

CORPUS HERMETICUM III: *HIEROS LOGOS*

Text based on "Corpus Hermeticum, vol. 1", Ed. Nock, A.D., Festugière, A.-J., Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1946, Repr. 1972.

(N.B. Suspected interpolations are reproduced in smaller italic script and indicated by *diploi* in the left margin.)

p.44

ἙΡΜΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

1 Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ
τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς
δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια
5 καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις.
ἦν γὰρ σκότος ἄπειρον ἐν ἀβύσσῳ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ πνεῦμα
λεπτὸν νοερόν, δυνάμει θεία ὄντα ἐν χάει. ἀνείθη δὴ φῶς
> ἅγιον καὶ ἐπάγη ὕφ' ἄμμω¹ ἐξ ὑγρᾶς οὐσίας στοιχεῖα καὶ
> θεοὶ πάντες καταδιωρῶσι² φύσεως ἐνσπόρου. 2 ἀδιο-
10 ρίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων, ἀποδιω-
ρίσθη τὰ ἐλαφρὰ εἰς ὕψος καὶ τὰ βαρέα ἐθεμελιώθη ἐφ'
ὕγρᾳ ἄμμω, πυρὶ τῶν ὅλων διορισθέντων καὶ ἀνακρεμα-
σθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι· καὶ ὥφθη ὁ οὐρανὸς ἐν κύκλοις

¹ The mss read ὕφ' ἄμμω ('beneath the sediment') which might well be corrupt (Dodd), but perhaps not. Festugière suggests (note ad loc.) that ὕφ' ἄμμω is a gloss, but it is hard to see what it should be a gloss of, or why it would have been inserted in the margin at this point. It is not necessary to accept Reitzenstein's emendation and read ὕφαμμα, even if one supposes that in the light of line 12 ὕφαμμα might have become corrupted to ὕφ' ἄμμω. In any case, in this treatise, the general idea of creation seems to be a process of emergence from below; see also Damascius *de princip.* I 323,17 ff (Ruelle) and Festugière I 45 note 5.

² I propose an emendation of the unintelligible καταδιωρῶσι (from καταδιεράω—to strain through thoroughly?) to καταδιωρῶσι. Neither verb is attested elsewhere. Reading an emphatic form of ὀράω requires only a fairly mild change of ε to ο. The sense of that verb would be that the gods both *look down upon* (καθοράω) and *clearly discern* (διοράω) the rising light and the emergence of the fertile elements. This construal suggests that a glossist insisted in the margin that the gods (who according to this creation story appear only later) beheld the spectacle of creation at this point; it may have been prompted, and is certainly parallel to, the creation vision described at the beginning of the *Poimandres*, CH 1, 4-5.

> ἐπτά καὶ θεοὶ ταῖς ἐν ἄστροις ιδέαις³ ὀπτανόμενοι σὺν
15 τοῖς αὐτῶν σημείοις ἅπασι, καὶ διηρθρώθη σὺν τοῖς ἐν ||
p.45 αὐτῷ⁴ θεοῖς, καὶ περιελίγη τὸ περικύκλιον ἀέρι, κυκλίῳ
δρομήματι πνεύματι θείῳ ὀχούμενον.

3 ἀνῆκε δὲ ἕκαστος θεὸς διὰ τῆς ἰδίας δυνάμεως
> τὸ προσταχθὲν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἐγένετο θηρία τετράποδα καὶ ἐρπετὰ
>5 καὶ ἔνυδρα καὶ πτηνὰ καὶ πᾶσα σπορὰ ἔνσπορος καὶ χόρτος
> καὶ ἄνθους παντὸς χλόῃ⁵. τὸ σπέρμα τῆς παλιγγενεσίας
> ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐσπερμολόγουν τάς τε γενέσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων
εἰς ἔργων θείων γινῶσιν καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργοῦσαν μαρ-
> τυρίαν, καὶ πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντων τῶν ὑπὸ οὐρανὸν
>10 δεσποτεῖαν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐπίγνωσιν εἰς τὸ αὐξάνεσθαι ἐν
αὐξήσει καὶ πληθύνεσθαι ἐν πλήθει, καὶ πᾶσαν ἐν σαρκὶ
> ψυχὴν διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίῳν τερασπορίας
εἰς κατοπτεῖαν οὐρανοῦ καὶ δρομήματος οὐρανίων θεῶν καὶ
ἔργων θείων καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργείας εἰς τε σημεῖα ἀγαθῶν
>15 εἰς γινῶσιν θείας δυνάμεως μοίρης ὀχλουμένης γινῶναι
> ἀγαθῶν καὶ φαύλων καὶ πᾶσαν ἀγαθῶν δαιδαλουργίαν
εὐρεῖν.

> 4 ἄρχεται αὐτῶν⁶ βιῶσαί τε καὶ σοφισθῆναι πρὸς ||
p.46 μοῖραν δρομήματος κυκλίῳν θεῶν, καὶ ἀναλυθῆναι, εἰς ὃ
> ἔσται μεγάλα ἀπομνημονεύματα τεχνουργημάτων ἐπὶ τῆς
> γῆς καταλιπόντες ἐν ὀνόματι χρόνων ἀμαύρωσιν καὶ

³ Reading ταῖς ἐν ἄστροις ιδέαις on the strength of evidence found in the MS family A, and the correction made in MS B.

⁴ Reading αὐτῷ for the uniformly attested but unintelligible αὐτῇ.

⁵ On the basis of his familiarity with *Gen 1*, the redactor found it necessary to insist also on the creation of plants and animals before the creation of man. These four lines, which were presumably copied at some point from the margin into the text, completely break up the syntax of the original text.

⁶ The reference of αὐτῶν is, presumably, to the humanity under the guidance of astrology, which, according to the redactor, is not simply a tool to discern the deities' blessings but can and should be used for the purposes of astrological magic.

πᾶσα γένεσις⁷ ἐμψύχου σαρκὸς καὶ καρποῦ σπορᾶς καὶ
>5 πάσης τεχνουργίας τὰ ἐλαττούμενα ἀνανεωθήσεται ἀνάγκη
καὶ ἀνανεώσει θεῶν καὶ φύσεως κύκλου ἐναριθμίου δρο-
μήματι.
τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἢ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις φύσει ἀνανεου-
μένη· ἐν γὰρ τῷ θείῳ καὶ ἡ φύσις καθέστηκεν.

⁷ “All generation” (πᾶσα γένεσις) must be the subject of the verb “will be renewed” (ἀνανεωθήσεται). The codd. read accusative πᾶσαν γένεσιν, which must be an early corruption due to the influence of the interpolated ἀμαύρωσιν. The emendation was already proposed by Flussas.

The Sacred Discourse of Hermes (CH III)

(Transl. Christian Wildberg)

(1) The splendor of all things is God, a divine thing and also a divine nature.

The beginning of what exists is God—mind, nature, matter, the wisdom to show forth all things. The divine is beginning and nature and activity and necessity and completion and renewal.

For there was a boundless darkness in the abyss, and there were water and pneuma, subtle and intelligent, present in Chaos by divine power.

There arose, then, a holy light, and beneath the sediment solidified

out of the watery substance elements

of a fertile nature.

and all the gods are
looking down (on it)⁸

(2) While everything was undetermined and unwrought, light things

separated off upwards and heavy things were laid as foundation

upon the wet sediment, after the wholes were separated by fire

and raised up by *pneuma* to be carried by it. Heaven became visible

in seven circles, [...] along with all their signs.

and gods being visible in the formations of stars

and heaven was entirely completed with the gods in it.

And the circumference wound itself around the air,

carried along on a circular path by divine *pneuma*.

(3) Each god, by his peculiar power, brought forth

what was ordained to him:

the generations of man

so that the the works of the gods be known

and there be active testimony to

(the works of) nature,

and a recognition of good things;

and (brought forth) each (human) embodied soul

to behold the heavens and the course of the heavenly gods

and the divine works and the activity of nature,

and to recognize the signs of good things

and discover every workmanship of good things.

There came to be four-footed animals, reptiles,

animals in water, and feathered animals as well as every

fertile seed, herbs and the green of every flower.

The seeds of rebirth the (gods) gathered in themselves.

And the multitude of men as well as the mastery over everything under the sky

so as to increase in their growth and multiply in multiplicity.

Through portent-sowing of the course of the circular gods.

For the knowledge of the divine power of

the troublesome allotment of good and bad things.

(4) And all generation⁹ of ensouled flesh

and of fruitful seed will be renewed by necessity,

by the gods' renewal and by the course of

It's the beginning of their living and scheming

against <the> fate of <the> course of <the> circular gods,

and dissolving it. For this there will be great monuments

⁸ Reading καταδιорῶσι instead of the transmitted καταδιερῶσι: "they are thoroughly straining through".

⁹ Reading nominative πᾶσα γένεσις instead of the accusative of the codd.

nature's numbered circle. For the entire cosmic mixture,
which is renewed by nature, is the divine.
For nature in fact rests firmly in the divine.

of <their> craftsmanship on the earth, after they
have left behind, in the name of times (?), darkness
and the inferior kinds of each craft.