended."

the discourse on palingenesis. The Greek word translated here as 'discourse' is λόγος, as in the title.

imparted to me. παραδίδωμι carries the sense here of 'handing down' - of transmitting, disclosing - some ancestral teaching or wisdom; a disclosing from master to pupil.

separated from the world. In respect of ἀπαλλοτριώω what is implied is not 'alienated' from (which has too many modern connotations) the world (κόσμος), but rather 'separate' - distanced - from the world, from worldly things, as a mystic is often 'otherworldly' and may seem to be - to others, and to themselves - a stranger in the world.

distancing my ethos. Reading ἀπηλλοτριώωσα (with Parthey, et al) not the emendation of Nock (ἀπηνδρείωσα) with φρόνημα here suggestive of one's character and especially of one's "way of thinking", one's weltanschauung: that is, the 'spirit' or ethos which guides one's way of life.

treachery. ἀπάτης. Personified in Hesiod's Theogony as a child of Night (Νύξ) along with "darksome Kir and Death" - Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον - and Nemesis, Νέμεσις.

rectify my insufficiencies. τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωσον. An alternative, literal, translation would be "supply what is needed."

since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me. Given the somewhat unusual phrasing here - οἷς ἔφησ μοι παλιγγενεσίας παραδοῦναι, which led Nock to add γένεσιν after παλιγγενεσίας - it seems that παλιγγενεσίας is the title given to a particular doctrine or esoteric theory rather than just a term such as 'rebirth'. Hence my capitalization.

what source ... what sown. The metaphysical context - and the reply - suggests that both μήτρας and σπορᾶς are meant metaphorically rather than literally

(womb, seed).

mortal. As in other tractates I translate ἄνθρωπος as 'mortal' rather than as 'man'. Which here - as in other tractates - suits both the Hellenic context, of mortals contrasted with the immortal theos and the immortal theoi, and the metaphysical context of immortality being possibly attainable by select mortals.

2.

noetic sapientia. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term *noetic sapientia* to denote σοφία νοερά.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, qv. *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερά may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin *sapientia* in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in the Poemandres tractate *sapientia* (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερά - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceiviation - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, *noetic sapientia* implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotatum whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, qv. the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken

or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

genuine. In respect of ἀληθινός as 'genuine', cf. Poemandres 30, ἀληθινὴ ὄρασις.

noble. Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility/honour', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22 and my essays *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* and *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

of whom dispersed. To express the meaning of the Greek, to avoid gender bias and because of the following παῖς, I have here used the plural rather than the singular, those avoiding expressions such as "I do not share/he does not share" and "he that is begotten of theos." This also has the advantage of avoiding a misapprehension such as "the begotten one will be different, a god, a son of god."

the desire of theos. In respect of θέλημα here, qv. v.18, συνάσατε τῷ θελήματί μου πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις.

quidditas. οὐσία. As at tractates XI:2 and VI:1, quidditas is a more appropriate translation of οὐσία rather than either 'essence' or 'substance'. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and here as in those tractates should be understood as a philosophical term requiring contextual interpretation. One possible interpretation of quidditas here as at VI:1 is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived via or as - φύσις (physis).

such a perceivation. I have followed the MSS and translated καὶ τῆς νοητῆς, omitted by Nock et al. In respect of νοητῆς, cf. Plutarch on the views of Krantor of Soli regarding psyche: μιγνύντι τὴν ψυχὴν ἔκ τε τῆς νοητῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ δοξαστῆς φύσεως (De Anima Procreatione in Timaeo, 1).

In respect of νοῦς as perceivation/perceivance, qv. my commentary on the Poemandres tractate.

entirely whole. τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί. A literal translation - "the all in all" - does not in its blandness (and the fact that "all in all" is a colloquialism) convey the meaning of the Greek, which considering what follows is suggestive of "entirely whole."

mixture of all abilities. ἐκ πασῶν δυνάμεων συνεστῶς. Mixture - a variant spelling of mixtion, meaning melded, compounded, combined, composed of - is most suitable for συνεστῶς given the metaphysical matters discussed.

a teacher to a pupil. ὃ τέκνον and ὃ πάτερ not here literally referring to how a father should converse with his son but rather to a teacher instructing a pupil,

with the pupil expecting the teacher to explain matters clearly rather than by means of riddles.

emanation. I incline toward the view that γένος (which is literally, 'kind', species, race, folk, breed) is used here as a technical term which - given what follows, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναμνησκέται, and the fact that it is not feasible for one mortal to impart knowledge about it to another mortal - here implies a particular 'emanation' of theos; a knowing of which one has to, as Hermes goes on to describe, experience for it to be properly understood. Such 'emanations of theos' are described in the Poemandres tractate where they are symbolized by a septenary system and the two "immortal" (acausal) realms which await for mortals beyond those seven spheres, with knowledge of these emanations being acquired by the ἄνοδος (anados, the upward journey) from the deathful realms to the realms of the deathless.

The term emanation also has the advantage of connotating the literal meaning of γένος since an 'emanation' is derived from a particular kind, breed, or lineage.

presenced. The term 'presenced' is from the noun 'presencing' (derived from the Latin praesentia) and means "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established."

ἀναμνησκω is a very interesting word to use and one which has a variety of meanings depending on context, and thus does not always impute something to do with either 'mind' or with 'memory' as those English terms are now often understood with their implications of those 'things' having some sort of an existence 'somewhere' - in the case of 'memory' as a faculty of the 'mind' - and/or as quantifiable 'things'.

In the world of ancient heroes and warriors, as evoked by Homer, it is simply a 'mentioning' of something:

ὦ φίλ', ἐπεὶ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνέμνησας καὶ ἔειπες,
φασὶ μνηστῆρας σῆς μητέρος εἶνεκα πολλοὺς
ἐν μεγάροις ἀέκητι σέθεν κακὰ μηχανάσθαι

My friend - since you have, in speaking to me, mentioned this,
There are indeed rumours of many suitors for your mother being in your home
Against your will who are plotting to do you harm.

(Homer, The Odyssey, Book III, 321-323)

In Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles it implies a 'seeing again' of things past:

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σαφῶς
ἀγνώτ' ἀναμνήσω νιν. εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
κάτοιδεν, ἦμος τῷ Κιθαιρῶνος τόπῳ,

ὁ μὲν διπλοῖσι ποιμνίοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐνί,
ἐπλησίαζον τῷδε τάνδρῃ τρεῖς ὅλους
ἕξ ἥρος εἰς ἀρκτοῦρον ἐκμήνους χρόνους

But I shall bring light
Upon those things which are now unknown. For well do I know
That he will see again that region of Cithaeron when he
With a double flock and I with one
Were neighbours and comrades for three entire six month
Durations from Spring to Arcturus.

(1131-1137)

In this tractate, the implication of ἀναμιμνήσκω is of *theos* - literally, given the definite article, τοῦ θεοῦ, *the theos* - presencing in the mortal (and thus gifting them with) the required understanding/knowledge of the emanation, just as *theos* has gifted mortals with sentience, cf. θεοῦ δωρεᾶς in IV:5, ἐλλόγιμος in tractate XI:7 and Asclepius 16, "Prouisum cautumque est, quantum rationabiliter potuisset a summo deo, tunc cum sensu, disciplina, intellegentia mentes hominum est munerare dignatus. Hisce enim rebus, quibus ceteris antestamus animalibus."

3.

unshaped. ἄπλαστον. A privation of πλάσσω, hence 'without invention, pretence, form; not manufactured, unadorned, unfashioned, without shape.' Cf. the irony of Lucian in *De Morte Peregrini* 10, πηλὸς γὰρ ἔτι ἄπλαστος ἦν καὶ οὐδέπω ἐντελὲς ἄγαλμα ἡμῖν δεδημιούργητο, for he was then formless clay with that glorious depiction not yet complete.

What is unshaped (form-less) is the vista - the view - seen, with there being no need, in my view, to impute that Hermes is here speaking of having had a 'vision', mystical, prophetic, or otherwise, given that a 'vision' is not by its nature of what is 'form-less' but of some-thing or some-things perceived and which therefore, being seen, have form or forms, qv. the mention of οὐδὲ τῷ πλαστῷ τούτῳ στοιχείῳ and of εἶδος which follow.

through the generosity of theos. ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ. Literally, "from the generosity of *theos*." Considering the metaphysical context, I incline toward the view that ἐλέος here is neither mercy - qv. Oedipus Tyrannus 672, ἐποικτίρω στόμα ἐλεινόν οὗτος δ' ἔνθ' ἂν ἦ στυγήσεται - nor 'pity' (cf. Oedipus Tyrannus 180, νηλέα δὲ γένεθλα πρὸς πέδῳ θαναταφόρα κεῖται ἀνοίκτως) but rather 'generosity' in the sense of Matthew 12:7, τί ἐστὶν Ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, "I seek generosity and not sacrifice" with such 'generosity' (of deed and spirit) not exactly the same as what the word 'compassion' now implies, given the post-Hellenic and especially the contemporary connotations of the word 'compassion'.

setting forth ... engendered by perceivation. καὶ ἑμαυτὸν ἐξελήλυθα εἰς ἀθάνατον σῶμα, καὶ εἶμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρῖν, ἀλλ' ἐγεννήθη ἐν νῶ. This passage is usually interpreted in a way which suggests that Hermes is describing some kind of ancient 'astral travel' where he goes "out of himself" and thence "into" a deathless body, ἀθάνατον σῶμα (in respect of θάνατος and ἀθάνατος as deathful and deathless, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14 and on vv. 1 and 2 of tractate XI).

However, I take the passage more literally, especially given the phrase εἶμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρῖν, "now I am not the/that before," and the mention of having been produced/engendered/grown by perceivation. That is, Hermes has "seen" - intuitively perceived, had an insight into - what deathlessness means and implies and is not the person he was before, having acquired (or been given, by theos) the gift of understanding that perceivation engenders, for as mentioned in tractate IV:4

βάπτισον σεαυτὴν ἢ δυναμένη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἀνελεύση πρὸς τὸν καταπέμψαντα τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ γνωρίζουσα ἐπὶ τί γέγονας. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν συνῆκαν τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ ἐβάπτισαντο τοῦ νοός, οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τέλειοι ἐγένοντο ἄνθρωποι, τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι

If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.
The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceivation
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceivation

shaped part. A direct contrast with the previous use of πλάσσω in respect of what was seen.

thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. διὸ καὶ ἡμέληται μοι τὸ πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος. What there is no concern for is the causal form (εἶδος) of the mortal body, mixturous and formful as it is (in respect of mixturous, qv. the note on *mixon* in v. 2) and given that such an initial form will, by palingenesis, be changed.

not as if. Reading οὐχ ὅτι with the MSS; literally, "not as though." Cf. John 6:46 οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις.

biochrome ... definity. I take κέχρωσμαι καὶ ἀφῆν ἔχω καὶ μέτρον, ἀλλότριος δὲ τούτων εἶμι metaphorically, not literally, with (i) κέχρωσμαι implying not colour per se but rather biochromy, the natural or the apparent (observed) colouration of living beings, and (ii) μέτρον suggestive not of "measure" but rather of 'definity' in reference to 'indefinity' (from the noun indefinitude) and thus implying, in this context, 'beyond being definable' by ordinary, causal, means

such as 'measure' and 'weight' and 'determinability' and 'definement'.

and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. While various emendations have been suggested for the readings of the MSS here, including δέ εἶμι between ὅ τι δέ and κατανοεῖς, the general meaning seems clear: to directly see or fix or to concentrate one's eyes, one's gaze on (ἀτενίζω) the outward form (εἶδος) which here is the body, the physical appearance, the physicality of the person.

But, as Hermes goes on to explain - οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς τούτοις θεωροῦμαι νῦν - what is so observed by the physical eyes does not provide an understanding - a perception, a seeing - of what he is now as a result of the "unshaped vista" that he, through the generosity of theos, saw of himself "setting forth to a deathless body." In respect of θεωρέω, cf. John 4:19, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ, "the woman said to him: Sir, I deem you are a prophet."

4.

Father, you have stung the heart, plunging me into no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself. Εἰς μανίαν με οὐκ ὀλίγην καὶ οἴστρησιν φρενῶν ἐνέσεισας, ὦ πάτερ· ἐμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ.

My translation is quite different from previous ones - such as Copenhaver's "you have driven me quite mad, father, and you have deranged my heart. Now I do not see myself" - for the following reasons.

i) Does μανία, in the context of this particular tractate, equate to what the English terms 'mania' and 'madness' now denote, as for example - in the case of mania - in 'obsessive need or enthusiasm', 'mood disorder', and - in the case of madness - 'mental illness', psychosis, lack of restraint, uncontrollable fury, uncontrollable mental turmoil, or even in the colloquial sense of 'cool' or quirkily interesting?

It is my considered opinion that it does not, but rather denotes what is suggested by Acts 26:24-25 especially given the use there of μαίνομαι,

Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῆ φωνῆ φησὶν Μαίνῃ, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλὰ σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρέπει. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος Οὐ μαίνομαι, φησὶν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλὰ ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι.

Speaking up for himself, Festus, in a very loud voice, said: "Paul, you are distracted. Your extensive learning has brought you to distraction." But Paul replied: "Noble Festus, I am not beside myself for the words I have spoken are restrained and truthful."

ii) In respect of οἴστροισιν I am rather reminded of the usage of οἴστρομα in Oedipus Tyrannus, 1318,

οἴμοι μάλ' αὖθις: οἶον εἰσέδου μ' ἅμα κέντρων τε τῶνδ' οἴστρομα καὶ μνήμη κακῶν

as do the stings of those goads, and the recalling of those troubles, pierce me

where the transitive senses of *goad* include "to cause annoyance or discomfort; to spur someone on, or 'to sting' or to prod someone to provoke them into responding."

Thus, with φρήν taken as a metaphor for the heart, one has the contextually apposite *stung the heart*, rather than completely out of context phrases such as "mind frenzy" or "mad".

iii) ἐμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ. Not a literal 'cannot see' but rather 'cannot comprehend who or what I - as a being - am,' as a consequence of what Hermes has just said about his own being. Hence, *I cannot now perceive myself*.

go beyond. In respect of διεξελέλυθας, not here implying to "pass through", or "come out" (of yourself) but "go - or pass - beyond" (yourself) as those sleepfully dreaming often in their dreams travel far beyond where they are sleeping.

essentiator. The entity, person, or divinity, who essentiate; that is, who is the genesis of, who is the essence of, and who gives being to - who 'authors' and who fashions - the Palingenesis. Which 16th century English word expresses the meaning here of the Greek term γενεσιουργός. Cf. δημιουργός - 'artisan' - in Poemandres 24.

The Mortal One, child of theos. Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, ἄνθρωπος εἷς, θελήματι θεοῦ. In respect of ἄνθρωπος εἷς, literally, *Essentialist Mortal*. That is, the primatial, or 'archetypal', human being. In respect of Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, cf. v. 2: τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ θεοῦ...ὁ γεννώμενος θεοῦ θεὸς παῖς, with παῖς not restricted to 'son' but implying the child - and hence the children, the youthful - of *the* theos, with the conventional translation here of 'son of god' imposing a particular meaning on the text and thus inviting as it may unwarranted comparisons with aspects of Christian theology.

5.

silenced. In regard to ἀφασία, cf. Euripides, Helen, 548-9,

ὡς δέμας δείξασα σὸν ἔκπληξις ἡμῖν ἀφασία τε προστίθης

I am mortified, silenced, by you imposing such a bodily appearance upon me

in my heart <...> since I perceive. It is possible that Reitzenstein's assumption - in *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927 - of a lacuna here is correct, although it is perhaps more probable to interpret what Thoth has just said - that he perceives the stature and the features of Hermes are still the same - accounts for him "forsaking what was previously in his heart," because he now believes that Hermes was speaking metaphorically in regard to being a stranger to "tactility and definity." Which is why, after the reply from Hermes, Thoth goes on to ask τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν (what, then, is the actuality) and then, after the reply from Hermes, says Μέμηνα ὄντως.

the seasons. As elsewhere, χρόνος is not some abstract 'time' but rather the duration or durations between certain observable events or changes, often measured by such things as the phases of the moon or by the appearance or disappearance of constellations or certain stars in the night sky. Here, it refers to the seasons of Nature and how, over the seasons, mortals - and crops - grow then wither.

6.

What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality? Τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν, ὦ Τρισμέγιστε. In respect of ἀλήθεια I have - as in translations of other Hermetic tractates, such as Poemandres 31 and XI:1 - eschewed the conventional translation of 'truth' (with its implication of some abstract, impersonal, and disputable, meaning) in favour of a contextual interpretation, mindful as I am of John 18:38 - τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια, Quid est veritas? - which well expresses a Greco-Roman sentiment.

The English term is derived from the classical Latin *actualis* and, in this context, refers to what is real, what has actual being or is a demonstrable fact.

the un-complexioned...the unmaterial. There are two ways of construing what follows. As an impersonal list of philosophical attributes - such as formless, colourless - or metaphorically as personal qualities associated with or relevant to the quest for palingenesis, and while most translators have chosen the first option I incline toward the view that, given the personal context - of what Hermes has said, "directly see my physicality," and about how "the form of the deathful alters every day" - they signify personal qualities. These personal qualities, such as τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον and τὸ ἀσώματον are echoed in the *De Imaginibus Oratio* of Iohannes Damascenus (written c. 730 CE) when he enumerates the qualities of God.

Here, and for example,

i) *the un-complexioned.* τὸ ἀχρώματον, γν. ἄχρως, the opposite of εὐχρως, cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VIII, 1.41 ὡς εὐχρωώτεροι ὀρώντο ἢ πεφύκασιν. An alternative to 'un-complexioned' would be 'hueless'.

ii) *the figureless*. τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον. That is, of no particular physique. Qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 94). Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book VIII, 3.59, sunt inornata et haec: quod male dispositum est, id ἀνοικονόμητον, quod male figuratum, id ἀσχημάτιστον quod male collocatum.

iii) *the unadorned*. τὸ γυμνόν. Not literally 'naked' or unclothed, but a metaphor for 'unadorned'.

iv) *the revealed*. τὸ φαῖνον. While the literal sense here is problematic - cf. Herodotus, II, 71.1, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, and Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1229, τὰ δ' αὐτίκ' εἰς τὸ φῶς φανεῖ, "soon to be exposed to the light" - what seems to be suggested metaphorically is 'the visible', 'the (already) revealed', and thus someone who is conspicuously (luminously) open and honest and has nothing to hide that might, to their detriment, be exposed. Cf. τὸν ἐπιτάξαντα πῦρ φανῆναι in v. 17 and the quotation there from Plato, *Timaeus*, 39b.

v) *the self-perceiving*. τὸ αὐτῷ καταληπτόν. That is, the self-apprehended, the self-aware, person.

vi) *the unwaveringly noble*. τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον ἀγαθόν. Qv. τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθόν, ὕμνει in v. 18.

vii) *the unmaterial*. τὸ ἀσώματον. The personal sense is well-expressed in a 14th century translation of 'De Proprietatibus Rerum' in which the qualities of an angel are explained: "inasmuch as he is farre from the bondage of earthly matter, insomuch he is the more perfect in contemplation of spirituall and unmateriall thinges." (Book I, ii. ii. 60). In respect of the term as applied to God, qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. Cf. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, V, 15, 1-4,

Vetus atque perpetua quaestio inter nobilissimos philosophorum agitata est, corpusne sit vox an incorporeum. Hoc enim vocabulum quidam finxerunt proinde quod Graece dicitur ἀσώματον. Corpus autem est quod aut efficient est aut patiens; id Graece definitur τὸ ἦτοι ποιοῦν ἢ πάσχον. Quam definitionem significare volens, Lucretius poeta ita scripsit: Tangere enim aut tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

I am completely confused. Μέμηνα ὄντως. Just as in v. 4, the context does not support Thoth saying - even rhetorically - something such as "I have gone mad" or "I am really deranged" considering what the English words "mad" and "deranged" now impute. The sense here - given what follows, ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος - is rather of being completely confused, befuddled, and thus lost because of what Hermes has just said. Cf. John 10:20, Δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε - "why listen to him? He bears a

daemon and is not himself" - with its suggestion that not only is the person completely confused but also that it is not him who is speaking (or, more probably, not he who is ranting) but the daemon he carries around and thus is "possessed" by.

the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed. ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος. Although the Greek is somewhat obscure, the general sense is that his perception - his understanding - of what he thought Hermes was explaining is now gone, having been obstructed, lost, because of his confusion.

and flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. The meaning here of ὑγρός and σύμπνοος are uncertain, with the context, the mention of elemental Fire, Earth, Water, and Air, perhaps indicative of them being technical (esoteric) hermetic terms rather than having their normal (exoteric) meaning of 'moist/wet' and 'breathing together' respectively.

i) In regard to ὑγρός, γν. Poemandres 4, where the context - ἀφάτως τεταραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδιδοῦσαν - implies flowing, Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποίουν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὄρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

ii) In regard to σύμπνοος, γν. Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης attributed to Plutarch - τὸ φύσει διοικεῖσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον σύμπνοον καὶ συμπαθῆ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ ὄντα (574e) - literally meaning that the Kosmos is συμπαθῆ with itself and mutually breathing (σύμπνοος), with the implication that it is a wholistic living being. Hence, here - given such a conjectured esoteric meaning as "breathfully connected" - a suitable interpretation of καὶ σύμπνοον ὡς ἀήρ would be *and is as breathfully connected as Air*, with 'breath' indicative of πνεῦμα as described in Poemandres 5 and XII:18.

However, a better alternative might be to provide a suitable technical term, open to interpretation, to express whatever esoteric meaning of σύμπνοος is conjectured, with my suggestion being neumæos, from the medieval Latin neumæ using the suffix -os derived from the Greek -ός, with one possible interpretation therefore being 'something' possibly pertaining to πνεῦμα', giving thus the translation *and is neumæos, as is Air*.

insubstantial. τὸ μὴ σκληρόν does not imply the literal what "is not hard" but rather the metaphorical what is 'insubstantial', whose form is thus not solid, not firm, but non-substantial and which therefore cannot be correctly known through touch and sight.

unmixturous. The meaning of ἀσφίγγωτος is unclear since it occurs only here, with suggestions ranging from 'not fastened', 'not bound', 'not tight', and 'loose'. However, I am inclined to accept Scott's emendation of ἀσύνητον - γν. τὸ

πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος (the initial mixturous/composed form) in v. 3 - giving thus unmixturous, not composite.

undissolved. Reading διαλυόμενον with Parthey et al.

actusivity. ἐνέργεια. Qv. tractate XII:21. The English term actusivity derives from the classical Latin actuosus and expresses the Greek here better than the word 'energy' given the modern connotations of that word. The meaning is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons or mortals.

that bringing-into-being within theos. τὴν ἐν θεῷ γένεσιν. Cf. Poemandres 26, ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Both imply a "uniting with theos" to thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both deathless and 'of theos'.

7.

Refine yourself. As often in other hermetic tractates - qv. Poemandres 10, 22, and VI:3 - καθαρός signifies not just the literal 'physically clean' but being 'refined' in terms of appearance, behaviour, manners, cleanliness, speech, learning, and thought.

brutish. Given the metaphysical context, and the contrast with καθαρός, ἄλογος implies more than 'irrational' or 'unreasonable'. The sense is of the unrefined, the uncultured, the brutish.

alastoras. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὧ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish alastoras of Materies," using the English term alastoras - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

materies. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, και τα λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

unknowing. In respect of ἀγνοέω here, 'unknowing' is a more suitable English word than 'ignorance', given its meaning, usage (past - as in the *Cloud of*

Unknowing - and present) and given the context. Cf. Poemandres 27, ἀγνωσία τοῦ θεοῦ, and Poemandres 32, ἐν ἀγνοίαι τοῦ γένους.

Vengerisse. A personification here in respect of one of the alastoras, rather than impersonally assumptive words such as 'torment/punishment' which in my opinion do not fully express the ethos of the Greek. *Vengerisse* is an alternative spelling of *Vengeress*: a woman who exacts vengeance, who does deeds of retribution; from the Latin *vindicare* via the Anglo-Norman *venger* whence the word *vengeance*. The spelling *vengerisse* occurs in Chaucer's 1374 translation of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

The personifications which follow - ἄγνοια, ἀκρασία, κ.τ.λ. - designate (i) the particular deed or deeds that the alastor in question has arrived to avenge, and/or (ii) the character trait or traits which has or have drawn that particular alastor to a person in order to torment them and exact vengeance, retribution.

In the case of ἄγνοια, the suggestion therefore seems to be that this is wilful unknowing, born out of arrogance.

Unrestraint. ἀκρασία. In relation to a person, the Greek means 'lack of control' and thus implies someone who cannot restrain themselves and thus who is self-indulgent; and it is somewhat unfortunate that some translators have opted here to use the word 'incontinence' given what that English word imputes in medical terms.

Unfairness. In respect of δίκη as fairness, and personified as a goddess, cf. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, 213-218,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὑβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθῶν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Putridity. The Greco-Roman sense of κακία is personal, not abstract, imputing rottenness: a rotten, putrid, bad physis (character, nature, disposition). This bad physis is revealed by personal deeds, such as cowardice, malice, corruption, depravity, and hubris.

inner mortal. ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρω. In respect of ἐνδιάθετος, an alternative to 'inner' would be 'enclosed', with the Greek word occurring in relation to Stoic philosophy where a distinction was sometimes made (qv. Theophilus of Antioch) between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (the inner or 'esoteric' logos) and λόγος προφορικός (the outer or 'exoteric' logos).

incarcerated. The Greek word used, δεσμωτήριον, is interesting as it does not imply a 'prison' as the word prison is mostly conceived of today, a large building in which people are confined together. Composed as the Greek is from δεσμός (bonds, shackles) and τηρέω (watch, guard) it signifies a place where a person is guarded and shackled, as for example in medieval dungeons. Occurring as the word does in conjunction with σῶμα (body) and ἀναγκάζω (compel, using force including torture) the suggestion seems to be of the alastoras tormenting or torturing a person while that person is confined, incarcerated, within their mortal body. Cf. John 3:24, βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν, which implies a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into a guarded cage, not "cast into prison."

generous. Qv. the comment on ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ in v. 3.

which is what the way and logos of Palingenesis consists of. καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος. Literally, "and thus consists the way and logos of the Palingenesis." Since the meaning of λόγος here is a matter of conjecture, I have transliterated it, although I incline toward the view that here it is used as a metaphysical term as in the Poemandres, as for example in v. 9, λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, "whose logos brought forth another perceiviation," and as in Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium:

μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῆ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine theos from genuine theos, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

8.

Speak quietly...and keep this secret. σιωπήσον...καὶ εὐφήμησον. Not a literal 'keep silent and do not say anything' since it is a formulaic phrase, with εὐφημέω suggestive of 'speak softly/quietly' due to either religions reverence (cf. VIII:5, XIII:8, κ.τ.λ.) or personal politeness/deference, and with σιωπάω suggestive of 'keep secret'.

Henceforward be pleased. The English word 'rejoice' - in respect of χαίρω - is

unsuitable here given the preceding εὐφημέω, and the association of the word with Christian worship past and present where it implies 'exult' and show/feel 'great joy'.

having refinement through the Cræfts of theos. ἀνακαθαίρομενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν. Regarding καθαρός as implying 'refinement', qv. the comment on v. 7.

Cræft - the older spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of craft - is, when so spelled, appropriate in reference to the use of δύναμις in this tractate, implying as it does, in an exoteric context, what the terms strength/power/force denote, while implying in an esoteric context (as often in this tractate) a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned in the traditional manner from a master or from a mistress of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte, that can be taught and learned. A Cræft is thus - for an individual - an ability, a capability, while it can also be, in respect of others, influential.

Thus, in this and other tractates the context can suggest alternatives such as 'influence' - qv. v. 9 in respect of the Alastoras, and tractate III:3 - or 'capability', qv. XI:3 and XII:20.

The word cræft also has the advantage of implying the plural, such as in the expression "the Cræft of theos."

comprehend. Considering the preceding σιώπησον the sense of ἀρθρώ here is not the literal 'articulate' the logos (by means of words spoken) but rather to be able to articulate it interiorly, clearly, and thus comprehend it for oneself.

arrivance. In respect of the unusual - but metaphysically appropriate - English word 'arrivance', cf. Luke 19:10, ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός, "the arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost."

knowledge. γνῶσις. Cf. Poemandres 26, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γνῶσιν ἐσχηκόσι, and also γνῶσις ἀγία in v. 18 here, where the Greek might usefully be transliterated as gnosis.

knowledge of Delightfulness. Cf. v. 18: διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν φῶς ὑμῶν χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ, through you, a song of apprehended phaos, delighted with delightful perceivance.

9.

influxious. Derived from 'influxion' - one of which meanings is 'influence' - and denoting a powerful influence, as in the 17th century book *England's Teares For*

The Present Warres by James Howell, "the Moon hath an influxious power."

Grade. βαθμὸς. It is possible that this is a technical - esoteric - term which could also be translated as 'degree' indicative as the term seems to be of some mystical progression by a supplicant or initiate. However, the tractate does not provide any evidence as to what such a progression was from and to, or what the other grades might have been.

Ancestral Custom. δικαιοσύνη. The meaning is not 'righteousness', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty toward both the gods and other mortals. This Hellenic - this personal - meaning derives from understanding δίκη personified as the goddess of both Fairness *and of* Tradition (Ancestral Custom) with 'fairness' a more apt description of the word δίκη, given that terms such as justice and judgement have acquired, over millennia, abstract (and often legalistic) meanings which are not relevant to either the culture of ancient Hellas or to the Hellenic milieu of the Corpus Hermeticum. The Tradition, the ancestral custom, of ancient Hellas - with the attendant mythology and legends - was recounted by Hesiod in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι (Works and Days) and in Θεογονία (Theogony).

Qv. δικαιοσύνη μου, τὸ δίκαιον ὕμνει δι' ἑμοῦ in v. 18.

vindicated. In respect of ἐδικαιώθημεν (qv. δικαιοῶ) what is not implied is 'made righteous' or 'made pure' - which are meanings derived from Christian exegesis, cf. ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, Revelation 22:11 - but rather 'vindicated', justified, and in this case because Unfairness was *in absentia*, having fled with there thus being no need for any further deliberations.

community. κοινωνέω imputes the sense of 'sharing in common or in partnership', that is, a community of shared interests, which is the opposite of individual covetousness.

With that departed. Referring to the departure of Coveter, the personification here of covetousness.

Actualis. A borrowing from the Latin root to personify 'actuality', qv. the comment in v. 6 on τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστὶν ὡς Τρισμέγιστε.

the noble has been returned. However τὸ ἀγαθὸν is interpreted - whether as the conventional 'the good', or as I interpret depending on context, 'the noble', 'the highest nobility', 'the honourable' - the literal meaning of πεπλήρωται here - denoting "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is completed", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν has been fulfilled", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is full" - is somewhat obscure, especially if one compares it to an apposite context such as John 3:29,

ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην νυμφίος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου, ὁ ἐστηκώς

καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ, χαρᾷ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὕτη οὖν ἢ χαρὰ ἢ ἐμὴ πεπλήρωται

He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

In tractate IV:4, πληρώω is also apposite,

Καὶ ποῦ αὐτὸν ἰδρύσατο.

Κρατῆρα μέγαν πληρώσας τούτου κατέπεμψε δοῦς κήρυκα καὶ ἐκέλευσεν αὐτῶι κηρύξαι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίαις τάδε...

Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down with an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals...

Thus, I am inclined to consider that here the usage is metaphorical, suggestive of τὸ ἀγαθὸν having been completed (i) as in restored, returned to the person before the intervention of "the brutish Alastoras of Materies", who undermined, replaced, or who sought to replace τὸ ἀγαθὸν with such things as Grief, Unrestraint, Lascivity, and Putridity; or (ii) as in, as a gift from theos, completing - refining - the mortal by removing what was detrimental to τὸ ἀγαθὸν and thus to Palingenesis, with this completing - refining - returning them to the necessary state of being, as does the ἄνοδος described in the Poemandres tractate.

phaos. φάος. As with φῶς - γν. Poemandres, κ.τ.λ. - a transliteration since I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what *phaos* may, or may not, mean, suggest or imply, especially as φάος metaphorically (γν. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen. In addition, as noted in Poemandres 21 and perhaps relevant here,

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος

phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being

skotos. σκότος. Given the following τιμωρία and what has preceded, I have personified σκότος here (as Hesiod personified Darkness as Erebus) since it is implausible for 'darkness', understood as absence of light, to punish or seek vengeance.

they whirlingly rushed away. I incline toward the view that in respect of ἐκπέτομαι what is meant is not a literal 'flying away' but a metaphor for 'rushing away' or hastily fleeing. Similarly in respect of ροίζω which suggests a whirling about in confusion as they flee; cf. Poemandres 11, διυῶν ροίζω, spinning them around.

Thus concludes what is apparently the initiation into the secret mystery of Palingenesis which began in v. 6 with "thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does..."

10.

the Dekad brought-into-being. τῆς δεκάδος παραγυνομένης. Given that δεκάς is a metaphysical term of the Way of Palingenesis as that Way is explained in this tractate, I have used the transliteration Dekad rather than 'decad'.

geniture of apprehension. νοερά γενεσις. Literally, a birthing of apprehension, of the ability to apprehend beyond what the alastoras signify in respect of our mortal nature. As in tractates VI and XI, geniture expresses the contextual meaning of γενεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Here, this 'something else' is the Dekad which produces this particular birthing. In respect of geniture, XI:2 may provide some metaphysical context:

Ἄκουε, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ πᾶν. θεός, ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ χρόνος, ἡ γενεσις. ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γενεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡσπερ οὐσία ἐστὶ [τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία,] ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἡ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἡ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ θάνατος

Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

banishing those twelve. The aforementioned alastoras, such as Grief and Lascivity.

by this geniture we are of theos. ἐθεώθημεν τῇ γενέσει. Cf. θεωθῆναι in Poemandres 26. As there, this does not mean or imply mortals become 'divinized' or 'deified' - "made into gods" - but rather it means θέωσις in the Hellenic, hermetic, sense of being mystically (re)united with theos but still being mortal, human, because there is and cannot be any partaking of, any participation in, the essence, the quidditas - οὐσία - of theos, a sense well

expressed centuries later by Maximus of Constantinople:

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. Quæstiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra,
XXII [Migne, Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all
ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence

That is, Palingenesis means that mortals become *of* theos, not that they become
theos or theoi. This may well explain the reading of the MSS, ἐθεωρήθημεν,
amended by Nock (after Reitzenstein) to ἐθεώθημεν. For it is possible that the
hermetic θέωσις implied, in practice, a contemplative type of life; a style of life
hinted at in v. 2 - "noetic sapientia is in silence" - and in v. 7 when Hermes says
to Thoth, "Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical
perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being." Cf. Ἀκλινης
γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 11.

that generosity. The definite article - *the* generosity - points to the meaning: not
ἔλεος per se but rather the generosity of theos who gifts this geniture.

they consist of such. The MSS have συνιστάμενος - Nock, συνιστάμενον - and
although some emendations have been proposed, including the addition of
νοητῶν (ἐκ νοητῶν) and Reitzenstein suggesting a lacuna between γνωρίζει
and ἐκ τούτων, what is referred to seems obvious: they consist of, are composed
from, such things that are of - are derived from - theos.

11.

quietude engendered by theos. Ἀκλινης γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. With ἀκλινης
understood metaphorically, cf. σοφία νοερά ἐν σιγῇ in v. 2.

the seeing is not of... In respect of φαντάζομαι, cf. XI:18, κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν
ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι.

through the noetic actus of the cræft. τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῆ ἐνεργείᾳ. In
respect of 'cræft', cf. ἀνακαθαίρομενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν in v. 8. In
regard to noetic, qv. the comment on σοφία νοερά in v. 2. In respect of actus, qv.
the comment on ἐνέργεια in v. 6.

The metaphysical content of this statement, important both in respect of what
immediately follows - which bears comparison with XI:18-19 (see below) - and in
respect of understanding Palingenesis, has been somewhat lost in previous
translations such as "with the mental energy that comes through the powers"
and "with the energy the Mind gives me through the powers."

What is meant is that there is a specific type of apprehension which is vivifying, which does not depend on what is seen directly by the eyes, and which is a *cræft*, a capability, an ability, an influencing, arising from the generosity of theos and from that quietude engendered by theos. Thoth then goes on to describe what this apprehension involves: ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῆ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...

I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water... Everywhere. ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῆ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...πανταχοῦ. Regarding this, and the aforementioned type of apprehension, cf. tractate XI:18-19,

ἔνια δὲ τῶν λεγομένων ἰδίαν ἔννοιαν ἔχειν ὀφείλει· οἶον δὲ λέγω νόησον. πάντα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ θεῷ. οὐχ ὡς ἐν τόπῳ κείμενα (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τόπος καὶ σῶμά ἐστι, καὶ σῶμα ἀκίνητον, καὶ τὰ κείμενα κίνησιν οὐκ ἔχει)· κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἀσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι. νόησον τὸν περιέχοντα τὰ πάντα καὶ νόησον ὅτι τοῦ ἀσωμάτου οὐδὲν ἐστὶ περιοριστικόν, οὐδὲ ταχύτερον, οὐδὲ δυνατώτερον· αὐτὸ δὲ πάντων καὶ ἀπεριόριστον καὶ ταχύτατον καὶ δυνατώτατον.

καὶ οὕτω νόησον ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ, καὶ κέλευσόν σου τῇ ψυχῇ εἰς Ἰνδικὴν πορευθῆναι, καὶ ταχύτερόν σου τῆς κελεύσεως ἐκεῖ ἔσται. μετελθεῖν δὲ αὐτῇ κέλευσον ἐπὶ τὸν ὠκεανόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκεῖ πάλιν ταχέως ἔσται, οὐχ ὡς μεταβάσα ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκεῖ οὔσα. κέλευσον δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπτῆναι, καὶ οὐδὲ πτερῶν δεηθήσεται. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτῇ οὐδὲν ἐμπόδιον, οὐ τοῦ ἡλίου πῦρ, οὐχ ὁ αἰθήρ, οὐχ ἡ δίνη, οὐχὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων σώματα· πάντα δὲ διατεμοῦσα ἀναπτῆσεται μέχρι τοῦ ἐσχάτου σώματος. εἰ δὲ βουληθεῖς καὶ αὐτὸ ὅλον διαρρήξασθαι καὶ τὰ ἐκτός εἶ γέ τι ἐκτὸς τοῦ κόσμου θεάσασθαι, ἔξεστί σοι.

Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is

beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered system - then it is possible for you.

What is that Way? As in vv. 7 and 10, an alternative here for τρόπος would be Art.

12.

dwelling. σκῆνος. The Greek word has been variously interpreted, as 'shelter', 'tent', and, in the New Testament, has been understood metaphorically to mean 'tabernacle' in reference to the body (2 Corinthians 5.1, 5.4). Here, what seems to be suggested, as Hermes later explains, is the deathful body as a temporary dwelling place for what is deathless.

passed beyond. διεξέρχομαι. Passed beyond as in the previous "I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water..." and as in the "go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream" of v. 4.

zodiac. ζωοφόρος. Literally, τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου implies "the life-bearing circle", referring to the personifications of the zodiacal constellations with the heavens understood as an abode of various divinities, cf. *Hymn to King Helios Dedicated to Sallust*, Πολὺ δὲ πρὸς οἷς ἔφη πλῆθος ἔστι περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν θεῶν, οὓς κατενόησαν οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν μὴ παρέργως μηδὲ ὥσπερ τὰ βοσκήματα θεωροῦντες. τοὺς τρεῖς γὰρ τετραχῆ τέμνων διὰ τῆς τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου πρὸς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν κοινωνίας τοῦτον αὐθις τὸν ζωοφόρον εἰς δώδεκα θεῶν δυνάμεις διαιρεῖ καὶ μέντοι τούτων ἕκαστον εἰς τρεῖς, ὥστε ποιεῖν ἕξ ἐπὶ τοῖς τριάκοντα. (IV, 148c).

Cf. *De Mundo*, ὧν μέσος ὁ ζωιοφόρος καλούμενος κύκλος ἐγκάρσιος διὰ τῶν τροπικῶν διέζωσται. (Bekker, Aristoteles Opera Omnia, I, 392a)

composed of beings, twelve in number. Omitting the redundant ἀριθμῶν.

same physis. φύσεως μιᾶς. As in other tractates I have transliterated φύσις since in the Hermetica physis is a metaphysical principle or attribute whose meaning goes beyond, but can include, what the English terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote, as the Poemandres tractate makes clear and where physis is, several times, personified, as for example in v. 14,

ἅμα δὲ τῆι βουλήι ἐγένετο ἐνέργεια καὶ ὤικησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν ἢ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos,
Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers,

they were intimately joined together.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. Cf. XI:16, ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ κόσμος παντόμορφος γέγονεν.

difference. διαζυγή. Literally, division, separation, cf. Euripides, Troades, 669 - ἄλλ' οὐδὲ πῶλος ἤτις ἂν διαζυγῆ τῆς συντραφείσης - and διάζευξις (disunion).

effector of psyche. ψυχογόνος. The 16th century English word *effector* (from the Latin word used by Cicero) is someone or some-thing who or which engenders or produces some-thing. As in other tractates, I have transliterated ψυχή as 'psyche' so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being, or a personification - is a question of contextual interpretation. However interpreted, it is an important, a primal, principle in this and other hermetic tractates, and might imply here the original, ancient Greek, sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' (or being) which (or who) animates beings making them 'alive'.

with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the henad is brought forth from the pneuma. ζῶη δὲ καὶ φῶς ἠνωμέναι εἰσὶν ἕνθα ὁ τῆς ἐνάδος ἀριθμὸς πέφυκε τοῦ πνεύματος. Since this expression is important to understanding the metaphysics described in the tractate it deserves some attention.

i) In respect of Life and Phaos, qv. v. 9.

ii) I have transliterated ἀριθμός here since the context suggests it implies more than the English word 'number' understood as a particular abstraction representing the quantity of 'things'; qv. Aristotle, ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἕνα εἶναι, ἕνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶνα (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20). Given such a distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq, and given the occurrence of ἀριθμός with μονάς in tractate IV,

μονὰς οὐσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἑτέρου ἀριθμοῦ...

Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any..

ἀριθμός is suggestive of a metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) principle or attribute - such as being an effluvium, or an emanation, of theos/monas/The One - whose outward (esoteric) appearance or representation is often assumed to be a particular 'numerical' quantity. As to whether or not what is suggested in the tractate regarding ἀριθμός is indicative of the metaphysics of Pythagoras, or represents a similar but different mystical

tradition, is an interesting question.

In terms of mystical tradition, there is a subtle difference between effluvia and emanations, with emanation often understood in the sense of some-thing proceeding from, or having, a source; as for example in theological use where the source is considered to be theos or some aspect of a divinity or God. Effluvium, however, has (so far as I am aware) no theological connotations and accurately describes a particular perceivization: a flowing of what-is, sans the assumption of a primal cause, and sans a division or a distinction between 'us' - we mortals - and some-thing else, be this some-thing else theos, God, a divinity, the numinous, or some assumed, ideated, cause, essence, origin, or form. Effluvia presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest in sentient beings such as ourselves, via for example a Way such as Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous.

iii) I have translated ἐνάς as 'henad' - avoiding the prosaic translation 'unit' - given the metaphysical context, the aforementioned comparison with IV:10, the equivalence of ἐνάς and μονάς, and also the following, from tractate XII:15,

ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις συνθέτοις πᾶσι σώμασιν ἀριθμὸς ἐκάστου ἐστί.
χωρὶς γὰρ ἀριθμοῦ σύστασιν ἢ σύνθεσιν ἢ διάλυσιν ἀδύνατον
γενέσθαι· αἱ δὲ ἐνάδες τὸν ἀριθμὸν γεννώσι καὶ αὐξοῦσι καὶ πάλιν
διαλυόμενον εἰς ἑαυτὰς δέχονται, καὶ ἡ ὕλη μία.

Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

iv) As in other tractates, I have transliterated πνεῦμα (as pneuma) since, as with ψυχή - κ.τ.λ. - it is suggestive here of a particular metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) attribute, requiring contextual interpretation consistent with what is currently understood of Greco-Roman mysticism and metaphysics. The usual translation of 'spirit' can impose Christian, modern philosophical and other contemporary, meanings on the text.

13.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe, the Kosmos. Qv. the Cantio Arcana (Esoteric Song) of vv. 17-18, and also XII:22-23 where the term is synonymous with theos.

τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ θεός, τὸ πᾶν. ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ οὐδὲν ἐστιν ὃ μὴ ἔστιν ὁ θεός· ὅθεν οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος περὶ τὸν θεόν ἐστί· πᾶν γὰρ ἐστί, τὸ δὲ πᾶν διὰ πάντων καὶ περὶ πάντα.

this is theos, All That Exists. For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not.

Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything

When the context merits it, and to avoid awkward phraseology, I have sometimes translated τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, as at vv. 18 and 19.

the perceivation. τῷ νοί. Which perceivation was mentioned in v. 11: "the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actuality of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air..."

In effect, this perceivation is of theos, and thus (i) of perceiving that 'all that exists' - including ourselves - are emanations of theos, or (ii) of perceiving that 'all that exists', including ourselves, are effluvia and thus presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest, via for example the Way of Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous, with theos thus understood as the artisan who crafted ourselves and every-thing else:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός, οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ, ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῆι δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα (Tractate IV:1)

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

Which metaphysical understanding is not only rather lost in conventional translations of ἐμαυτὸν ἐν τῷ νοί such as "I see myself in Mind," but which also introduce an abstraction, an ἰδέα, 'the mind', which detracts from an appreciation of emanations of theos and effluvia of the numinous.

No more to present the body in three separations. τὸ μηκέτι φαντάζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῆ διαστατόν. Or, less literally, "no more to present the body in three separate ways." And 'no more' because the perceivation is of 'all that exists' as either emanations of theos (the One) or presencings of the divine, the monadic numinous.

i) *to present.* That is, to present - to show - in a particular manner. In respect of φαντάζεσθαι, cf. Aeschylus, Agamemnon,

μηδ' ἐπιλεχθῆς
Ἀγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.
φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ 1500
τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ
Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος
τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν

τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.

But do not add to those words that it was me who was the mistress of Agamemnon
Since the wife of this corpse presents herself here
As that most ancient fierce Avenger.
It is Atreus, he of that cruel feast,
Who, in payment for that, has added to his young victims
This adult one.

ii) *separations*. As noted in my commentary on tractate IV:1, what is not meant by διαστατός is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise. What is expressed in IV:1 may also be relevant here:

τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὄρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ πῦρ ἐστιν οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε ἀήρ οὔτε πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma even though all such things are from that Being.

Thus, to translate τὸ μηκέτι φαντά ζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῆ διαστατόν as something like "no longer to picture the three-dimensional body" is to introduce two fairly recent, and unnecessary, abstractions: that of to picture/visualize - as if in some-thing denoted by the term 'mind' - and that of 'three-dimensions'. Whereas what the Greek expresses is relatively simple and suitable to the milieu of Greco-Roman mysticism: of not seeing, of not representing, the body in three particular ways. What these three separate ways are is open to interpretation, but the context suggests in terms of physicality, of psyche, and of pneuma.

through this disclosure. Although 'disclosure' seems apposite, λόγος could be translated here - as in the title - as 'discourse'.

Between τὸ τριχῆ διαστατόν and διὰ τὸν λόγον, Nock et al indicate a lacuna, although it is possible to make some sense of what is here rather obscure Greek. [An overview of some of the problems here - in the context of the meaning of the following διάβολος - is given by Anna Van den Kerchove, *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques*, Brill (Leiden), 2012, pp.100-4]

written about for you alone. Reading ὄν εἰς σὲ μόνον ὑπεμνηματισάμην with Reitzenstein et al, and taking ὑπεμνηματισάμην to refer to 'writing about' Palingenesis.

rouner. διάβολος. In regard to the Old English word *rouner* - denoting a person who whispers secrets or who spreads rumours in a secretive, disruptive,

manner - qv. the Prologue of the 14th century *Cloud Of Unknowing*,

Fleschely janglers, opyn preisers and blamers of hemself or of any other, tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales

Also, cf. 2 Timothy 3:3, ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀκρατεῖς (unloving, unforgiving, rouners, unrestrained) where mention is made of ἀκρατής, which in this tractate is personified as one of the Alastoras.

I take the following τοῦ παντὸς as referring to keeping the silence - the secrets - as mentioned in v. 22, rather than as referring to the preceding τὸ πᾶν.

the many. τοὺς πολλούς. It is possible to take this pejoratively and thus as referring to 'plebal outsiders', to 'the masses', the plebeians.

but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires. Reading ἀλλ' εἰς οὓς ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς θέλει with Reitzenstein. The text is obscure to the point of being corrupt, with various emendations having been proposed, and thus my translation is somewhat conjectural.

14.

Speak quietly. Qv. v. 8

constituted of such cræfts. Such cræfts as Palingenesis, and thus such abilities as a cræft confers.

disrespected. ἀσεβεῖσθαι. Qv. Lysias, Funeral Oration, 2.7,

Ἀθηναῖοι ἡγησάμενοι ἐκείνους μὲν εἶ τι ἡδίκουν, ἀποθανόντας δίκην ἔχειν τὴν μεγίστην τοὺς δὲ κάτω τὰ αὐτῶν οὐ κομίζεσθαι ἱερῶν δὲ μαινομένων τοὺς ἄνω θεοὺς ἀσεβεῖσθαι

the Athenians considered that if those ones had done harm then their death was the greater punishment, with those in the realms below not being attended to, and - with their consecrated places defiled - the gods above were being disrespected

Also, cf. Poemandres 23,

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἶμι

I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic

the quiddity of geniture. τῆς οὐσιωδοῦς γενέσεως. A metaphysical expression

which, in context, signifies that the essentiality, the realness, of the particular bringing-into-being that is Palingenesis - with its perception of effluvia (or of emanations of theos) and of the mortal being 'all that exists' - is far removed from the physis that ordinary perception associates with the physical body.

engendered of theos. θεὸς πέφυκας. That is, reborn through Palingenesis because of theos. The following καὶ τοῦ ἐνδὸς παῖς provides the necessary context. In respect of Palingenesis signifying becoming *of* theos (as a child is *of* the parent) and not becoming theos or theoi, cf. the comment on v. 6, "by this geniture we are of theos." Cf. φύσει μὲν πέφυκας θεός (Josephus Hymnographicus, *Feast of Saint Basilissa*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 105, 1120) and δόξης γέμων θεός πέφυκας (Joannes Geometra, *Carmina Varia*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 106, 997)

15.

song. ὕμνος. Not a 'hymn' in the Christian sense (which the word hymn now so often imputes) but rather celebrating the numinous, and theos, in song, verse (ode), and chant.

you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad. The Ogdoad - ὄγδοος, the eighth - relates to Poemandres 26, τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν, the ogdoadic physis which is beyond the seven spheres, the reaching of which is celebrated in song, ὕμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὐσι τὸν πατέρα, which signifies the end of the mortal anados (ἄνοδος) and where the mortal hears 'the influences' - those of The Cræft - who or which are beyond the ogdoad celebrating theos in melodious song, τιμῶν δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν φωνῆι τιμὴ ἡδεῖαι ὕμνουσῶν τὸν θεόν.

There are several ways of interpreting the text here and what follows. If one accepts the emendation σου (Nock, after Reitzenstein) then Thoth is asking to hear the song Hermes heard when he reached the Ogdoad, while if one reads, with the MSS, μου, then Thoth is asking for the song Hermes said Thoth would hear when Thoth himself reaches the Ogdoad. In addition, τῶν δυνάμεων in association with either σου ἀκοῦσαι or μου ἀκοῦσαι is awkward, implying "heard from The Cræft" - or, in exoteric terms, "from the (those) Powers/Forces /Influences/" - when whomsoever reaches the Ogdoad, and which inclines one to ask, whose or what influences/powers? Those mentioned, for example, in vv. 8-9, such as Delightfulness, Self-Restraint, and Perseverance? If so, are these influences, collectively, The Cræft itself personified and who thus, through the generosity of theos, enable Palingenesis?

On balance, given the reference to Poemandres 26, I am inclined to accept the emendation σου and take 'the influences' as referring to those of The Cræft, some of whom are personified in vv. 8-9, and which 'influences' are those who in Poemandres 26 are "celebrating theos in melodious song."

divined about the Ogdoad. Taking καθὼς Ὀγδοάδα ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ἐθέσπισε with τέκνον, not with the preceding ἀκοῦσαι τῶν δυνάμεων.

Poemandres, the perceiviation of authority. Qv. Poemandres 2, εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς ἀθθεντίας νοῦς. As there, the title implies "What (knowledge) I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Poemandres, the authentic perceiviation."

and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. καὶ ἐπέτρεψέ μοι ἐκεῖνος ποιεῖν τὰ καλά. While an alternative translation is "and entrusting me to presence the noble," it does not immediately connect to what follows: of beautifully presencing such beautiful things as the esoteric song (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη, cantio arcana) which Hermes proceeds to teach to Thoth.

16.

except to you at your completion. εἰ μὴ σοὶ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ παντός. More literally, "except to you at the ending of the whole." That is, at the ending of the initiation into the secret of Palingenesis.

respectfully. That is, reverentially. The sense of προσκυνέω here does not necessarily imply a 'kneeling down' or some sort of what the Greeks (and the Romans) would undoubtedly have described as a 'barbarian adoration' or prostration as if in worship of Helios or of some-thing. It also does not necessarily imply a type of body-bent bowing, a stooping, toward a particular person (cf. Herodotus, I:119.1, ἄρπαγος μὲν ὡς ἤκουσε ταῦτα, προσκυνήσας καὶ μεγάλα ποιησάμενος ὅτι τε ἡ ἀμαρτὰς οἱ ἐς δέον ἐγγόνεε καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τύχησι χρηστῆσι ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκέκλητο, ἦι ἐς τὰ οἰκία).

What such respect, in this particular case, involved is unknown although the tractate - with its invocations of Self-Restraint, the imperturbable, the unwaveringly noble, of a contemplative silence, and its declamation of "go within" - is suggestive of a simple, unadorned, silent, respect for the numinous and the divine, as might perhaps be manifest in a slight bowing of the head. Cf. John 4:20 where the type of reverence is also unknown,

οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν· καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ.

Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem.

17.

Logos Δ. The MSS at this point have the heading ὑμνωδία κρύπτη, λόγος Δ. While ὑμνωδία κρύπτη is understandable - Esoteric Song, Cantio Arcana, Secret Chant - the meaning of λόγος Δ is conjectural, with suggestions including The Fourth Song, The Fourth Formula, and the Fourth Discourse, with the obvious implication that there are, or were, four such hermetic songs, formulae, or discourses, with various suggestions as to those other three, such as Poemandres 31, tractate V:10, and Asclepius 41, all of which are relatively short.

every Physis of Kosmos. Among the presencings of the Kosmos described here by their physis are Earth, Trees, the Heavens, Air, and Water.

In respect of Kosmos and physis, qv. tractate XII:14,

ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos

Gaia. γῆ. Earth as elemental principle, hence the personification here since Earth is being directly, personally, invoked.

open. ἀνοίγνυμι. Cf. Papyri Graecae Magicae, XXXVI. 312ff. The term was often used in both mystic odes and in classical magicae incantations. The Latin *aperio* well expresses the sense, as in "aperire librum et septem signacula eius," (Jerome, Revelation V:5) and "et cum aperuisset sigillum secundum." (Jerome, Revelation VI:3)

μοχλός. Here, not a literal 'bolt' or 'lock' but what prevents (access to) or is a defence against something.

Abyss. ἀβύσσου. This is the emendation of Reitzenstein for the various readings of the MSS. Nock has ὄμβρου which does not make sense here, for why "open what prevents" rain? In respect of ἄβυσσος, qv. tractate III:1.

incurvate. This unusual English term is appropriate here to poetically suggest the sense of the Greek - σείω - which is to bend from side to side as if shaken by an earthquake, by a trembling of the Earth.

Master Artisan. κτίσεως κύριον. 'Founding Lord', or less poetically, Lord of Creation. Theos as creator-artisan is mentioned in Poemandres 9, with the term there, and in tractate IV:1, being δημιουργόν. Qv. also δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών (the craft of theos: Aion) in tractate XI:3.

clan. κύκλος. Here signifying a particular group, or a particular assembly, of people as in the English expression "the inner circle." Hence, "the clan of

theos".

Sweet water. γλυκὸ ὕδωρ. The sweetness of water suitable to drink. Cf. John 4:10, ὕδωρ ζωῶν, the 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς.

bring light to. In respect of φαίνω as 'bringing light', cf. Plato, Timaeus, 39b,

φῶς ὁ θεὸς ἀνῆψεν ἐν τῇ πρὸς γῆν δευτέρᾳ τῶν περιόδων, ὃ δὴ νῦν
κεκλήκαμεν ἥλιον, ἵνα ὅτι μάλιστα εἰς ἅπαντα φαίνοι τὸν οὐρανὸν

theos ignited a light in that second circle from Earth, named now as Helios, so that it could bring light to all of the heavens

fond celebration. Regarding εὐλογία in a neutral way which does not impute the Christian sense of "praise the Lord", qv. Poemandres 22,

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὀσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

my Arts. As at Poemandres 31 - which is also a traditional doxology (δοξολογία) to theos - the sense of δυνάμεων is not 'powers', forces (or something similar and equally at variance with such a laudation) but 'arts'; that is, particular abilities, qualities, and skills. Here, these abilities and skills - the craft - relate to esoteric song; to be able to be an effective laudator in respect of theos and "every Physis of Kosmos."

18.

numinous. ἅγιος. As in the Poemandres tractate and other tractates.

knowledge. As at Poemandres 26, γνῶσις here could be transliterated as gnosis although I incline toward the view that such a transliteration might - given what the term gnosis now imputes, as for example in being a distinct 'spiritual way' - lead to incorrectly imposing modern meanings on the text.

numinal understanding. φωτίζω here implies an understanding given by a divinity, as for example in spiritual enlightenment, something that is not conveyed if a single word such as 'enlightened' is used as a translation. In order to express something of the Greek, I had used the term 'numinal understanding' with numinal implying 'divine' as at tractate III:1,

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

phaos. As at Poemandres 4ff - and in other tractates - a transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος, given that it (like physis) is a fundamental principle of Hermetic weltanschauungen and one which the overused English word 'light', with all its modern and Christian interpretations, does not satisfactorily express.

mastery. Implying mastery over one's self, cf. Chaucer, The Physician's Tale: "Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrie." (v. 58)

respectful of custom. δίκαιος. Not 'righteous', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty (that is, being honourable) toward both the gods and other mortals.

Honesty. ἀλήθεια. Given that those who are urged to sing are personifications, this is not some abstract, disputable, 'truth' but as often elsewhere in classical literature, a revealing, a dis-covering, of what is real as opposed to what is apparent or outer appearance. In personal terms, being honest and truthful.

Through me, may Kosmos accept... δι' ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ. I take this with the following λογικὴν θυσίαν, and τὸ πᾶν as vocative, and poetically combine the unnecessary λόγῳ with λογικὴν. As punctuated by Nock et al it would with λογικὴν θυσίαν literally be something such as "through me accept in speech All That Exists/the Kosmos, an offering spoken," which - in the context of the song and of theos being τὸ πᾶν, All That Exists/the Kosmos - is distinctly odd.

Here, as in v. 19, translating τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, rather than 'All That Exists' to elucidate the meaning and avoid awkward phraseology.

respectful wordful offerings. Qv. Poemandres 31. The difficult to translate Greek term λογικὴν θυσίαν implies an offering, and one which is both respectful and conveyed by means of words but which words are of themselves insufficient, inadequate, with the term 'wordful' suggesting such insufficiency as well as doubling for λόγῳ in the previous line.

19.

I take λογικὴν θυσίαν (respectful wordful offerings) as the end of the named, the metaphysical, 'esoteric song' (ὕμνωδία κρύπτῃ) with what follows - lines 214-235, that is, until the interjection by Thoth - a personal evokation, a chant, to theos - τὸ πᾶν - for acceptance of the offering (the singing of the esoteric

song) followed by a personal request to remain enlightened, followed by an epiphonema which includes sentiments of personal gratitude.

Life, recure. σωζε ζωή. Recure - from the classical Latin recuro - is an interesting, if neglected, English word and is apposite here implying as it does restore (to health), heal, and preserve. As mentioned in Poemandres 17 regarding Life and Phaos,

ὁ δὲ Ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν, ἐκ μὲν ζωῆς ψυχὴν, ἐκ δὲ φωτὸς νοῦν

Of Life and Phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from Phaos - perceivation

Theos, spiritus. πνεῦμα θεέ. In respect of πνεῦμα Nock considered it doubtful and noted the suggestion of Keil, πνευμάτιζε, although πνεῦμα θεέ - theos, pneuma (spiritus) - does seem appropriate: theos, 'a breath', a breathing, Pneuma; which breathing imbues beings with life and spirit, with pneuma.

Breath-Giver, Artisan. πνευματοφόρε δημιουργέ. Literally, "Pneuma-Bearing, Artisan." The Master Craftsman whose craft is to make - to construct, to create - living beings.

20.

Because of your desire. Qv. v. 4, θελήματι θεοῦ.

21.

I follow Festugiere and take τῷ σω τὴν εὐλογίαν ταύτην λεγομένην as belonging to Thoth, not Hermes.

a more numinal perceivation. Regarding ἐπιφωτιζω, qv. v. 16, γνώσις ἀγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ and the comment on 'numinal understanding'. As there, what is meant is not some ordinary type of 'illumination' but rather a divinely-inspired or a divinely-given understanding. Here, this understanding has enhanced the perceivation Thoth has acquired.

from my heart. As at v. 4, φρήν as a metaphor for the heart. Which explains the response of Hermes: μὴ ἀσκόπως.

essentiator. Qv. v. 4.

kyrios. A transliteration of the Greek, appropriate here given what terms such as 'Lord' and 'Master' now so often denote, and given Poemandres 6,

Οὕτω γινώθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς
πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἕνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν
ἡ ζωὴ

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although
perceivation is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other,
because their union is Life.

22.

invokation. εὐχομαι. Not 'pray' - which has too many Christian and other
non-Hellenic religious connotations - but invokation, as in appeal to a deity, to
call upon, to offer a laudation or an offering. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 933,
ἠύξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ὧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε, did you invoke the gods because you
feared doing such things?

the unrottable produce. τὰ ἀθάνατα γενήματα. Literally, "the
deathless/immortal produce". Taking ἀθάνατος metaphorically contrasts well
with the preceding 'bearing good fruit'.

the tradition. In respect of παράδοσις, cf. παραδιδόναι μοι in v. 1. As there, the
suggestion is of a disclosing of some ancestral teaching or wisdom; the
disclosing by a teacher or master to a pupil.

rouners. For 'rouner' in respect of διάβολος, qv. v. 13, εἰς δὲ ὑπεμνηματι σάμην
ἵνα μὴ ὧμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τοὺς πολλούς.

noesis. A technical, mystical, term, qv. the comment on 'noetic sapientia' in v. 2.

Bibliography

- ° B. Copenhaver. *Hermetica*. Cambridge University Press. 1992
- ° A-J. Festugiere. *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*. Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1944-1954.
- ° Anna Van den Kerchove. *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques*. Brill, Leiden, 2012.
- ° GRS Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906
- ° A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Paris, 1972
- ° Gustav Parthey, *Hermes Trismegisti Poemander*. Berlin, 1854.
- ° W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson: *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936
- ° Dieterich Tiedemann, *Hermes Trismegisti Poemander*. Berlin, 1781.
- ° Turnebus. *Ερμού του Τριμεγίστου Ποιμάνδρης Ασκληπιού Όροι προς Άμμονα Βασιλέα*. Paris 1554
- ° van den Broek. *From Poimandres to Jacob Bohme*. Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica. 2000
- ° R.A. Reitzenstein. *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927.
- ° R. A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres: Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1904
- ° R. A. Reitzenstein & H. H. Schaefer. *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland*, (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg), Teubner, Leipzig, 1926

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2017
(Second Edition)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,
according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt

Christianity, War, Paganism, And Honour

Preface

While David Myatt's post-2012 writings about extremism have (i) been prejudicially rejected by individuals of a particular political persuasion {1} and (ii) ignored, or even prejudicially rejected, by academics who have mentioned him usually in the context of certain unproven allegations, {2} a most interesting and neglected aspect those post-2012 writings concern war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' in the context of Christianity, Islam, the modern State and his own pagan philosophy of pathei-mathos. {3}

Most interesting, for five reasons. First, because when studied without preconceptions they complement and extend his philosophy of pathei-mathos; second, because they are based on his personal experience of Christianity and Islam; thirdly because they reveal his scholarly knowledge of those subjects; fourthly, because the concept of the numinous is embedded in such writings, {4} and fifthly because they not only compliment his writings about his personal rejection of extremism but elegantly refute the aforementioned prejudicial rejection of his post-2012 writings.

Most of Myatt's writings concerning war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' are contained in the following texts:

- (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* which forms part two of his 2013 *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; {5}
- (ii) the 2018 essay *Persecution And War*; {6}
- (iii) his three part 2019 text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*; {7}
- (iv) his 2013 book *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. {8}

Part One

Good, Evil, and Christianity

Catholicism

Myatt's views about Catholicism are relevant to both his understanding of the religion of Christianity and the development of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, and are summarized in Part One of *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*:

"why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathei-mathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings."

In Part Two of that text, his personal experience of Catholicism and his understanding and scholarly study of Christianity are evident, as in his comprehensive footnotes to the quotation below and which footnotes are included here for completeness:

<begin quotation>

"Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world."

ooo

[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἄν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς ἄν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John.

Given that the transliteration pneuma – with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic – does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in *Wright's Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation Halig Spiritus, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word Halig – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'.

As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided. One of the oldest usages of the word sin – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the

Latin *sons, sontis*. Thus, this early usage of the English word *syn* seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word *sin*, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [*Αναμαρτητος*] throw the first stone at her."

ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἢ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/> and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander*.

ooo

<end quotation>

Myatt goes on to explain what he means by how 'a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous',

"This personal - and via the Confessional, this priestly - connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics, criticize the Roman Catholic Church [...]

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual - the eternal - dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance [...]

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment."

His argument being that, in judging the actions of a person, "the application of certain spiritual considerations" were, in the past, more important than secular ones because they are based "on the belief in the Eternal Life - in Heaven or in Hell - which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession."

He expands on this in Part Three - *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* - writing that the expectations of the Catholic Church, as in a letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1^o de enero de 2019, in this era now seem to be:

"that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods."

For centuries, the Catholic Church taught the primacy of divine justice, and that in his view

"the move toward the change [Pope Francis] suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presented for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal."

Such temperate views, based on experience and study, are also evident in his *Questions of Good, Evil,*

Honour, and God where Myatt asks important ethical, philosophical, questions including whether "the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is bad," and "does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative" and whether or not we as a species can change without "a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State."

Good And Evil

In his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* Myatt begins his analysis of the Christian answers by asking what is meant by the phrase γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν in Genesis 3.5 which is conventionally translated as "knowing good and evil".

He suggests that this presumes a theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with 'the forces/realm of evil' as if they have an existence external to us and associated with, in the case of 'evil', an entity

"described in the Hebrew scriptures as a serpent and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων."

Dissenting, Myatt asks whether,

"in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?"

There follows a lengthy section about (i) the meaning of κάλος and πονηρὸν, in respect of which he quotes Homer and Sophocles, and that γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν might suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful /noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable; (ii) the Hebrew of Genesis 3.5 - generally rendered as "knowing tov and rah" - with tov suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful, and rah adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious; and (iii) Genesis 8.21 followed by Luke 6.43-5 in Greek with his own translation; and (iv) Aeschylus, Sophocles, and verses from Romans 12 and 13, again in Greek with his own translations.

He concludes the section by writing that

"what these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

Moving on to the Muslim view, he provides quotations from the Koran in Arabic followed by his own "fallible interpretations of meaning" in English, knowing from his Muslim years not to describe them as 'translations'.

He quotes Surah 5, Ayah 100, Surah 2, Ayah 267, and Surah 2, Ayah 267, the latter of which interprets:

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed."

His view is that

"as with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them."

In his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* {9} he expands upon his statement

that "the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while" by referencing his translation of the Gospel of John and concluding that:

What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

Hence why he writes that the Gospel of John "contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous."

Thus for Myatt the Gospel of John forms part of what he terms 'the culture of pathei-mathos' {10} with their being

"in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

In Part Three of *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* - subtitled *Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals* - Myatt describes how all this, and his analysis Part Two of Islamic and Western jurisprudence, and of the modern State, relates to his philosophy of pathei-mathos. For the culture of pathei-mathos:

"not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad.

For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political, or codified ideologically or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years."

Which, in his words, leads to

"an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous."

This relates to his understanding of honour as described in the *The Numinous Balance of Honour* section of chapter VI of his *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. {11}

Which understanding, as with most of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, {12} he frames in terms of classical rather than modern philosophy and thus uses ancient Greek terms:

"In many ways, the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

Myatt's understanding of honour as a personal presencing of the numinous and a consequence of empathy - that is, his understanding of good and evil - may be said to be one ultimately based on experience. For his philosophy:

"is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture."

Which brings us to the core of that experience, the concept of honour, and how experience and his learning from experience caused him to refine it over the decades. From being a codified part of his extremist ideology to being a manifestation, a personal understanding, of the essence of 'the human culture of pathei-mathos'.

This was the 'inner struggle' described in his autobiography *Myngath*, {13} during which Myatt's perception of honour and duty would be changed.

Part Two

Extremism, War, And Honour

In his old writings as a neo-nazi ideologist (1984-1998) and, later (2001-2008) as a Muslim apologist for al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Myatt eulogized Kampf and Jihad, and the role of "the warrior". {14}

This began to change when a personal tragedy led him to his question his extremist past and extremism in general; a questioning he wrote about in his semi-autobiographical 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*. {8}

A passage from that book provides the necessary personal and philosophical context, and a passage I quote in full since it also explains the genesis of his understanding of suffering, of the inhumanity of war, and of extremism in general:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos..."

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-

otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own *pathei-mathos*, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my [*philosophy of pathei-mathos*] is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal."

Here we have, in what he termed the separation-of-otherness, the basis for his philosophy of *pathei-mathos*: (i) *pathei-mathos*, (ii) the knowledge provided by empathy, and (iii) that this knowing is personal and thus cannot form the basis for anything supra-personal such as a political ideology or a religion.

As he explains in that Part One of *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*:

[A]ll extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions [...]

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its 'opposite' [...]

The individual, extremist or otherwise, is therefore required to accept - be subservient to - the judgement that the ideology asserts, or which some ideologue proclaims, is correct; for all ideologies denigrate or require (overtly or otherwise) the suspension of individual judgement either in favour of the collective, 'correct', ideological one, or in favour of the judgement of some leader, ideologue, or some 'higher authority'.

What his own *pathei-mathos* and that of others revealed was:

"a quite simple truth; that what is wrong is causing or contributing to suffering, and that, with (at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) one exception and one exception only we cannot now (again, at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) morally justify intentionally causing or contributing to the suffering of any living being.

How many more centuries - or millennia - will we need? To learn, to change, to cease to cause such suffering as we have for so many millennia caused.

My own life - of four decades of suffering-causing extremism and personal selfishness - is, most certainly, just one more example of our manful capacity to be stupid and hubriatic. To fail to learn from the pathei-mathos of human culture, even though I personally had the advantages of a living in diverse cultures and of a 'classical education', and thus was taught or became familiar with the insights of Lao Tzu, of Siddhartha Gautama, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Marcus Aurelius, Dante Alighieri, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, TS Eliot, EM Forster, and so many others; and even though I had the opportunity to discover, to participate in, and thus felt, the numinosity, the learning, inherent in so many other things, from plainchant to Byrd, Dowland, Palestrina, Tallis, to JS Bach and beyond. And yet, despite all these advantages, all these chances to learn, to evolve, I remained hubriatic; selfish, arrogant, in thrall to ideations, and like so many men somewhat addicted to the joy, to the pleasures, of Kampf, placing pursuit of that pleasure, or some cause, or some ideation, or my own needs, before loved ones, family, friends. Only learning, only finally and personally learning, after a death too far."

Honour And Empathy

During Myatt's National Socialist years his perception of honour was of it as "the natural instinct for nobility made conscious and this is done through a Code of Honour" {15} which laid down rules of behaviour such as being reserved in public and not given to displays of emotion."

During his "inner struggle" between 2006 and 2009 such an impersonal written codification with its rules or commandments was at odds with the individual learning inherent in the culture of pathei-mathos:

"One uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei- mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us." {16}

In 2014 he expressed his understanding more philosophically, writing that personal honour

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it is only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {17}

This "cannot be extracted out from the living moment" also applies to empathy since

"empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings

assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis." {18}

Furthermore, when asked in a 2022 interview:

"You appear to have forged an existential crucible from which many now draw inspiration. How would you like to see that inspiration embodied in the lives of those who look up to you?" {19}

Myatt's answer was:

"Just as my fallible understanding is that honour cannot be abstracted from a personal moment to become some sort of principle or guide, so my similar fallible understanding is that a person who learns by means of *pathei-mathos* cannot be or rather should not become such a guide or even an example and certainly should not assume any sort of guiding role."

In the same interview when asked where does he philosophically situate his own pagan *weltanschauung*, he replied:

"I do not situate my *weltanschauung* anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my *weltanschauung*, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires."

Which answers express the *raison d'être* of his philosophy: the personal *pathei-mathos* of one person and, as he also says in that 2022 interview, his "attempt at expiation".

Conclusion

Those answers in that 2022 interview return us to where we began: with his defence, based on personal experience, of Catholicism, and with his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, the first chapter of which, titled *Numinous Expiation*, invokes the dilemma he faced when confronting his extremist past:

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal *dua* to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site."

The only answers Myatt could find were his pagan philosophy of *pathei-mathos* {3} and his writings about rejecting extremism. That certain academics and persons of a particular political persuasion have prejudicially rejected his answers surely reveals something significant about them.

References

URL's valid as of January 2023

{1} *In Their Prejudice They Prefer To Prejudge*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/dm-prejudged.pdf>

{2} *The Urban Tale Of Myatt And Long*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/urban-tale-myatt-o9a-v7a.pdf>

{3} The pagan nature of Myatt's philosophy is comprehensibly described in *The Pagan Philosophy Of David Myatt*, which includes the monograph *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*. <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/myatt-paganism.pdf>

{4} The use of the English term numinous dates from the 17th century, and Myatt explains his understanding of the numinous in his essay *From Mythoi To Empathy*:

"that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις [hubris] upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, pp.38-41, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{5} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{6} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/09/09/persecution-and-war/>

{7} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

{8} *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{9} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

{10} Myatt describes this culture in the following terms:

"The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience."

{11} *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{12} This use of Greek terms, sometimes transliterated, sometimes not, makes his philosophy not only rather distinct among modern philosophies but also often obscure. In his defence, Myatt writes that

"the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have

endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." Introduction to Part Two of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, op.cit.

As with the philosophy of Heidegger, who also uses Greek terms and certain words, such as Dasein, in a particular philosophical way, Myatt's philosophy requires serious study.

{13} David Myatt, *Myngath*, 2013, pp.65-67, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{14} Rachael Stirling's *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist* chronicles Myatt's extremist decades with quotations from his neo-nazi and Islamist writings.
<https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/dm-ns-ideologue-second-edition.pdf>

{15} *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, included in *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-selected-ns-writings1/myatt-selected-ns-writings1.pdf>

{16} *Myngath*, pp.80-81, op.cit.

{17} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*, included in his book *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014. A gratis pdf version is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{18} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{19} *What is the Meaning of Myatt?* Included in *Three 2022 Interviews*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/dm-three-interviews.pdf>

The Question Of David Myatt And Expiation



One of the central themes of David Myatt's extensive post-2012 writings is expiation; of finding some means by which the mistakes of his past, of his forty or so years of political and religious extremism, may be offset or recompensed. Myatt, in his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief*, {1} devotes a whole chapter to expiation and his concerns, writing that:

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site [...]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὄβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance. In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise [...]

In relation to his own beliefs, or lack of them, the important section is:

"if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused." {1}

The answer he apparently settles on is to write about his past, about his regrets, about his decades of extremism; and how he came to reject such extremism, political and religious; with his philosophy of pathei-mathos being, for him, expiative:

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative, as are my writings concerning

extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*." {2}

"After 2006, I increasingly felt compelled to develop [that philosophy] in expiation, in search of answers, and in an effort to understand myself, my extremist pasts, and the suffering I finally came to realize I had caused. {3}

Never Forgive?

Are such expiatory writings by Myatt sufficient? His many political enemies do not believe so, for one or more of the following reasons. Firstly, because of their ideological axiom "never forgive, never forget" which in practice, on the human level, means that they are unable or unwilling to forgive him, and can be vindictive, vengeful, with hatred and prejudice motivating their actions and their deeds.

Secondly, because their prejudice and hatred motivates many of them to believe his post-2012 writings are lies, a deception. Thirdly, because of their zealous certitude that he, despite his denials, is Anton Long and the founder of the occultic Order of Nine Angles (O9A, ONA) and has never publicly condemned it or its policies such as support for the 'culling' of certain humans.

In respect of such people Myatt wrote, in 2012,

"are those who in the past have prejudged me - who have written about me as a violent extremist - accepting of individual change, of the virtues of reformation and pardonance? [...] Are they open to the possibility of my change and reformation? Or will they continue with 'the party line' and thus continue to insist that I am some sinister person whose recent mystical writings are just some sort of diabolical ploy?

More interestingly (perhaps) could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not - I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police." {4}

Two years later he would write:

"I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (ex concessio) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future." {5}

In respect of founding a covert Occult group in the 1970s, Myatt's explanation has always been that his purpose was for it to be used to aid National Socialism, and which explanation is both explicit and expressive of his extremist, immoral and fanatical belief at the time that any means were justified in the political and revolutionary struggle he believed in and was then fighting:

"In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap, to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves." {6}

In effect, Myatt is concatenating his founding of an Occult movement, which he does not name, with his political and religious extremism and with his rejection of all extremism with the result, although unstated, that he apparently considers such a manifestation of Occultism as just another extremism. Perhaps unsurprisingly this concatenation does not satisfy his political opponents, and Myatt was asked about this in regard to his past as a neo-nazi in a 2022 interview:

RS: Yet your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing. {7}

In another interview he was asked a similar question:

[T]hey claim you are still a neo-nazi; that what you write and have written since 2010 such as your autobiography should be treated with suspicion and not taken seriously; that unless you come out in public to attend some sort of 'media circus' and directly answer their questions, they will never believe you.

Myatt replied:

φημί ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν.

Such a seeking to apprehend such things is what now and for the past twenty or so years has occupied me [...] As for what they or others claim or believe about me now and the past, it is their burden howsoever brought-into-being, howsoever nurtured and howsoever it might be described by them or by others. {7}

It is possible, therefore, to conclude, especially given their silence about Myatt's post-2012 writings about Christianity, that such opponents are acting in an intolerant way inconsistent with the message of the Christian gospels and what many, including Myatt, believe is the gospel message of forgiveness.

Christianity And The Gospels

To many it seems strange that the later Myatt, manifest in his post-2012 writings, would write positively about Christianity and especially about Catholicism, given the widespread and decades-long and often politically motivated accusations of him being a 'satanist'. These writings include his three-part *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, {8} *Miserere Mei, Deus*, {9} and his translation of and commentary of chapter one to five of the Gospel of John. {10}

In this respect, a section in his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* is relevant:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond." {11}

In his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth* he provides his interpretation of the Gospel of John:

"What emerges from my own translation - that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John - is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered good and what is considered evil." {12}

One of most recent writings expresses his feelings in regard to Christianity:

"The liturgical season of The Passion is upon us again and I find myself appreciating once more how the numinous allegory of The Passion was presented in liturgical music from the Graduale *Christus Factus Est* to Vittoria's *Popule meus, quid feci tibi* - Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς - to Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* to JS Bach's *St John* and *Matthew Passions*. And I reminded so movingly of - when a monk - singing *Tenebrae* amid the flickering then extinguished light of candles...

So much human suffering for so many millennia which the allegory of The Passion of Jesus of Nazareth reminded so many of, century after century; as it reminded me several times in the depths of my decades of extremism. In comparison with such numinous music, liturgical and otherwise, what is my own wordy

weltanschauung of pathei-mathos worth? Very little it now seems to me, if anything at all." {13}

However, so far his political opponents have not commented on, or possibly not read, such writings perhaps because, as I assume, they consider them just another part of the 'diabolical ploy', the deception, they believe and claim are his post-2012 writings. Which silence is perhaps one more expression of their prejudice, hatred, and un-Christian attitude, although to many unbiased readers such writings are indicative of a person who is not only remorseful but able to understand and place his own life into a wider human perspective.

A Lingering Influence

That Myatt despite his post-writings and rejection of all extremism, political, religious, and Occult, has a lingering influence on extremists both neo-nazi and Occult, with for example "most of his neo-nazi writings are still essential reading in many militant far-right groups and circles" {14} may partly explain the ideological, 'hard-line', attitude of many of his opponents.

Is such influence Myatt's fault or the fault of his opponents with their 'never forgive' attitude and their prejudicial assumption that those post-2012 writings are a deception? Given that Myatt's post-2012 writings are voluminous and consistent in content over a period of ten years with his philosophy of pathei-mathos also consistent with his rejection of extremism, the logical answer would seem to be that it is such prejudicial ones, with their continual propagation of their unfounded allegations, who are at fault.

Perhaps it will take several scholarly, unbiased, studies of those writings and that philosophy to redress the balance although given the current state of academia where certain matters are verboten such studies may be many decades in the future.

Rachael Stirling
June 2023

{1} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{2} *Some Questions For DWM, March 2014*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf>

Myatt's philosophy is outlined in the seventh edition of his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{3} The quotation is from page 72 of Myatt's 2013 autobiography *Myngath*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{4} *A Matter Of Honour*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

{5} *Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing*, 2012, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/06/23/pathei-mathos-genesis-of-my-unknowing/>

{6} *Ethos of Extremism*, 2012, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/ethos-extremism-extracts.pdf>

{7} *An Uncertitude Of Knowing, Four Interviews With David Myatt*, 2023. International Standard Book Number 979-8394746574

{8} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

{9} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/03/10/miserere-mei-deus/>

{10} His translation and commentary of chapters one to five of the Gospel of John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/gospel-of-john-1-5.pdf>

{11} *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{12} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

{13} *Tenebrae*, April 2023. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2023/04/06/tenebrae/>

{14} Daniel Koehler. *From Traitor to Zealot: Exploring the Phenomenon of Side-Switching in Extremism and Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. p.162

o o o o o o o

Image credit: David Myatt, 1995, visiting a Catholic Church

Scholarship, Primary Sources, And Mr Myatt

οοοοοοο

Aristotelis Hermeneutica Analytica Elenctica

Εστι δη των εν τω διαλέγεσθαι λόγων τέτταρα γένη, διδασκαλικοί και διαλεκτικοί και πειραστικοί και εριστικοί [...]

διδασκαλικοί μεν οι εκ των οικείων αρχών εκάστου μαθήματος και ουκ εκ των τού αποκρινόμενου δοξών συλλογιζόμενοι (δει γαρ πιστεύειν τον μαθησάμενον), διαλεκτικοί δ' οι εκ των ενδόξων συλλογιστικοί αντιφάσεως, πειραστικοί δ' οι εκ των δοκούντων των αποκρινόμενων και αναγκαίων ειδέναι το προσποιούμενον έχειν την επιστήμη (δν τρόπον δε, διώριεται εν ετέροις), εριστικοί δ' οι εκ των φαινομένων ενδόξων μη όντων δε συλλογιστικοί ή φαινόμενοι συλλογιστικοί. περί μεν ούν των αποδεικτικών εν τοις Αναλυτικοίς είρηται, περί δε των διαλεκτικών και πειραστικών εν τοις άλλοις· περί δε των αγωνιστικών και έριστικών νύν λέγωμεν.

οοοοοοο

Scholarship And Primary Sources

A study of primary sources is the scholarly, the civilized, way for an individual to understand, to acquire a learned knowledge of a subject, such as a philosophy or a weltanschauung be such a weltanschauung a spiritual or a religious one. Thus to understand in such an individual, civilized, way the religion of Christianity a detailed study of the four gospels in their original language is required since they are primary sources in respect of that religion given that Christian tradition considers them the oldest and most reliable sources. Similarly, to understand in such a way a philosophy such as that of Immanuel Kant a study of his writings, and his writings alone and in their original language is necessary, since to rely on the translations of others is to rely on the interpretation of those others, as is considering and giving weight to the opinions or the conclusions of others regarding Kant's philosophy.

To be learned, to be a scholar in the traditional sense, is to have a profound knowledge gained by study.

Scholarly (*skɒˈlɑːli*), *a.* [f. SCHOLAR + -LY 1.]
Not in Johnson or Todd.
Pertaining to, or characterizing, a scholar; befitting, or natural to, a scholar; learned, erudite.

Learned:

2. Of a person: In early use, that has been taught; instructed, educated. In later use with narrowed sense: Having profound knowledge gained by study, esp. in language or some department of literary or historical science; deeply-read, erudite. Const. *in. † of.* (Superseding the earlier LERED.)
Learned society: a society formed for the prosecution of some branch of learning or science.

However, in this era where the interpretations, the opinions, the often fallaciously made conclusions, of others are readily available by means of printed articles and books, by the Media, and by mediums such as the Internet, this scholarly, civilized, rational, slow way to acquire a balanced knowledge and understanding of a subject is a dying, unpopular, Cræft {1} even in academia. For the designation 'academic' in this era does not necessarily imply that a person who is employed in academia is learned, erudite, in a particular subject as for example the scholar Richard Jebb was erudite in Ancient Greek. Instead, it is often the case that a published work by a modern academic is not based on their own detailed scholarly research {2} using primary sources {3} but on the opinions, or the conclusions, of others, and thus often on fallacies such as Appeal to Authority. {4}

The particular Cræft under consideration was, in the early decades of the twentieth century, practised by many if not most of what are now described as 'intelligence' or security service agencies but has become deprecated because as experience has revealed the political paymasters of such agencies do not want to be informed of what may contradict their political agenda and personal opinions but only of what may be politically or personally advantageous to them and their government, and if some analyst provides an inconvenient report then politicians, as they have done multiple times recently in regard to Western actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, have no hesitation in censoring or concealing or denying the truth in the belief that through manipulation of the Media that truth will 'go away' or that certain documents will 'go missing' or that it will be officially suppressed for fifty years or more under what is known, in Britain, as the fifty year rule.

This deprecation of the scholarly Cræft is particularly evident in the case of Wikipedia.

Wikipedia

In the last decade or so the Internet articles which are collected together under the term Wikipedia - the so-called "free encyclopedia that anyone can edit" - have become the first and often the only source most people turn to find out about a subject or an event or a group or an individual partly because, given massive financial and other support to the Wikipedia Foundation from the corporate worldwide business Google (with an annual revenue, as of 2023, around US\$200 billion) Wikipedia items always appear at the top of internet searches using Google Search as they invariably do when other 'search engines' are used given the volume of traffic to Wikipedia generated by Google Search.

But this support by Google comes at a cost, as evident in the criteria Wikipedia uses for what they regard as a 'reliable

source'. Their criteria is to reject primary sources in favour of interpretive secondary and tertiary source material produced by established publishers or by news media (including digital, on-line ones) whose authors are regarded by the often anonymous editors of Wikipedia as authoritative about a subject simply because their items are published by such publishers and news media or have appeared elsewhere in the mass media. Thus opinion pieces by academics, by journalists and others which meet the Wikipedia criteria of being such secondary or tertiary sources provide the basis for Wikipedia articles even if the authors of cited books or articles commit fallacies such as the Appeal To Authority and the Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence and have not used primary sources as the basis for their conclusions.

The consequence is that most of those using Wikipedia unknowing commit the fallacy of Appeal To Authority, relying as they do on the opinions and conclusions of others and thus on secondary and tertiary sources.

This reliance on such a mass media source as Wikipedia is indicative of our era for two reasons. Firstly, because it is a radical departure from the civilized, rational, way of personally acquiring a balanced knowledge and understanding of a subject or a person by using primary sources or by searching for books and items written by those who are scholars and thus who have used primary sources and drawn conclusions based on logical reasoning. Secondly, because such reliance is invariably a reliance on what has become or appears to be the accepted public or Establishment opinion {5} about a subject or a person often based as such an opinion is on propaganda, and thus is an example of the fallacy of ad populum which is when a person 'follows the crowd' and believes or claims that because so many others have claimed or believe something it is probably true, as in the old proverb 'no smoke without fire'.

Thus, far from being used by many to access knowledge of a scholarly nature, the Internet and digital resources such as Wikipedia are used by the majority to access what has become the accepted public or Establishment opinion about a subject or a person.

A Modern Example

In the matter of Wikipedia an example of their use of secondary and tertiary sources, and thus of opinion pieces by journalists, politicians, academics and others, is the article about the controversial modern figure David Myatt, former neo-nazi activist and ideologue, former Catholic monk, former supporter of bin Laden and the Taliban, and apparently now a reformed extremist who has developed a mystical philosophy centred around virtues such as compassion and empathy.

The Wikipedia article relies almost entirely on secondary and tertiary sources; provides no link to Myatt's current weblog, and no quotations from his recent writings. Instead, it is dominated by the allegation of him being "the political and religious leader of the White nationalist theistic Satanist organization [the] Order of Nine Angles".

As 'evidence' for this allegation the secondary and tertiary sources include mainstream published opinion pieces by antifascists and journalists; citations to reports and articles by government sponsored policy groups such as the Combating Terrorism Center at the Establishment-run West Point Military Academy; and academics such as Goodrick-Clarke and Senholt.

Yet when examined, none of these secondary and tertiary sources provide any probative evidence for the accusations they make. Pertinent examples are:

° The referenced report by the Combating Terrorism Center simply states that "the O9A is a occultist current founded by David Myatt in the late 1960s in the United Kingdom," with their only citation being a book by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. However, on examination, that cited book provides no evidence from primary sources.

For Goodrick-Clarke's identification of Myatt as 'Anton Long' - in his book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, NYU Press, 2003 - is solely based on his claim that Myatt was the author of a typescript titled *Diablerie*, a copy of which is in the British Library, General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567. However, he provided no evidence, no sources, for this claim of his, or for his other claims such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" and that Myatt was "a long time devotee of satanism."

Goodrick-Clarke also failed to research and provide any documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life so that it could be compared to the life described in the *Diablerie* manuscript; he failed to ask Myatt himself about the manuscript which Myatt his 2012 text *A Matter of Honour* denounced as a work of fiction. {6}

The fact that Goodrick-Clarke's book is and has often been cited as 'proof' that DM=AL thus provides another classic example of the fallacy of appeal to authority.

° That Jacob Senholt is cited and quoted as writing that "ONA-inspired activities, led by protagonist David Myatt, managed to enter the scene of grand politics and the global War On Terror" and yet Senholt, as described in Appendix One of our article, not only failed to provide evidence from primary sources but committed the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence.

° In regard to Myatt's rejection of extremism, the citation is not to primary sources written by Myatt since 2012 but to a secondary source: an article by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Madeleine Blackman, with Daveed Gartenstein-Ross in a later, 2023, article - *The Order of Nine Angles: Cosmology, Practice & Movement*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2023.2186737> - claiming that "[Anton] Long's writings display thematic and linguistic similarities to those of Myatt" while not providing details of what these similarities are, nor any evidential facts regarding them nor providing any citations to where such similarities have been analysed and evidential facts presented. We can only presume that the now discredited assumptions of Senholt - qv. Appendix One below - were the source.

° In regard to opinion pieces by lay-persons, a 2003 book by a journalist - *Into a World of Hate* by Nick Ryan - is

mentioned although the claims made by the author, such as that Myatt wrote "the publicly available teachings of the ONA under the pseudonym Anton Long", are simply the author's personal opinion with no scholarly citations given to support them. Which mention of such a book by a lay-person is yet another example of how the editors of the Wikipedia article about Myatt commit the fallacy of Appeal to Authority.

The logical conclusion is that the Wikipedia article about Myatt, based as it is on secondary and tertiary sources, is unbalanced, remiss, failing as it does to cite or provide quotations from primary sources such as Myatt's extensive post-2012 writings {7} referencing as it does only the accepted Establishment opinion about him evident in such government and corporate sponsored policy groups such as the Combating Terrorism Center. Hence why the minimal reference in the Wikipedia article about Myatt having rejected extremism and developed his own philosophy is not to Myatt's writings on the matter but to interpretive secondary sources such as a 2012 book by Roger Griffin titled *Terrorist's Creed: Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning*.

Conclusion

Is this examination such as we have conducted just a pedantic aside which can easily be ignored in the maelström of the modern world with its rapid easily accessible transmission, and acceptance of, personal opinion and propaganda?

We believe it is not a pedantic aside, for the reliance on secondary and tertiary sources, the committal by politicians, journalists and even by academics of fallacies of reasoning, expose how our Western civilization has apparently declined because we have forsaken its core essentials: scholarship, logical reasoning, and the Aristotelian essentials which are:

- (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
- (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
- (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
- (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Essentials also expressed in relation to science by Isaac Newton in his *Principia*,

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance [...] for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

To conclude, we would controversially claim that David Myatt, object of much Establishment propaganda as exemplified in the Wikipedia article about him, is in his later life one modern example of the *raison d'être* of our Western civilization, as evident in such post-2012 writings of his as (i) *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, (ii) *The Gospel According To John: A Translation And Commentary*, Chapters 1-5; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*; and (iv) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

All of which writings, available both in print and on his weblog, are not even mentioned in that Wikipedia article or even by academics.

Haereticus Reputandus
September 2023
v.1.5

o o o o o

{1} Cræft: this older spelling implies more than the modern usage associated with the word 'craft'.

III. † 5. The learning of the schools, scholarship. b. (with *a* and *pl.*) A branch of learning or knowledge, a science. *The seven crafts*: the 'seven arts' of the mediæval Universities: see ART 7. *Obs.*
c 1205 LAY. 10923 On bocken heo cuðe godne cræft. *Ibid.* 30493 An clarc þe com from Spaine . . feole craftes he cuðe. a 1225 *Leg. Kath.* 522 Fifti scolmeistres, of alle þe creftes þet clerc ah to cunnen. a 1300 *Cursor M.* 4647 (Cott.) Þe seuen craftes all he can. a 1400-50 *Alexander* 33 Þe pasage of þe planettis, þe poyntes & þe sygnes. Þai ware þe kiddest of þat craft knawyn in þaire tyme. 1483 *Cath. Angl.* 79 A Crafte, *ars liberalis*, *sciencia* [etc.]. 1530 PALSGR. 210/1 Crafte of multiplyeing, *alquenemie*.
IV. A branch of skilled work.
6. An art, trade, or profession requiring special skill and knowledge; *esp.* a manual art, a HANDICRAFT; sometimes applied to any business, calling, or profession by which a livelihood is earned.
c 897 K. ÆLFRED *Gregory's Past.* i. 24 Se cræft þæs lareowdomes bið cræft ealra cræfta. c 900 *Beda's Hist.* iv. xiii, Seo þeod ðone cræft ne cuðe ðæs fiscnoþes. c 1040 *Rule St. Benet* 94 For ingehide his cræftes. 1340 *Ayenb.*

{2} The criteria of scholarship are: (i) a detailed, meticulous, unbiased original research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a year or more in duration and involving primary source material; (ii) an ability to be able to read primary sources in their original language; and (iii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject being the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired. If the researcher cannot read primary sources in their original language and has to rely on the translations of others then their conclusions are not original and not scholarly just as if they commit logical fallacies - such as the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - then their conclusions are also not scholarly.

{3} Primary sources include contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews, speeches, and other materials individuals used to describe (i) events in which they were participants or observers, and (ii) ideas or creations - such as a philosophy, music, literature, or art-work - which they were responsible for. Hence in the matter of a philosophy such as that of Heidegger the primary sources are his published writings, authenticated recordings or transcriptions of his speeches/lectures, and authenticated unpublished manuscripts if any. The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about that philosophy are secondary or tertiary sources.

{4} See Appendix Two for fallacies such as Appeal to Authority.

{5} By the Establishment is meant those who in modern Western societies have the power, the means, to influence and to shape 'public opinion' on matters political and social. The Establishment thus includes politicians and the incumbent government and often the 'political opposition', large often multinational corporate businesses, the mainstream Media (including national newspapers, television and internet news media and outlets), well-funded special-interest advocacy groups both political and business-orientated; established academics whose work has featured in mainstream publications, and so-called 'independent' or 'freelance' journalists whose work appears in or is cited by the mainstream Media or established publishers.

An Establishment represents the orthodoxy, the zeitgeist, of a particular era, with adherence to or a belief in that orthodoxy a good indication of who or what is part of the Establishment, with the orthodoxy of the current Western current era including support for the idea of modern democracy even if the result of elections has been influenced by particular business and political concerns and 'special interest' groups who have the financial resources to employ professional lobbyists, Media consultants, and propagandists and who often have politicians to further their interests or agenda.

{6} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

{7} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/>

Appendix One

Senholt And the Fallacy Of Incomplete Evidence

Jacob Senholt, in a revised version of his 2009 MA thesis titled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles* published as a chapter in the 2012 book *The Devil's Party - Satanism in Modernity* {1} alleged that Myatt wrote the terrorist manual *A Practical Guide to Aryan Revolution* which it has been claimed influenced David Copeland, and Senholt like others before and since - including the authors of the 2023 article *The Order of Nine Angles: Cosmology, Practice & Movement*, DOI:10.1080/1057610X.2023.2186737 - Senholt provided no evidential facts in support of that particular allegation, and did not mention that following Myatt's arrest in early 1998 by police officers from Special Branch based at Scotland Yard, the British police in conjunction with the Canadian police and the FBI spent three years trying to prove that Myatt wrote that document, having seized his computers and files, searched his home for over seven hours, and travelled to places such as Canada to interview witnesses. They failed to find any evidence and Myatt was released from his bail in the Summer of 2001.

Senholt also presented his circumstantial evidence that Myatt=Long and in the process and probably inadvertently commits the fallacy of incomplete evidence which is when only certain evidence is presented with other evidence not found, or ignored or deliberately suppressed.

Circumstantial Evidence

i) He mentions a 1978 text, *Copula cum Daemone*, which he claims was written by a DW Myatt and was "in a collection of ONA manuscripts" manuscripts but does give the title of this collection nor any details of publication or images of the text nor any evidence that it was written by Myatt. He then claims that in later digital editions of this text - which again he provides no references to or images of - it was attributed to various other authors and concludes that this is "a clear example of a text originally issued by Myatt, and later disguised with a pseudonym."

In other words, he does not provide any evidential facts but presents only his personal opinion.

ii) He goes on to claim that the *Diablerie* manuscript - a copy of which is in the British Library {2} - "reveals details of Long's life that appear remarkably similar to Myatt's own life" and cites Goodrick-Clarke and yet as with Goodrick-Clarke {3} does not provide comparisons using research based on documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life.

Thus and yet again Senholt does not provide any evidential facts but presents only his personal opinion.

iii) His next claim is that since writings by Myatt and the ONA have been published by the same publisher there "is a direct connection" which is a spurious conclusion since publishers often print items from various authors which does not mean the various authors are connected in any way.

iv) His next piece of circumstantial evidence "concerns the use of alternate dating-systems", about which he states that since both Myatt in his National Socialist writings and the ONA use "yf, designating the Year of the Führer" there is a connection, neglecting to mention - or failing to discover through research - that other groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and William Pierce of National Alliance fame and other neo-nazis have used the same dating system, both in its English form and its German form of 'Jahr des Fuhrers' {4}.

(v) His final piece of circumstantial evidence is linguistic, claiming that "when one has a closer look at many of the basic ideas and the terminology used in the ONA, it appears as if there are many glaring similarities to Myatt's own ideas." He cites terms such as Homo Galactica, causal and acausal, and Aeons while failing to mention that such borrowing of terms, ideas and concepts, is and has been common for centuries and is not evidence of a direct and personal link between those using such terms, ideas and concepts.

However, he not only does not provide any evidence from forensic linguistics but fails to mention numerous texts by Anton Long and by self-declared O9A adherents in which he explains the purpose of Anton Long's Labyrinthos Mythologicus which implies:

"myth-making; creating or concerned with mythology or myths; a mythical narrative, and is both (a) a modern and an amoral version of a technique often historically employed, world-wide among diverse cultures and traditions both esoteric and otherwise, to test and select candidates, and (b) a mischievous, japing, sly, and sometimes (for mundanes) an annoying, part of the O9A sinister dialectic." {5}

In other words, it was used not only to test and select candidates but also had an antinomian, dialectical, and japing purpose with Anton Long in a 28th August 103yf [1992] letter to Temple of Set member David Austen writing that the intent was "to make people like you draw the conclusion you were intended to make." {6} There is also the problem of the O9A 'manual of style' in relation to the claim that

"since one or more ONA blogs or websites, or some articles, use the same or similar styling and/or layout as some blog or website or article by or assumed to be by Myatt, it means that Myatt is behind them all - clearly ignoring the obvious fact that such similarities, if not just coincidental, could well be a deliberate imitation designed to get mundanes to jump to such a silly, fallacious, conclusion." {7} {8}

In regard to forensic linguistics,

"author profiling is subjective not empirical and thus not definitive. Second, and most important in this case, the task would be formidable with the result easily open to question given the volume of material written by both Myatt and the pseudonymous Anton Long over several decades and given that the forensic profiler would have to subjectively select what texts from what years to compare.

What would their subjective criteria for such a selection be? To compare a few texts from around the same time? To compare a few texts from the same decade? To compare just a few or dozens of texts from three or four decades?

Since 1984 with the publication of his 45 page tract *Vindex - Destiny of the West* to 2022 with the publication of his *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, Myatt has written thousands of pages of texts. The texts also vary in subject matter, from polemical propagandistic texts in support of National Socialism (1984-1998) to ideological tracts in support of his 'ethical National Socialism' (1996-1998) to items supporting a particular and radical interpretation Islam (2001-2008) to his post-2012 writings about his philosophy of pathai-mathos to his autobiographical effusions such as his 2014 collection of essays titled *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods* and the letters included in parts two and three of his 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*. There is also the matter of Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum (2017) and his 2017 scholarly monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

In the case of Anton Long there are also thousands of pages of texts, from most of the typescripts included in the compilation *Naos* (1989) to *The Satanic Letters* (1992) to *Enantiodromia - The Sinister Abyssal Nexion* (2012). The issue is further complicated by writings published between 1992 and 2011 which do not bear the name 'Anton Long' and thus are anonymous but which anonymous texts many critics have assumed were written by Anton Long but for which assumption they have not and never have provided any evidence." {7}

Insight Roles

Following his circumstantial evidence, Senholt also claims that Myatt's diverse and exeatic life is an example of O9A Insight Roles which mean "gaining real-life experience by working undercover for a period of 6-18 months".

Of five Insight Roles, Senholt cites three - (a) "Join or form a covert insurrectionary organization, dedicated to National Socialism", (b) "Convert to Islam and aid, through words, or deeds, or both, those undertaking Jihad against Zionism and the NWO", and (c) "Join or form a National Socialist group or organization, and aid that organization and especially aid and propagate historical revisionism" - which he claims Myatt has undertaken.

What Senholt neglects to mention is that Myatt promoted National Socialism for thirty years (1968-1998) not for the "6-18 months" of an Insight Role, and was a Muslim who supported Jihad for over ten years (1998-2009) not for the "6-18 months" of an Insight Role.

Which places Senholt's claim into perspective. In addition, he does not mention the obvious facts that the O9A might have been inspired by the nature of Myatt's exeatic life to concoct such Insight Roles, and that Myatt's life does not include other suggested roles such as being an assassin and joining the police or the armed forces.

Conclusion

In summary, Senholt does not provide any evidential facts in regard to the urban tale that Myatt was/is Anton Long and founded the O9A. Instead, he commits the fallacy of incomplete evidence. That his work is often cited as 'proof' of that urban tale about Myatt being Anton Long provides another example of people committing the fallacy of appeal to authority.

ooo

{1} Per Faxneld and Jesper Aa. Petersen (editors), *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

{2} A copy of the 19 page *Diablerie - Revelations of a Satanist* typescript is in the British Library: General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567.

{3} Goodrick-Clarke's identification of Myatt as 'Anton Long' - in his book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, NYU Press, 2003 - is solely based on his claim that Myatt was the author of a typescript titled *Diablerie*, a copy of which is in the British Library, General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567.

He provides no evidence, no sources, for this claim of his, or for his other claims such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" and that Myatt was "a long time devotee of satanism."

Goodrick-Clarke also failed to research and provide any documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life so that it could be compared to the life described in the *Diablerie* manuscript; he failed to ask Myatt himself about the manuscript which Myatt his 2012 text *A Matter of Honour* denounced as a work of fiction:
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

That Goodrick-Clarke's book is and has been often cited as 'proof' that DM=AL thus provides another classic example of the fallacy of appeal to authority.

{4} <https://web.archive.org/web/20230511054221/https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/03/world/klan-seizes-on-germany-s-wave-of-racist-violence.html>

{5} *A Glossary of Order of Nine Angles Terms*, v. 7.05, included in *Order Of Nine Angles Subculture: A Complete Guide*, e-text, 1520 pages, 2021.

{6} The letter is included in facsimile in volume one of *The Satanic Letters of Stephen Brown*, Thormynd Press, 1992.

{7} Kerri Scott, *Author Profiling In The Case Of David Myatt And Anton Long*, e-text, 2022.

{8} The O9A 'manual of style' was publicly mentioned in several 2015 and 2016 Internet posts such as this one from 2016:

That you equate me/us with someone else who has posted about the O9A on some forum (which has since banned all discussion of the ONA) is both flattering and mildly amusing. Perhaps it's the still secret "ONA Manual Of Style" that keeps outsiders making such assumptions...

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220511055625/https://annaczereda.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/mad-as-a-hatter/>

It was also described in a 2016 article titled *The O9A Manual Of Style*,

"As mentioned to some correspondents over the years, those who are associated with the Falciferian O9A have had an 'ONA Manual of Style' just as many older, established, newspapers (such as the Guardian and the New York Times) have their in-house manuals of style and usage. Such manuals are often updated every few decades, and are useful guides that enable printed items to have an 'in-house' style. Given the non-hierarchical structure and ethos of the O9A, the manual offers guidance, recommending best practice rather than giving rules which are expected be followed.

The ONA manual deals not only with the specific - O9A assigned - meaning of certain words (such as nexion, presencing, mundanes, culling) but also with many other topics, such as (i) whether certain words - for example 'satanism' and 'satan' - should be with an upper or a lower case S, (ii) how titles and subtitles should appear (usually, and against current convention) with all words beginning with upper case), (iii) how footnotes should be numbered and displayed (usually numbered within curly brackets), (iv) how each page should be set out, (v) how texts should display the name of the author, and (vi) how the introduction to following paragraphs should be phrased, with suggestions ranging from 'However' to 'In addition' to 'Thus'

[...]

Initially compiled by 'Anton Long' in the early 1990s, the manual has gone through several editions, with one of its main functions being inspired by what was once termed the Aquino fallacy."

The article *The O9A Manual Of Style* was included in the compilation *The Dialectical Order Of Nine Angles*, e-text, 2016.

Appendix Two

The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority

The fallacy of appeal to authority, also known as the fallacy of Argumentum ad Verecundiam, is somewhat misunderstood in this age of the Internet. It is not only citing or quoting a person or persons who is/are regarded, by the person citing or quoting or by others, as an authority or 'expert' on a subject but also citing or quoting the opinion given by some institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar, on a subject, regardless of whether or not the 'expert' or institution or whatever has their opinion published by some means or some medium regarded as 'mainstream', academic, or 'respectable' or authoritative.

The crux of the fallacy is a reliance by someone or by some others on who or what is regarded in a particular society as an authority on or as having a detailed or 'expert' knowledge of a subject or subjects.

Thus a statement such as the fallacy of appeal to authority "is when the opinion of a non-expert on a topic is used as evidence" is itself fallacious because although it appears to be a decisive statement regarding 'authority' it is logically not so having not only restricted the fallacy to those are not 'experts' but does not define what an 'expert' or a 'false expert' is or are or who or what person or institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar has the 'authority' to declare someone an 'expert' or a 'false expert' in a certain subject or subjects, and from whence a person or an institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar derives their own authority to make such declarations.

The corollary of the appeal to authority, as defined in the first paragraph, is personal research by scholarly means of a subject using primary sources. Which leads to the definition of what constitutes primary sources and scholarly means, as defined below.

Fallacy Of Ad Populum

This is when a person 'follows the crowd' and believes or claims that because so many others have claimed or believe something it is probably true.

Fallacy Of Argumentum ad Hominem

This belongs to the category ignoratio elenchi. Argumentum ad hominem is when the character and/or the motives and/or the identity of the person presenting an argument is/are maligned or called into question often in an attempt to deflect attention away from the topic being discussed or from their failure to answer questions asked of them.

Fallacy of Composition

Also known as the Fallacy of Illicit Transference. This is an example of equivocation, and is when a generalization is made from a few specific instances or examples with the generalization then applied to pejoratively describe or malign a group or organization or person.

Fallacy Of The False Cause

Generally referred to by the Latin phrase *non causa pro causâ*. This fallacy is the assumption that one thing is the cause of another without any logical reasoning.

Fallacy Of Incomplete Evidence

Also known as the fallacy of suppressed evidence. This is when evidence which disproves or may disprove a claim or conclusion is not considered either deliberately (suppressed evidence) or because of a lack of detailed and scholarly research.

ooo

The criteria of scholarship are: (i) a detailed, meticulous, unbiased original research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a year or more in duration and involving primary source material; (ii) an ability to be able to read primary sources in their original language; and (iii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject being the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired. If the researcher cannot read primary sources in their original language and has to rely on the translations of others then their conclusions are not original and not scholarly just as if they commit logical fallacies - such as the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - then their conclusions are also not scholarly.

Primary sources include contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews,

speeches, and other materials individuals used to describe (i) events in which they were participants or observers, and (ii) ideas or creations - such as a philosophy, music, literature, or art-work - which they were responsible for. Hence in the matter of a philosophy such as that of Heidegger the primary sources are his published writings, authenticated recordings or transcriptions of his speeches/lectures, and authenticated unpublished manuscripts if any. The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about that philosophy are secondary or tertiary sources.

This item is in the Public Domain



Another Iconoclastic Translation

Although David Myatt's translation of the gospel of John from the Christian New Testament is, as of the date of writing, a work-in-progress, sufficient has been released for a preliminary review. Thus far he has published the completed translation of and extensive commentary on the whole of chapters 1 to 5, which partial translation is available from his blog. {1}

To describe the translation as iconoclastic is something of an understatement. Perhaps more aptly it is heretical in the sense that Wycliffe's 14th century and Luther's 16th century translations were at the time considered by some to be heretical. To understand why it might be considered heretical, by mainstream Christians at least, we need to examine Myatt's methodology.

Methodology

Myatt's methodology is the same as that used in his translations of chapters from the Corpus Hermeticum which was written in the same Hellenistic Greek as the New Testament. His methodology is to use some transliterations – theos instead of god/God; phaos instead of light; and so on – and to find unusual English words for Greek terms which he considers are important to preserve the meaning current at the time the writings were composed. His reasoning is that particular English words – and angel, Word, spirit, prison, heaven, hour, and Jews, come to mind vis-a-vis the gospels – have acquired or now convey meanings which are not appropriate to the time of the gospels and which thus distort the text.

One very striking example is his translation of verse 24 of chapter 3. The King James Bible has "For John was not yet cast into prison." All other English translations are similar. Myatt, however, has "And John had yet to be hurled into a guarded cage."

In his commentary on this verse he writes,

βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. A phrase deserving some consideration, for φυλακή is not 'prison' as prisons are understood today and in the past few centuries but rather 'a guarded cage', with βεβλημένος εἰς implying a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into such a cage.

A quick check of a dictionary of ancient Greek reveals that φυλάσσω – the origin of the term φυλακή – does mean "to keep guard" and figuratively, in the likes of Herodotus, implies a 'cage'.

But possibly most controversial of all is his rejection of English terms such as *Jews*, *angel* and *heaven*. In place of *Jews* he has *Judaeans*, writing in a comment on chapter 1 verse 19,

After much consideration I have translated Ἰουδαία not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by *Judaeans*, given (i) that the English terms *Jews* and *Jewish* (deriving from the 13th/14th century words *gyv*/*gyw* and *lewe*) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, *Judaea* (as does the Latin *iudaeus*); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (*iudeas*) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, *æfter iudea gecleansunge*, "according to *Judae*an cleansing."

In a long and bound to be controversial comment on the term 'heaven' he writes,

Conventionally, οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' – used in the context of the Gospels – now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods (ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί), an assumption consistent with the fact that the Evangelist explains and interprets certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51).

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term *Empyrean*, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 – παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) – and also by *shamayim*.

Which is why the standard translation of a verse such as chapter 1,19 - "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?" - is interpreted by Myatt as

For such was the evidence John gave when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?"

Heresy

His heretical interpretation is evident in so many passages it is difficult to pick out just one or two. But the following is a typical example, from chapter 3, verses 19-21, with Myatt pointing out in his commentary that in the gospel of John *the phaos* is identified as Jesus himself and thus is in the gospel of John a synonym for Jesus.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

This is conventionally translated as "And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God."

The effect of Myatt's interpretation of the gospel is that it not only humanizes Jesus but also Christianity, with Myatt writing in the Preface that,

"it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth."

He also mentions Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn in his 2017 essay *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* where, giving several examples from his translation and commentary, he writes that the gospel expresses

"the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'. {2}

His iconoclasm - heresy? - is also evident in his translation and commentary on The Beatitudes, {3} from The Gospel According To Matthew 5:1-10, and which translation is:

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Emyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Emyrean.

The translation, as he explains in his commentary, uses his interpretation of particular Greek words in the Gospel of John, rather than the conventional ones, examples in The Beatitudes being 'theos' instead of God, 'fortunate' instead of blessed, 'spiritus' instead of spirit, and Emyrean instead of Heaven; all of which he explains in detail in his commentary on John and quotes from in his commentary on the Beatitudes.

Conclusion

As to whether Myatt's translation of John, when completed, will find a niche is an interesting question given not just his iconoclastic methodology but also the esteem in which the gospels are held by Christians the vast majority of whom, were they to read his interpretation, would probably be offended even though his explanations in his commentary are extensive and scholarly.

KS
2018
v.1.05

{1} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

{2} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/dm-way-of-jesus.pdf>

{3} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>

Editorial Note:

An earlier version of this article was originally published in 2017 on the now defunct regardingdavidmyatt blog.
We have updated the URL's

This item is in the Public Domain

Notes On Expiation, Forgiveness, And Implacability

In the matter of the post-2012 writings of David Myatt, ⁽¹⁾ in which he described his rejection of National Socialism, of all types of extremism, and expounded his weltanschauung of *pathei-mathos* ⁽²⁾ with its virtues of compassion, empathy, and honour, there are only two logical approaches. Either (i) they are, as his former political opponents believe, Myatt "lying through his teeth", ⁽³⁾ a deception, and that he is still an extremist, a neo-nazi; or (ii) they are as Myatt writes expiative ⁽⁴⁾ and express what he has slowly learned from his own *pathei-mathos*: from his three decades as a neo-nazi activist and ideologue, from his decade as a Muslim, from the deaths of two loved ones, and from a scholarly study in their original language of Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Christian literature including Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristotle, Cicero, the Corpus Hermeticum, the Christian Gospels and The Fathers Of The Church such as Tertullian, Augustine and Maximus of Constantinople whose writings are included in the collections, edited by Migne, titled *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina*, also known under the title *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*. ⁽⁵⁾

In regard to the belief of his former political opponents the question they have to answer is where is their evidence, their proof? For the civilized rule is that the burden of proof is on those who accuse.

Reasonable doubt: is there any other reasonable explanation for those writings other than the accusation they are lies, a deception? Yes, that they are expiative and born of *pathei-mathos*, in support of which they are consistent over a period of some ten years and detailed both in autobiographical terms, in terms of the scholarly, poetic and other references and quotations, and particularly in terms of the philosophy expressed by means of their ontology, ethics, and epistemology.

Evidential facts: are there any evidential facts that make their accusation substantially more probable to be true rather than false? No. One such evidential fact would be a forensically verified recorded or written confession by Myatt under Police caution in which he admitted they were a deception and that he was still a neo-nazi. No such confession exists.

His accusers have provided no evidence, no proof, and It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the accusation, by whomsoever made and whatever their status, is false. Which logically leads to the questions (i) of why was the accusation not only made but propagated by the accuser(s) for nearly a decade via modern mass media, and (ii) of why no academic or journalist questioned the accusation and asked for or sought evidence for and against it?

Implacability And Peer Pressure

The most obvious and logical answer as to why the accusation was made is the implacability of Myatt's political opponents born as this is from a belief in, an adherence to, an ideology with its uncompassionate axiom of "never forget, never forgive."

A secondary answer is that it is their nature, their character, to be unforgiving and to believe they do not require evidence because they already knew, or felt, that a person was guilty as many of those who, for example, did regarding the accused in the witch-trials such as in Salem and in Scotland, with such verbal evidence as was given in such trials imaginary, emotionally or religiously biased, vindictive, hateful, or prejudiced as in being in those cases misogynistic.

The logical answer as to why the accusation has been assiduously propagated by the accuser(s) is in the second answer: because it is in their nature, their character to do so.

The logical answer to why the accusation has never been rationally investigated or challenged by others is two fold. First, the fallacies of appeal to authority and of *ad populum*. The appeal to authority is when a person, journalists and academics included, accepts what someone else says or writes because they accept or believe that those making or repeating the accusation are some sort of 'authority' on the matter; the fallacy of *ad populum* is when they, including many journalists and academics, believe that because so many others believe or accept the accusation as true it must be true.

Second, it has not been investigated because of 'peer pressure'. In this case, the 'peer pressure' is the current Establishments of the West and their shared *zeitgeist* which Establishments, as evident in the repetition of the accusation against Myatt by politicians, by the mass media and in 'reports' by government and corporate sponsored policy groups, accept the accusation as true. For the careers, the livelihood of most journalists and academics depends on not crossing certain boundaries. In the case of the witch-trials the boundaries were set by the Church and its believers; now the often unacknowledged boundaries are set by current Establishments, by the mass media and by government and corporate sponsored policy groups.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the virtues of the religion of Christianity. Of religions in general Myatt wrote:

"In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism [...]

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God, or Allah, or θεός or Nature, or δίκη or Wyrð, or Karma or ψυχή or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - ὕβρις - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead." (6)

Of Catholicism:

"Why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung - the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathei-mathos - now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults - recent and otherwise - and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence - as it has for centuries presented - aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings." (7)

In his 2013 *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillippe de Monte, and beyond." (8)

In his 2017 *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth* he provides his understanding of the Gospel of John:

"What emerges from my own translation - that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John - is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations." (9)

Considering the failure of Myatt's accusers to comment on such writings, and their failure to produce any evidence whatsoever for their accusations about his post-2012 writings, it is logical to conclude that they not only consider such writings about Christianity and forgiveness as part of the deception they accuse him of, but also that they do not believe in the virtue of forgiveness, or if they do then they are ideologically, politically, and thus cunningly selective about those few they believe such forgiveness applies to.

Changing The Narrative

Given the influence of current Western Establishments, the power of the mass media with its concerns for profits and adherence to the zeitgeist of those Establishments, and given the proliferation of national and international government, corporate and commercially sponsored policy groups - vulgarly and misleadingly termed 'think-tanks' - there is little prospect of changing the popular perception of Myatt manufactured by his political opponents, propagated by governments, policy groups and the mass media and accepted by journalists and academics.

In a 2022 interview Myatt was asked about the problem:

[Y]our many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing. (10)

Yet human nature being what it is and has been for millennia, with decades sometimes centuries of strife, repression, intolerance and censorship followed by brief periods of enlightenment where honour and reason burst forth again, there is the possibility that Myatt will be rehabilitated even given that currently the majority of people support or are indifferent to a status quo where no evidence for accusations is required in the 'special cases' manufactured by

Establishments who have managed to convince most of the populace that 'falsehood is truth' and 'dishonour is honour' as occurs every time they designate a group, or some nation, or some person or some belief or cause, as evil and the enemy of the freedom they constantly announce their Establishments uphold. Relevant examples in recent times being the rendition and torture of suspects and their detention in Guantánamo; the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan; the killing without due process of law of individuals by military drones, and the current proxy war against Russia designated by Western Establishments as the new 'evil Empire' controlled by a new 'evil tyrant' and which Establishments have gone so far as to indite the new 'evil tyrant' for 'war crimes' while their own illegalities, such as invasions and extra-judicial killings, are ignored.

That it took centuries for the Salem, the Scottish and other witch-trials to be rationally perceived for what they were is a relevant historical example of how long such rehabilitation may take.

Conclusion

A suitable summation:

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον,
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον.

Those words were written by David Myatt in 2018, ⁽⁷⁾ include an ancient doxology, and place certain accusations, and the individuals who make them, who believe them and propagate them, into the necessary perspective, human, divine, and otherwise.

JR Wright
2023

(1) Most of these writings are listed at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/03/09/david-myatt-opera-omnia/>

(2) The Ancient Greek term πάθει μάθος in this context means a personal "learning from adversity and experience". Of *pathei-mathos*, Myatt writes that an:

"intimation of wisdom - and perhaps one of the most significant - is *pathei-mathos*, with Aeschylus writing, in his *Agamemnon*, that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is *pathei-mathos*. That is, that for we human beings, *pathei-mathos* possesses a numinous, a living, authority; that the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

(3) The expression was used by a British antifascist - honoured in 2016 by the British Establishment with the award of an MBE - and repeated by him in an interview with Canadian journalist Justin Ling that was published in March 2022.

(4) One of the subjects of David Myatt's post-2012 writings is expiation; of finding some means by which the mistakes of his past, of his forty or so years of political and religious extremism, may be offset or recompensed. In his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief* - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf> - he devotes a chapter to expiation and his concerns, from which chapter this is an extract:

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is *Teshuvah* culminating in *Yom Kippur*, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal *dua* to, and reliance on, Allah *Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam*.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site [...]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal

belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὕβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance. In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise."

His answer of how to make reparation was to write about his past, about his regrets, about his decades of extremism, and about how he came to reject such extremism, political and religious; with his philosophy of pathei-mathos part of the expiation required:

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative, as are my writings concerning extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*." Some Questions For DWM, March 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf> (5)

(5) References to and quotations from those and other classical authors occur in many of Myatt's philosophical works and autobiographical writings such as in his 2012 *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/moral-problems-of-national-socialism/> - and his *Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>. There is also his translation of and extensive commentary on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

In regard to Christianity and Fathers Of the Church, there are, for example, (i) his translation of and extensive commentary on chapters from the Gospel of John - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/gospel-john-chapters1-5.pdf> - (ii) his monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf> - (iii) essays such as *Persecution And War* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/about/persecution-and-war/> - where he references *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* and *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, and his commentary of tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum. Thus in his commentary on verses 14 and 15 of Tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum he writes:

14.
enosis. ἕνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

15.
eikon. εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains.

Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

(6) *Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations in Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

(7) *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

(8) <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

(9) <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

(10) *An Uncertainty Of Knowing, Four Interviews With David Myatt*, 2023, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-four-interviews/myatt-four-interviews.pdf>