

Trimorphic Protennoia



Information on Trimorphic Protennoia

JOHAN D. TURNER WRITES (The Nag Hammadi Library in English, pp. 511-522): "Trimorphic Protennoia ('The Three-formed [Divine] First Thought') is, in its form, a Barbeloite treatise which has undergone both Sethian and Christian revisions. It is roughly contemporaneous with The Apocryphon of John (mid-second century C.E.), which it resembles in certain interesting ways, and is distinguished by a number of striking parallels to the Fourth Gospel and especially its prologue."



Trimorphic Protennoia Translated by John D. Turner

I AM PROTENNOIA, the Thought that dwells in the Light. I am the movement that dwells in the All, she in whom the All takes its stand, the first-born among those who came to be, she who exists before the All. She (Protennoia) is called by three names, although she dwells alone, since she is perfect. I am invisible within the Thought of the Invisible One. I am revealed in the immeasurable, ineffable (things). I am incomprehensible, dwelling in the incomprehensible. I move in every creature.

I am the life of my Epinoia that dwells within every Power and every eternal movement, and (in) invisible Lights and within the Archons and Angels and Demons, and every soul dwelling in Tartaros, and (in) every material soul. I dwell in those who came to be. I move in everyone and I delve into them all. I walk uprightly, and those who sleep, I awaken. And I am the sight of those who dwell in sleep.

I am the Invisible One within the All. It is I who counsel those who are hidden, since I know the All that exists in it. I am numberless beyond everyone. I am immeasurable, ineffable, yet whenever I wish, I shall reveal

myself of my own accord. I am the head of the All. I exist before the All, and I am the All, since I exist in everyone.

I am a Voice speaking softly. I exist from the first. I dwell within the Silence that surrounds every one of them. And it is the hidden Voice that dwells within my, within the incomprehensible, immeasurable Thought, within the immeasurable Silence.

I descended to the midst of the underworld, and I shone down upon the darkness. It is I who poured forth the water. It is I who am hidden within radiant waters. I am the one who gradually put forth the All by my Thought. It is I who am laden with the Voice. It is through me that Gnosis comes forth. I dwell in the ineffable and unknowable ones. I am perception and knowledge, uttering a Voice by means of thought. I am the real Voice. I cry out in everyone, and they recognize it (the voice), since a seed indwells them. I am the Thought of the Father, and through me proceeded the Voice, that is, the knowledge of the everlasting things. I exist as Thought for the All -- being joined to the unknowable and incomprehensible Thought -- I revealed myself -- yes, I -- among all those who recognize me. For it is I who am joined with everyone by virtue of the hidden Thought and an exalted <Voice>, even a Voice from the invisible Thought. And it is immeasurable, since it dwells in the Immeasurable One. It is a mystery; it is unrestrainable by the Incomprehensible One. It is invisible to all those who are visible in the All. It is a Light dwelling in Light.

It is we also who alone have separated from the visible world, since we are saved by the hidden wisdom, by means of the ineffable, immeasurable Voice. And he who is hidden within us pays the tributes of his fruit to the Water of Life.

Then the Son who is perfect in every respect -- that is, the Word who originated through that Voice; who proceeded from the height; who has within him the Name; who is a Light -- he revealed the everlasting things, and all the unknowns were known. And those things difficult to interpret and secret, he revealed. And as for those who dwell in Silence with the First Thought, he preached to them. And he revealed himself to those who

dwell in darkness, and he showed himself to those who dwell in the abyss, and to those who dwell in the hidden treasures, he told ineffable mysteries, and he taught unrepeatabe doctrines to all those who became Sons of the Light.

Now the Voice that originated from my Thought exists as three permanences: the Father, the Mother, the Son. Existing perceptibly as Speech, it (Voice) has within it a Word endowed with every <glory>, and it has three masculinities, three powers, and three names. They exist in the manner of Three ... -- which are quadrangles -- secretly within a silence of the Ineffable One.

It is he alone who came to be, that is, the Christ. And, as for me, I anointed him as the glory of the Invisible Spirit, with goodness. Now the Three, I established alone in eternal glory over the Aeons in the Living Water, that is, the glory that surrounds him who first came forth to the Light of those exalted Aeons, and it is in glorious Light that he firmly perseveres. And he stood in his own Light that surrounds him, that is, the Eye of the Light that gloriously shines on me. He perpetuated the Father of all Aeons, who am I, the Thought of the Father, Protennoia, that is, Barbelo, the perfect Glory, and the immeasurable Invisible One who is hidden. I am the Image of the Invisible Spirit, and it is through me that the All took shape, and (I am) the Mother (as well as) the Light which she appointed as Virgin, she who is called 'Meirothea', the incomprehensible Womb, the unrestrainable and immeasurable Voice.

Then the Perfect Son revealed himself to his Aeons, who originated through him, and he revealed them and glorified them, and gave them thrones, and stood in the glory with which he glorified himself. They blessed the Perfect Son, the Christ, the only-begotten God. And they gave glory, saying, "He is! He is! The Son of God! The Son of God! It is he who is! The Aeon of Aeons, beholding the Aeons which he begot. For thou hast begotten by thine own desire! Therefore we glorify thee: ma mo o o eia ei on ei! The Aeon of Aeons! The Aeon which he gave!"

Then, moreover, the God who was begotten gave them (the Aeons) a power of life on which they might rely, and he established them. The first

Aeon he established over the first: Armedon, Nousanios, Armozel; the second he established over the second Aeon: Phaionios, Ainius, Oroiael; the third over the third Aeon: Mellephaneus, Loios, Daveithai; the fourth over the fourth: Mousanios, Amethes, Eleleth. Now those Aeons were begotten by the God who was begotten - the Christ - and these Aeons received as well as gave glory. They were the first to appear, exalted in their thought, and each Aeon gave myriads of glories within great untraceable lights, and they all together blessed the perfect Son, the God who was begotten.

Then there came forth a word from the great Light Eleleth, and said, "I am king! Who belongs to Chaos and who belongs to the underworld?" And at that instant, his Light appeared, radiant, endowed with the Epinoia. The Powers of the Powers did not entreat him, and likewise immediately there appeared the great Demon who rules over the lowest part of the underworld and Chaos. He has neither form nor perfection, but, on the contrary, possesses the form of the glory of those begotten in the darkness. Now he is called 'Saklas', that is, 'Samael', 'Yaltabaoth', he who had taken power; who had snatched it away from the innocent one (Sophia); who had earlier overpowered her who is the Light's Epinoia who had descended, her from whom he had come forth from originally.

Now when the Epinoia of the Light realized that he (Yaltabaoth) had begged him (the Light) for another order, even though he was lower than she, she said, "Give me another order, so that you may become for me a dwelling place, lest I dwell in disorder forever." And the order of the entire house of glory was agreed upon her word. A blessing was brought for her and the higher order released it to her.

And the great Demon began to produce aeons in the likeness of the real Aeons, except that he produced them out of his own power.

Then I too revealed my Voice secretly, saying, "Cease! Desist, (you) who tread on matter; for behold, I am coming down to the world of mortals for the sake of my portion that was in that place from the time when the innocent Sophia was conquered, she who descended, so that I might thwart their aim which the one revealed by her appoints." And all were disturbed,

each one who dwells in the house of the ignorant light, and the abyss trembled. And the Archigenetor of ignorance reigned over Chaos and the underworld, and produced a man in my likeness. But he neither knew that that one would become for him a sentence of dissolution, nor does he recognize the power in him.

But now I have come down and reached down to Chaos. And I was with my own who were in that place. I am hidden within them, empowering them, giving them shape. And from the first day until the day when I will grant mighty glory to those who are mine, I will reveal myself to those who have heard my mysteries, that is, the Sons of the Light.

I am their Father, and I shall tell you a mystery, ineffable and indivulgeable by any mouth: Every bond I loosed from you, and the chains of the demons of the underworld I broke, these things which are bound on my members, restraining them.

And the high walls of darkness I overthrew, and the secure gates of those pitiless ones I broke, and I smashed their bars. And the evil force, and the one who beats you, and the one who hinders you, and the tyrant, and the adversary, and the one who is King, and the present enemy, indeed all these I explained to those who are mine, who are the Sons of the Light, in order that they might nullify them all, and be saved from all those bonds, and enter into the place where they were at first.

I am the first one who descended on account of my portion which remains, that is, the Spirit that dwells in the soul, which originated from the Water of Life, and out of the immersion of the mysteries. And I spoke, I, together with the Archons and Authorities.

For I had gone down below their language, and I spoke my mysteries to my own - a hidden mystery - and the bonds and eternal oblivion were nullified. And I bore fruit in them, that is, the Thought of the unchanging Aeon, and my house, and their Father. And I went down to those who were mine from the first, and I reached them and broke the first strands that enslaved them. Then everyone of those within me shone, and I prepared a pattern for those ineffable Lights that are within me. Amen.

The Discourse of Protennoia: One

I am the Voice that appeared through my Thought, for I am 'He who is syzygetic' since I am called 'the Thought of the Invisible One'. Since I am called 'the unchanging Speech', I am called 'She who is syzygetic'.

I am a single one, since I am undefiled. I am the Mother of the Voice, speaking in many ways, completing the All. It is in me that knowledge dwells, the knowledge of <things> everlasting. It is I who speak within every creature, and I was known by the All. It is I who lift up the Speech of the Voice to the ears of those who have known me, that is, the Sons of the Light.

Now I have come the second time in the likeness of a female, and have spoken with them. And I shall tell them of the coming end of the Aeon and teach them of the beginning of the Aeon to come, the one without change, the one in which our appearance will be changed. We shall be purified within those Aeons from which I revealed myself in the Thought of the likeness of my masculinity. I settled among those who are worthy in the Thought of my changeless Aeon.

For I shall tell you a mystery of this particular Aeon, and tell you about the forces that are in it. The birth beckons; hour begets hour, day begets day. The months made known the month. Time has gone round succeeding time. This particular Aeon was completed in this fashion, and it was estimated, and it (was) short, for it was a finger that released a finger, and a joint that was separated from a joint.

Then, when the great Authorities knew that the time of fulfillment had appeared - just as in the pangs of the parturient it (the time) has drawn near, so also had the destruction approached - all together the elements trembled, and the foundations of the underworld and the ceilings of Chaos shook, and a great fire shone within their midst, and the rocks and the earth were shaken like a reed shaken by the wind. And the lots of Fate and those who apportion the domiciles were greatly disturbed over a great thunder. And the thrones of the Powers were disturbed, since they were overturned, and their King was afraid. And those who pursue Fate paid

their allotment of visits to the path, and they said to the Powers, "What is this disturbance and this shaking that has come upon us through a Voice <belonging> to the exalted Speech? And our entire habitation has been shaken, and the entire circuit of the path of ascent has met with destruction, and the path upon which we go, which takes us up to the Archgenitor of our birth, has ceased to be established for us."

Then the Powers answered, saying, "We too are at loss about it, since we did not know what was responsible for it. But arise, let us go up to the Archgenitor and ask him." And the powers all gathered and went up to the Archgenitor. They said to him, "Where is your boasting in which you boast? Did we not hear you say, "I am God, and I am your Father, and it is I who begot you. and there is none beside me"?"

Now behold, there has appeared a Voice belonging to that invisible Speech of the Aeon which we know not. And we ourselves did not recognize to whom we belong, for that Voice which we listened to is foreign to us, and we did not recognize it; we did not know whence it was. It came and put fear in our midst and weakening in the members of our arms. So now let us weep and mourn most bitterly!

As for the future, let us make our entire flight before we are imprisoned perforce, and taken down to the bosom of the underworld. For already the slackening of our bondage has approached, and the times are cut short, and the days have shortened, and our time has been fulfilled, and the weeping of our destruction has approached us, so that we may be taken to the place we recognize. For as for our tree from which we grew, a fruit of ignorance is what it has; and also its leaves, it is death that dwells in them, and darkness dwells under the shadow of its boughs. And it was in deceit and lust that we harvested it, this (tree) through which ignorant Chaos became for us a dwelling place. For behold, even he, the Archgenitor of our birth, about whom we boast, even he did not know this Speech."

So now, O sons of the Thought, listen to me, to the Speech of the Mother of your mercy, for you have become worthy of the mystery hidden from the Aeons, so that you might receive it. And the consummation of this

particular Aeon and of the evil life has approached, and there dawns the beginning of the Aeon to come, which has no change forever.

I am androgynous. I am Mother (and) I am Father, since I copulate with myself. I copulated with myself and with those who love me, and it is through me alone that the All stands firm. I am the Womb that gives shape to the All by giving birth to the Light that shines in splendor. I am the Aeon to come. I am the fulfillment of the All, that is, Meirothea, the glory of the Mother. I cast voiced Speech into the ears of those who know me. And I am inviting you into the exalted, perfect Light. Moreover, (as for) this (Light), when you enter it, you will be glorified by those who give glory, and those who enthrone will enthrone you. You will accept robes from those who give robes, and the baptizers will baptize you, and you will become gloriously glorious, the way you first were when you were <Light>.

And I hid myself in everyone and revealed myself within them, and every mind seeking me longed for me, for it is I who gave shape to the All when it had no form. And I transformed their forms into (other) forms, until the time when a form will be given to the All. It is through me that the Voice originated, and it is I who put the breath within my own. And I cast into them the eternally Holy Spirit, and I ascended and entered my Light. I went up upon my branch and sat there among the Sons of the holy Light. And I withdrew to their dwelling place which [...] become glorious [...]. Amen.

On Fate: Two

I am the Word who dwells in the ineffable Voice. I dwell in undefiled Light and a Thought revealed itself perceptibly through the great Speech of the Mother, although it is a male offspring that supports me as my foundation. And it (the Speech) exists from the beginning in the foundations of the All.

But there is a Light that dwells hidden in Silence, and it was first to come forth. Whereas she (the Mother) alone exists as Silence, I alone am the Word, ineffable, unpolluted, immeasurable, inconceivable. It (the Word)

is a hidden Light, bearing a fruit of life, pouring forth a living water from the invisible, unpolluted, immeasurable spring, that is, the unreproducible Voice of the glory of the Mother, the glory of the offspring of God; a male virgin by virtue of a hidden Intellect, that is, the Silence hidden from the All, being unreproducible, an immeasurable Light, the source of the All, the root of the entire Aeon. It is the foundation that supports every movement of the Aeons that belong to the mighty glory. It is the foundation of every foundation. It is the breath of the powers. It is the eye of the three permanences, which exist as Voice by virtue of Thought. And it is a Word by virtue of Speech; it was sent to illumine those who dwell in the darkness.

Now behold! I will reveal to you my mysteries, since you are my fellow brethren, and you shall know them all.

(5 lines missing)

I told all of them about my mysteries that exist in the incomprehensible, inexpressible Aeons. I taught them the mysteries through the Voice that exists within a perfect Intellect, and I became a foundation for the All, and I empowered them.

The Second time I came in the Speech of my Voice. I gave shape to those who took shape, until their consummation.

The Third time I revealed myself to them in their tents as Word, and I revealed myself in the likeness of their shape. And I wore everyone's garment, and I hid myself within them, and they did not know the one who empowers me. For I dwell within all the Sovereignities and Powers, and within the angels, and in every movement that exists in all matter. And I hid myself within them until I revealed myself to my brethren. And none of them (the Powers) knew me, although it is I who work in them. Rather, they thought that the All was created by them, since they are ignorant, not knowing their root, the place in which they grew.

I am the Light that illumines the All. I am the Light that rejoices in my brethren, for I came down to the world of mortals on account of the Spirit

that remains in that which descended (and) came forth from the innocent Sophia. I came, and I delivered [...], and I went to ...

(5 lines missing)

... which he had formerly, and I gave to him from the Water of Life, which strips him of the chaos that is in the uttermost darkness that exists inside the entire abyss, that is, the thought of the corporeal and the psychic. All these I put on. And I stripped him of it, and I put upon him a shining Light, that is, the knowledge of the Thought of the Fatherhood.

And I delivered him to those who give robes - Yammon, Elasso, Amenai - and they covered him with a robe from the robes of the Light; and I delivered him to the baptizers, and they baptized him - Micheus, Michar, Mnesinous - and they immersed him in the spring of the Water of Life. And I delivered him to those who enthrone - Bariel, Nouthan, Sabenai - and they enthroned him from the Throne of Glory. And I delivered him to those who glorify - Ariom, Elien, Phariel - and they glorified him with the glory of the Fatherhood. And those who snatch away snatched away - Kamaliel, [...]anen, Samblo, and the servants of <the> great holy luminaries - and they took him into the light-place of his Fatherhood. And he received the Five seals from the Light of the Mother, Protennoia, and it was granted him to partake of the mystery of knowledge, and he became a Light in Light.

So now ...

(5 lines missing)

... I was dwelling in them in the form of each one. The Archons thought that I was their Christ. Indeed, I dwell in everyone. Indeed, within those in whom I revealed myself as Light, I eluded the Archons. I am their beloved, for in that place I clothed myself as the son of the Archgenitor, and I was like him until the end of his decree, which is the ignorance of Chaos. And among the angels I revealed myself in their likeness, and among the Powers, as if I were one of them; but among the Sons of Man, as if I were a Son of Man, even though I am Father of everyone.

I hid myself within them all until I revealed myself among my members, which are mine, and I taught them about the ineffable ordinances, and (about) the brethren. But they are inexpressible to every Sovereignty and every ruling Power, except the Sons of the Light alone, that is, the ordinances of the Father. These are the glories that are higher than every glory, that is, the Five Seals, complete by virtue of Intellect. He who possesses the Five Seals of these particular names has stripped off <the> garments of ignorance and put on a shining Light. And nothing will appear to him that belongs to the Powers of the Archons. Within those of this sort, darkness will dissolve and ignorance will die. And the thought of the creature, which is scattered, will present a single appearance and dark Chaos will dissolve and ...

(6 lines fragmentary)

... until I reveal myself to all my fellow brethren, and until I gather together all my fellow brethren within my eternal kingdom. And I proclaimed to them the ineffable Five Seals in order that I might abide in them and they also might abide in me.

As for me, I put on Jesus. I bore him from the cursed wood, and established him in the dwelling places of his Father. And those who watch over their dwelling places did not recognize me. For I, I am unrestrainable, together with my seed; and my seed, which is mine, I shall place into the holy Light within an incomprehensible Silence. Amen.

The Discourse of the Appearance: Three

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