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A NEW PROPOSAL FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE HERMETIC GOD POIMANDRES

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What I offer here is a case for a new solution to a problem that has plagued scholars of the Hermetica for centuries: whence did the revealer-divinity Poimandres of the first treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (*CH*) derive his name and, with that, his being?

Attempts at a solution fall into two basic groups corresponding to the two cultural soils of tradition in which Hermetism is rooted, that which proposes a Greek origin for the name, and those which propose an Egyptian origin. Both groups share the view, however, that the name Poimandres did not have an independent history antedating its appearance in *CH* I but was coined *ad hoc* by or for the author of the Hermetic treatise. The awkward problems occasioned by this view of the name's origin as an artificial construct, a name with no real and close connection to the environment of living Graeco-Egyptian onomastics, are obviated by the new proposal. Behind the Hermetic god Poimandres lurks an actual divinity with a vibrant cult in late Hellenistic and early Roman Egypt.

The Greek solution, championed in modern times particularly by Richard Reitzenstein, advocates a derivation from ποιμήν and ἀνήρ and has the name mean “shepherd of men”.¹ Reitzenstein and his followers point to passages in *CH* XIII and in a treatise of the alchemist Zosimos of Panopolis (later 3rd to early 4th century A.D.) where it appears clear, in what are all but certainly punning allusions to the name (and to *CH* I as the context in which they found the name), that the name Poimandres was, or at least could be, interpreted as having this meaning.²

There is nothing, however – or, at the very least, nothing at all specific – in *CH* I to indicate that the author intended such a meaning for the name.³ It may simply be a matter of later emergence, in *CH* XIII

¹ Richard Reitzenstein, *Poimandres. Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1904) 8 with n. 1, 32; idem with H. H. Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland* (SBW 7; Leipzig & Berlin, 1926) 9–10; idem, review of Walter Scott, *Hermetica* II (see n. 5 below), *Gnomon* 3 (1927) 267–268. Among those who follow Reitzenstein in favouring the Greek derivation are Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* I. *Die mythologische Gnosis* (3. Aufl.; Göttingen, 1964) 344; H. Gundel, Poimandres, *PW* XXI 1193.1–2; Ernst Haenchen, *Aufbau und Theologie des ‘Poimandres’*, *ZThK* 53 (1956) 152–53; Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis. The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson; San Francisco, 1983 [1980]) 26; B. A. Pearson, *Jewish Elements in Corpus Hermeticum I (Poimandres)*, *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (EPRO 91; ed. R. van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren; Leiden, 1981) 340 n. 12; and Jörg Büchli, *Der Poimandres: Ein paganisiertes Evangelium. Sprachliche und begriffliche Untersuchungen zum 1. Traktat des Corpus Hermeticum* (WUNT, 2. Reihe, 27; Tübingen, 1987) 15–16.

² *CH* XIII, after earlier (§ 15) mentioning Poimandres by name and in a context that suggests direct reference to *CH* I (e.g., by identifying Poimandres as ὁ τῆς ἀθηνείας νοῦς as does *CH* I §§ 2, 30), further on (§ 19) has Hermes Trismegistos instruct his initiand Tat that Λόγον . . . τὸν σὸν ποιμαίνει ὁ Νοῦς (Note 83 in the Nock–Festugière edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum* [II 217–8] remarks *ad loc.*: “L’auteur fait dériver Ποιμάνδρης de ποιμήν, ποιμαίνω, et ἀνδρας.”) In his *Τελευταία Ἀποχή* (§ 8) Zosimos orders his addressee Theosebeia: ὅταν δὲ ἐπιγνῶς σαντὴν τελειωθεῖσαν, τότε καὶ (ἐπιτύχουσα) τῶν φυσικῶν τῆς ὕλης κατάπτυσον καὶ καταδραμοῦσα ἐπὶ τὸν Ποιμένανδρα καὶ βαπτισθεῖσα τῷ κρατῆρι ἀνάδραμε ἐπὶ τὸ γένος τὸ σόν. (I cite the superior text offered by Festugière in *La révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste* I. *L’astrologie et les sciences occultes* [Paris, 1986 (1950)] 368, replacing the earlier Berthelot–Ruelle edition.) The form in which Zosimos cites the name – Ποιμένανδρα, without the syncopation of -ev- posited by the theory of Greek derivation for the first element of the original form Ποιμάνδρης and with a third declension ending on the second element – makes it clear that he wants Theosebeia to see ποιμήν + ἀνήρ, “shepherd-man”, in the name Poimandres. On this passage and on Zosimos’ dependence on *CH* I see Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes. A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge etc., 1986) 122–123, 125.

³ Reitzenstein proposed the theory, first in his *Poimandres* 11–13, 32–36, and later summarily in his *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus* 10, that among the many details that the *Shepherd* (Ποιμήν) of Hermas adapted from *CH* I in some earlier form or other is the revelatory being who appears σχήματι ποιμενικῷ in *Vis.* V 1–3 and after whom the Christian work is named; similarly Haenchen, *Aufbau und Theologie des ‘Poimandres’* 153 n. 6. Even if this theory were true, however – and it is doubtful enough (to select but two scholars, Gustave Bardy, *Le Pasteur d’Hermetas et les livres hermétiques*, *RB* 20 [1911] 391–407, and Martin Dibelius, *Der Offenbarungsträger im ‘Hirten’ des Hermas*, *Harnack-Ehrung. Beiträge zur*

and in Zosimos, of the common phenomenon of a Greek meaning foisted upon a word of foreign extraction for which existence in Greek transliteration and the Greek passion for etymology – together, more often than not, with ignorance as to its actual and original meaning – combined to ensure that a Greek derivation be teased from the name meaningful enough in a Greek cultural milieu to be gratifying.⁴ But the silence from the author of *CH I* himself is obviously very inconvenient to the view that the name Poimandres was coined by or for him with this intended meaning, since one would in that case expect him to have been forthcoming with some direct reference to and/or exploitation of this intended meaning for a name his readership had never encountered before. Critics of the Greek derivation hypothesis rightly stress this as a substantial chink in its armour. They also point out that with the presupposition of Greek coinage it is problematic that the form Ποιμάνδρης (genitive -δρου *CH I* §§ 7, 30) violates the rules of proper Greek onomastics. Reitzenstein explains the malformation as owing its existence to avoidance of convergence with the name Ποίμανδρος attested as possessed by the mythical founder of Tanagra in Boeotia, but other properly-formed options of equivalent or potentially equivalent meaning existed (Ποιμάνωρ or Ποιμενάνωρ). One is left wondering why the author of *CH I* did not choose one of them but chose an un-Hellenic barbarism instead.⁵

To turn now to the hypotheses favouring an Egyptian derivation of the name Poimandres, the earliest to advocate such an etymology was, it seems, Frank Granger. Though he is willing to entertain the possibility that the *Corpus Hermeticum* existed from the start in both Coptic and Greek, it is Granger's preferred view that the corpus was originally composed in Coptic, and he proposes that Ποιμάνδρης is a Greek transliteration of what was an original Coptic πηῖτρε, “the witness”. He posits a mythological background for this original meaning of the name in the role of Thoth as adjudicator of the quarrel of

Kirchengeschichte ihrem Lehrer Adolf von Harnack zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstage (7. Mai 1921) dargebracht von einer Reihe seiner Schüler [Leipzig, 1921] 112–114, will have none of it) – it would prove nothing about what the Hermetist intended in Poimandres' name. (For his part Büchli, *Der Poimandres* 20–21, posits the influence of the shepherd-motif going in the reverse direction.) Haenchen (p. 152) argues, as equally Büchli (p. 15), that Poimandres as “Hirtenmann” makes him a “Schutzgott” and that this role of his is alluded to in Poimandres' statement (§ 2) σύνειμί σοι πανταχοῦ and in the god's protective remarks at the end of § 22, but these passages are, to say the least, at best extremely tenuous support.

⁴ Though I do not think that the proposal for the Coptic origin of the name Poimandres presented by Peter Kingsley is the correct one, it is one of the great merits of his, the most recent article devoted to the subject, Poimandres: The Etymology of the Name and the Origins of the Hermetica, *JWCI* 56 (1993) 1–24, that it recognizes that a Greek etymology and an Egyptian etymology are not mutually exclusive; the former may overlie the latter (Kingsley, Poimandres 3, 11–15, a fine discussion, citing excellent examples). For other examples, involving the names of Egyptian divinities proved to have a gratifying Greek significance and/or origin note Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* § 2: “Isis” means “knowledge” (Ἰσις < the ἴσ- or εἰσ- stems of εἰδέναι + -σις) and § 60: “Isis” means “hastening with knowledge” (Ἰσις < ἕσθαι μετ' ἐπιστήμης); § 61: “Osiris” means “holy (and) sacred” (Ὀσίρις < ὄσιος (κοιλ) ἱερός), together with J. Gwyn Griffiths' comments, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (University of Wales, 1970) 258–259, 515–516, 517 (here noting the Egyptian etymology for Osiris given earlier in § 10).

⁵ Reitzenstein's explanation is at *Poimandres* 8 n. 1. Critics of the Greek derivation hypothesis include Frank Granger, The Poemands of Hermes Trismegistus, *JThS* 5 (1904) 395–412, particularly p. 400; Walter Scott, *Hermetica. The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus II. Notes on the Corpus Hermeticum* (Oxford, 1925) 15; Kingsley, Poimandres 3. For the onomastic problem posed by the form Ποιμάνδρης and for the alternative options available the discussion by C. F. Georg Heinrici, *Die Hermes-Mystik und das Neue Testament* (Leipzig, 1918) 15–16 and n. 1, presented with the aid of the eminent Classical philologist and grammarian of Indo-European languages Karl Brugmann, is particularly thorough, though Brugmann's suggestion that the element -μάνδρης in the name Ποιμάνδρης, syncopated from Ποιμενομάνδρης, reflects the name of a divinity worshipped in Asia Minor (on whom see [A.] Burckhardt, Mandros [oder Mandra], PW XIV 1042.19–1043.20) is unlikely on a number of grounds, not the least of which is the difficulty of explaining how and why so obscure and alien a divinity should appear in a document from so strongly Egyptian a milieu as Hermetism. (Büchli, *Der Poimandres* 16, finds Brugmann's hypothesis attractive, though with a twist of his own.) On Ποίμανδρος see [O.] Höfer, Poimandros, Roscher's *Lexikon* III 2601.13–2602.12; Gerhard Radke, Poimandros, PW XXI 1207.52–1209.52; W. Pape & G. Benseler, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen* (3. Aufl.; Graz, 1959 [1911]) 1216 s. v. The onomastically properly formed names Ποιμάνωρ and Ποιμενάνωρ available as alternatives to Ποιμάνδρης were never possessed by anyone, as a glance at Pape–Benseler s. vv. shows (though the former occurs as a common noun in Aeschylus, *Persians* 241), so that there was no reason to avoid them on the grounds Reitzenstein posits for avoidance of Ποίμανδρος.

Horus and Seth, though in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, he holds, Hermes/Thoth is not himself the witness, but rather the herald of the “witness” Poimandres. Sharing as he does the once common but untenable assumption that ΠΗΠΤΡΕ/Ποιμάνδρης was the title not only of *CH I* but of the whole of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Granger finds support for his proposed etymology in what he holds to be allusions to the Egyptian myth and to heraldic testimony from the Hermetic Hermes in *CH XIII* 13 ἵνα μὴ ὦμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντός εἰς τοὺς πολλούς and in *CH III* § 3 τὰς . . . γενέσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἔργων θείων γνῶσιν καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργοῦσαν μαρτυρίαν.⁶

It is not surprising that Granger’s proposal never won acceptance. Leaving aside the dubious value of the cited passages as evidence for influence of the myth of Thoth as arbitrator in the quarrel of Horus and Seth, there is nothing whatsoever in *CH I* – to which it is now clear, as it was not to Granger, that we must restrict ourselves if the name Poimandres was an *ad hoc* Hermetic creation – to support the role of Poimandres as “the witness”. What is more, anyone who knows the early history of Coptic literature knows how utterly unlikely it is, on a number of grounds, that *CH I* (let alone the whole of the *Corpus Hermeticum*) was composed originally in Coptic, not even on the view, adhered to by Granger but shared by no one now, that the corpus is of Christian origin.⁷ It is fair to say that Granger’s proposal for a Coptic etymology for the name Poimandres is improbable.

All the other proposals positing an Egyptian origin for the name Poimandres equally suggest a Coptic etymology. They all wisely abandon Granger’s hypothesis of a Coptic original for *CH I*. But the general improbability remains that an author would coin or have someone coin for it the name Poimandres from Coptic. This improbability pertains not primarily on the grounds offered by the advocates of the Greek derivation hypothesis, that Greek readers could not have understood the name and would not have had a clue as to its Coptic origin.⁸ Rather it is that early Coptic literature, including texts in “Old” Coptic, is replete with bizarre names, and many of them have an ultimately Egyptian origin, but they are never formed directly from Coptic. It is unlikely that the name Poimandres in *CH I* is a lone exception.

One thing, at least, the two other Coptic derivations seem to have in their favour is that they both claim a solid grounding in *CH I* itself, something all prior solutions, whether Greek or Coptic, sorely lack. They both present Coptic etymologies which see in ὁ τῆς ἀύθεντίας νοῦς, the phrase which Poimandres uses to describe himself when he first introduces himself (*CH I* § 2), a Greek translation of the Coptic etymology.

The first of the two new Coptic derivations stems from the eminent Egyptologist Francis Llewellyn Griffith, who, consulted by Scott, proposed that Ποιμάνδρης is a Greek transliteration of Coptic ΠΕΙΜΕ ΠΗΗ with the literal meaning “the knowledge of the Sun-god”, and that, in the Greek phrase which quali-

⁶ Granger, *The Poemandres of Hermes Trismegistus* 398–402. Granger prints ΠΗΠΤΡΕ as ΠΗΠΤΡΕ, which evidently represents (so too Scott, *Hermetica* II 16, assumes) a proposed vocalization of the Coptic intended to demonstrate how closely the Greek Πο-μ-ανδρης is or could be a transliteration thereof. (This may account for why Granger consistently renders Ποιμάνδρης with “Poemandres”, eschewing the diphthong, throughout his article.) But the form ΠΗΠΤΡΕ is Granger’s own artificial creation, a back-formation from the very Greek name it is meant to explain; the word is never (and could never be) written this way by Coptic scribes, and in any case the Greek Πο-μ-ανδρης could not possibly be a phonetically representative replication of the Coptic supralinear strokes.

⁷ For the early history and development of Coptic and literature in Coptic see, for example, Siegfried Morenz, *Das Koptische, Handbuch der Orientalistik I, i (Ägyptologie)*, 1 (*Ägyptische Schrift und Sprache*) (Leiden, 1959) 90–93; Jan Quaegebeur, *De la préhistoire de l’écriture copte*, *OLP* 13 (1982) 125–36; Helmut Satzinger, *Die altkoptischen Texte als Zeugnisse der Beziehungen zwischen Ägyptern und Griechen, Graeco-Coptica. Griechen und Kopten im byzantinischen Aegypten* (ed. Peter Nagel; Halle, 1984) 137–146; Tito Orlandi, *La traduzioni dal greco e lo sviluppo della letteratura copta*, *ibid.* 181–203.

⁸ Reitzenstein, review of Scott, *Hermetica* II, 268; Haenchen, *Aufbau und Theologie des ‘Poimandres’* 152; Büchli, *Der Poimandres* 15. Reitzenstein, 268 n. 1, also points out that, on the reckoning that the name was coined from Coptic and (as is true of all the Coptic origin hypotheses) that the initial letter of the name represents the Coptic definite article, it is odd that in *CH I* the name is always additionally accompanied by the Greek definite article as well. The author’s readership may not have been aware of this doubling, but the author himself certainly would if the name was his own creation. I shall offer a reason for the presence of the Greek definite article later.

fies the name, νοῦς renders εἰμε and ἀθθεντία renders ρη.⁹ A partly different Coptic etymology was later proposed by Ralph Marcus. While he thought Griffith's πειμε satisfactory, he found ἄρη difficult and proposes a derivation from Coptic πειμε ἄρηπτερο, "the reason of sovereignty" – i.e., with ἄρηπτερο, literally "kingdom, reign" then rendered into Greek with ἀθθεντία. Marcus holds this Coptic original to have been, in turn, an attempt to render what still more originally was the Stoic technical term for the rational part of the soul, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, "the ruling (element)". As if this chain from Greek rendered into Coptic rendered back into Greek were not complexity enough, to get a closer Coptic approximation to Greek Ποιμάνδρης, Marcus further proposes that πειμε ἄρηπτερο "[i]n broad phonetic transcription would be *peimentmentero*" and "[b]ecause of the reduplication of the syllable *ment*, it would not be unlikely for haplophony to occur, giving a form *peimentero*".¹⁰

The improbabilities inherent in Marcus' hypothesis are patent enough, and Peter Kingsley makes short shrift of it.¹¹ Kingsley himself offers a refinement of the Griffith etymology, with the more fulsome genitive particle ἄρηπτε substituted for Griffith's ἄρη-, partly on the grounds that ἄρηπτε ρη brings us closer to -νδρης than Griffith's ἄρη.¹² Kingsley mounts an impressive defense of the essential features of the Griffith etymology (εἰμε rendered by νοῦς, ρη by ἀθθεντία), demonstrating with formidable erudition that the Coptic verb εἰμε frequently translates Greek νοεῖν; that Re/Helios frequently enjoys the status of ἀθθεντία, "supreme authority"; that the Classical Egyptian personifications Sj3, "Knowledge", and Hw, "Command", as associates or sons of Re might underlie the Coptic πειμε ἄρηπτε ρη and that the common affiliation of Sj3 with Thoth and the equation of Thoth with the heart (= the νοῦς) of Re would make the appearance of Thoth, the Egyptian Hermes, in CH I as "the intelligence of Re" perfectly understandable.¹³

This is all certainly very attractive, but the Griffith Coptic derivation hypothesis' claim that ὁ τῆς ἀθθεντίας νοῦς is a Greek translation of the Coptic original in the name Poimandres has its own specific problems. As Kingsley himself notes,¹⁴ no such expression as πειμε ἄρη- or ἄρηπτε ρη is attested in Coptic, whether in the so-called "Old" Coptic or in the newer; the phrase is in fact an utterly artificial creation.¹⁵ The verb εἰμε may, as Kingsley points out, translate νοεῖν, but the *noun* εἰμε, rare enough in itself (and mostly Bohairic), never renders νοῦς; one expects, rather, either νοῦς or, for a Coptic word of Egyptian origin, ρητ, which is attested as rendering νοῦς. Moreover, as Griffith points out,¹⁶ ρηπτε (or ρε) does occur without the definite article in late Egyptian (Demotic or "Old" Coptic), but it is rarely, largely because by the early Roman imperial period the god Re is increasingly becoming "the Sun" or "the god Sun" (hence Griffith's translation of ἄρηπτε, in his suggested Coptic etymology, with "the

⁹ Scott, *Hermetica* II 16–17. In his study of Hellenistic Judaism and the Hermetica C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London, 1935) 99 n. 1, accepts Griffith's etymology; similarly later in *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1954) 30 (with n. 2)–31.

¹⁰ Ralph Marcus, The Name *Poimandrēs*, *JNES* 8 (1949) 40–43, particularly pp. 42–43.

¹¹ Poimandres (see n. 4 above) 4 n. 15. Kingsley unfairly brands Marcus' proposal "based on some very confused ideas about Greek philosophical terminology". The term τὸ ἡγεμονικόν is indeed what Marcus avers it to have been. The problems with Marcus' etymology lie elsewhere.

¹² Poimandres 5. Kingsley (5 n. 19) owes this refinement to Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, 1987) 450. Layton remarks: "Its [*viz.* the name Poimandres'] etymology has not been discovered . . . 'Poimandres' superficially resembles three words: Greek *poimēn* 'shepherd'; the Greek stem *andr-* 'man'; and Coptic *p-eime nte* 'the knowledge of'." These statements suggest that he found none of the proposed etymologies, Greek or Coptic, convincing.

¹³ Poimandres 5–10.

¹⁴ Poimandres 7.

¹⁵ It was doubtless for this reason that Bentley Layton (see n. 12), himself an expert Coptologist, declined to invest any faith in it. It was probably equally for this reason that others with expertise in Coptic (e.g., Kurt Rudolph and Birger Pearson cited in n. 1) favour the Greek derivation hypothesis over any of the Coptic ones.

¹⁶ In Scott, *Hermetica* II 16.

Sun-god”, not with “Re”).¹⁷ When Griffith claims that “ϖΗ without the article would have a more learned and solemn appearance than the ordinary Π-ϖΗ” it is simply special pleading; for solemnity one would rather expect ΠϖΗ.

In sum, all of these proposed etymologies, whether Greek or Coptic, present problems which make it improbable that any one of them represents the truth about the origin of the name Poimandres. Most of these problems ultimately stem from the universal presupposition that the name was coined *ad hoc* by or for the author of *CH I* and that it is thus onomastically an artificial creation. In fact, as I stated at the outset, behind the name Poimandres lurks a real and actual divinity of Hellenistic and early Roman period Egypt. This is, indeed, exactly what we would expect to find to have been the case with Poimandres: all the other *dramatis personae* of the *Hermetica* – Hermes Trismegistos/Thoth, Asklepios/Imouthes, Isis and her son Horus, Tat (Thoth), Ammon/Amun, and some others – are actual contemporary divinities with a living cult in Egypt, not artificial creations.¹⁸

There were several things true of Poimandres’ native Egyptian predecessor that conspired to keep the Hermetic god’s real identity hidden. In the first place, the Egyptian deity’s cult, centred in the Fayyum where it originated, was, to judge from the surviving evidence, restricted to that area and, however enormously popular there, does not seem to have spread beyond it. Secondly, outside the *Corpus Hermeticum* and those, like Zosimos, dependent on it, the evidence attesting to the god and his cult is epigraphic and papyrological, not literary, and thus is not widely known. Lastly, like his compatriot divinities Kamephis and Arnebeschenis, mentioned by name in two Hermetic extracts preserved by John of Stobi, Poimandres’ originally Egyptian name was Hellenized by various transcriptions into Greek, but his relatively obscure local status meant that his name never achieved the more standardized, universally accepted Greek form achieved by the more famous among his fellows in the *Hermetica* like Ammon, Isis, or Horus in the list enumerated above, and his person never had bestowed upon it the Greek identity that made Thoth a Hermes or Imouthes an Asklepios and that thus assured their wider familiarity in a Hellenocentric world.¹⁹

I proceed first by listing all known pre-Hermetic instances of the Egyptian god’s name in Greek dress together with a description of the context in which they occur and details as to provenance and date, within the broader parameters of the Fayyum and the Ptolemaic period that apply to all of them. I shall then briefly trace the roots of the cult into its earlier, Pharaonic Egyptian context and then turn to the more important issue here, under what circumstances this Egyptian divinity became a god of the *Hermetica* and why his name has the form Ποιμάνδρης there.

The list is as follows:

1) Πραμαρρη̅ς – from Soknopaiou Nesos (probably), dated 104 B.C. Stele showing the god, with uraeus-serpent on his brow and grasping a *w3s*-sceptre, seated behind Souchos (Sobk, the crocodile-god who was lord of the Fayyum). Below, a dedicatory inscription from the members of a cult-society of the god ([οἱ ἐκ τῆ]ς [με]γάλης συνόδου Πραμαρρη̅[ί]ους – or, perhaps, better, Πραμαρρη̅[ί]ους – θεοῦ μεγάλου) whose priest for life, Eirenaios, son of Eirenaios, the inscription goes on to tell us, was the συγγενής of the man currently serving as ἐπιμελητής and thus himself a man of high standing, well connected to the power elite.

¹⁷ Kingsley, *Poimandres* 5 n. 18, asserts that “it is hardly true that omission of the article in such a case” – i.e., in the case of ἡ- or ἡτϵ ϖΗ – “is out of the ordinary”, but the proper names Kingsley cites in support from Hermann Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen*, and Erich Lüddeckens (*et al.*), *Demotisches Namenbuch*, while most are from Late Egyptian contexts, were nevertheless formed after Classical Egyptian models or precedents, not *ex nihilo* in Coptic.

¹⁸ See Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* (above n. 2) 32–33.

¹⁹ On Kamephis (*Stobaei fragmentum* XXIII §32) = *K3-Mwt-f* see the Nock–Festugière edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum* III clxii; H(elmuth) Ja(cobsohn), Kamutef, *LdAe* III 309–310. On Arnebeschenis (*Stobaei fragmentum* XXVI §9) = *Hr-nb-Sḥn* see J(an) Q(uaegebeur), Harnebeschenis, *LdAe* II 998–999. Arnebeschenis’ experience with multiple Greek transcription of his name parallels that of the god behind the Hermetic Poimandres, and for the same reasons: he is a local god (Horus of Letopolis) with no international connections and no Greek identity.

2) Πρεμαρρήης – from Soknopaiou Nesos, dated 104 B.C. Dedicatory inscription from one Dionysos, son of Demetrios, his wife Thases, daughter of Philon, and their children, to Isis Sononais and to Harpokhrates and our god (Ἄρποχράτη καὶ Πρεμα[ρ]ρεῖ, θεοῖς Εὐχαρίστοις) – the latter as her synnaoi? – recording the assumption of the cost for a direct road from the temple of Premarres (Πρεμαρρείους) to other locales and for an altar.

3) Φραμαρῆης – from Hawara, of uncertain date. Stele with relief showing the god, wearing the crown of Lower Egypt, seated behind another divinity, probably Souchos/Sobk as in 1), and with a dedication Φραμαρῆτι θεῷ μεγάλῳ μεγάλῳ from one Akhilion, son of Akousilos.

4) Πρεαμαρῆης – from Hawara, reign of Ptolemy XIII Neos Dionysos. Stele with relief showing the god seated in a chapel on top of which two crocodiles are sprawled. The god wears royal headdress and holds the *w3s*-sceptre; behind the chapel stands Isis. Below the relief, a heavily damaged dedicatory inscription [Πρ]εαμαρρεῖ, probably in conjunction with Souchos/Sobk, from one Petenephies, whose father was a Prophet of Souchos/Sobk.

5) Πρεεμαρῆης – from Euhemeria, probably 172–170 B.C. Ex-voto dedication Πρεεμαρῆτι θεῷ μεγάλῳ of a propylon in an unnamed temple by one Nekhthnibis, son of Sokomenis, and his sons.

6) Πρεμανρῆης – of uncertain provenance (Gurob?) and date (3rd century B.C.?). Papyrus tax account of palm orchards mentioning one such orchard associated with an altar of Premanres (Πρεμανρέους) in the village of Apollonias.

7) Πορεμανρῆης – Philadelphia, probably late in the reign of Ptolemy II. Memorandum to Zenon from Herakleides, who is probably the superintendent of the pig-breeding industry at Philadelphia known from elsewhere, requesting Zenon to help underwrite the construction of a palisade to protect his animals from encroaching floodwaters from a neighbouring canal. At the foot of the letter Herakleides has drawn a map showing the canal and the location of the requested palisade, to run from the house of a physician named Artemidoros, past a Hermaion, to the temple of Poremanres (Πορεμανρῆτος).

8) Πορραμάνρηης – Narmouthis (Medinet Madi), early 1st century B.C. (?). The last of the four hymns of one Isidoros inscribed on the pillars at the entrance into the vestibule of the temple of Thermouthis/Renenutet ascribes the foundation of the temple to a god-king whom Isidoros informs us (lines 33–34) the Egyptians call Πορραμάνρηην . . . τὸν μέγαν, ἀθάνατον (or τὸν μέγαν ἀθάνατον).²⁰

The hymn of Isidoros, discovered in 1935, confirmed what had already been deduced on other evidence (cp. the royal dress in 1), 3), and 4)): our Hellenistic Egyptian god is none other than the deified Amenemhet III, the great Middle Kingdom pharaoh of the XIIth Dynasty, whose long reign spanned most of the second half of the 19th century B.C. The element -μαρῆης, etc. renders Amenemhet III's throne-name *N(j)-M3^c.t-R^c*, and the initial Πρα-, Πρε-, etc. renders *Pr-ʿ3*, “Pharaoh”, following the common convention, begun around 1000 B.C., of prefixing this title to royal names. The variants Πρα-, Πρε-, etc. in the Greek transcription of *Pr-ʿ3* preserve contemporary dialectical variation of the sort reflected later in the various forms of the title's Coptic descendant (“king”) – in Sahidic and

²⁰1): *SB* 1269; O. Rubensohn, *Pramarres*, *ZaES* 42 (1905) 111–115 with pl. VI; Ulrich Wilcken, report on Rubensohn's article, *APF* 4 (1908) 211–212 (no. 51); Winfried J. R. Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte in Faijum während der griechisch-römisch-byzantinischen Zeit* (Bonn, 1974) 161. 2): J. P. Mahaffy, A New Inscription from the Fayyûm, *Hermathena* 21 (1895) 243–247; *SB* 8884; *OGIS* 175; Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte* 161. 3): *SB* 5755; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Roman Portraits and Memphis (IV)* (London, 1911) 21 and pl. XX.2. 4): Max L. Strack, *Inschriften aus ptolemäischer Zeit III*, *APF* 3 (1906) 136 (no. 17); Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte* 91. 5): *SB* 10046; Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte* 84. 6): John P. Mahaffy, *The Flinders Petrie Papyri with Transcriptions, Commentaries and Index II* (Dublin, 1893) 141 (no. XLIIIb, lines 65–66); Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte* 58. 7): Campbell Cowan Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection* (Ann Arbor, 1931) 162–163 with pl. VI (no. 84); Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte* 144. 8): Achille Vogliano, *Gli scavi della Missione Archeologica Milanese a Tebtynis, Atti del IV Congresso internazionale di Papirologia* (Milano, 1936) 485–496; *SB* 8141; *SEG* VIII 551; Nicola Turchi, *I quattro inni di Isidoro*, *SMSR* 22 (1958) 139–148, particularly pp. 146–148; Étienne Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine. Recherches sur la poésie épigrammatique des Grecs en Égypte* (ALUB 98; Paris, 1969) no. 175, particularly pp. 635–636, 640–641, 648–652; Vera Frederika Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidoros and the Cult of Isis* (ASP 12; Toronto, 1972), especially pp. 9–16, 63–74, and pl. IX; J. Bollók, *Du problème de la datation des hymnes d'Isidore*, *StudAeg* 1 (1974) 27–37, arguing for a date late in the 3rd century B.C.

Akhmimic (π)ῑρο, for example, but (π)ῑρα Fayyumic, whence Πρα-, Φρα-, Πρεα-, Πορρα- in our 1), 3), 4), and 8). In the case of Amenemhet III's throne-name, all the Greek forms attested in our list reflect the loss of *N(j)-*, evidently due either to its propretoric position or to assimilation into the following *m*, the latter a phenomenon apparent, to choose one example, in Classical Egyptian *wmm* becoming Coptic ογωμ. This loss of *N(j)-* is also present in a Demotic papyrus of 180/179 B.C., where the deified Amenemhet III is included among other divinities of the Fayyum as *Pr-ε3-M3^c.t-R^c*. The doubling -ρρ- in the Greek transcriptions of the throne-name in 1), 2), 4), and 5) is equally a common phenomenon, visible, for example, precisely in Coptic ῑρο and its variants for *Pr-ε3*, and the -vp- in 6), 7), and 8) is, on one view, an example of the dissimilation of the double rho which is also commonly attested in Coptic – again to select but one example, in *μενρε-*, *μενριτ* Bohairic for *μερρε-*, *μερριτ* Akhmimic.²¹ The personal names of individuals named after the god (minus the prefix element representing *Pr-ε3* of course) show the same range of variants in transcribing Amenemhet III's throne-name: Μαρηης, Μαρρηης, Μανρηης, and even (once) Μανρρηης.²²

Together with the evidence attesting to the cult of the god-king *Pr-ε3 M3^c(.t)-R^c = Πραμαρρηης et al.*, presented in the list above, these anthroponyms, spanning in date the period from the early 3rd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D., bear witness to the great and long-lasting popularity of the cult of the deified pharaoh. That the cult was centred in the Fayyum was due to the facts that it was Amenemhet III who completed the prodigious project, begun by his predecessors, of land reclamation and hydraulic engineering for the whole of the Fayyum basin and that he consequently dedicated many splendid monuments there. The grandest of these was the king's (southern) pyramid at Hawara, overlooking the Nile channel into the Fayyum, and, adjoining it, a huge architectural complex whose central focus was the king's mortuary temple, in which his funerary cult was celebrated in conjunction, evidently, with the cult of other gods, probably local deities of the Fayyum.

The cult of the god-king Amenemhet III, having originated in and with this mortuary temple, is again attested at Hawara in the Hellenistic period, as our 3) and 4) (and 6) as well, if Rubensohn is right that the village of Apollonias is modern Hawara) show. The extensive new reclamation efforts undertaken in the Fayyum, roughly 15 centuries later, by Ptolemy II Philadelphos brought with them a revival of the cult of Ptolemy's ancient deified predecessor in this reclamation effort, doubtless with politically useful encouragement, direct or indirect, from royal patronage. It is not likely to be merely a coincidence, then, that the earliest attestation to the renewed cult of the god-king, 7) on our list, probably dates from late in Ptolemy II's reign. If it had not already done so, it was probably at this time, consequently, that the cult of Amenemhet III spread to other sites in the Fayyum. Nor is it a surprise, equally consequently, that native Greeks appear, in addition to native Egyptians (Petenehies in 4) and Nekhthnibis in 5), both as worshippers (Akhilion, 3), and Dionysos, 2), though the latter's wife Thases bears an Egyp-

²¹ Rubensohn, *Pramarres* 113–114; Wilcken, report on Rubensohn 211–212; Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Aegyptologische Randglossen zu Herodot 1. König Moiris*, *ZAeS* 43 (1906) 84–86, particularly pp. 85 with nn. 5, 8–10, and 86 n. 6 on the loss of the feminine ending *.t* in *m3^c.t* (common in Late Egyptian; Jaroslav Černý and Sarah Israelit Groll, *A Late Egyptian Grammar*; 3rd ed.; Rome, 1984; 6 [§ 1.9]); idem, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Die demotischen Denkmäler II. Die demotischen Papyrus* (Straßburg, 1908) 286–290 (no. 31178), particularly p. 290 (verso, col. 5); Giulio Farina, *Noterelle egizie agli inni greci di Isidoro scoperti nel Fayyūm*, *RSO* 17 (1938) 280; Jozef Vergote, *Le Roi Moiris-Marēs*, *ZAeS* 87 (1962) 66–76, particularly pp. 74–75, proposing a different view of the relationship of -μαρρηης to -μανρηης. For -vp- from -ρρ- see Ludwig Stern, *Koptische Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1880) 52 (§ 103) and n. 2. On the original meaning of *N(j)-M3^c.t-R^c* see Wolfhart Westendorf, *Lamares und Rathures als Kronzeugen für die mit nj- gebildeten Namen?*, *Festschrift Wolfgang Helck zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (SAK 11; Hamburg, 1984) 381–397. A stele possibly from Hawara and perhaps dating to as late as the Roman period shows, however, that the cult of Amenemhet III still knew the pharaoh's throne-name in its original form; the stele shows the god-king in friendly encounter with Souchos/Sobk and their names, written in hieroglyphs, in cartouches between them: O. Guéraud, *Une stèle gréco-romaine au cartouche d'Amenemhet III*, *ASAE* 40 (1940) 553–560 with pl. LVII.

²² See Preisigke's *Namenbuch* s. vv.; Foraboschi's *Onomasticon alterum papyrologicum* s. vv. Μανρηης and Μαρρηης; J. Vergote, *Les noms propres du P. Bruxelles inv. E. 7616. Essai d'interprétation* (PLB 7; Leiden, 1954) 9–10.

tian name) and as life-long officiants (Eirenaios, 1)) in the cult, in the latter case a native Greek well connected to men in high position in the government.

It can only have served to encourage Greeks like Eirenaios in devotion to the cult that from Herodotus' time on the god-king's mortuary complex was on the "must see" list of attractions for visitors to Egypt. Herodotus calls it a labyrinth for its maze of courts and chambers, asserting that it surpasses even the Pyramids in indescribability; small wonder, then, that so many Greek and Roman tourists after him trekked to the site to marvel at the Egyptian Labyrinth's gigantic size and many wonders. Herodotus and his successors preserve a lot of what is often inaccurate, garbled, or anachronistic information, as usual, about the function of the complex and about the king who built it. Even without the help of Manetho, however, others – (pseudo?)-Eratosthenes, with Μάρης, and Diodorus Siculus, with Μένδης and Μάρρος (βασιλέα Μένδην ὃν τινες Μάρρον προσονομάζουσιν), and Strabo, with Ἴσμάνδης (Μαίνδης the Epitomizer) – knew the builder by names that, like the anthroponyms alluded to above, derive, or seem to derive, from Amenemhet III's throne-name. Educated Greeks of the sort Eirenaios is likely to have been consequently had access to Greek traditions that lionized the god-king and his achievements to help foster their faith in "Pharaoh Marres/Manres".²³

Native Egyptians naturally had their own tales to tell. For these Isidoros' fourth hymn (8) above) is of great interest because it is directly dependent, he says (lines 7, 17–19, 35–39), on local and contemporary native Egyptian informants, probably priests of the cult in the temple on which the hymns are inscribed. I offer a translation of lines 7–40, since the hymn is virtually an aretology of Porramanres, and so it shows us what the theology of the cult of the god-king Amenemhet III was like early in the 1st century B.C. (or late in the 3rd century B.C., if the alternate dating happens to be the correct one). That, in turn, will provide us with a springboard from which to make the leap to Porramanres' appearance as the Hermetic god Poimandres in *CH I*. The opening lines of the hymn (1–6) ask who it was, what god, who built the temple of Thermouthis and provided a home for its divine inhabitants Isis-Thermouthis together with her son Anchoes and Sokonopis as synnaoi. Isidoros then proceeds:

They say there was a divine king of Egypt who revealed himself lord of every land, rich and pious, possessed of omnipotent power; /¹⁰ his glory and his wondrous excellence rivalled that of heaven. For earth and sea obeyed his command, and all the rivers with their lovely streams, and the blowing of the winds, and the sun that when it rises sends out sweet light so resplendently for all, /¹⁵ and the races of winged creatures heeded him with one accord, and all of these, at his command, obeyed him. It is clear that birds heeded him because those who have read through the inscriptions of the temples say that once he commanded a crow to send a message, /²⁰ and it returned with a letter, bringing him a reply. For he was not a mortal man, nor was he born of a mortal lord. He was the offspring of a great, eternal god; of Souchos the son, Souchos the all-powerful, the great, great, and most great good god, he appeared on earth as lord. /²⁵ His mother's father is the giver of life, Ammon, who is the Zeus of Greece and Asia; that is why all things obeyed himself as well, all things on earth that crawl and all the races of the winged creatures of the skies. What sort of name had he? Who gave it him? /³⁰ What ruler, what king, what one of the immortals? It was he that nurtured him, Sesoōsis, who has gone to the West of heaven, that gave him the beautiful name of

²³ On the foregoing three paragraphs: Rubensohn, *Pramarres* 114–115; Wilcken, report on Rubensohn 212; Spiegelberg, *Aegyptologische Randglossen zu Herodot* 84–86; Vergote, *Le Roi Moiris-Marēs* 66–76; W. L. Westermann, *Land Reclamation in the Fayum under Ptolemies Philadelphus and Euergetes I*, *CP* 12 (1917) 426–430; (H.) Kees, *Labyrinthos 4: Aegyptisches Labyrinth*, *PW* XII 323.50–326.58; Ch. Audebeau Bey, *La légende du Lac Moeris*, *BIE* 11 (1928–1929) 105–127; W. G. Waddell, *Manetho* (LCL 350; Cambridge, Mass., 1940) 68–73, 225 with n. 1; Wolfgang Helck, *Untersuchungen zu Manetho und den ägyptischen Königslisten* (Berlin, 1956) 34–35; Henri Riad, *Le culte d'Amenemhat III au Fayoum à l'époque ptolémaïque*, *ASAE* 55 (1958) 203–206 with pl. I; Alan B. Lloyd, *The Egyptian Labyrinth*, *JEA* 56 (1970) 81–100; id., *Herodotus Book II. Commentary 1–98* (EPRO 43; Leiden, 1976) 34; *Commentary 99–182* (Leiden, 1988) 120–121, 124–128; Anne Burton, *Diodorus Siculus Book I. A Commentary* (EPRO 29; Leiden, 1972) 181–182, 196–200.

the brilliant Sun, but in their own language the Egyptians call him Porramanres, the great, immortal. /³⁵ A wonderful marvel also I heard from others, how he would cruise on the mountains with wheels and sail. And having learned all this reliably from the men who give account of it I have myself in turn interpreted it for Greeks and made it public record here, the power of the god and king, /⁴⁰ how no other mortal ever had an equal power.

It is clear from the hymn that Isidoros' Egyptian informants about the cult knew that *Pr-ε3 M3ϙ(.t)-R^c* /Πορραμάνρης was an ancient Egyptian king and that a king whose name Isidoros transcribes with Σεσοῦσις (Sesostris III) was his father. They also furnished Isidoros with two *Wundererzählungen*, perhaps supplied, to fill the need for them, either from purposeful or ignorant misreading of hieroglyphs, to the effect that Amenemhet III had parasailed over the desert on a cart with sails and that he had a crow for a carrier pigeon (the latter also retailed, of a king he names Μάρης, by Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals* VI, 7). But, to judge from the extent of his focus on it, what was clearly the most important element of the cult for Isidoros as for his informants was what was indeed the central focus of the cult of the god-king from its inception: the ancient Egyptian theology of kingship which made the pharaohs sons of god and lords of the cosmic order. Far from having lost its relevance, this theology was a vital element of Greco-Egyptian religion in the Hellenistic period, not least due to the Machiavellian use made of it by the Ptolemies and their Seleucid cousins. With it Isidoros has worked up what is consequently a typically Hellenistic aretalogy of the god-man, the god incarnate, the θεὸς ἐπιφανής (cp. ἐξεφάνη in line 8 and ἐφάνη in line 24, rendered in the translation with “revealed himself” and “appeared on earth” respectively).

It is this typically Hellenistic yearning for direct contact with divinity that underlies the later emergence of the deified Amenemhet III, Isidoros' Porramanres, in the form of Poimandres in *CH I*. It is not an accident that so many others of the *dramatis personae* of the *Hermetica* had either actually once been human beings but had long before become gods, like Imouthes/Asklepios, who was Imhotep, the deified vizier of Zoser, or, as with the Hermetic Isis (and Osiris), Ammon, and Hermes Trismegistos himself, were divinities treated by the *Hermetica* as human beings largely because, in a manner true to ancient Egyptian tradition, they had descended to earth in human form, on some primeval occasion, to assist or enlighten humankind.²⁴ But whether humans-become-gods or gods-become-humans the divinities of the *Hermetica* live in the twilight zone between the two worlds. They live there because they are intermediaries between the worlds of humankind and divinity, and with that they show that the two worlds can, after all, intersect, and intersect intimately. Isidoros' Porramanres, too, lives in this twilight zone. In the hymn Isidoros wavers: Porramanres is now god, now mortal man. It was precisely that double nature that made him a perfect candidate for inclusion in the Hermetic pantheon. If ὁ τῆς ἀθθεντίας νοῦς seems too grand a new identity for old Amenemhet III, even as a Hellenistic man-god, one need only reflect on how central a doctrine the identity of divine νοῦς and human νοῦς is in *CH I*, how frequently and purposefully confused the two are in it (particularly §§ 6, 7–8, 16, 21–23, 30), to appreciate how appropriate this new identity for the god-king actually is. In Isidoros' aretalogy the god-man Poimandres ruled the world and commanded its elements; what more suitable Greek philosophical/theological identity for him, then, than the Νοῦς, the world-ordering Mind of God that is incarnate in mankind? *CH I*'s theology of Poimandres is merely an updated, Greek rationalist version of the ancient Egyptian theology of kingship embodied in the cult of *Pr-ε3 M3ϙ(.t)-R^c*.

²⁴ For the *Hermetica* see Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* 24–29, 174 with n. 83, 205 (Hermes Trismegistos); 32 with n. 115, 140 (Ammon, viewed as an ancient king); 40, 174 n. 83 (Asklepios/Imouthes). For deities come to earth note, for example, *Stobaei fragmentum* XXIII, 5–6 (Hermes), 64–69 (Isis and Osiris); on this theologoumenon in classical Egyptian tradition see Fowden, *ibid.* 59, of Thoth in the late Egyptian Setne-Khamwas romance; on Imhotep see Kurt Sethe, *Imhotep, der Asklepios der Aegypter. Ein vergötterter Mensch aus der Zeit des Königs Djoser* (Leipzig, 1902); Dietrich Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Aegypten* (MAeS 36; München & Berlin, 1977).

There is precious little evidence attesting to the cult of *Pr-ε3 M3ϕ(.t)-Rϕ/Πορραμάνρης et al.* into the Roman period. The anthroponyms derived from Amenemhet III's throne-name, which, as we saw, continue into the 2nd century A.D., make it likely that the cult survived at least until then. Aside from the personal names there is the stele from Hawara bearing the god-king's throne-name in its original form (note 21 *ad fin.*) that may be as late as the early Roman imperial period, and there are terracottas that may attest to the cult and may equally be of this date.²⁵ The date of *CH I* is similarly uncertain, although the arguments for a dating to around the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. are cumulatively fairly weighty.²⁶ But it is in any case probable that the cult was still alive at the time of the composition of *CH I*.

This, in turn, might explain notable features of the Hermetic tractate. We are repeatedly given to understand by the author, who speaks in the first person singular, that he and the god of whom he has been granted the vision, from whom he has received the revelation, and by whom he is commissioned to evangelize the world with its content share a remarkably warm and intimate relationship. We have already seen that, on the level of *voûς*, the two are ontologically co-substantial, but on a personal level, too, Poimandres and his devotee are close enough to prompt Haenchen and Büchli (above n. 3) to label Poimandres a "Schutzgott" and to find in this support for the shepherd-motif inherent in the Greek derivation hypothesis. It may not be adequate support for deriving Ποιμ- in the god's name from ποιμήν, but the intimately protective role of the god is palpable from σύνειμί σοι πανταχοῦ at the initial appearance of Poimandres in § 2, through their chatty exchanges – unusually intimate even for the *Hermetica*, where, as we saw, divinities are human and humans are divine – in §§ 3, 6, 16, and 20–22, to the evangelizing commission, unique in the *Hermetica*, begun with λοιπόν, τί μέλλεις; in § 26. I would suggest that what accounts for this intimacy, for the evangelizing commission, and for the use of a confessional first person singular is that the author of *CH I* was himself a fervent devotee of the cult of *Pr-ε3 M3ϕ(.t)-Rϕ*, whose name he transcribes with Ποιμάνδρης (I shall turn to this issue shortly). The habitual presence of the definite article with the god's name in the work would thus, on this reckoning, be an example, common in the papyri, of the article's use, as Edwin Mayser categorizes it, "wo von bestimmten lokalen Kultformen die Rede ist, insbesondere wenn der Verfasser am Kultort anwesend ist oder selbst unter dem Schutz des betreffenden Gottes steht".²⁷

If the author was indeed a devotee of the god-king, it is consequently likely that *CH I* was written somewhere in the Fayyum, and probably, then, at some cult-site of the god-king. The Fayyum, after all, had been heavily settled by Greeks, beginning with and as a result of Ptolemy II's reclamation efforts there alluded to earlier, so that the two cultures to which the *Hermetica* are equally indebted, Greek and Egyptian, had been mingling there for centuries by the time *CH I* was written.²⁸ What is more, if *CH I*

²⁵ Wilhelm Weber, *Die ägyptisch-griechischen Terrakotten* (Berlin, 1914) 138–143 with Taf. 21 (no. 214); Joseph Vogt, *Expedition Ernst von Sieglin. Ausgrabungen in Alexandria II, 2. Terrakotten* (Leipzig, 1924) Taf. 2,2 p. 84 (*non vidi*); Paul Graindor, *Terres cuites de l'Égypte gréco-romaine* (Antwerpen, 1939) 124–125 and pl. XVIII (no. 45).

²⁶ For the various proposals (up to 1951) and the rationale for a dating to the 2nd century A.D. see Gundel, Poimandres (above n. 1) 1194.53–1195.32; add the long and important discussion by Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (above n. 9) 201–209, arguing on plausible grounds for a date early in the 2nd century A.D. or even late in the 1st. Like Dodd, Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantike Geist I* (above n. 1) 348, favors an early 2nd century date; Haenchen, *Aufbau und Theologie des 'Poimandres'* (above n. 1) 191, ignoring Dodd, favours one late in the century. See now Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* 10–11, 161–162.

²⁷ Edwin Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit II, 2* (Berlin und Leipzig, 1934) § 53.2b (p. 3), citing many examples.

²⁸ Greeks and Egyptians mixing in the Fayyum: see, for example, Claire Préaux, *Les Grecs en Égypte d'après les archives de Zénon* (Bruxelles, 1947) 68–70; Dorothy J. Crawford, *Kerkeosiris. An Egyptian Village in the Ptolemaic Period* (Cambridge, 1971); Deborah H. Samuel, Greeks and Romans at Socnopaiou Nesos, *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress of Papyrology* (ASP 23; ed. Roger S. Bagnall *et al.*; Chico, 1981) 389–403. Note further that this bicultural situation in the Fayyum is exemplified in the facts that Dionysos and Thases, the husband and wife who are the dedicants in 2) in our list of attestations to the cult of the god-king, are of Greek and Egyptian extraction, respectively, and that, with a father named Philon, Thases herself is likely to have been the offspring of a bicultural marriage.

is also, as it is commonly held to be, the earliest treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, it means that the Fayyum is equally likely to have been the place where the ‘philosophical’ strain of Hermetism (as opposed to the ‘technical’) was born. There is nothing explicitly “Hermetic” about *CH I* – i.e., Hermes Trismegistos does not figure in the work – so that it might actually better be labeled pre-Hermetic or proto-Hermetic. But the cult of Thoth, and specifically of Thoth/Hermes, was widespread in the Fayyum, and there was thus plenty of occasion for a movement which may actually have begun with a visionary devotee of Pramarres *et al.*/Poimandres to become “Hermetic” and then, later, to make the recipient of the revelation in *CH I* Hermes Trismegistos himself, as *CH XIII* (§ 15) seems to have done.²⁹ The transition to focus on Hermes/Thoth would have been facilitated by the existing close association of the god-king with Thoth/Hermes in the Fayyum. It is not likely to be merely a coincidence that a Hermaion – i.e., a shrine of Thoth/Hermes – sat just next door to a temple of Poremanres at Philadelphia, as we saw from the map in Herakleides’ letter to Zenon, 7) in our list above.³⁰ If Labib Habachi is right, as he is in all probability, that the figures of a man in what was evidently pharaonic dress, a hippopotamus, a baboon, and a crocodile on a monument from Crocodilopolis, dating probably to early in the Hellenistic period, represent the god-king *Pr-ε3 M3Ϛ(.t)-Rε*, Taweret/Thoëris, Thoth, and Sobk/Souchos, respectively, it means that Thoth/Hermes and the god-king already had a friendship stretching back hundreds of years by the time the Hermetist of *CH XIII*, long after the death of the author of *CH I*, identified *CH I*’s “I” with Hermes Trismegistos, making him a pupil of the god-king.³¹ With the rise to prominence of Thoth-as-Hermes in the movement, now properly “Hermetic”, the object of such fervent devotion from the movement’s founder slipped into oblivion because, unlike Thoth, the god-king had the deficiencies discussed earlier: he was a strictly provincial divinity with no Greek identity and no international connections.

We cannot trace what stages, if any, intervened in the two hundred years or so that separate the latest attested Hellenized form of the god-king’s throne-name in the Hellenistic period, probably Isidoros’ Πορραμάνρης, from the form Ποιμάνδρης the name assumes in *CH I*. But it is clear, nevertheless, that the form Ποιμάνδρης represents a final stage in the process of Hellenization of the name *Pr-ε3 M3Ϛ(.t)-Rε*. Isidoros’ accusative Πορραμάνρησιν shows that the name has already assumed the proper Greek declension -ης, -ου, -η, -ην that *CH I*’s Ποιμάνδρης (genitive -δρου, as we saw) equally evinces, where earlier, less Hellenized forms of the god-king’s name show either the -ης, -ειους/-ηους, -ει or -ης, -ητος, -ητι that are both characteristic of Egyptian names transcribed directly into Greek.³² The insertion of the voiced dental stop δ into -νρ- was inevitable due both to the impossibility of the consonant combination -νρ- in Greek and, perhaps, as well to imitation of Greek names in -ανδρος particularly common in the Hellenistic period. As for the disappearance of the first rho (or double rho), it is plausibly to be explained as a case of the common phenomenon of loss of a liquid as a result of dissimilation, namely from the presence of a second rho in -μαν(δ)ρης at the end of the word – so, for attested example, in ἀκρόδρουα for ἀκρόδρουα and φατρία for φρατρία.³³ With the disappearance of rho from a form like Herakleides’ Πορε- or Isidoros’ Πορρα- the diphthong οι would be the natural result.

²⁹ For the popularity of the cult of Thoth/Hermes in the Fayyum see Crawford, *Kerkeosiris* 87–88 with n. 2; Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte* 37–38, 77, 97, 113, 120, 168–169, 185–186, 199, 223.

³⁰ Sir Harold I. Bell, *Popular Religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, *JEA* 34 (1948) 85, and *Graeco-Egyptian Religion*, *MH* 10 (1953) 225–226, rightly maintains that the Hermaion at Philadelphia is much more likely to have been a shrine of Thoth/Hermes than of Olympian Hermes.

³¹ Labib Habachi, *A Strange Monument of the Ptolemaic Period from Crocodilopolis*, *JEA* 41 (1955) 106–111 with pl. XXI. The monument probably originally stood in the “Great Hall” Amenemhet III constructed for the temple of Sobk in the capital of the Fayyum.

³² See Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri* I, 2 § 63, Anhang 6 (p. 34), and § 64, Anhang (pp. 41–42), citing examples.

³³ See Eduard Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* I (HAW II, i, 1; München, 1939) 259–260, with examples; Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri* I, 1 § 36.1a (pp. 159–160), with examples.

Advocates of Coptic derivation hypotheses commonly assert that the distance of the form Ποιμάνδρης from the various proposed Coptic etymologies might be the product of an effort by the author of *CH I* to assimilate the name to what the Greek derivation hypothesis would have it mean.³⁴ But in fact the name's evolution from *Pr-ε3 M3Ϛ(.t)-R^c* to Ποιμάνδρης is perfectly explicable on the principles of Egyptian and Greek linguistics. If Greek onomastics helped him in the case of -ανδρ-, that would have been because it furthered his theology of the co-substantiality of human and divine νοῦς, for which the god-man *Pr-ε3 M3Ϛ(.t)-R^c*/Ποιμάνδρης furnished him with the primeval exemplar. But Ποιμ- suggested by ποιμήν is a different matter. It does not fit his theology of Poimandres as ὁ τῆς ἀθθεντίας νοῦς, and if he was aware that Ποιμάνδρης could be re-etymologized as “shepherd-man” or “shepherd of men” he gives no sign of it. He knew who “Ποιμάνδρης” was and what the name meant. It was only Zosimos and the author of *CH XIII* who, much later, took the step of re-etymologizing the name, in the case of Zosimos by altering it to make it more explicitly ποιμήν + ἀνήρ. Zosimos and the author of *CH XIII* needed to re-etymologize the name because to them, outside the Fayyum (certainly so in the case of Zosimos), the god-king and his cult were, if not utterly unknown, then at least of no concern. By their time the focus had shifted to Hermes/Thoth.

To sum up then, Poimandres was an actual contemporary Graeco-Egyptian divinity with a living cult, a cult of which the author of *CH I* was himself a fervent devotee. The name Ποιμάνδρης was not an *ad hoc* coinage of the author of *CH I* to lend personality to a hypostasis of God,³⁵ but rather a further Hellenization of the earlier, still more purely transcriptional Greek forms of the throne-name of the god-king Amenemhet III. The advocates of Coptic derivation hypotheses were right in positing an Egyptian origin for the name, and Griffith was correct in proposing that -ρης transcribed *R^c* – Isidoros' Egyptian informants knew this too (“Sesoōsis . . . gave him the beautiful name of the brilliant Sun”). But the rest is wrong, and the name actually antedates the evolution of Coptic by some two thousand years.

Claremont

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³⁴ Scott, *Hermetica* II 15 n. 3; Marcus, *The Name Poimandrēs*, 43; Kingsley, *Poimandres* 11, 12.

³⁵ For this debate see Gundel, *Poimandres* (see n. 1 above) 1206.57–1207.28.