

Corpus Hermeticum

XIII

Translation And Commentary

David Myatt

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

Preface

This translation of and commentary on tractate XIII compliments my other translations of and commentaries on seven Corpus Hermeticum texts published in two volumes in 2017.

As with many of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, the Greek text of XIII presents the translator with certain problems, sometimes related to textual corruption, sometimes grammatical (should $\rho\acute{o}\iota\zeta\omega$, for example, in v. 9 be related to $\nu\iota\kappa\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\iota$ or to $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\pi\tau\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$) and many of which concern the variety of meanings which can be assigned to certain words, as for instance in the important matter of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ which is invariably translated as either "intellect" or as "mind", neither of which is satisfactory especially given what both of those English words now often denote almost two thousand years after the Greek tractates were written. My own choice here in respect of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ - as in my translations of other Hermetic tractates - is perceivoration/perceivrance, which while such English words hint at what I believe $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ meant and implied esoterically and philosophically in Hellenistic times are not entirely satisfactory either. The only reasonable alternative seems to be a transliteration, as I do in this tractate - and have done in other tractates - in respect of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ and several other Greek words.

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 'an interpretation of meaning'.

My 'interpretation of meaning' of tractate XIII is as radical as my interpretations of tractates I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, and the Gospel of John. In all these Hellenic texts I have utilized some transliterations and sought to find suitable English alternatives (sometimes obscure alternatives) for some Greek words and expressions that have traditionally been translated in a certain way. This results in a certain technical - an 'esoteric' - vocabulary which requires or may require contextual, usually metaphysical, interpretation, although quite often the interpretation is to leave some transliteration - such as $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ - 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 thus to assimilate it into the English language. Which is one reason why these translations of hermetic tractates are, in many

respects, rather different from other English versions, past and present, with such translations hopefully enabling the reader to approach and to appreciate the 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.

The references in the commentary to other tractates are to those seven translations and commentaries: I (Ποιμάνδρης), III (Ιερός Λόγος), IV (Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἢ μονάς), VI (Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ), VIII (Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται), XI (Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν) and XII (Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ).

As with my other translations of Hermetic texts I do not, as many translators do, add the names - such as Thoth or Hermes - to relevant verses of the text unless such names are in the Greek text, for the repetition of terms such as ὦ τέκνον and ὦ πάτερ generally make it plain who is speaking.

The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Tome II, 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
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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, mixion 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 perceiveration.

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 actus, 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 perceivration 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 perceivration 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 Perceivance 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 -
essentiator of engenderment - that I, Thoth, convey wordful offerings. Theos,

you the Father; you the Kyrios, you the Perceivation, 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

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Commentary

Title.

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.

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 τόν 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, γν. 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 ἔξωτερικά) 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 ἀπαλλοτριόω 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 ἀπηλλοτριώσα (with Parthey, et al) not the emendation of Nock (ἀπηνδρειώσα) 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 νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, cf. *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 νοερὰ 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 νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which

suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceivation - 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 συνεστώς. Mixture - a variant spelling of mixture, meaning melded, compounded, combined, composed of - is most suitable for συνεστώς given the metaphysical matters discussed.

a teacher to a pupil. ὧ τέκνον and ὧ 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 ἀναμιμνήσκειται, 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 ἀνοδος (anodos, 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 something manifest and/or present and/or established."

ἀναμιμνήσκω 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:

ὧ φίλ', ἐπεὶ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνέμνησας καὶ ἔειπες,
φασὶ μνηστῆρας σῆς μητέρος εἶνεκα πολλοὺς

ἐν μεγάροις ἀέκητι σέθεν κακὰ μηχανάασθαι

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. εὔ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
κάτοιδεν, ἦμος τῷ Κιθαιρῶνος τόπῳ,
ὁ μὲν διπλοῖσι ποιμνίοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐνί,
ἐπλησίαζον τῷδε τάνδρῳ τρεῖς ὅλους
ἕξ ἦρος 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 ἀναμνήσκω 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 - cf. Oedipus Tyrannus 672, ἐποικτίρω στόμα ἐλεινόν οὔτος δ' ἔνθ' ἂν ἤ στυγήσεται - nor 'pity' (cf. Oedipus Tyrannus 180, νηλέα δὲ γένεθλα πρὸς πέδω 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 perceivration. καὶ ἐμαυτὸν ἐξελήλυθα εἰς ἀθάνατον σῶμα, καὶ εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρὶν, ἀλλ' ἐγεννήθην 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, cf. 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 εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρὶν, "now I am not the/that before," and the mention of having been produced/engendered/grown by perceivration. 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 perceivration 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 ἐβαπτίσαντο 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 perceivration
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceivration

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 ἀφὴν ἔχω καὶ μέτρον, ἀλλότριος δὲ τούτων εἰμί 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 εἰμι 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 Μαΐνη, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλά 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 *οἴσθησιν* I am rather reminded of the usage of *οἴσθημα* in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1318,

οἴμοι μάλ' αὖθις: οἶον εἰσέδου μ' ἅμα κέντρων τε τῶνδ' οἴσθημα 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 ὀρῶ*. 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 ἔκπληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν 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 ἐστίν (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 ἐστίν, 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 ἐστίν 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 εὐχρωότεροι ὀρῶντο 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, γν. 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 ἥτοι ποιοῦν ἢ πάσχον. Quam definitionem significare volens, Lucretius poeta ita scripsit: Tangere enim aut tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

I am completely confused. Μέμνηνα 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 αἰ 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 αἰ 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 τετραγαμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδι δοῦσαν - implies flowing, Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποίουσαν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὀρμᾶν - 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 - qv. τὸ πρῶτον σύνητον εἶδος (the initial mixturous/composed form) in v. 3 - giving thus unmixturous, not composite.

undissolved. Reading διαλυόμενον with Parthey et al.

actuality. ἐνέργεια. Qv. tractate XII:21. The English term actuality 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. Poemander 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. Poemander 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, ὦ 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 κακῆ 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. σιώπησον...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. ἀνακαθαιρόμενος 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 γνώσις 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. βαθμός. 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 ὑμνεῖ δι' ἐμοῦ in v. 18.

vindicated. In respect of ἐδικαιώθημεν (qv. δικαιόω) 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. κοιωνέω 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 ἐστίν ὦ 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 ἐστηκὼς καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ, χαρᾷ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὕτη οὖν ἡ 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 saught 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 - qv. 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 (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. 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 Erebos) 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, δυνῶν 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 παραγνομένης. 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. νοερὰ 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 τῆ 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. Ἀκλινῆς 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. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. With ἀκλινῆς 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. τῆ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῆς ἐνεργείας. In respect of 'cræft', cf. ἀνακαθαίρο μενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν in v. 8. In

regard to noetic, qv. the comment on σοφία νοερά in v. 2. In respect of actusivity, 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 ὃ 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 ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι. νόησον τὸν περιέχοντα τὰ πάντα καὶ νόησον ὅτι τοῦ ἄσωμάτου 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 βουληθείης καὶ αὐτὸ ὅλον διαρρηξασθαι καὶ τὰ ἐκτός εἶ γέ τι ἐκτός τοῦ κόσμου θεάσασθαι, ἔξεστὶ 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. σκήνος. 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 ἔφην πλῆθος ἐστὶ περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν θεῶν, οὓς κατενόησαν οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν μὴ παρέργως μηδὲ ὡσπερ 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,

ἄμα δὲ τῆι βουλῆι ἐγένετο ἐνέργεια καὶ ὤικησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν ἣ
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 ἦτις 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*. ζωὴ δὲ καὶ φῶς ἠνωμένοι εἰσὶν ἔνθα 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 δὲ τις τὸν πρῶτον
ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν
τοῦτον εἶναι (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 οὖσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς
ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γενναῖ 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 perceivment: 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 γεννῶσι 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 οὐδέν ἐστιν ὃ μὴ ἔστιν ὁ θεός· ὅθεν οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος περὶ τὸν θεόν ἐστι· πᾶν γάρ ἐστι, 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 actuosity 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 αἰεὶ 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 φαντά ζεσθαι 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 ἀπτόν, οὐδὲ ὀρατόν, οὐδὲ
μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ
πῦρ ἐστὶν 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 ὃν 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 ἐνὸς 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 ὄγδοατικὴν 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, τινων δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὄγδοατικὴν φύσιν φωνῆι τιμὴ ἡδείαι 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 perceivation of authority. Qv. Poemandres 2, εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς ἀυθεντίας 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 Pœmandres, the authentic perceivation."

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 ἐγεγόνεε καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τύχησι χρηστῆσι ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκέκλητο, ἦτε 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 ζῶν, 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 ὕμνοῦντες 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. σῶζε 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 σῷ τὴν εὐλογίαν ταύτην λεγομένην as belonging to Thoth, not Hermes.

a more numinal perceivation. Regarding ἐπιφωτιζω, qv. v. 16, γνῶσις ἀγία, φωτισθεῖς 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 γνῶθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατήρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ δίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἢ ζωή

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. εὔχομαι. 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, ἠὺξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ᾧδ' 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 ὃν ὑπεμνηματι σάμην ἵνα μὴ ᾧμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τοὺς πολλούς.

noesis. A technical, mystical, term, qv. the comment on 'noetic sapientia' in v. 2.

Appendix

Cicero On Summum Bonum

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, as does Seneca [1], the Greco-Roman view, with a perhaps more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum thus being "the highest nobility".

◦◦◦

[1] "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

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