



The Physis Sorcery of Naos

The septenary system, or tradition, of the modern occult group the Order of Nine Angles (ONA/O9A) was first publicly outlined in their 1980s text *Naos - A Practical Guide To Modern Magick*. The text is, interestingly, completely devoid of the satanism that the O9A has come to be associated with, and, as the *Introduction* states, the first part is a "guide to becoming an Adept and is essentially 'Internal magick' - that is, magick [sorcery] used to bring about personal development (of consciousness and so on) [...] Internal magick is the following of the Occult path from Initiation to Adeptship and beyond, and in the Septenary tradition this path is known as the seven-fold Way."

Furthermore, in the 'Notes on Esoteric Tradition' of *Naos* it is directly stated that "the goal of sentient life is to [...] become part of the acausal (i.e. 'immortal' when seen from the causal). Initiation, and 'the Mysteries' (i.e. the seven-fold Way), are the means to achieve this."

Of particular interest is the fact that, in *Naos*, the internal sorcery used to bring about personal development is also called 'physis magick':

"Physis is divided into seven stages and these seven stages may be regarded as representing the varying degrees of insight attained. In terms of traditional magick, the stages represent Initiation, Second Degree Initiation, External Adept, Internal Adept, Master/Mistress (or High Priest/Priestess), Magus and Immortal. Each stage is associated with a sphere of the Septenary Tree of Wyrds."

Physis is a clear use of the ancient Greek term φύσις, which term occurs frequently in the Pymander (also known as the Pœmandres) section of the ancient Greek text of the Corpus Hermeticum, dating from around the second century CE and first published in 1554 CE, and which Pymander discourse also describes, in some detail, a system of seven spheres; a journey, a quest - an anados, ἀνοδος - up through these spheres in order that the last stage, that of an immortal, may be achieved; and how the individual is changed in the process of journeying through the spheres.

It therefore would seem difficult to disagree with the claim, made in *Naos* and other O9A texts of the same period, that the O9A's septenary system - with its seven-fold Tree of Wyrds - represents, at least in part, the 'genuine Western occult tradition', in contrast to the ten-fold Kabbalah based system used by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, by Aleister Crowley, and by all other, non-O9A, modern occultists, and which ten-fold Kabbalah based system is not only over a thousand years later than the Hellenic septenary system but employs Hebrew terminology in contrast to the Greek terminology of the earlier hermetic tradition.

However, obvious as it should have been to learned students of the occult and to those academics researching esotericism, this connection to ancient hermeticism was - with one possible exception {1} - overlooked for over thirty years, with the O9A's septenary system, even as late as 2012, dismissed - in a purportedly academic work, no less - as merely "a replacement for the Kabbalah [...] a non-Semitic version of the Kabbalistic Sepherot." {2}

It was only after the publication, in 2013, of Myatt's translation of and commentary on the Pymander section of the Corpus Hermeticum {3} that others, outside of the O9A, began to realize that the O9A claim had some historical merit after all, since Myatt's translation and commentary places the O9A's septenary system into its correct historical and esoteric perspective, with Myatt's learned commentary explaining much both about the septenary system - the hebdomad - which forms an important part of the hermetic Pymander text, and about the anados, the journey through the spheres to the final goal of immortality. {4}

Physis, The Corpus Hermeticum, And The Ancient Hermetic Quest For Immortality

At the beginning of Pymander text of the Corpus Hermeticum the seeker says that they desire "to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." {5} The seeker is instructed, later on, by Pœmandres, that, in respect of humans and their physis, "distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal" {6} - and thus have the opportunity to become immortal.

Regarding physis, Myatt notes in his commentary that,

"According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all physis – the being, nature, character, of beings – their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as – re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the seven spheres." {7}

Asked by the seeker about the anados – the way to immortality through the seven spheres – Pœmandres replies, in rather mystical terms, that:

"First, the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed with the semblance it had disappearing and its now non-functioning ethos handed over to the daimon, with the body's perceptions returning to their origin, then becoming separated with their purpose, transplanted, and with desire and eagerness journeying toward the physis devoid of logos. Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and – in the second one – those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

[Thus] they become united with theos. For to so become of theos is the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge." {8}

This 'becoming united with theos', however, does not mean that mortals 'become god' or become 'a living god'. Instead, as Pœmandres has made clear (for example in section 26) it means transcending, beyond mortal death, to the two immortal realms that exist beyond the seven spheres, one of which is that of the 'ogdoadic physis', and both of which are described in terms of emanations of theos.

Having thus been instructed and having understood, the seeker himself goes on to ask, of other humans, "you who are earth-bound, why do you embrace death when you have the means to partake of immortality?" {9}

R. Parker
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{1} Connell Monette. *Mysticism in the 21st Century*. Sirius Academic Press, 2013. ISBN 978-1940964003

{2} Senholt, Jacob. *Secret Identities in The Sinister Tradition*, in Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen (eds), *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*. Oxford University Press, 2012, p.253

{3} David Myatt. *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei*. 2013. Included in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, ISBN 9781976452369

Myatt's translation and commentary is also available as a gratis open access document at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{4} My review of Myatt's translation, published in 2013, is reproduced in Appendix 2 of the full text of at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210515224203/https://omega9alpha.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/perusing-7fw-o9a-v3ab1.pdf>.

{5} *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander*, translation, section 3. All the quotations from the Pymander text given here are taken from Myatt's translation.

As Myatt notes in his commentary on this passage, in reference to theos:

"Does θεός here [γυνῶναι τὸν θεόν] mean God, a god, a deity, or the god? God, the supreme creator Being, the only real god, the father, as in Christianity? A deity, as in Hellenic and classical paganism? The god, as in an un-named deity – a god – who is above all other deities? Or possibly all of these? And if all, in equal measure, or otherwise?

The discourse of Pœmandres, as recounted in the tractate, suggests two things. First, that all are meant or suggested – for example, Τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ἔφη, ἐγὼ νοῦς ὁ σοὺς θεός could be said of Pœmandres as a god, as a deity, as the god, and also possibly of God, although why God, the Father – as described in the Old and New Testaments – would call Himself Pœmandres, appear in such a vision, and declare what He declares about θεός being both male and female in one person, is interesting. Second, that the knowledge that is revealed is of a source, of a being, that encompasses, and explains, all three, and that it is this knowing of such a source, beyond those three conventional ones, that is the key to 'what is real' and to apprehending 'the physis of beings'. Hence, it is better to transliterate θεός – or leave it as θεός – than to use god; and a mistake to use God, as some older translations do."

[6} Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, translation, section 15.

[7} Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, commentary on section 24.

[8} Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, translation, section 24-25.

[9} Mercurii Trismegisti Pymander, translation, section 28.

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