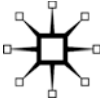


*THE THUNDER: PERFECT MIND*  
A NEW TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION

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*THE THUNDER: PERFECT MIND*

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THE THUNDER: PERFECT MIND,  
ANNOTATED COPTIC TEXT AND  
ENGLISH TRANSLATION

[13.1]<sup>1</sup> ⲧⲉⲃⲣⲟⲛⲧⲏⲛⲁⲓⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲗⲉⲓⲟⲥ |

[ⲛ]ⲧⲁⲅⲧⲁⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓ<sup>4</sup> ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲛ̄ | ⲉⲟⲛⲁⲓ<sup>5</sup>

ⲁⲅⲱ ⲛⲧⲁⲓⲉⲓ ⲟⲩⲁ ⲛⲉⲧ̄|ⲛⲉⲉⲅⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ̄

ⲁⲅⲱ ⲁⲅⲟⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄|ⲛⲟⲓ̄ ⲉⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲧ̄ⲟⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲉⲓ

ⲉ|ⲛ̄]ⲁⲅⲥ<sup>6</sup> ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲛⲉⲧ̄ⲛⲉⲉⲅⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ̄ |

ⲁⲅⲱ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉⲗⲥⲱⲧ̄ⲛ̄ ⲥⲱⲧ̄ⲛ̄ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ̄ |

ⲛⲉⲧ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲛⲧ̄ ⲟⲩⲟⲧ̄ | ⲉⲣⲱⲧ̄ⲛ̄

<sup>1</sup> This Coptic text layout of *Thunder* is the first attempt to present the Coptic text itself in a poetic format. The standard critical editions (in English by George W. MacRae and in French by Paul-Hubert Poirier) rightly displayed the layout of the text in terms of columns and lines as they appear in the MS. This layout allows one to identify more easily the patterns in the language, sonoric density, general poetic themes, parallelism, and even rhyme. For some brief explanations on the criteria by which we have laid out the Coptic text in terms of line breaks, indentations, and stanza breaks, see Chapter 9. Our English translation, for the most part, follows the Coptic in terms of stanza breaks, but some of the lines have been altered for ease of the English prose. For an attempt of a similar English layout, see MacRae and Parrot, “The Thunder: Perfect Mind (VI, 2),” in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. Robinson, 297-303, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1997. The reader will find, however, that we follow very different criteria for stanza breaks and line indentations than found in MacRae and Parrot. Throughout, these notes will not note the many discrepancies between our Coptic layout and English translation layouts, for they are too many, but they will transparently discuss how the stanzas are formed through factors such as shifts in syntax, theme, mood, prevalence of particular poetic devices, and more specific indicators.

<sup>2</sup> Schenke and Bethge had read ~ ⲛⲉⲃⲣⲟⲛⲧ ⲏ, or “Nebront, or,” citing the parallel in *Gos. Evg.* See Schenke, Review of Robinson et al., *Facsimile Edition: Codex VI, OLV 69* (1974), col. 230-231. ⲧⲉⲃⲣⲟⲛⲧⲏ is Krause’s reading, followed by MacRae and Chérif. According to MacRae (236, n. 13,1), Schenke later accepted the reading of ~ ⲧⲉⲃⲣⲟⲛⲧⲏ in personal correspondence with Robinson (October 2, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> ⲛⲟⲩⲥ does not have either a definite or an indefinite article. This occasionally occurs in this text, including our reconstruction of the very next line (see note 11 with ⲉⲁⲓ). The word ⲛⲟⲩⲥ itself only appears twice more in the text (18.9, 19.32).

<sup>4</sup> Reconstruction by Krause.

<sup>5</sup> Krause, followed by everyone else, reconstructs this word as [ⲧ] ~ ⲉⲟⲛ, but we have determined that there is not enough room on the line to insert a ⲧ without breaking with the left-hand margin of the MS by one letter.

<sup>6</sup> Reconstruction by Krause. Cf. Poirier. The verb ⲛⲁⲅ typically takes a prefixed ⲁ to create an imperative, but ⲉ is used here instead. Subachmimic, and Fayyumic for that matter, often uses an ⲉ where Sahidic uses an ⲁ, but the Subachmimic imperative in this case would typically be ⲁⲛⲉⲅ (Till, *Koptische Dialektgrammatik*, 8-11, 51).

THE THUNDER:<sup>7</sup> PERFECT MIND<sup>89</sup>

I was sent from within power	2
I came to those pondering me.	
And I was found among those seeking me	
Look at me, all <sup>10</sup> you who contemplate me	6
Audience, <sup>11</sup> hear me	7
Those expecting me, receive me	

<sup>7</sup> This word, the Greek word *bronte* has been transliterated into the Coptic. The word does not occur in the text itself of the piece. In the Hebrew Bible and subsequent Jewish and Christian traditions, thunder often accompanies a theophany, underscoring God's power; it is the "thunder of the almighty" (Ex. 20:16; Ezek. 1:24; cf. Job 26:14). Thunder also characterizes a divine, angelic, or heavenly voice. Emphasizing the powerful effect of a theophany alongside the "thunder" of God's voice and reflecting upon the Sinai theophany as depicted in Ex. 20, Ps. 18:13 reads, "The LORD also thundered in the heavens / and the most High uttered his voice, / hailstones and coals of fire." Ps 29:3 also emphasizes the power of God's voice: "The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; / the God of glory thunder, / the LORD, upon many waters." One also finds this in early Christian writings, such as Jn 12:28b-29: "Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered." Likewise, in Rev. 6:1, one of the four living creatures that upholds God's throne speaks with a voice of thunder. In Greek traditions, Zeus is the "Thunderer" and is usually portrayed as holding a thunderbolt. Finally, thunder was a meteorological omen in antiquity. The study of thunder in the skies began in Mesopotamia, as can be found in the *Enuma Anu Enlil*, tablet 44. A brontologion, or a "thunder-chart," was found at Qumran (4Q318), which predicts events based upon thunder in a particular zodiacal house. This particular text is the oldest evidence for this practice west of Mesopotamia in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Other texts can be found in Greek in the Byzantine period (see Greenfield and Sokoloff, "An Astrological Text from Qumran (4Q318) and Reflections on Some Zodiacal Names," 507-525. The word "thunder" does not recur in this text. M. Tardieu has written of the significance of "thunder" in neo-platonism and holds that "the direct literary source of the title of the second writing of codex VI, prodigiously philosophical in its formulation" is Plato's *The Republic* X.621. b 1-4.

<sup>8</sup> These two words are also Coptic transliterations of Greek words *nous (n) teleios*. Neither does the phrase "perfect mind" occur in any of the text that follows this title. The Coptic word  $\mu\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\varsigma$ , which does occur alone (also in a Coptic transliteration of the Greek) twice in the piece in 18.9 and 19.32, does not seem to carry any particular significance for the piece as a whole.  $\mu\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\varsigma$  does not have either a definite or an indefinite article in the title. This occasionally occurs in this text, including our reconstruction of the very next line. The notion of "perfect mind" does occur in a broad range of literature. Its use in neo-platonism participates in a larger psycho-cosmology in which the mind, spirit, and soul (and occasionally body) are principal elements of the human person. In this literature, the mind is seen generally as an integrative human capacity. It is a relatively prevalent notion also in the Nag Hammadi collection itself. Cf. *The Secret Revelation of John* 8.29.

<sup>9</sup> "The Thunder: Perfect Mind" as a title must then be external to the piece itself. As such it belongs to many titles of Hellenistic literature in which the title has been appended to a piece of literature at a later date (e.g., *the Gospel of Mark*, *the Wisdom of Solomon*, and *the Odes of Solomon*). The second problem with the title is its lack of obvious sense.

<sup>10</sup> Our use of "all you" or "you all" in this translation is an effort to indicate the plural you throughout Coptic *Thunder*. We do not slavishly use this everywhere, since that would falsify the economy of the poetic rhythm of the overall piece. However, we use it strategically in order to remind the reader that the "you" of *Thunder* is a plural you.

<sup>11</sup> We use "audience" here for two reasons, even though it is not an exact rendering of the Coptic: (1) it renders the literal "hearers, hear me" less clumsily, and (2) it reminds the twenty-first-century reader that this piece was most likely performed. Cf. the preface and Chapter 9 in this book.



Don't chase me from your sight<sup>17</sup>  
 Don't let your voice or your hearing hate me 11  
 Don't ignore me any place, any time<sup>18</sup>  
 Be careful. Do not ignore me<sup>19</sup>  
 I am the first and the last<sup>20</sup> 16  
 I am she who<sup>21</sup> is honored and she who is mocked

<sup>17</sup> The translation of *bal* is not as earthy as we would have wanted. *Bal* literally means "eye," and there are other Coptic words for sight (*cia*, *eiorb*, *nau*). It seems the text is using quite a poetic flourish, then, when it has, literally, "Do not chase me away from the midst of your eyes." Unfortunately, we have been unable to render this poetic image in English.

<sup>18</sup> Paul-Hubert Poirier's article "Structure et Intention du Traite Intitule 'Le Tonnerre: Intellect Parfait'" makes a strong case for the first 16 lines of *Thunder* being an independent introduction with a separate structure, based mainly in three matching positive and negative imperative sentences. Although Poirier does not draw redactional conclusions of this analysis, the clear implication is that these first 16 lines were written later as an introduction to the body of the text and that there is a similarly added epilogue.

<sup>19</sup> Overall, this stanza shows a pattern of sets of parallel lines grouped as follows: 3, 2, 3+, 2, 1. The basic structure is 3-2, but the poet "riff's" on this pattern by adding a flourish in the second 3, and then, as will happen often throughout the text, the author breaks the pattern by a concluding line that has no parallel line(s). Moreover, this stanza shows a great deal of internal rhyme in the assonance of the word endings of "oi" and "œci" (cf. 14.15-25).

<sup>20</sup> According to the aforementioned Poirier article, "I am the first and the last" is the last part of the separate introduction. With acuity, he notes that the pairing of "the first and the last" does not contain the same kind of irony all of the following contrasts do. In his commentary, he further notices a parallel to *Revelation* 1:8.

<sup>21</sup> Our translation "she who" represents a carefully calibrated rendering of the complexly gendered character of Coptic, a character that has been largely ignored by all the existing translations of *Thunder*. We have worked intensely to do justice to the complexity of the situation and the originality of the language in *Thunder*, since "she who" occurs so often and since both the frequency and unusual applications have central implications for the whole of *Thunder*. The particular dimension of Coptic at issue is the use of the pronominal *te*, *pe*, *tete*, and *pete* in *Thunder*. *Thunder*'s use of these gendered pronominal forms is both conventional and unconventional, especially in relationship to the dominant use of *anok* throughout the piece. Often and conventionally, the *anok* in *Thunder* is paired with a *te* and sometimes with a *pe* as a common Coptic copula gendering device. In this regard the *anok*, and its predicate, is characterized by gendering the basically ungendered *anok* in order to match it gender-wise with its predicate, which as a Coptic noun almost always has its own genderedness indicated in the form of an article. In these cases we have not translated any of the words gender specifically, and have never used the translation "she who" or, more infrequently, "he who" in places where the *te* or *pe* is used as a part of the copula mechanism. We have attended to times in which the relative pronoun *ete* is made gender specific with forms of *tete* and (less frequently, but still in surprising ways) *pete*. In these cases we have honored the gender specificity with a "she who" or less frequent "he who" translation. It will be relatively obvious to even the casual reader of *Thunder* that these gender-specific translations fit with the larger project of *Thunder* to bring to center stage Yesboth characterizations of women and ironic tensions within the representation of women. It is less obvious, but equally interesting that once one attends to the experimentally gendered imagery and grammar of *Thunder*, a gender-bended character within the piece also appears, especially in the somewhat rare appearance of male pronominal and nominal images spliced into the more obvious dominance of images of women and feminine representations.

ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ΤΠΟΡΗΗ ΔΥΩ ΤΣΕΗΗ· |  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ΤΕΣΖΙΜΕ ΔΥΩ ΤΠΑΡ|ΘΕΝΟΣ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΤΉΕΕΥΕ<sup>22</sup> | ΔΥΩ ΤΩΕΕΡΕ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΗΜΕΛΟΣ | ΗΤΕ ΤΑΜΑΔΥ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ΤΑΒΡΗΗ· |  
     ΔΥΩ ΝΑΩΕ ΝΕΣΩΗΡΕ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ | ΤΕ ΤΕΤΝΑΩΕ ΠΕΣΓΑΜΟΣ ΔΥΩ [13.25] ΗΠΙΧΕΙ ΖΔΙ·<sup>23</sup>  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ΤΜΕΣΩ | ΔΥΩ ΤΕΤΕ ΜΑΣΜΙΣΕ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ | ΠΕ ΠΣΟΛΣ ΗΝΑΝΑΔΚΕ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ | ΤΕ ΤΩΕΛΕΕΤ·  
     ΔΥΩ ΠΡΗΩΕΛΕ|ΕΤ·<sup>24</sup>  
     ΔΥΩ ΠΑΖΟΟΥΤΉ ΠΕΝΤΑΥ|ΣΠΟΕΙ·

<sup>22</sup> This literally reads, “I am he who thinks” (ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕΤΗΕΕΥΕ). Because this particular part of the passage focuses upon family relationships, MacRae emends the text to <τ>ετμ<αα>γ|ε), or, “she, the mother.” However, ηεεε is probably just a variant of mother, since ηεεγ is attested in Subachmimic and Fayyumic dialects (Crum 197). Since Subachmimic is the most prominent dialect throughout the Nag Hammadi Codices, it is not too surprising to see it emerge here. On the other hand, as MacRae notes, the MS uses the Sahidic spelling ηααγ in every other instance: in 13.22 and 13.30. Even so, as noted with regard to αρεαηε and αρεοουη, the text has little difficulty using the Subachmimic and the Sahidic variants of a word in very close proximity to one another. The other issue is the masculine ηε, which MacRae has emended to the feminine τε. While this would make the copula agree with the feminine words “mother” and “daughter,” we have decided to retain the MS’s masculine copula. In this full-length study, we have discovered that the text often plays with, reverses, and deconstructs gender, and whether using the masculine copula with the clearly feminine nouns of “mother” (however spelled) and “daughter” was intentional or not, its current form reflects the gender-bending that is to come in the poem.

<sup>23</sup> ζαϊ “husband” is without a definite or an indefinite article. An indefinite article often drops out during negation, but this usually occurs in statements of negative existence “there is not” or, in this case, ηη ζαϊ. There are several cases in this text in which the article drops out, including the title (13.1) and the subsequent line (13.2). See note 3.

<sup>24</sup> This is a rather rare form for the word “bridegroom,” literally “man-bride.” As MacRae notes, however, it is also attested in *Exeg. Soul* (II.6) 132.9, 15. The usual form for “bridegroom” is ηατρελεεετ, which is literally the “not-bride.”

I am the whore and the holy woman	18
I am the wife and the virgin	
I am he the mother and the daughter	
I am the limbs of my mother	21
I am a sterile woman and she has many children	
I am she whose wedding is extravagant and I didn't have a husband	
I am the midwife and she who hasn't given birth	
I am the comfort of my labor pain	27
I am the bride and the bridegroom, <sup>25</sup>	
And it is my husband who gave birth to me	

---

<sup>25</sup> Poirier, noticing the masculinity of the “I” if only in this instance, wants to link this line to a divine androgynous figure (219-220). It is important to note, however, that the text never uses the Coptic word for androgyne, and doesn't seem to aim for any metaphysical state of pure, ungendered wholeness.



ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ΤΗΔΔΥ Ν̄ΤΕ | ΠΑΕΙΩΤ̄  
 ΔΥΩ ΤΩΩΝΕ Μ̄ΠΑ|ΧΟΟΥΤ̄  
 ΔΥΩ Ν̄ΤΟΥ ΠΕ ΠΑΧΟΠ̄ |  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ Τ̄ΣΑΟΥΟΟΝΕ<sup>26</sup> Μ̄ΠΕ|ΤΑΥΣΒ̄ΤΩΤ̄  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ Τ̄ΧΟΕΙΣ<sup>27</sup> [14.1] Μ̄ΠΑΧΠ̄

Ν̄ΤΟΥ ΔΕ<sup>28</sup> ΠΕΝΤΑΥΧ[ΠΟΙ]<sup>29</sup> | ΖΑΘΗ Μ̄ΠΕΟΥΕΙΩ Ζ̄Ν ΟΥΖΟΥ[Υ]ΜΙΣΕ<sup>30</sup>  
 ΔΥΩ Ν̄ΤΟΥ ΠΕ ΠΑΧΠΟ Ζ[Μ] | ΠΕΟΥΕΙΩ  
 ΔΥΩ ΤΑΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ Ο[Υ]<sup>31</sup> | ΕΒΟΛ Ν̄ΖΗΤ̄Υ ΤΕ<sup>32</sup>  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΣΕΡΩ[Β]<sup>33</sup> | Ν̄ΤΕΥΘΟΝ<sup>34</sup> Ζ̄Ν ΤΕΥΜ̄Ν̄Τ̄ΩΝΗ[

<sup>26</sup> This word is peculiar because it uses the singular feminine definite article, but has a plural ending.

<sup>27</sup> The word *χοεις* or “lord” is often primarily associated with male authority figures, especially for those coming out of the medieval European Christian tradition in which the word “Lord” usually has the association of a feudal (male) lord, and by association, with a god primarily conceived of in male terms. The word has the connotations of “master” and “owner.” Indeed, even in ancient Coptic, the masculine form is the most prevalent, and this might be reflected in one of the more accessible dictionaries only listing the masculine for it (Smith, *A Concise Coptic-English Lexicon*, 55). But the use of the feminine form, as here, was quite common in antiquity. It would be equivalent to the word “mistress” used in the medieval sense of the female equivalent of “master” and not with the contemporary connotation of a woman in an ongoing romantic or sexual relationship with a married man who is not her husband. So, for example, the Coptic word *χοεις* with the feminine definite article was used to translate the Greek equivalent of *κυρία*, the female equivalent of the male *κύριος*, or “lord.” *τχοεις* is quite often used in the Coptic translation of the Bible, such as in Gen 16:4 to refer to Sarai vis-à-vis Hagar (for other examples, see Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 787b).

<sup>28</sup> The *δε*, while it is a weak disjunctive form in Greek, usually meaning “but,” in Coptic often is untranslatable or loses its disjunctive sense. In this passage, and in much of the poem as a whole, we have determined that it, along with other disjunctive and conjunctive words, such as *ραρ*, verbally indicates shifts in thought, which we represent as stanza breaks. *δε*, here is coupled with an addition shift from an exclusive emphasis on *ΔΝΟΚ* or “I” to both *Ν̄ΤΟΥ* and *ΔΝΟΚ* or “he and I.” Alongside this shift in emphasis in subject, the disjunctive *δε* also allows a continuation of the theme of begetting from the previous section.

<sup>29</sup> Reconstruction by Krause; cf. Cherix: ΠΕΝΤΑΥΧ[ΠΟΙΕ].

<sup>30</sup> The reconstruction of this word is not completely certain. In the MS, the *ο* clearly has a horizontal stroke, suggesting a possibility of either a *θ* or more likely an *ε*, but Browne, “Textual Notes on Nag Hammadi Codex VI,” *ZPE* 13 (1974), 306, has suggested that the scribe originally wrote *ε*, but corrected it to *ο*. Browne’s suggestion has been followed in the major translations. Cf. Funk *ουε<ουε>ε*; Browne *ουε[υ]*; Schenke *ου(ε)<ουε>ε; [Μ]* Krause.

<sup>31</sup> *ο[υ]* by MacRae; cf. Krause.

<sup>32</sup> A copula ends this sentence: although this is not uncommon in Coptic as a whole, it is a relatively rare construction in this text. It recurs at 19.17.

<sup>33</sup> Reconstructed by MacRae; Krause: ΠΣΕΡ[ΩΒ].

<sup>34</sup> In just two lines, the text uses two words for “power”; one a Greek loanword, *ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ*, and the other a native Egyptian term, *ΘΟΝ*, which, later in this text is also spelled as *ΘΑΝ* (see n. 42; cf. n. 29). Although the text seems to revel in repetition of the same words and sounds throughout, the difference here could be due to stylistic variation, something more valued in Greek literature, or the two words could have different shades of meaning, much like how in English a loanword and an Anglo-Saxon root could have originally the same meaning, but they attain different shades of meaning by their very presence in the same language. Such differing shades of meaning, however, are not completely recoverable.

I am my father's mother,  
 my husband's sister, and he is my child 32  
 I am the slavewoman<sup>35</sup> of him who served me  
 I am she, the lord<sup>36</sup> **14.1** of my child, 34

It is he who gave birth to me at the wrong time<sup>37</sup>  
 And he is my child born at the right time  
 And my power is from within him  
 I am the staff of his youthful power

<sup>35</sup> This word is peculiar because it uses the singular feminine definite article, but has a plural ending. In deference to this feminine definite article, we then translate "slavewoman." It is impossible to do justice to the plural ending, and the meaning remains enigmatic in both Coptic and English.

<sup>36</sup> The Coptic word for "Lord" here is written as a combination of the general word for masculine ruler with the feminine definite article. There is, however, no Coptic word for feminine ruler, and using the feminine article with the masculine word to designate a feminine ruler is standard. Poirier, also cued into this, translates this into the French word *maitresse*.

<sup>37</sup> The Coptic is literally "before the time," and this is the way MacRae renders it in translation. We take into account its contrasting expression in line 4 and the overarching contrast of the first birth being premature. It is quite possible that the translation could best be rendered "But it is he who gave birth to me *prematurely*, And he is my child born *on the due date*." Poirier indeed translates the suggestion of premature birth (221-3). In simultaneous deference to the obvious imaginary contrast between the two, the need for an intelligible translation, and the meanings of the Coptic word in question, we have stopped short of this more graphic imagination, while trying to make sense of the contrast. It is interesting to note that this brief section does not fit well into the "gnostic" category that some propose as *Thunder's* context. Within the established "gnostic" cosmology Sophia falls in ignorance thus creating the material world and its evil powers. However, in this section we find this elusive figure claiming that "he" gave birth to "her" at the *wrong* time, whereas she gives birth in the *right* time. With this in mind, it is difficult to consider this figure as Sophia or in line with established "gnostic" mythology.

αγω]<sup>38</sup> | ἥτοϣ πε τκελεελε ἡτανῆ† | ρλλω<sup>39</sup>  
 αγω πετῆογοῳῆ ῳαϣῳωπε ἡμοει<sup>40</sup>

αнок пе кпарωϣ [14.10] ете μαγωταροϣ<sup>41</sup>  
 αγω τεπινο|α ете ναϣε πεсῆ πνεεϣε|  
 αнок те теснн ете ναϣε πεсῆρροοϣ·  
 αγω πλογос ете ναϣε | πεϣεине·  
 αнок пе πῳαχε ἡ|παραν·

<sup>38</sup> There is no half-raised dot here, but the MS is corrupt where one would expect a half-raised dot to indicate a line break. The line break, as well as the reconstructed auw (reconstructed by Krause), is placed here on the basis of the tightly patterned tricoloric sequence that this passage suggests. In short, we are reconstructing a stanza that displays a double tricola or two sets of three lines. Although we tend conservatively to leave all reconstructed words to the notes, the tight structure of this stanza almost demands auw.

<sup>39</sup> “Staff” (πσῆρωβ) and “baton” or “rod” (τκελεελε) are two symbols of authority in antiquity that were often paired together. In the immediate Egyptian context, pharaohs are often depicted holding a scepter and a crook, the latter being a stylized staff to represent the pharaoh as the “shepherd” of the people. The two are also often paired in biblical sources, such as in the very famous Psalm 23: “[Y]our rod and your staff—they comfort me” (v. 4). It is difficult to read these two images outside of *Thunder*’s larger pressing interests in gender and sexuality. Perhaps the most consciously phallic passage comes in Gen. 49:10, in which Jacob blesses Judah: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet.” In the two lines from *Thunder*, there is an additional play on gender. The staff, which is a masculine word, is of “his power” and is equated with “youth,” while the baton, a feminine word in Coptic, is of “my,” here a female voice, “old age.” The word “old age” is extremely literally rendered “old-womanhood.” Although an abstract noun, which by definition in Coptic is feminine, the word can be inflected by gender, abstracting the word for “old man” or “old woman.” In that sense, the word, although an abstract noun, has a subtle adjectival sense. The gender play is complicated by the fact that the first person singular female voice in this passage *is* the masculine staff, while “he” *is* the feminine baton. Moreover, the word κελεελε has an interesting variety of meanings in Coptic. According to Crum (103b), it can be a “sonorous wooden board” that is struck to call a meeting to order or to assemble a congregation, it is used to call people to prayer, and it can just mean staff. It also connotes weapons used for punishment, and indeed, when the word is abstracted, it means “punishment.” The choice of the translation of “baton” is meant to catch the different connotations that call people to order and, as in a police baton, can be used in a punitive manner.

<sup>40</sup> This stanza has a dense gender play between the feminine “I” and the masculine “he” and a sophisticated interplay between the lines. Structurally, it forms a “double tricola,” or two sets of three parallel lines. In this particular stanza, each set of three begins with a statement, the second line is a counter-statement meant to contrast the first line, while the last line concludes each set of three. The third line of the first set and the first line of the second set are tied together by different forms of the word “power,” the first in Greek and the second in Coptic. Moreover, each set of the third lines seems to form parallel statements, the first being that her power derives from him and the second being his power over her (translated as, “whatever he wants happens to me”).

<sup>41</sup> This section signals a shift in subject, moving from the double-subject of “he and I” and the emphasis on “power” to a focus on terms of sound, word, voice, and silence alongside the repetition of the word ναϣε, which can mean “great,” “many,” “manifold,” “multiple,” and so forth. In addition, one can see another shift in stanza organization from two sets of three to two sets of two with a concluding line. As before, there is also an intricate play on gender here. Every two lines indicates a shift in gender, beginning with masculine in the first line, shifting to feminine in the third line, and back to masculine in the concluding line. The final masculine noun, πῳαχε, may be playing alliteratively off the previous repetition of the word ναϣε.

And he is the baton<sup>42</sup> of my old womanhood  
Whatever he wants happens to me

I am the silence never found 9  
And the idea infinitely recalled  
I am the voice with countless sounds  
And the thousand guises of the word  
I am the speaking of my name 14

---

<sup>42</sup> *Tkelele* can sometimes mean the instrument that calls people to worship (cf. Lambdin and Crum). In an attempt to maintain the phallic symbolism of the section and the violence of the following line—"Whatever he wants happens to me"—we decided to translate *Tkelele* as "baton," which evokes notions of performance as well as punishment.

ετβε οὐ νετ̄νοστε ἤ|μοει τετ̄νηε ἤμοει·  
 αὖω | τετ̄ηνοστε ἤνετ̄νε ἤμοει.<sup>43</sup> |  
 νετ̄ρ̄αρνα ἤμοει εριζομολογει | ἤμοει·  
 αὖω νετ̄ρ̄ρομολογει [14.20] ἤμοει εριαρνα ἤμοει·  
 νετ̄χε | νε εροῖ χι βολ εροει·  
 αὖω νε|ταχε βολ εροει χε τνε εροει·  
 νετ̄σοοῦν ἤμοει εριατ̄σο|οῦν ἤμοει·  
 αὖω νετε ἤπογ|σοῦωντ̄ μαροῦσοῦωντ̄.<sup>44</sup> |  
  
 ἀνοκ γαρ πε πσοοῦν αὖω | τνητ̄ατ̄σοοῦν.<sup>45</sup>  
 ἀνοκ πε | πωῖπε αὖω τπιαρρησια· |  
 ἀνοκ οὔατωῖπε.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> This is a peculiar couplet, because it breaks any pattern of parallelism. MacRae (237) suggests that one could emend the first ἤμοει to ἤνοοῦ to translate, “Why do you love those who hate me and hate those who love me.” Yet the reading in the MS is perfectly clear, and, in current form, it places incongruent actions upon the hearers: “Why, those who hate me, do you love me, and you hate those who love me?” The question also signals a thematic shift, not only between love and hate, but moving the emphasis from the speaking “I” to “you” or “they/those.”

<sup>44</sup> Regarding content, this section exhorts listeners to the opposite behavior; thus, those who confess, must now deny and vice versa. While the speaker remains the same throughout the poem, the subject does not. Here the speaker has switched from self-designations to commands, focusing on “those who” and “you.” This section has a great deal of rhyme as well, although this is not a particular or necessary characteristic of the poetics of the text as a whole (although cf. 13.2-15); the word ἤμοει or its rhyming counterpart εροει both conclude every line except the last one and show up in the middle of each line. Moreover, overall the stanza uses very dense alliteration and assonance, very often repeating “m,” “n,” “t,” “o,” and “ei” sounds. The contrariwise repetition of each couplet alongside the internal and ending rhymes gives the stanza a rhythm, all of which is broken with the last line. For a more extensive discussion of this section, see Chapter 8.

<sup>45</sup> The transition between the previous stanza and this one is very smooth here in terms of content of knowledge and ignorance, but the poem switches back to the earlier syntactical structure as found in what has been separated into the second section of the poem. As in that section, here the γαρ signals a shift in focus that depends upon the previous section: it signals a new stanza while providing some continuity with the previous stanza. This alternation suggests an architectonic organization to the poem amongst the variety of sentence and stanza formations that can be found throughout.

<sup>46</sup> The shift from definite to indefinite predications eliminates a need for the copula, reducing much of the gender play inherent in the copular construction. At the same time, the text has shifted from indicating lines that contain two opposing qualities to having the opposing qualities between lines. The definite article and the use of opposing qualities in the same line returns at the end of the stanza, making bookends, or an *inclusio*, for the indefinite forms. As such, so far, each section of “I” statements has used a different format.

You who loathe me, why do you love me and loathe the ones who  
love me?

You who deny me, confess me

You who confess me, deny me

You who speak the truth about me, lie about me

You who lie about me, speak the truth about me

You who know me, ignore me

You who ignore me, notice me

I am both awareness and obliviousness<sup>47</sup>

I am humiliation<sup>48</sup> and pride<sup>49</sup>

I am without shame

29

I am ashamed

30

---

<sup>47</sup> There is a density of uses of the term *cooun* (meaning “to know”) in 13.23-13.27, creating a clever set of wordplays. Poirier surveys these occurrences, concluding that quite contrary to referencing a complex conceptual system, the uses of “to know” are inconsistent, and instead simply represent a spectrum of uses of the word (235).

<sup>48</sup> The root *shipe* is legitimately translated “shame” as it is in the following line. We use the synonym “humiliation” in order to avoid repeating the word “shame” in three successive lines. By using “shame” roots in lines 29 and 30 we keep the poetic use of the *shipe* sound in lines 28 and 29. The choice of “humiliation” is made for the way it corresponds to the way *Thunder* plays on the ancient Mediterranean system of honor and shame. Cf. discussion of honor and shame in Chapter 6.

<sup>49</sup> The translation of *tparhecia* with “pride” is also meant to underline the honor/shame dynamics. Cf. immediately previous note and Chapter 6 for more discussion on this section and honor/shame.

ΔΝΟΚ ΟΥ|ΧΠΗΤ΄

ΔΝΟΚ ΟΥΝΑΩΤΕ΄

ΔΥΩ | ΔΝΟΚ ΟΥΖΡ΄ΤΕ΄

ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΠΠΟ|ΛΕΜΟΣ ΔΥΩ †ΡΗΝΗ΄

† ΖΤΗ|Τῆ̄ ΕΡΟΕΙ ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΤ΄ΣΔΕΙΝΟΥ | ΔΥΩ ΤΗΟΣ<sup>50</sup>

† ΖΤΗ|Τῆ̄ ΕΤΑΜῆ̄Τ΄ [15.1] [ΖΗ]ΚΕ<sup>51</sup>

ΔΥΩ ΤΑΜῆ̄ΤΡῆ̄ΝΑΟ΄

[ῆ̄]Πῆ̄ΧΙΣΕ<sup>52</sup> ῆ̄ΖΗΤ΄ ΕΡΟΕΙ ΕΒΕΙ|ῆ̄ΝΧ<sup>53</sup> ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ̄Χῆ̄ ΠΚΑΡ<sup>54</sup>

Δ[ΥΩ]<sup>55</sup> | ΤΕΤΝΑΣΙΝΕ ῆ̄ΜΟΕΙ Ζῆ̄ Ν[Ε|Τ]ῆ̄ΝΗΟΥ<sup>56</sup>

ΟΥΤΕ ῆ̄Πῆ̄ΡΝΑΥ<sup>57</sup> | [ΕΡ]ΟΕΙ<sup>58</sup> Ζῆ̄ ΤΚΟΠΡΙΑ ῆ̄ΤΕΤῆ̄ΝΩΚ | [ῆ̄]Τῆ̄Τῆ̄ΚΑΔΑΤ<sup>59</sup>

ΕΒΕΙΝΧ ΕΒΟΛ΄ |

ΔΥΩ ΤΕΤΝΑΣΙΝΕ ῆ̄ΜΟΕΙ Ζῆ̄ | ῆ̄Νῆ̄Τῆ̄ΡΡΑΕΙ΄

ΟΥΔΕ ῆ̄Πῆ̄ΡΝΑΥ ΕΡΟΕΙ ΕΒΕΙΝΧ ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ̄ ΝΕΤ΄ΣΔ|ΕΙΝΟΥ΄

ΔΥΩ Ζῆ̄ ΝΕΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ | ΤΟΠΟΣ<sup>60</sup> ῆ̄ΤΕΤῆ̄ΝΩΒΕ ῆ̄ΣΩΔΕΙ΄ ῆ̄ΣΩΔΕΙ΄

<sup>50</sup> The movement from a string of self-predications to the imperative to “give heed/heart to me,” which we have translated as “pay attention to me,” gives a clear indication of a new theme and syntactical formations. We have decided to indent the following two stanzas, because they seem to be a poem within a poem. The two stanzas are so intricately connected that one could almost as easily group them into one stanza. They have overlapping themes and even overlapping sentence forms, somewhat like a fugue style, but not quite.

<sup>51</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>52</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>53</sup> Reconstructed by MacRae; cf. Krause: εβει[ῆ]νχ.

<sup>54</sup> A similar phrase occurs again in *Thunder* in 19.29-30.

<sup>55</sup> Reconstructed by MacRae; cf. Krause.

<sup>56</sup> Reconstructed by MacRae; cf. Krause and Poirier: ζῆῆ[αῖ ε]; Cherix ζῆῆ[αῖ ετ]. [τ]ῆῆῆου by MacRae; Krause [τῆ]ῆῆου; Giverson [τῆ]ῆῆου; Cherix ῆῆῆου.

<sup>57</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>58</sup> Reconstructed by MacRae; Krause [ερο]ει.

<sup>59</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>60</sup> MacRae, 238, supplies the ῆ̄ to create <ῆ̄>-τοπος, which is usually necessary to connect a noun and an adjective; cf. Krause (note) and Poirier (note).

I am security and I am fear  
I am war and peace

Pay attention to me  
I am she who is disgraced and she who is important  
15.1 Pay attention to me, to my impoverished state and to my  
extravagance 1  
Do not be arrogant to me when I am thrown to the ground  
You will find me among the expected.<sup>61</sup>

Do not stare at me in the pile of shit,<sup>62</sup> leaving me discarded  
You will find me in the kingdoms<sup>63</sup>  
Do not stare at me when I am thrown out into the condemned  
Do not laugh at me in the lowest places

---

<sup>61</sup> The Coptic meaning here is unclear. Literally, this sentence can be translated “You will find me in the ones that are to come.” This sentence is to be paired with the one preceding it: “Do not be arrogant to me when I am thrown to the ground,” and forms an important couplet with the following two sentences: “Do not stare at me in the pile of shit, leaving me discarded. You will find me in the kingdoms.” In both pairs of sentences, the first sentence is an imperative that demands that the addressee not look at *Thunder*’s “I” in distress, and the second sentence justifies this demand by asserting that *Thunder*’s “I” will be ascendant again. The second couplet’s descriptions of this future ascendency is that *Thunder*’s “I” will be found in the “kingdoms,” or the ruling places. So “You will find me in the ones that are to come” should somehow indicate an ascendency for *Thunder*’s “I.” In order to make this ascendency clearer, we contemplated translating this sentence in question “You will find me in the ones of destiny” or “You will find me in destiny.” This meaning seemed to be speculative for the Coptic. So we left it with the translation of those “expected,” which is still more directly connected to those “to come,” the more literal Coptic meaning.

<sup>62</sup> We have translated *kopria* (a Greek loanword to Coptic) as “shit” in order to keep with the graphic language of the Coptic. The word can also, of course, be translated “dung,” “dungheap,” “manure,” “excrement,” or “feces.” We have rejected “dung” and “dungheap” inasmuch as they are rarely used in contemporary English, and as such connote an antiquarian setting and meaning. “Manure” seems too rural, and “excrement” and “feces” too technical for the evocative language of *Thunder*.

<sup>63</sup> The use of “kingdom” in the plural suggests a possible imperial context. The Romans often depicted conquered nations as abused and stripped women, as exemplified in the Forum of Augustus. In this regard, this section can be both individual and collective in its understanding.



ΟΥΔΕ ΜΠΡ̄ΝΟΧ̄Τ̄ ΕΡΡᾹΙ ΕΝΕΤ̄|ΟΥΔΑΤ̄ Ζ̄Ν̄ ΟΥΜ̄Ν̄Τ̄ΑΥCΤΗΡΟC<sup>64</sup>

[15.15] ΔΝΟΚ ΔΕ ΔΝΟΚ<sup>65</sup> ΟΥΩΔΑΝ ΖΤΗC|

ΔΥΩ ΔΝΟΚ ΟΥΔΞ̄ΙΗΤ̄·

ΔΡΗΖ̄ | ΜΠΡ̄ΜΕCΤΕ ΤΑΜ̄Ν̄Τ̄CΤΜΗΤ̄· |

ΔΥΩ ΤΑΕῙΚΡΑΤΕΙΑ Μ̄ΤΕΤ̄Ν̄ | ΜΕΡΙΤ̄C<sup>66</sup> Ζ̄Ν̄ ΤΑΜ̄Ν̄Τ̄CΩΒ̄<sup>67</sup>

ΜΠΡ̄|ΒΩ̄ ΤΗΝΕ ΕΡΟΕΙ·

ΔΥΩ Μ̄ΤΕ|Τ̄Ν̄Τ̄Ρ̄ ΖΟΤΕ ΖΗΤ̄C̄ Ν̄ΤΑCΘΜ̄· |

<sup>64</sup> This forms a tightly constructed poetic unit, organized around the Greek loanwords οὔτε and οὐδέ. οὔτε literally means “and not” and is usually rendered as “neither” or “nor.” οὐδέ likewise means “but not” or “nor.” These negative disjunctives organize the entire passage. As such, for the phrases in the middle, we have decided not to carry the negative through the conjunctives as previous translators have done. The “neither...nor” construction operates on a larger level in three parts rather than within each line. In addition, one may notice the much longer lines that characterize this section in contrast with the rest of the poem thus far. These five lines form a tightly constructed unit, but they are strongly syntactically tied to the previous two lines by the repetition in the second part of the parallel lines of ΔΥΩ ΤΕΤΝΑCΘΜΕ Μ̄ΝΟΕΙ Ζ̄Ν̄ ΜΕΤ̄Ν̄ΝΗΟΥ (literally, “and you will find me in the coming ones”) from the line just preceding the “neither, nor, nor” section with ΤΕΤΝΑCΘΜΕ Μ̄ΝΟΕΙ Ζ̄Ν̄ Μ̄Ν̄Τ̄Ρ̄ΡΑΕΙ (literally, “and you will find me in the kingdoms”). The only thing that differs is the final word in each line, indicating that the “neither, nor, nor” section is a continuation of these lines. The entire theme of this section, however, is introduced by the lines that begin with “Pay attention to me,” emphasizing the speaker’s poverty and wealth, disgrace and greatness. The passage, moving on from this, expands more upon the first terms of poverty and disgrace, but the wealth and greatness are not far away (e.g., “the kingdoms”).

<sup>65</sup> The double “I” is relatively rare in this text (but see 16.24 and 19.15), and here functions at the beginning of a self-designation stanza in dialectical tension to the entire previous stanza. The double-I is a jolting after hearing about the speaker’s lowliness, shifting focus to the speaker’s compassion and cruelty.

<sup>66</sup> Again, one is faced with the choice of carrying the negation through the conjunction. There is nothing in the passage that would push the translator one way or another, but the interpretive differences are significant. With the negation, the passage reads, “Do not hate my obedience and [do not] love my self-control,” the second “do not” being supplied to fill out the suggested meaning in the Coptic. On the other hand, the passage could read, “Do not hate my obedience and love my self-control.” In this second rendering, it is doing both actions at once that are forbidden, hating the speaker’s obedience while loving her self-control. The second construal is preferable because, although it holds a different nuance than the first, it still can contain the first meaning.

<sup>67</sup> As MacRae notes, the division of the lines here is uncertain. The Ζ̄Ν̄ ΤΑΜ̄Ν̄Τ̄CΩΒ̄ could conceptually be placed at the end of the previous line or the beginning of the next one. We have strictly followed the indications in the text for the Coptic layout, which places “in my weakness” with the line “and love my self-control,” but for the sake of translation, the phrase does make more sense with the following, “in my weakness, do not forsake me.”

Do not throw me down into those slaughtered viciously  
 I myself am compassionate  
 And I am cruel  
 Watch out!  
 Do not hate my compliance and do not love my restraint 17  
 In my weakness do not strip me bare<sup>68</sup>  
 Do not be afraid of my power<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> A primary meaning of *bosh* is to strip or lay bare. Other translators seem to have shied from the graphic character of the verb. Almost all the translators seem to have followed MacRae in the translation of the more buffered term “forsake.”

<sup>69</sup> Here, as elsewhere in the translation, we have not translated *gar*, which can be translated as “for,” “because,” or “since.” We see *gar* in this case as an indication of transition, but not causality. This is often the case with words like *gar* and *de*, which are taken directly from the Greek.

εἴθε οὐ γὰρ τετῆ̄ρκατα|φρονι ἤταρῆ̄τε:<sup>70</sup>  
 ἀγὼ τε|τῆ̄σκαροῦ ἠπαῶγοῦγοῦ  
 [15.25] ἀνοκ δε τετῶσοῦ ἔῆ ἠ|φοβος τηροῦ  
 ἀγὼ πῆ̄ωατ<sup>71</sup>| ἔῆ οὔστωτ·  
 ἀνοκ τε τετῆ̄σοοβ·  
 ἀγὼ εἰοῦα.α. ἔῆ οὔ|ῆμλονη ἠτοπος·  
 ἀνοκ οὔ|αοῆτ ἀγὼ ἀνοκ οὔαβη· |

εἴθε οὐ ἀτετῆ̄μεστῶει | ἔῆ νετῆ̄φοῦσνε·  
 χε †νακα|ρῶει ἀνοκ ἔῆ ἠετῆ̄κα ρῶοῦ.<sup>72</sup>|  
 ἀγὼ †ναοῦωνῆ̄ εβολ ἠτα|ῶα.α.ε·  
 [16.1] εἴθε οὐ σε ἀτετῆ̄μεστῶει ἠ̄ρ[ελ]|λην<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> The introduction of a question and the use of γὰρ together with a shift in emphasis from imperatives to interrogatives and indicatives all suggest a new sense unit.

<sup>71</sup> According to MacRae, this spelling of ἠῶατ, which can be translated as “strength,” “boldness,” or “hardness,” is otherwise unattested as a noun. It is usually spelled ἠῶοτ. While this is true to the extent that the Sahidic ἠῶοτ is typically substantivized in Subachmimic via the qualitative form of the verb in the form παῶτ, this rare form of the word most likely simply follows the dialectal tendencies of Subachmimic in which the Sahidic o was replaced by the Subachmimic a. The form in this MS actually meets the two dialects half way. In fact, it is a tendency of this text as a whole, see the switch from the usual spelling of σοῦν to σοῦν (see nn 17 and 42).

<sup>72</sup> Note the playful use of the transposition of sounds in this line in †νακα and νετκα. The ἀνοκ half way between the two balances and intensifies the alliteration of “n” and “k” sounds. The entire doublet breaks the previous pattern, introducing the sentence with the rare (for this text) introductory χε, although, interestingly, the couplet also ends with this sound through the word ῶα.α.ε, providing bookends for this couplet. In fact, this stanza evinces a pattern of beginning a line with a question, εἴθε οὐ, with a subsequent line that begins with χε. The only difference between the two is that the first set has an explanatory expansion in the third line with ἀγὼ. The second couplet, then, begins a shift in topic to be elaborated much more extensively in the subsequent stanza on an interplay of ancient identity categories of Greek and Barbarian with an additional single reference to Egypt itself. For more on the poetic and sonorous aspects of this section, see Chapter 9. For more on “Greek and Barbarian,” see chapters 2, 6, and 7.

<sup>73</sup> Reconstruction by MacRae; Cf. Krause ἠ̄ρ[ελ]λην. Poetically, this stanza and the next show some interesting plays in sounds at the end of each line. βαρβαρος is the final word on four lines, ῆλλην concludes two lines, and plays on the sounds in the word ῆλλην account for the rest. κῆνε reproduces the long ā sound from ῆλλην, while introducing an “m” sound that will be reproduced in the final two lines with a long ī sound in nim. In short a rhyme scheme could be set as follows: ABABBA’ BCC.

Why do you despise my fear and curse my pride?  
 I am she who exists in all fears and in trembling boldness  
 I am she who is timid<sup>74</sup> 26  
 And I am safe in a comfortable place  
 I am witless and I am wise.

Why did you hate me with your schemes?  
 I shall shut my mouth among those whose mouths are shut<sup>75</sup>  
 and then I will show up and speak

16.1 Why then<sup>76</sup> did you hate me, you Greeks?<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> *Koob* can mean “weak,” “feeble,” or “timid,” according to Lambdin (351). We have preferred “timid” for two reasons. First, it is a striking contrast to the “boldness” of the previous line, which wants to be in tension with *koob*. Second, we have relied on the verb form *kbee*, which emphasizes timidity and feebleness (also Lambdin, 351).

<sup>75</sup> The verb *karw* generally connotes silence, but uses the actual root for closed mouth. Hence we have used the more graphic translation of being silent, reflecting the Coptic root imagery as well.

<sup>76</sup> Here, we have somewhat exceptionally translated the *de*, one of the several Greek transitional words that we have often left untranslated. In this case we have rendered *de* with “then” in order to recognize that it seems to want to connect this subject matter about Greeks and barbarians to the immediately previous themes of having one’s mouth shut, being timid, and being afraid. As discussed in chapters 2, 6, and 79, *Thunder* takes on the problematic vocabulary of Greek and barbarian, and deconstructs it through inversion and paradox. As Chapter 9 notes, this attack on the social construction of Greek superiority and barbarian shame is part of a larger strategy in *Thunder*. The connection *de* makes ideationally between 15:22-34 and 16:1-10 integrates the threat of shame and fear with the specific shaming of “barbarians” at the hands of “Greeks.”

<sup>77</sup> “Greeks” in the Greco-Roman world refers to more than those of Greek national origins. Greek represents a major cultural ideal and ethos, acknowledged and admired even by the politically dominant Romans. Inasmuch as one places *Thunder* in Egypt, this more expansive understanding of “Greeks” still applies. For instance, the Egyptian city of Alexandria had a centuries-long legacy of literary activity in the Greek language.

χε ἀνοκ οὐβαρβαρος εἰ[ν]ε|β[α]ρβαρος<sup>78</sup>

ἀνοκ γαρ<sup>79</sup> τε τσοφ[ι]α<sup>80</sup> | ἡ[ν]ε[ρ]ε[λ]λην<sup>81</sup>

ἀγω ττηνωσις<sup>82</sup> ἡ[ν]ε[ρ]ε[λ]λην<sup>83</sup>

ἀνοκ πε φατῆ ἡ[ν]ε[ρ]ε[λ]λην<sup>84</sup> ἡ[ν]ε[ρ]ε[λ]λην<sup>84</sup> ἡ[ν]ε[ρ]ε[λ]λην<sup>84</sup>

ἀ[νοκ]<sup>85</sup> | πετ[η]να[υ]ε πεσεῖνε εἰ[ν]ε κημε [·]<sup>86</sup>

ἀγω τετε ἡ[ν]ε[ρ]ε[λ]λην<sup>87</sup> εἰ[ν]ε ἡ[ν]ε[ρ]ε[λ]λην<sup>88</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>79</sup> γαρ both indicates a new stanza or thought unit and continues the theme of “Greeks and barbarians” posed in the question from the previous stanza. The two stanzas, therefore, constitute one larger unit, but differ in terms of syntax as well as line and language patterns. The previous stanza has a clear line pattern in which line 1 parallels line 4 and line 2 parallels line 5. 1 and 4 both begin with εἰνε οὐ αἰτιῶναι, or “Why did you hate me,” and the subsequent lines both begin with χε, which means “for/that/because,” following by a rhetorical answer to the question. The two instances of εἰνε οὐ link this stanza to the one preceding it, which also begins with the question “why” or εἰνε οὐ, suggesting a very long, well-crafted section. The significance of the repetition of χε also lies in the fact that these two lines are the only ones in all of *Thunder* that begin with this particular word. The subsequent stanza, then, continues and expands upon the theme of Greeks and barbarians in terms of wisdom and knowledge as well as images, or the lack thereof. The final two lines return to the theme of the previous stanza of “hate,” or she is the one who is “hated” and “loved” everywhere.

<sup>80</sup> The word σοφία or wisdom has a long history in ancient Israelite, Jewish, Greek, and Christian thought. In monotheistic trajectories, she is a hypostasis or personified female divine attribute of God. In these same trajectories and in other places she is or may be a goddess in her own right (see Proverbs; Wisdom of Solomon; Sirach; and many of the documents in the NHC). This line might be picking up on some of these traditions, but the passage itself puts “wisdom” in a parallel line with “knowledge,” at the very least muting that association or reworking in terms of the next word, ττηνωσις, which was not ever personified or deified. For the relationship of *Thunder* to ancient wisdom literature, see Chapter 3.

<sup>81</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>82</sup> The word ττηνωσις along with ancient word ττηνωσικος (or “gnostic”) is part of the nexus of ancient terminology whence the modern construction of “Gnosticism” derives. Along with MacRae, we do not think that this text fits within any modern reconstruction of “Gnosticism” or invokes even those other texts that have been placed in these categories, but probably just reflects the ancient Greek emphasis, such as in the philosophical traditions, on knowledge and knowing more generally. The word appears again in this text in 18.14-15, regarding “my knowledge of angels,” and in 19.32-33 as “the knowledge of my name.” For a discussion on *Thunder* and “Gnosticism,” see Chapter 4.

<sup>83</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>84</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>85</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>86</sup> The text does not indicate a break at this point, but the MS is corrupt here. Breaking the line here creates two parallel lines that center around the word εἰνε or image.

<sup>87</sup> The word for image εἰνε is feminine in this line (ττηνωσις), whereas it is masculine in the previous line (ττηνωσικος).

<sup>88</sup> Poirier (*Tonnerre*, 116-7, 170, 252-4) argues, on the basis of this line alone, that *Thunder* must be Jewish. This particular line may, in fact, refer to the well-known, although not always adhered to, Jewish prohibition on images. One cannot, however, characterize an entire text on the basis of a single line, since the speaker identifies with the images in Egypt just as easily as with the lack of them among the “barbarians,” or possibly Jews. It seems, rather, that the text is referring to a very well-known group of perceived outsiders or “barbarians” (from a Greek’s point of view), adding another permutation to the multiply identifying voice of *Thunder*. See further Chapter 2.

Because I am a barbarian among barbarians?<sup>89</sup>

I am the wisdom of the Greeks and the knowledge of the barbarians

I am the justice of both the Greeks and barbarians 7

I am he whose image is multiple in Egypt<sup>90</sup>

And she who is without an image among the barbarians

---

<sup>89</sup> This sentence is the only straightforward identity proposed and accepted by *Thunder*'s "I." All other "I am" phrases in *Thunder* are spoken with complex irony and paradox. However, to a certain extent this straightforward identity statement without additional twist, contradiction, or paradox is in itself a paradox--there is no one in the Hellenistic world who would self-proclaim her/himself a "barbarian."

<sup>90</sup> In the larger rhetoric of Egypt in the Greco-Roman world, "Egypt" was often, but not always, associated with "barbarian." The Coptic *khme* literally means "black" or "dark." More significant than this, however, is the high Greek identity of Egypt's main cosmopolitan city of Alexandria. Cf. chapters 2, 6, and 7 on the tension between the "Greek" Egyptian city of Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, especially the contrast between sophisticated Alexandria and rural Egyptians. It appears quite possible here that the "honor" of Alexandria is being ironically confused and caricatured in this section of *Thunder*. This would help make sense of the two paired sentences: "I am he whose image is multiple in Egypt and she who is without image among the barbarians." The comparisons/contrasts of "he/she" and "multiple image/without an image" are given ironic power by the similarity between Egypt and barbarian.

ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΝΤΑΥΜΕΣΤΩΣ [16.10] ἑῖ̄ ἡ̄ ΝΑ ΝΙΝ·  
 ΔΥΩ ΤΕΝΤΑΥΜΕΡΙΤ̄ | ἑῖ̄<sup>91</sup> ἡ̄ ΝΑ ΝΙΝ·

ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΤΕ ΨΑΥΜΟΥ|ΤΕ ΕΡΟΣ ΧΕ ΠΩΝῆ̄·  
 ΔΥΩ ΔΤΕΤῖ̄|ΜΟΥΤΕ ΧΕ ΠΜΟΥ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΤΕ | ΨΑΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΣ ΧΕ ΠΜΟΝΟΣ [-]<sup>92</sup>  
 [16.15] ΔΥΩ ΔΤΕΤῖ̄ΜΟΥΤΕ ΧΕ ΤΑΝΟΜΙΑ·<sup>93</sup>

ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΝΤΑΤΕΤῖ̄ΠΩΤ̄ ἡ̄ΝΟΕΙ·  
 ΔΥΩ ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΝΤΑΤΕΤῖ̄ΝΑΝΑΞΤΕ | ἡ̄ΝΟΕΙ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ<sup>94</sup> ΤΕΝΤΑΤΕΤῖ̄ΧΟ|ΟΡΕΤ̄ ΕΒΟΛ·  
 ΔΥΩ ΔΤΕΤῖ̄ΣΟΟΥ|ἑῖ̄ ἑΞΟΥΝ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΝΤΑΤΕΤῖ̄|ΨΙΠΕ ἑΝΤ̄·  
 ΔΥΩ ΔΤΕΤῖ̄Ρ ΔΤΩ|ΠΕ ΝΗΕΙ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΤΕ ΝΑΣῖ̄ ΨΑ· |  
 ΔΥΩ ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΤΕ ΝΑΩῖ̄ ΝΕΣΩΑ·<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> In this line, the *η* in *ἑῖ̄* assimilates to *η*, whereas in the previous line it remains the same even in the exact same placement.

<sup>92</sup> At every other similar point in the stanza, the text indicates a break with a half-raised dot, but does not do so here. The break has been supplied to follow the pattern in the passage.

<sup>93</sup> These four lines syntactically alternate between the habitual and the perfect tenses. The lines also always couple the habitual with the relative form *τετε* or “she whom.” Moreover, the lines alternate between “they” and “you” as the subjects with “they” always in the habitual and “you” always in the perfect.

<sup>94</sup> Note the use of the copula here, where the previous and subsequent sentences omit it. In fact, the last two lines are different enough to be considered a new thought unit, but placing them in the next stanza creates unnecessary awkwardness with the double “I” statement, which, in the Coptic, seems to “wake up” the reader/hearer; it punctuates the prose like an exclamation point. Therefore, we have chosen to consider the lines concerning celebrating festivals as a conclusion to the previous stanza, while recognizing that the copula helps the transition to the next stanza.

<sup>95</sup> The use of the feminine relative form of *τεττα* or “she whom” and the second person plural perfect *ατετῖ̄*, creates a tongue twister with an extremely high density of “t” and “n” sounds. One might also note that this stanza both begins and ends with two parallel rhyming lines. The first two lines end on the “ei” sound and the last two on the “sha” sound. The very last line plays with the sonority to an even greater extent, playing on the “n” and “sha” sounds in *νασα* and *νεσα*. One might also note that the concluding lines change from the relative form of *τεττα* or “she whom” to the relative form of *τετε*, which is here “she who.” For the sonority of this passage, see Chapter 9.

I am she who was hated in every place  
 And she who was loved in every place

I am she whom they call life  
 And you<sup>96</sup> all called death  
 I am she whom they call law  
 And you all called lawlessness

15

I am she whom you chased and she whom you captured<sup>97</sup>  
 I am she whom you scattered  
 And you have gathered me together  
 I am she before whom you were ashamed  
 And you have been shameless to me  
 I am she who does not celebrate festivals  
 And I am she whose festivals are spectacular

---

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Chapter 4 for a thorough discussion of the curious personages of “you” and “they” in *Thunder*.

<sup>97</sup> This stanza is full of depictions of the “feminine” “I” of *Thunder* in desperate and humiliating circumstances: being chased, captured, scattered, shamed, unlearned, and detested. This strong grouping of such characteristics in typical *Thunder* fashion is not left without ironic contrasts of being at the same time “she whose festivals are spectacular” and “whose God is magnificent.” There may be some contrast with the “feminine” characterization of “I” and the “I am he the one you thought about” and “I am he from whom you hid.”



ΔΝΟΚ ΔΝΟΚ<sup>98</sup> ΟΥΑΤΝΟΥΤΕ·  
     ΔΥΩ [16.25] ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΤΕ ΝΑΦΕ ΠΕΣΝΟΥΤΕ· |  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕΝΤΑΤΕΓῆΜΕΕΥΕ ΕΡΟΪ | ΔΥΩ ΑΤΕΤῆΦΟΣΤ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΟΥ|ΑΤ΄ΕΒΩ·  
     ΔΥΩ ΕΥΧΙ ΕΒΩ ΕΒΟΛ | ΞῆΤΟΥΤ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ΤΕΝΤΑΤΕΤῆ|ΚΑΤΑΦΡΟΝΕΙ ἸΜΟΕΙ·  
     ΔΥΩ ΤΕ|ΓῆΜΕΕΥΕ ΕΡΟΕΙ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕΝ|ΤΑΤΕΤῆΖΩΠ̄ ΕΡΟΕΙ·  
     ΔΥΩ ΤΕ|ΓῆΟΥΟΝΞ̄ ΝΑΪ ΕΒΟΛ·<sup>99</sup>

ΖΟΥΑΝ ΔΕ | ΕΤΕΤῆΦΑΝΖΩΠ̄ ἸΜΩΤῆ·<sup>100</sup> |  
     ΔΝΟΚ ΖΩΩΤ̄ †ΝΑΟΥΟΝΞ̄† [17.1] [ΕΒΟΛ·  
 ΖΟΥΑΝ] ΓΑΡ<sup>101</sup> ΕΡ[Ω]ΔΝΤΕΤῆ<sup>102</sup> | [ΟΥΟΝΞ̄Τῆ Ε]ΒΟΛ·<sup>103</sup>  
     ΔΝΟΚ ΖΩΩΤ̄ | [†ΝΑΖΩΠ̄ Ε]ΡΩΤῆ·<sup>104</sup>

<sup>98</sup> The double “I” as an indicator of a new topic to the extent that it breaks or punctuates the prose in an exclamatory fashion (cf. 15.15 and 19.15).

<sup>99</sup> This stanza has an interesting play on gender. After the initial two lines that begin with ΔΝΟΚ ΔΝΟΚ, the subsequent lines flip back and forth between masculine and feminine relative pronouns.

<sup>100</sup> The last stanza ended with the theme of hiding and appearing, which provides a transition into the theme of these four lines. The break in this stanza is given primarily by syntactical indications of a shift to the ΖΟΥΑΝ form, meaning “whenever,” which does not appear anywhere else in the poem, and by the disjunctive ΔΕ. We left the reconstructions in the prose because the parallelism makes the reconstructions virtually certain. The reconstructed ΕΒΟΛ was retained because the word ΟΥΟΝΟΞ̄ takes an ΕΒΟΛ. The rest of the words were reconstructed by the parallel forms. Overall, the passage plays back and forth between the presence and absence or the “appearance” and “hiding” of the “I” and the “you.” Although it is a continuation of the same theme from the previous stanza, it differs, in terms of content, in one crucial respect. In the previous stanza, it was the “you” who both hid and appeared. In this stanza, however, whenever the “you” hides, the “I” appears, and vice versa. Whether the following lines that begin with ΝΕΝΤΑῩ belong to this stanza or to its own stanza is uncertain due to the lacunae in the MS.

<sup>101</sup> [ΕΒΟΛ ΖΟΥΑΝ] ΓΑΡ MacRae; [ΕΒΟΛ ΖΟΥΑΝ Γ]ΑΡ Krause.

<sup>102</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>103</sup> Reconstructed by Krause and Bethge; Cherix and Poirier: [ΟΥΩΞ̄ ΝΑΪ Ε]ΒΟΛ.

<sup>104</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

I, I<sup>105</sup> am without God<sup>106</sup> 24  
 And I am she whose God is magnificent  
 I am he the one you thought about and you detested me  
 I am not learned<sup>107</sup> and they learn from me  
 I am she whom you detested and yet you think about me  
 I am he from whom you hid  
 And you appear to me

Whenever you hide yourselves, I myself will appear 35  
 17.1 Whenever you hide yourselves, I myself will appear  
 Whenever you, I myself [.....] you [..]

<sup>105</sup> The Coptic emphasizes this statement with a rare doubling of the “I” *anok anok*.

<sup>106</sup> We have chosen to capitalize “God” here in order to retain the enigmatic assertion about *Thunder*’s “I” as without (a) divinity. This represents an effort to translate into contemporary English, in which the term “god” mostly serves as an antiquarian reference. However one might want to interpret this line, it is clear that *Thunder* is not treating the topic of the divine in such an antiquarian manner. Other translations use “god” in some form, leaving the reader with much less irony and tension. The ancient reader/hearer—whether in a monotheistic or polytheistic frame of reference—would almost certainly have experienced “I, I am without God” as massively ironic, in that the form of literature *Thunder* most closely represents is the aretology or self-revelation of a God/god. Cf. Chapter 2 for ways *Thunder* turns out to be a parody of this common literary form of divine self-revelation.

<sup>107</sup> This translation needs the proper pronunciation to make sense, with the accent on the second syllable, “learn-ed.”

ΝΕΝΤΑΥ [ | ] ΖΗΤΟΟΤῆ ΜΠ[ | ]<sup>108</sup>  
 [ | ] Ζῆ ΟΥΝῆΤΑΘ[ΗΤ<sup>109</sup> | ] Τῆ<sup>110</sup>  
 ϣι ἦνοει. [ ] ΤΟΥ<sup>111</sup> | [επιστη]μη<sup>112</sup> ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΟΥ[ῆ]ΚΑΖ<sup>113</sup> ἦΖ[Η]Τ<sup>114</sup>  
 ΔΥΩ ἦΤΕΤῆΦΟΠῆ<sup>115</sup> | ε[ΠΩ]Τῆ<sup>116</sup> ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΟΥΕΠΙΣΤΗΜ[Η | Μῆ ΟΥ]  
 ἦΚΑΖ<sup>117</sup> ἦΖΗΤ<sup>118</sup>  
 ἦΤΕΤῆΦΟ[Π]ῆ<sup>119</sup> ΕΡΩΤῆ ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΖΕΝΤΟΠΟΣ [17.12] ΕΥΘΑΕΙΗΟΥ  
 ΔΥΩ Ζῆ ΟΥΤΑΝΟ<sup>120</sup> |  
 ΔΥΩ ἦΤΕΤῆΤΩΡῆ<sup>120</sup> ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΝΕ|ΤΝΑΝΟΥΟΥ ΚΑΗ Ζῆ ΟΥΜῆΤῆΔ|ΕΙΕ<-><sup>121</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Due to the extremely fragmentary condition of this section of the MS, this line break is hypothesized on the basis of the approximate average of number of letter spaces that the line breaks have in this section.

<sup>109</sup> Reconstructed by Krause; Cherix ΟΥΝῆΤΑΘ[ΗΤ ἦνοει]; Poirier ΟΥΝῆΤΑΘ[ΗΤ ΔΥΩ]

<sup>110</sup> Cherix [ἦῆΤΩΔ]Τῆ.

<sup>111</sup> Reconstructed by MacRae; Krause ἦνοει [ῆ]ΤΟΥ; Cherix ἦνοει Ζ[ῆ]ΤΟΥ; Poirier ἦνοει Ζ[ῆ]ΤΟΥ.

<sup>112</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>113</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>114</sup> Fig. Pl. 11 \*d; Reconstructed by MacRae and Cherix; Krause [ῆΖ]Τ.

<sup>115</sup> Cherix ἦΤΕΤῆΦΟ[Π]ῆ.

<sup>116</sup> Fig. Pl. 11 \*d; Reconstructed by MacRae; Krause [ΕΡΩ]Τῆ.

<sup>117</sup> ΟΥΕΠΙΣΤΗΜ[Η | Μῆ ΟΥ]ῆΚΑΖ reconstructed by Krause; Poirier: [ΖῆΟΥ]ῆΚΑΖ.

<sup>118</sup> This is an unusually long line for this text, but I am unsure, on the basis of the current reconstruction, of how it could have been broken up differently. In fact, it parallels the previous line very well. The first line in the set uses one form of “take” (ϣι) and the second line, another form (φωῖτ). Both lines most likely use the word επιστηνη or “understanding,” although this must be reconstructed for the first line, and they also both use a phrase, ΟΥῆΚΑΖῆΖΗΤ, that means “heartache.” Parallel lines, especially when they use almost virtually the same vocabulary, highlight whatever differences there may be. The differences here are the different forms of the word “take.” The first has the connotation of “to carry” or “bear,” while the second has the connotation of “to receive.” The other difference is the position of the prepositions. Indeed, while the exact same prepositions are used, they are placed slightly differently to bring out different nuances of meaning. The first line literally means, “understanding from within heartache,” while the second line means, “from within understanding and grief.”

<sup>119</sup> Reconstructed by Krause.

<sup>120</sup> Funk and Poirier: ἦΤΕΤῆΤΩΡῆ<ἦνοει>.

<sup>121</sup> There is no indication of a line break at this point in the text, but one is postulated based upon the parallelism it creates with the subsequent lines both in terms of syntax, beginning both clauses with ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ, and in terms of content, with the marked emphasis on “shame” and “shamelessness.”

[.....] Those who have [....]  
 [.....] to it [.....] take me[.....]from  
     within[.....] 6  
 Receive me with understanding and heartache  
 Take me from the disgraced<sup>122</sup> and crushed places  
 Rob from those who are good, even though in disgrace

---

<sup>122</sup> *Baciv* occurs in this line and the following one, and is translated “disgraced” and “in disgrace.” It can also have the meaning of “ugly,” but disgrace seems more appropriate to the ancient Mediterranean dynamic of honor and shame that *Thunder* seems to target so often as object of deconstruction.

εβολ εἴ<sup>123</sup> οὐραπε ὄροντ<sup>124</sup> | ερωτῆ εἴ οὐμῆτ'ατῶπε |  
 ἀγῶ εβολ εἴ οὐμῆτ'ατῶπε | μῆ οὐραπε<sup>125</sup>

ⲭⲡⲓⲟ ⲛⲏⲁⲙⲉ|ⲗⲟⲥ εἴ ⲧⲏⲅⲧῖ  
 ἀγῶ ⲛⲧⲉ|ⲧῖⲧⲓⲧⲉⲧⲓⲟⲅⲟⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲛ ⲉϩⲟⲓ |  
 ⲛⲉⲧ'ⲥⲟⲟⲅⲏ ⲛⲏⲟⲓ ἀγῶ ⲛⲉⲧ'ⲥⲟⲟⲅⲏ ⲛⲏⲁⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ  
 ⲛⲧⲉⲧῖ|ⲥⲙⲏⲏ ⲛῖⲛⲏⲟⲥ εἴ ⲛⲏⲟⲅⲟⲓ ⲛ|ⲟⲣⲛῖ ⲛⲕⲧⲓⲥⲏⲁ·

ⲧⲉⲧῖ|ⲟⲅⲟⲓ ⲉϩⲣᾶῖ ⲉⲧⲏῆⲧ'ⲟⲏⲣⲉ|ⲟⲏⲏ·  
 ἀγῶ ⲛⲡⲣⲏⲥⲧⲟⲥ | ⲗⲉ ⲥⲥⲁⲅⲉⲕ ἀγῶ οὐⲕⲟⲅⲟⲓ|ⲧⲉ·  
 οὅⲧⲉ ⲛⲡⲣⲧⲥⲧⲟ ⲛⲅⲉⲛ | ⲛῆⲧⲏⲁⲥ εἴ ϩⲉⲛⲏⲉⲣⲟⲥ εβολ | εἴ ⲛῆⲏⲧⲕⲟⲅⲟⲓ·  
 ⲉⲟⲁⲅ|ⲥⲟⲅⲟⲛ ⲛῆⲏⲧⲕⲟⲅⲟⲓ ⲅⲁⲣ | εβολ εἴ ⲛῆⲏⲧ'ⲏⲟⲥ<sup>126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> This is the only place in the poem where εβολ εἴ begins a line as a prepositional phrase, although compare the conjunctive use of εβολ with a meaning of “because” or “since” to begin a new line in 20.13. The use of this prepositional phrase at the beginning of a line forces a different syntactical arrangement than anywhere else in the poem, suggesting that it is introducing a new stanza. The next two lines, in fact, speak of the theme of “shame,” employing various permutations of the root word ὄπε.

<sup>124</sup> ὄπε ὄροντ or “shame, take me” is a play on words in Coptic. Both words use the root consonants of ὄ and π. See further Chapter 9.

<sup>125</sup> The ordering of these two lines forms a chiasm of shame, shamelessness/shamelessness, shame.

<sup>126</sup> These last two stanzas have parallel organizations, suggesting that they belong together; thus, they are indented to highlight their similarities. They each begin with a line followed by a line that begins with ἀγῶ, followed by two parallel lines without the usual parallelism indicator of ἀγῶ, making these two stanzas syntactically unique in the poem. In fact, we contend that these three stanzas form a poem within a poem, and, thus, belong together (again, indicated by indenting the entire stanza). The first two lines introduce the new poem with the theme of shame and shamelessness, which seems to be somewhat connected to the next stanza’s line that commands one to “blame my parts in you.” The last part, in turn, overlaps with knowing those “parts,” by which time the poem within a poem has reached a new structural and syntactical form that links smallness and greatness with the command to “come forward to childhood,” a line that links back up to the command to “come forward to me,” both using the phrase πετῖοⲅⲟⲓ. Therefore, there are many intricate links between the stanzas both grammatically and thematically that point to a very sophisticated and largely self-contained composition. For an extensive discussion of this entire passage, see Chapter 9.

Bring me in shame,<sup>127</sup> to yourselves, out of shame  
 With or without shame<sup>128</sup>  
 Blame the parts of me within yourselves  
 Come toward me, you who know me 20  
 and you who know the parts of me  
 Assemble the great among the small and earliest creatures

Advance toward childhood<sup>129</sup> 25  
 Do not hate it because it is small and insignificant  
 Don't reject the small parts of greatness because they are small  
 since smallness is recognized from within greatness

---

<sup>127</sup> The alliteration of these two lines is especially strong. It also forms a chiasm of shame, shamelessness/shamelessness, shame. These strong oral or performancial elements would make less sense in a written form. Cf. Chapter 9's discussion of performance of *Thunder*.

<sup>128</sup> This sentence that we have translated "Bring me in shame, to yourselves, out of shame, with or without shame" confirms our larger translational attention to ancient Mediterranean social systems of honor and shame and to *Thunder*'s eagerness to burst them open. Because of obscurity of meaning, we have been tempted to paraphrase the Coptic in order to gain meaning. But, as noted in the translator's preface, we have not allowed paraphrasing in the translation out of a longer-term commitment to meanings that may emerge in further study of *Thunder*. In notes then, we speculate on some possible paraphrasing that might make more sense. Such a paraphrase might be: "Bring me and my shamefulfulness to yourselves in order to escape from your shamefulfulness. Whether you are ashamed or not, just bring me to yourselves."

<sup>129</sup> "Advancing" toward "childhood" is another kind of irony, over against the dominant ancient Mediterranean ethos that values maturity and wisdom of those aging. Note another such irony in *Matt* 18:3: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

εἴθε | οὐ τετῆ̄καροῦ ἦμοι·<sup>130</sup>  
 λῶ τετῆ̄ταει<sup>131</sup> ἦμοι·  
 ἀτετῆ̄ωσε·  
 λῶ ἀτετῆ̄|να·<sup>132</sup>

ἦπ̄ρπορχῆ̄ εβολ ρῆ̄ ἦωρῆ̄ [18.1] ναῖ ἦτα[τε]ῖτῆ̄ς [ ]<sup>133</sup>  
 [ ]<sup>134</sup> | ἦπ̄ρνεχ̄ λλαγ [εβολ·]<sup>135</sup>  
 [ ] | τῆ̄τε<sup>136</sup> λλαγ εβολ ἦ<sup>137</sup> [ | ]  
 [ ] | τῆ̄τα τῆ̄νε λγ[ω<sup>138</sup> | σο]γῆ<sup>139</sup> ἦμογ ἀν·  
 ἀη<sup>140</sup> | ]·

<sup>130</sup> There are many indications that this line begins a new stanza. It begins by asking a question, and we have seen elsewhere that asking a question with εἴθε οὐ often signals a change of topic. Moreover, the line lengths are much shorter than the previous stanzas, and this stanza shows no real connection to the previous three stanzas, which had several interrelationships between them.

<sup>131</sup> The MS reads τῶαει, which would mean “condemn,” but the letter σ appears to be erased. The reconstruction of ταει provides an antithesis to καροῦ, which means “curse.” As MacRae notes, however, elsewhere the MS erasures are indicated by dots above the letters or by strokes through them, while here the letter σ has been singularly rubbed out.

<sup>132</sup> This is the shortest set of parallel lines in the piece, with the paralleled aspects being only one word in each line connected by the usual λῶ. This creates a strong possibility of these lines and the two before them being a separate unit unto themselves because of the very long subsequent lines. Although, given the poor state of the MS in the following section, it is difficult to determine any larger syntactical or thematic patterns.

<sup>133</sup> MacRae ἦτα[τε]ῖτῆ̄ς[οῦωνοῦ]; Krause ἦτα[τε]ῖτῆ̄ς[οῦωνοῦ]. The new stanza, as noted in the last footnote, is predicated upon line length and a shift in topic, although, as also noted, the lacunae make any formatting much more hypothetical than usual. MacRae reconstructs this lacuna as ἦτα[τε]~ ~ τῆ̄ς[οῦωνοῦ]. We agree that the first reconstruction of τε is virtually certain, while the latter insertion of οῦωνοῦ is probable, but we have chosen to exercise caution in applying this word to this lacuna since only one letter, ε, remains in the text. This caution, then, extends to the rest of the lacuna, which appears on our subsequent line with the reconstruction of ογλε.

<sup>134</sup> Krause and MacRae: ογλε.

<sup>135</sup> This reconstruction is virtually certain based upon the subsequent line with a parallel phrase.

<sup>136</sup> Krause’s reconstruction of [λῶ ἦτετῆ̄]ῆ̄τε or the nominative “you” is highly likely given use of τῆ̄νε, or the accusative “you” in the parallel line, which most likely reverses whatever relationship this line portrays in terms of “turning away.” Cf. Cherix: [ογλε ἦπ̄]ῆ̄τε.

<sup>137</sup> Reconstructed by MacRae; Krause εβολ[.]

<sup>138</sup> MacRae’s reconstruction; Krause τῆ̄τα τῆ̄νε ἀη; Poirier τῆ̄τατῆ̄νε ἀ[.]

<sup>139</sup> Krause’s reconstruction here is virtually certain given the only word consistently used in the MS that ends with γῆ is σογῆ.

<sup>140</sup> Following MacRae; Krause ἀη; Cherix ἀη[οκ].

Why did you curse me and revere me?  
You wounded me and you relented  
Don't separate me from the first **18.1** ones  
you[.....]  
throw away no one[.....]  
turn away no[.....]

3



τῆτε τῶει [<sup>141</sup> ·] |  
 †ϛ[ο]ογν<sup>142</sup> ἀνοκ ἡῆω[ορ]ῆ[·] |  
 ἀγῶ<sup>143</sup> | νετῆῆῆσα καῖ σεσορ[γν<sup>144</sup> ἡ]ῆοει [<sup>145</sup> ·] |

ἀνοκ δε<sup>146</sup> πε νογς ἡ[ ·] <sup>147</sup> |  
 [18.10] ἀγῶ ταῆαπαγςις ἡπ[.] .. [<sup>148</sup> ·]

ἀ|νοκ πε πσοογν ἡπαῶινε·  
 ἀγῶ | πῶινε ἡνετῶινε ἡῆοει·  
 ἀγῶ | πογαρσαρνε ἡνετῶινε ἡῆοει |  
 ἀγῶ τῶαη ἡῆῶαη<sup>149</sup> ρῆ τῶγνῶ|ςις<sup>150</sup> ἡῆατῶελοσ·

ἡτῶγτῶογ|ογ ρῆ παλογοσ <·><sup>151</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Following MacRae; Krause τῶει[; Cherix τῶει [re.

<sup>142</sup> Following Krause; Cherix †ϛ[ο]ογν.

<sup>143</sup> Fr. Pl. 12\*d; MacRae's reconstruction; Krause ἡῆω[ορπ ἀγῶ]; Bethge ἡῆω[ορ]ῆ ἀγῶ.

<sup>144</sup> Krause's reconstruction.

<sup>145</sup> Fr. Pl. 12\*d; MacRae's reconstruction; Krause ἡῆοῖ.

<sup>146</sup> oo indicates a change in topic.

<sup>147</sup> Krause reconstructs that this lacuna with = η[τῶελοσ], which would make, "I am he the perfect mind," the only allusion to the title in the entire poem. Perhaps due to the complete lack of reference to the title in the text, we should be suspicious of such a reconstruction. Outside of the title (13.1), the word nous itself appears again in 19.32. Marvin Meyer, does, however, reconstruct "perfect mind" at this point in his translation (Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 376); cf. MacRae (18.9 note).

<sup>148</sup> Following MacRae; Krause ἡπ[ ] . . [δ]; Giversen ἡπ[ρρ]γ[ῆηε]; Cherix ἡπ[η]ογ[ς]; Poirier ἡπ [ . . ]ογ[ . . ] .

<sup>149</sup> The word "power" shifts in spelling from ὄση (13.3) to ὄαη; the former is the standard Sahidic spelling and the latter is the typical Subachmimic spelling (cf. nn. 17 and 29).

<sup>150</sup> Cf. the use of the word ῥῶοσις in 16.4, in which it is used in parallel to σοφία, and in 19.32-33, in which it is the "knowledge of my name."

<sup>151</sup> There is no line break indication here in the MS, but it is tempting to place it here to create a parallel structure of two sets of four lines.

she who[.....]

I know those

And the ones after these know me

But I am the mind<sup>152</sup>[.....] and the rest [.....] 9

I am the learning from my search

And the discovery of those seeking me

The command of those who ask about me

And the power of powers<sup>153 154</sup> 14

In my understanding of the angels<sup>155</sup>

Who were sent on my word

---

<sup>152</sup> One of two occurrences of the word *nous* from the title. It, however, does not contain any allusion to the “thunder” in the title.

<sup>153</sup> Lines 9-14 display a clear thematic resonance with the beginning of *Thunder*: mind, power, pondering/learning, searching, and finding. Both sections are also followed by an extended “I am” segment.

<sup>154</sup> The repetition of “power” and its connection to the repetition of “God” in line 17 seems reminiscent of *The Gospel of Peter* 5:5.

<sup>155</sup> Lines 14 to 17 seem to mark a departure in vocabulary from the piece to this point. The use of “power of powers”, “angels,” “word,” and “God among Gods” imply a kind of cosmic or metaphysical vocabulary not noted in *Thunder* by and large. It does have some particular similarities to *the Gospel of Peter* 5:5, in which there is a doubling of “power” as a parallel for the doubling of “God” in *the Gospel of Mark*’s 15:34.

ἀγὼ ἡνοῦτε | εἰ ἡνοῦτε<sup>156</sup> εὐολ εἰ παροχνη·  
 ἀγὼ ἡπῆα ἡρωμε νημ εἰ(ῶοῦ) ἡμῆαι·  
 ἀγὼ ἡῖομε [18.20] εἰ(ῶοῦ) ἡῖητ<sup>157</sup>

ἀνοκ τε τετ|ταεινοῦ ἀγὼ τετοῦσμοῦ | ερος·  
 ἀγὼ τετοῦρκαταφροῖν ἡμος εἰ οὔ(ῶ)·  
 ἀνοκ | τε τρηνη ἀγὼ ἡταῖπολεμος | ῶ(ῶ)πε εἰτβηητ·

<sup>156</sup> This is a difficult passage. It may be a clever play on words that works only in Coptic in which the first ἡνοῦτε means “gods” and the second ἡνοῦτε means “in their times/seasons.” MacRae notes that for this translation to work, the word should be ἡεῖητ. The word τῆ or “time/season” is also attested spelled as τε. The only nonstandard variation would be the third person plural possessive, usually being εἰ but here potentially as οὔ. Even so, while in Sahidic, one invariably expects εἰ, Subachmimic attests both εἰ and οὔ as third person plural possessive pronouns (Till, *Dialektgrammatik*, 30). Another possible understanding would be “the gods among the gods.” To do this, one would have to emend the text as suggested by Krause and followed by Poirier: ἡνοῦτε εἰ <ἡ> ἡνοῦτε. Even so, while in other bodies of literature, the second η drops, throughout the NHC three η’s regularly recur in a row, and, in fact, usually with the noun, ἡνοῦτε. One final possibility is “the gods in/among god/a god.” In such a case, one would expect the following: ἡνοῦτε εἰ <η> ἡνοῦτε or ἡνοῦτε εἰ <οὔ> ἡνοῦτε. Nevertheless, ἡνοῦτε often appears without definite and indefinite article throughout the NHC, and, while sometimes it is translated as plural (in very special circumstances), the singular understanding seems to be the default. With such a tendency in mind, perhaps the best translation is “Gods in God,” but given the very close vocalization between ἡνοῦτε and ἡεῖητ, it is possible that it could have been understood either way. Moreover, the text may be playing upon and reversing the earlier example of the “power of powers,” moving from singular to plural, with “Gods in/among God,” moving from plural to singular. In sum, this could be considered a place of a polysemous play on words, in which the text can be taken in two different ways, as either “Gods in/among God” or “Gods in their seasons.”

<sup>157</sup> These three stanzas represent yet a third example of a “poem within a poem.” Like the second example, as found in 17.15-32, this section follows a stanza pattern of sets 2, 4, and 4 parallel lines. As before, the relationship of the first two introductory lines with the last two stanzas is a bit more tenuous than the intricate interrelationships between the two longer stanzas themselves. The introductory lines may have had a stronger relationship with the succeeding stanzas, but the lacunae make this unknowable. The “mind” and “rest” probably introduce the themes of “knowledge” in the second stanza and “dwelling” or “existence” with the speaker in the last stanza. The second two stanzas of four parallel lines each are rather unique in Thunder in that they have one line with three parallel expansions of that line rather than the usual one additional parallel or the occasional two additional parallel lines. While based upon line organization the last two stanzas are separate, based upon syntax, they are not. In fact, the first line of the last stanza is a relative clause expanding upon the last word of the previous stanza of ἡἡαρελοσ. With the second stanza being a long expansion of the end of the first stanza, these last two stanzas could be rendered as a single, very long sentence about the knowledge of supra-mundane powers, including the angels or messengers (first set of four lines), and by whom those messengers have been sent (second set of four lines). For this kind of analysis of *Thunder*, cf. Ch.apter 8.

And the Gods in God, according to my design? 17  
And spirits of men who exist with me  
And the women who live in me<sup>158</sup>

I am she who is revered and adored  
And she who is reviled with contempt  
I am peace and war exists because of me

---

<sup>158</sup> The parallelism of these two lines ("And the spirits of men who exist with me And the women who live in me") have little to none of the irony exhibited in the parallelisms throughout *Thunder*.

ἀγὼ ἀνοκ | οὐϞῶῆνω ἀγὼ οὐρῆ ἡπολις.<sup>159</sup> |

ἀνοκ τε τοῦσια·

ἀγὼ τετε μῆ|τες οὐσια·

νετῶροοῖ εβολ | ρῆ τα.συνοῦσια.<sup>160</sup> σεῖρατῶροοῦν [18.30] ἡμοει·

ἀγὼ νετῶροοῖ ρῆ τα|οῦσια νετῶροοῦν ἡμοει.<sup>161</sup> |

νετῶρην εροει.<sup>162</sup> ἀρῶ ατῶροοῦν | ἡμοει·

ἀγὼ νετῶροοῦ ἡ|σα ἡβολ ἡμοει νετῶροοῦ|ωντῶ·

ρῆ περοοῦ εειρην εροῦ.<sup>163</sup> [19.1] [ερωτῆ τετ]ῆροοῦ.<sup>164</sup> ἡσανολ.<sup>165</sup> | [ἡμοει·

ἀγ]ῶ.<sup>166</sup> ρῆ περοοῦ.<sup>167</sup> εῖ|[ροοῦ ἡσα].<sup>168</sup> ἡβολ ἡμω[τῆ †]ρην·

<sup>159</sup> This section lacks the usual connecting terms that allow clearer indications of stanza breaks. There is a shift in parallel patterns, however. This stanza returns to the normal mode of two parallel lines (here two sets of two), unlike the previous two stanzas that used four at a time. We also have a distinctive shift from supra-mundane entities to clear social categories. The first falls into the category of honor and shame, construed broadly, which permeated the ancient Mediterranean world, drawing upon the terms of honor, praise, despising, and scorn. The next social category is peace and war. And the final category is the alien and the citizen. These social categories all have a bearing upon social belonging, delineating degrees of who belongs and who does not, whether within a society (honor and shame), between rival groups (peace and war), or an interaction between these two (alien and citizen). For a more extensive discussion of honor and shame as well as other social categories, see Chapter 7.

<sup>160</sup> Although the text indicates a line break here with a half-raised dot, and, indeed, this is a natural pause, but I have combined to two lines to illustrate the parallelism much more clearly.

<sup>161</sup> This stanza shifts from the issues of social location of the previous stanza to more abstract existential themes of “being and nothingness,” to borrow a phrase from Heidegger. The entire stanza plays on the words οῦσια, a Greek loanword for “being,” and συνοῦσια, which we have translated as “presence,” but literally means “being with.”

<sup>162</sup> Like the previous stanza, the MS indicates a line break here, and, in fact, in reading or reciting this poem, this would be a natural pause, but the parallelism in these lines can actually best be illustrated by combining the two lines together in an oppositional parallel to the subsequent line.

<sup>163</sup> One would expect the word to be spelled εροῦν rather than εροῦ with a rare supra-linear stroke over a vowel. This abbreviated form with the supra-linear stroke typically occurs at the end of a line or column when the scribe has run out of room, as is the case here. Note the probable reconstruction of the final line uses εροῦν in the exact same situation as one would expect. Cf. 20.24, which has ἡπετῆσαννοῦ rather than the expected ἡπετῆσαννοῦν.

<sup>164</sup> MacRae’s reconstruction; Krause [ερωτῆ εῖ] οῦνο[γ]; Cherix [ερωτῆ εεῖ] οῦνοῦ.

<sup>165</sup> ἡσανολ appears to be a form of ἡσα ἡβολ in which the β has dropped out and the = η has changed to ῆ. See the reconstructed phrase in MS 19.3 (or the very next line in our formatting).

<sup>166</sup> Following MacRae; Krause [ἡμωτῆ ἀγ]ῶ.

<sup>167</sup> Following MacRae and Poirier; Krause ροοῦ.

<sup>168</sup> Following Krause.

I am a foreigner and a citizen of the city<sup>169</sup> 26

I am being<sup>170</sup>

I am she who is nothing<sup>171</sup>

Those who participate in my presence<sup>172</sup> know me<sup>173</sup>

Those who do not share in my being,<sup>174</sup> don't know me

Those who are close to me, did not know me 32

Those who are far from me, knew me

On the day that I am close to you 19.1[.....]are far away

[.....]on the day that I[.....]

<sup>169</sup> Considering *Thunder's* Coptic provenance, it is quite possible that this is a reference to the city of Alexandria and the Coptic countryside.

<sup>170</sup> The term *ousia* (which also occurs in the parallel line after this first reference) is taken directly from the Greek, and is, of course, well-known within early Christian christological and trinitarian debates. In many translations of those debates, "substance" is used as a translation, although "being" is not uncommon. Our translation, however, is not meant to link *Thunder* to those debates, inasmuch as no other vocabulary similarities are found. Our decision to avoid a dominantly philosophical translation is reflected especially in the second line: "I am she who is nothing."

<sup>171</sup> MacRae ignores the *te* without copula here and simply translates "no substance." Maguire, Meyer and Layton do recognize the gendered twist created by the *te* in the second clause about "being" or "substance." Maguire has "she who has no substance." Meyer has "a woman without substance," leaving out the humanity/divinity ambiguity of the "I" in *Thunder*. Layton somewhat experimentally has "she who has no riches." Our translation of "she who is nothing" aims more for the poetic power rather than the philosophical reading. Cf. Chapter 8's discussion of the complexly gendered poetry of this line.

<sup>172</sup> The word *synousia* continues the use of Greco-Coptic words. It is a clever poetic continuation of the play with *ousia*. We have found it difficult to reflect this clever Coptic/Greek improvisation on associated words. Instead we have preferred to highlight the inherent poetic clashes created in the next four lines of the text (lines 28-34 in the manuscript). In order to receive the ironies of these four lines, it is most important to focus on the ironic relationships portrayed. Maguire solves the complex translation problem by not translating at all, simply putting the Greco-Coptic *synousia* into the translation itself. This could relate to Meyer's larger push for associating *Thunder* with so-called gnostic texts by translating *synousia* with "union." Layton once again is experimental with the translation of *synousia* as "sexual intercourse." See Poirier for ancient examples of this usage (299).

<sup>173</sup> Lines 29 and 30 may have been understood by some Christians as a reference to the Eucharist. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (*John* 6:56).

<sup>174</sup> Here our preference for a poetic, less philosophical reading of *ousia* continues with the translation "being."

ερω]γν<sup>175</sup> ερωτῆ[·]<sup>176</sup>

Δη[οκ<sup>177</sup> | ]ὄψε<sup>178</sup> ἦφητ·

Δ[<sup>179</sup> | ] ἠμφύσις·<sup>180</sup>

Δ[νο]κ πε<sup>181</sup> [ ]τε ἦκτικισ ἠηῆπῆ[ξ·]<sup>182</sup> |

[Δγω ἠπ]Διτῆμα<sup>183</sup> ἠῆψγχοογ· |

[Δνοκ] πε<sup>184</sup> παμαρετ·

<sup>175</sup> Following MacRae; Cherix ἠηφ[τῆ εἰ | ρῆη ερω]γν; Krause ἠηφ[τῆ εἰ]ρῆη ερω]γν. This part of the MS has many difficult lacunae, but these lines can be confidently reconstructed based upon the parallel line structure. Therefore, the reconstructions of “you” (ερωτῆ) and “me” (ἠηφῆ) in the third line of this stanza are virtual certainties. The reconstructions of the verb “to be distant from” with its accompanying preposition (εἰσθῆου ἦσα) and the first person singular form of “to be near to” with its accompanying preposition (τῆη ερωγν) in the last line are virtual certainties based upon the parallel use in the previous line.

<sup>176</sup> Reconstruction of line break follows MacRae. This stanza continues the theme of the previous one. The “being” stanza ended with parallel lines of knowledge and ignorance based upon whether one was “apart from” or “in” the speaker’s “being.” This stanza, likewise, speaks in terms of knowledge and ignorance with regard to being near to or far from the speaker. But there is a slight shift in identification. In the previous stanza, those who were apart from the speaker’s “presence” were ignorant, while those who were “in” her “being” had knowledge. In this stanza, the situation is reversed. Those who are near to the speaker now have ignorance, while those who are far from the speaker, “have known” her. As such, we have a very sophisticated play of near and far and knowledge and ignorance that is expressed in different ways in these two stanzas. Instead of just having antithetical parallel lines, here we seem to have antithetical parallel stanzas. They, therefore, demonstrate more strongly interrelationships to each other than is usually the case between stanzas in *Thunder* as a whole. And, indeed, we would indent to demonstrate this, but the line lengths in the last stanza are much longer than average.

<sup>177</sup> Following Krause; MacRae Δη[οκ πε.

<sup>178</sup> MacRae’s reconstruction; Krause πε π]ῆψε; Cherix πτ]ὄψε; Poirier ]ῆψε.

<sup>179</sup> This word could just as easily be Δγω or Δνοκ. If the former, then the line probably began as Δγω Δνοκ. Krause Δ[γω Δνοκ]; MacRae Δ[νοκ πε; Cherix Δ[γω ποιοῦρ]; Poirier Δ[γω . . .].

<sup>180</sup> Krause [πε]; Cherix [εβολ]; Poirier [ . . . . .ῆ].

<sup>181</sup> Following Krause.

<sup>182</sup> Following Krause.

<sup>183</sup> Krause [Δγω π]Διτῆμα (note); Krause [Δγω πα]λιτῆμα; MacRae [. . . . .]Δ-τῆμα. Our reconstruction rests upon the following. There is only room for four or five letters, partly depending upon which letters. This line is most likely a parallel expansion on the latter part of the previous line, or “creation of spirits” is expanded and paralleled by “request of souls”; therefore, following the tendencies of this text, the first three letters constitute the conjunctive Δγω. This leaves room only for one or two additional letters, including the definite article π. Since the ink traces for the letter before τ is most certainly Δ, the only Greek loanword that could fit is what is outside of the lacuna, namely Διτῆμα, which means demand or request. The other possible Greek loanwords that MacRae postulates would all be too long: diai/thma, e)ndiai/thma, sundiai/thma, and a)nai/thma, which mean “food,” “dwelling-place,” “intercourse,” or “demand,” respectively (MacRae 248). The most likely reconstruction is [Δγω ἠπ]Διτῆμα-, “and of the request of the souls.” This would take up the full five spaces, but may necessitate a variation in word width to squeeze in the ἠ, which the text often does with regard to the π.

<sup>184</sup> Following MacRae; Krause [Δνοκ π]ε.

from you[.....]

[.....]of the heart[.....]

[.....]of the natures

I am he[.....]of the creation of the spirits[....]request of the souls

[.....]control



ΔΥΩ ΠΑΤΑ[ΜΑ]ΞΤ[Ε]<sup>185</sup>  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΠΩΤῚ Μῆ<sup>186</sup> ΠΒΩΛ ΕΒΟΛ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΤῚ ΜΟΝΗ<sup>187</sup> |  
 ΔΥΩ ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΠΒΩΛ<sup>188</sup>  
 ΔΝΟΚ | ΠΕ ΠΕΠΤῚ ΔΥΩ ΕΥῆΝΗΟΥ | ΕΡΞΑΙ ΕΤΟΟΤ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΦΑῖ [19.15] Μῆ ΠΚΩ ΕΒΟΛ·  
  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΔΝΟΚ<sup>189</sup> | ΟΥΑΤΝΟΒΕ·  
 ΔΥΩ ΤΝΟΥΝΕ | Μῆ ΠΝΟΒΕ ΟΥΕΒΟΛ ἦΞΗΤῚ ΤΕ<sup>190</sup> |  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ΤΕΠΘΥΜΙΑ Ξῆ ΟΥ|ΞΟΡΑΣΙΣ·  
 ΔΥΩ ΤΕΓΚΡΑΤΕΙΑ [19.20] ἦΦΗΤῚ ΕΣΩΟΟῖ ἦΞΗΤῚ·

<sup>185</sup> Following MacRae; Krause [ΜΑ]ΞΤ[Ε].

<sup>186</sup> Note the increased use in this passage of Μῆ as a conjunction on the same line rather than ΔΥΩ, which, in this passage, only conjoins entire lines.

<sup>187</sup> While generally the gender of the copula follows the predication, in this line the copula is masculine and the predication is feminine. This might indicate that the pronoun ΔΝΟΚ should be predominantly understood as masculine in this section. In fact, in the stanzas as they stand in this reconstruction, every single pronominal copula in this particular stanza is masculine. On the other hand, this might provide some clearer evidence of the volatility or perhaps indeterminacy or deconstruction of the Γ's gender throughout the piece. These explanations are by no means mutually exclusive and they both challenge the past consensus of this entire poem being about a female divine revealer figure. The speaker is predominantly feminine throughout the text, but, as this passage shows, the gender identifications are more fluid than previously considered. For a more extensive discussion of the copula and the "I," see chapters 5, 6, and 8.

<sup>188</sup> Krause ΠΒΩΚ (note).

<sup>189</sup> This is one of three instances of a double ΔΝΟΚ (see also 15.15 and 16.24). As with the other instances, it punctuates the text, and, as such, indicates a shift in topic or theme, which we have represented by a stanza break. The entire theme of the previous section cannot be fully determined due to the lacunae at the beginning of it. Stylistically, however, there are stronger grounds for a shift or break. The earlier stanza tended toward short, succinct juxtapositions and oppositions without adjectival or adverbial modifiers in the same line or opposing lines. Beginning with the double ΔΝΟΚ, the sentence structure becomes more complex and elaborated. For example, the final line of the previous stanza can be translated as, "I am the judgment and the dismissal." This typical line for this stanza has two somewhat oppositional words. The first line of the new stanza can be translated as, "I, I am sinless, and the root of sin derives from me." While the first part has remained relatively simple, the second part, instead of just saying "sinful" or "with sin" has elaborated the opposing term. This example is actually one of the least complicated of this stanza, which become increasingly elaborate and complex as it goes along. Because of this greater elaboration, the opposing terms are consistently on different lines, whereas the previous stanza, with its simpler organization, usually held both terms on the same line, although occasionally having very short separate lines.

<sup>190</sup> Although using a copula at the end of a sentence is normal in Coptic as a whole, it is only one of two occurrences in this text (see also 14.5).

and the uncontrollable

I am the coming together and the falling apart

I am the enduring and the disintegration

I am down in the dirt<sup>191</sup> and they come up to me

I am judgment and acquittal

I myself<sup>192</sup> am without sin and the root of sin is from within me

I appear<sup>193</sup> to be lust but inside is self-control

---

<sup>191</sup> *Epitn* is a form of *citm* with the straightforward meaning of “ground, earth, dust.” For a translation that seeks connections to so-called gnosticism, cf. Meyer’s and Maguire’s more abstract translation “descent.”

<sup>192</sup> We have translated “I myself” for the rare *anok anok*.

<sup>193</sup> We have taken into account the *ouhorass*, which means “according to outward appearance,” as adverbial qualifier of the normal *anok te*, which would normally be rendered simply “I am.” Hence, our “I appear to be.”

ΔΝΟΚ | ΠΕ ΠΣΩΤῆ Εἴϑηη ἦοϑον | ΝΗ·  
           ἠῆ<sup>194</sup> πῶαχε εἴτε μαϑυε|μαρτε ἦμοϑ·  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΟΥΕΒΩ | ΕΝΑΣΩΑΧΕ·  
           ΔΥΩ ΝΑϑε [19.25] ΤΑΗῆῖῖῖῖῖ ἦϑαχε·  
 ΣΩΤῆ<sup>195</sup> | ΕΡΟΕΙ Ζῆ ΟΥΣΩΝ·  
           ΔΥΩ ἦτε|ῖῖῖῖῖ ΣΩ ΕΡΟΕΙ Ζῆ ΟΥῆῖῖῖῖ· |  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕΤΑϑ ΣΗΛ ΕΒΟΛ<sup>196</sup> |  
           ΔΥΩ ΕΥΝΟΥΧΕ ἦ|ἠοει ΕΒΟΛ ῖῖῖῖῖ πῖο ἦπκαρ<sup>197</sup> |  
 ΔΝΟΚ Εἴῖῖῖῖ ἦῖοεικ ἠῆ | ΠΑΝΟΥΣ ΕΖΟΥῆ<sup>198</sup>  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ ῖῖ|ῖῖῖῖῖ ἠῖαῖῖῖ<sup>199</sup>

<sup>194</sup> This is the only place in this entire poem of ἠῆ conjoining two lines.

<sup>195</sup> While this section places a lot of emphasis on the themes of hearing, speech (including “crying out”), this lone switch of these two parallel lines from the first person singular indicative mood to the imperative mood is surprising and somewhat jolting. Right afterwards, the text immediately returns to the first personal singular indicative predications. Other than the jolting effect, I am not quite sure what to make of this singular instance of an imperative in a section full of “I am” statements.

<sup>196</sup> At this point in the MS, between ΕΒΟΛ and ΔΥΩ, the scribe wrote ῖῖῖῖῖ πῖο ἦπκαρ, “upon the face of the earth, but recognizing it was a dittography (see the next line), deleted it, indicated by the dots above the letters.

<sup>197</sup> This phrase also occurs in 15.2-3.

<sup>198</sup> The meaning of this line is very difficult to discern. Literally, it reads, “I prepare the bread with/ and my mind within/inside.” Most likely, the text is, through poetic substitution, creating an association between “mind” and “yeast,” which is what one would normally expect to find inside bread. This line would, then, be making a connection between the dynamic growth and productivity of yeast in making bread rise and some similar dynamism and life with “mind.” Another possibility is that this is not the Greek loanword, but a native Egyptian form. The word ἠοϑε is elsewhere attested as a term of opprobrium, although its exact meaning is obscure. Another rather remote possibility is that it has something to do with the word ἠοϑε (not to be confused with ἠοϑε or “god”), which means to “grind” or “mill,” whence the word ἠοϑε, which literally means ground meal. Of these possibilities, the poetic substitution of “mind” instead of something like “yeast” is the most likely, making this line one of the rare occurrences of the Greek loanword nous or “mind” in the text itself (cf. 18.9, and, of course, the title, 13.1). Funk with Poirier reconstruct this as ἦῖοεικ ἠῆ< . . . > | <ΔΥΩ ΕΥ ἠ>ΠΑΝΟΥΣ ΕΖΟΥῆ.

<sup>199</sup> This is the third occurrence of the Greek loanword ἠοϑε or “knowledge.” The other two occurrences can be found in 16.4 and 18.14-15. The first occurrence places “knowledge” in parallelism with “wisdom.” The second occurrence deals with the knowledge of “angels.” Here the “knowledge of my name” refers to the inherent power in a name in antiquity (cf. the “speaking of my name” in 14.14-15 and the “sound of the name and the name of the sound” in 20.31-33). To know and then to invoke a deity’s true, usually esoteric, name was to have power over that deity. Specifically in Egypt, there is an ancient story of, most appropriately, Isis tricking the older sun-god, Re, into revealing his true name to her, by which she gained some power over him (see Chapter 8). Perhaps there is a subtle reference to this or this type of understanding is being invoked in 21.10-11: “[H]e who created me / and I will speak his name.” Powerful names were often invoked for “magical” purposes, to make a god, often Apollo, to do one’s bidding, as can be found in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (Betz), as well as in the New Testament, where people invoke Jesus’ name for the purpose of exorcism (*Mark* 9.38-41; *Luke* 9.49-50; cf. *Luke* 11:19-20; *Acts* 19.13-20).

I am what anyone can hear but no one can say 21  
I am a mute that does not speak and my words are endless  
Hear me in tenderness, learn from me in roughness  
I am she who shouts out and they throw me down on the ground<sup>200</sup>  
I am the one who prepares the bread and my mind within  
I am the knowledge of my name

---

<sup>200</sup> Our more plain spoken translation of “they throw me down on the ground” fits with the strong, tangible, and violent images that recur in *Thunder*. Almost every other translation agrees on “cast upon the face of the earth” or a close derivative. For us, this illustrates three tendencies in the relatively small family of *Thunder* translations in publication: (1) many translations follow MacRae’s original translation without much further examination, (2) there is a general bias in these translations toward making *Thunder*’s language cosmic or philosophical when it is not, and (3) a curious predilection exists in translating ancient Mediterranean texts that makes them “antique” by making them sound vaguely Elizabethan. Cf. this example at hand in almost all translations, “cast upon the face of the earth.”

ΔΝΟΚ ΤΕ|ΤΑΩΚΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ'  
 ΔΥΩ ΔΝΟΚ ΕΤ'|ΧΙ ΣΜΗ'

[20.1] †ΟΥΟΝ<sup>201</sup> ΕΒΟΛ ΔΥ[Ω<sup>202</sup> ]<sup>203</sup> | ΜΟΟΥΕ ΖΝ̄ ΟΥΠ[ ]<sup>204</sup> |  
 ςΦ[Ρ]ΔΓΙς<sup>205</sup> ἦΤΑΜΔ[<sup>206</sup> ]<sup>207</sup> ·|  
 [ ] ΕΙΟΝ<sup>208</sup> ἦΠΧΗ [ <sup>209</sup> ] | [ ] ΔΕ[·]<sup>210</sup>  
 ΔΝΟΚ ΠΕ [ ]<sup>211</sup> | [ ] ΤΕ ΤΑΠΟΛΟΓΙΑ[·]<sup>212</sup>  
 ΔΝ[Ο]Κ<sup>213</sup> ΤΕΤΕ ΘΔΥΜΟΥΤ[Ε ΕΡΟΣ ΧΕ]<sup>214</sup> | ΤΜΕ'  
 ΔΥΩ ΠΧΙ ΝΘΟΝ<sup>215</sup> [ ]<sup>216</sup> |  
 ΤΕΤἦΤΑΕΙΟ ἦΜΟΕΙ Ν[ ]<sup>217</sup> |  
 [20.10] ΔΥΩ ΤΕΤἦΚΑΚΚ̄ ΕΡ[ΟΙ·]<sup>218</sup>

<sup>201</sup> Following MacRae; Krause φογοῖ εβολ; Schenke φογοῖξ εβολ; Cherix φογοῖξ εβολ.

<sup>202</sup> Following Poirier; Krause ΔΥ[ω; Schenke ΔΥ[; MacRae ΔΥ[ω.

<sup>203</sup> Krause ἦτετἦ; Cherix †].

<sup>204</sup> Although there clearly is a change in syntax from the string of “I am” statements to other forms, overall the text is too fragmentary to determine line breaks with confidence.

<sup>205</sup> Following MacRae; Krause εφ[γ]ς; Cherix ἦφ[ρ]Δς.

<sup>206</sup> MacRae’s reconstruction; Krause ἦΤΑΜ. [.

<sup>207</sup> Cherix π].

<sup>208</sup> Following MacRae; Krause [ςη]ἦσιον; Cherix [ςη]ἦσιον; Poirier [πςη]ἦσιον.

<sup>209</sup> Following MacRae; Krause ἦπχ. . . [; Cherix ἦπχῆ; Poirier ἦπχῆ.

<sup>210</sup> MacRae’s reconstruction; Krause [ ] ΔΕ[·] Poirier [ . . . ] ΔΕ[ . ].

<sup>211</sup> Following Krause; Bethge πε [πεκρτς].

<sup>212</sup> Following MacRae; Krause [ ] τεγαπολογία [; Cherix [ΔΝΟΚ] τε ταπολογία [.

<sup>213</sup> Following Krause.

<sup>214</sup> Following Krause and MacRae. This reconstruction is virtually certain due to the required syntax for the word μοῦτε or “to call.” The verb is in the third person plural habitual, which can be rendered in a passive sense as it is here. μοῦτε takes an indirect object indicating the person who is called, which is ερος or “she,” as well as the word χε, which, in this case, is untranslatable, but often means “that” and is used to indicate direct speech, much like quotation marks. This exact same construction can be found in 16.11-15. As such, the reconstructed line can be very literally rendered, “I am she whom they call her ‘truth.’”

<sup>215</sup> Following MacRae; Krause νοῦἦ[ς].

<sup>216</sup> Krause [πε παρμη]

<sup>217</sup> Following Krause; Cherix η[ετχρωετ].

<sup>218</sup> Krause ερ[οῖ].

I am she who shouts out and it is I that listens

**20.1** I appear and[.....]walk in[.....]seal of my[.....]

[.....]I am he[.....]the defense[.....]

I am she they call truth and violation[.....]

7

You honor me[.....]and you whisper against me

н[ετ]ογ|χροειτ<sup>219</sup> εροογ·  
 ерикpine нmo|oγ εμπaтoγ† ρaπ̄ ερωτῆ· |  
 εβολ<sup>220</sup> δε πεκpιγnc нᾱ πxι ρo<sup>221</sup> εγ|ωooπ̄ ρῆ τhνε·  
 εγωaнcдaεie [20.15] τhνε εβολ ρῆ παῖ ниm πετnα|ka τhνε εβολ·  
 ῆ<sup>222</sup> εγωaнka τh|ne εβολ ᾱρhтῆ ниm πετnαωa|нaρte ῆнωτῆ·<sup>223</sup>

πετῆπετῆ|caнzoγn γaρ пе πετῆπετῆcaн|boλ·<sup>224</sup>  
 aγω πετpῆλαcce ῆca.boλ | ῆнωτῆ·  
 ῆтаqῖp̄тγпoγ ῆнoγ | ῆπετῆcaнzoγn·  
 aγω πετε|тῆнаγ εpоq ῆπετῆcaнboλ· |  
 τετῆнаγ εpоq ῆπετῆcaнzoγ̄<sup>225</sup> [20.25] qoγoнē εboλ·  
 aγω τεтῆῖcω|te·<sup>226</sup>

<sup>219</sup> Following MacRae; Krause m?[ . . ]ou; Cherix m?[ar]ou; Poirier n?[εt]ou.

<sup>220</sup> This is the second instance of the use of the word ebol to begin a line. In the first instance (17.15), it formed a prepositional phrase ebol 6n\_, whereas here it functions in the conjunctive sense of “since” or “because.”

<sup>221</sup> The word πxιno is a nominalized form of a verb that literally means to “take face.” It has a wide range of connotations. It can mean to give respect to a person or “pay heed.” In this sense, it can also mean to show “favor.” These are largely very positive understandings of the word. In a juridical context, however, “favor” can also be extended to “favoritism” or “partiality” (MacRae’s translation, 251) in direct contrast to what a good judge would be; namely, impartial.

<sup>222</sup> This is the only time ῆ or “or” is used to begin a new line.

<sup>223</sup> Although it is difficult to reconstruct any stanza or even many line breaks in this section, and there are probably more than one stanza here, this passage, as can be reconstructed, has some thematic coherency surrounding judgment and justice. Some of the scattered words toward the beginning suggest this theme, such as ἀπολογία, a Greek loanword, whence we get the word “apology,” but has a more specific meaning of a legal defense. The text then moves to “truth” and “iniquity,” after which we find a high prevalence of “judgment” words after talk of being “vanquished” or “defeated.” This includes being a “judge” and, somewhat problematically, being “partial.” This section finally ends with a play on condemnation (in a juridical meaning) and acquittal versus detainment. See Chapter 2.

<sup>224</sup> Although stanza breaks are uncertain due to the fragmentary nature of this column, the use of the word ρaρ signals, here, a shift in thought from a primary emphasis on legal terminology to a major emphasis on “inside” and “outside.” Concerning this motif, cf. *Luke* 11.40; *Act. Thom.* 147; *GThom* 37.26-27; *GPhil* 68.4-6.

<sup>225</sup> The expected spelling here would include n at the end of a line. Instead, we receive the rare supra-linear stroke above the last vowel. This occurs in 18.35, where we find ερoγ̄ instead of εpоγn.

<sup>226</sup> The repetition of petn\_, pet, petetn\_, and tetn\_ gives this stanza a highly rhythmic quality in addition to the alliterative density of “p,” “t,” and “n” sounds.

You conquered ones: judge them before they judge you  
Because the judge and favoritism exist in you  
If he condemns you, who will release you?  
If he releases you, who can detain you?

Since what is your inside is your outside 19  
And the one who shapes your outside is he who shaped your inside  
And what you see on the outside, you see revealed on the inside  
It is your clothing<sup>227</sup>

---

<sup>227</sup> This expression is most likely to be taken in the sense of *I Peter* 5:5: “Humility towards one another must be the garment you wear constantly;” or even *Ephesians* 6:15: “with truth a belt round your waist, and righteousness a breastplate, wearing for shoes on your feet the eagerness to spread the good news of peace . . .” As in the words of *Thunder*; here clothing represents the unity of the inside and outside of a person. This use of clothing seems quite distinct from other literature like *II Corinthians* 5:4 or *Gospel of Mary Magdalene* 9:5, in which clothing is seen as an illusion or an inadequate expression of something real. Meyer, in his translation commentary, however, seems to take this clothing in *Thunder* to be characteristic of a distinction between two realities of the body and the inner person: “The garment is the body that clothes the inner person” (378).





Hear me, audience, and learn from my words, you who know me  
I am what everyone can hear and no one can say  
I am the name of sound and the sound of the name  
I am the sign of writing<sup>234</sup> and disclosure of difference  
And I 21.1

---

<sup>234</sup> This may well be the first sign within the *Thunder* manuscript of an awareness of itself. In the subsequent manuscript page, a number of striking stylistic and ideational departures from the piece thus far occur alongside other references to writing (21:12,13) occur (Cf. Chapters 4 and 8 for an explanation of these differences). Because of a manuscript issue (cf. footnote on Coptic page) the word for “writing” (*sbai*) may indeed be “beauty” (*sai*). So, although our judgment is that the word to be translated is *sbai* (hence, “writing”), it is not completely clear that this verse--so near Chapter 21--should be considered a part of the departure from the original piece that seems to occur on manuscript page 21.

[ ]<sup>235</sup> πογοειν [ ]<sup>236</sup> | [ ]<sup>237</sup>  
 λγω θ[ ]<sup>238</sup> |  
 [ ]<sup>239</sup> | [ ]<sup>240</sup> ερωτῆ·  
 φο η[ ]· [ ]<sup>241</sup> | [ ]<sup>242</sup> ἦτνος<sup>242</sup> ἦσომ<sup>243</sup>  
 λγω π.<sup>244</sup> | [ ]<sup>245</sup> ἡκιν ἀν ἦπραν·  
 [21.10] [ ]<sup>246</sup> πενταγταμιοῖ·<sup>247</sup> |  
 λ[η]οκ<sup>248</sup> δε †ηαλω ἦπεφραν<sup>249</sup> |  
 ἀναγ σε ενεφωδεε ἦν ἦσραῖ | τηρογ ἦταγλωκ εβολ<sup>250</sup>  
 † | ρτητῆ σε ἡκροατης λγω ἦ|τωτῆ ρωτῆτηγτῆ ἦηατῆ|λος ἦν  
 νεπταγταοοογ· |  
 λγω ἦπῆα ἦταγτωδων εβολ | ρῆ νετῆσοογτ·  
 λε ἀνοκ πετῆ|οοοῖ ογαατ<sup>251</sup>

<sup>235</sup> Krause [ἀνοκ πε].

<sup>236</sup> Schenke [ἦτε θε].

<sup>237</sup> Cf. MacRae, Krause, and Cheri; Schenke [ωρεῖ]α.

<sup>238</sup> Following MacRae; Krause θ· [ ωτῆ]; Schenke θ[εωρεῖα ἦπ]; Cheri θ[αιβεσ ωτῆ]; Poirier θα[ιβεσ ω].

<sup>239</sup> Following MacRae; Krause [ερωῖ η]κροατ[ησ ἦτετῆ]; Schenke [ογοειν ἦ]κροατ[ησ †τη]; Poirier [ῆη ερωῖ η]κροατ[ησ . . . .]. See note to 20.26. Cf. the usage in 21.14.

<sup>240</sup> Following MacRae; Schenke [ῆη θε]; Cheri [ωοῖτ].

<sup>241</sup> Following MacRae; Krause φοη; Schenke φοη[ε ἦσ π]; Cheri φ[οῖ]ε ἦσ[η] | . . .

<sup>242</sup> MacRae's reconstruction; Krause [ ἦ]τνος; Schenke [ραν ἦ]; Cheri [ . . . ] ἦ τνος.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. the use of σον or σαν in 13.2-3 and 18.14.

<sup>244</sup> MacRae's reconstruction; Krause πε; Cheri πε[τ].

<sup>245</sup> MacRae's reconstruction; Krause [ ]ῆ; Cheri [αρερα]ῆ.

<sup>246</sup> Following MacRae; Schenke [πεταρ]εραῖ; Krause [φναταρ] εραῖ; MacRae [πεταρ(ε)] εραῖ (note).

<sup>247</sup> One might note that elsewhere in the poem, the emphasis is on giving birth (13.22-14.4), whereas here the more general term for “create” is used.

<sup>248</sup> Following Krause.

<sup>249</sup> See note to 19.33-34 concerning the importance of knowing or uttering a name in order to gain power over a person or especially a divinity. Two lines before this, the damaged text also reads, “will not move the name.” Cf. 14.14-15 and 20.31-33.

<sup>250</sup> The theme of writing was introduced for the first time in 20.33-35. This sets a marked departure from the major emphasis on oral/aural terms throughout *Thunder*. See further Chapter 9.

<sup>251</sup> These two lines, “I am he who alone exists / and no one judges me,” are markedly different from most of *Thunder*. Elsewhere, the speaker refuses to get so existentially pinned down without some sort of antithesis, paradox, or oppositional terminology, however asymmetrical, which sets the hearer/reader off balance. These lines, and column 21 as a whole for that matter, tend toward statements without opposition. This particular line, changing pace with the rest of the poem, drifts toward monotheism. Indeed, the very lofty statements in this passage stand in contrast to the antitheses of power and lowliness that have been integral heretofore. One might also note the slow drift in the poem toward an increasing emphasis on “male” terminology and the increased use of the masculine copula and relative pronouns. For a more extensive discussion of this and its implications for *Thunder*, see chapters 4 and 8.

[.....]light[.....]  
 [.....]and[.....]hearers[.....]to you[.....]  
 [.....]the great power.  
 And[.....]will not move the name.....  
 [.....]he who created me  
 But I will speak his name  
 Look then at his pronouncements and all the writings<sup>252</sup> that have  
     been completed  
 Listen then, audience  
 And also you angels  
 Along with those who have been sent  
 And spirits who have risen from among the dead<sup>253</sup>  
 Since I am he who exists alone

---

<sup>252</sup> This clear reference to actual writings may indicate that manuscript page 21 represents another stage of development of *Thunder*. Cf. chapters 5 and 9 for a fuller examination of these differences in 21.

<sup>253</sup> Here a relatively distinct vocabulary appears in manuscript page 21. Up until this point, *Thunder* has shown no interest in questions like life after death. Cf. chapters 4 and 8 for a fuller examination of these differences in 21.

αὐτὸ ἡνῆταει [21.20] πετνακρινε ἦμοει.<sup>254</sup>

ραξ γαρ | ἡειδος εγζολεσ νε νετ|ωροπῆ ρῆ ρεννοβε εναωω|ογ·  
 αὐτὸ ρεννηῖταταμαρτε | ἡῖ ρενπαθεσ εγβαεινγ· |  
 αὐτὸ ρενρηλδονη προς πε | ογοειω·  
 εγαμαρτε ἦμο|ογ ωαντογῖρηνφε ἦσε|πωτ· ερραῖ επογκηνη|τηριον·  
 αὐτὸ σεναβινε ἦ|μοει ἦπμα ετῆμαγ ἦσε|ωνε·  
 αὐτὸ ἦσετῆσωτ· | εμογ.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>254</sup> It is difficult to determine any patterns in this section. This is partly due to poor state of the MS, but also due to the style of what remains. There is a clear difference in style of this column from any previous passage in the poem. The line lengths in this section, until the last six lines of the entire poem, are erratic, and there are little to no indications of antithesis, paradox (or paradox unhinged), or oppositional statements in this entire column. There is also a lack of parallelism throughout, excepting the simple listing of vices in the last six lines or the listing of inferior beings in 21.14-18. See further Chapter 8.

<sup>255</sup> This final stanza is set off by the usual ραρ and a shift from the list of beings that must “pay heed” to the speaker and the final reasoning for why all creatures, human, spirit, and angelic, must do so (“For I am he who alone exists / and I have no one who will judge me”) to an ascetic emphasis on things to avoid. Indeed, one might note that the literary tendency of the final column as a whole is not to use parallelism per se, but to make lists. The entire poem, in its current iteration, ends with a double tricola, or two sets of three lines. Unlike other sets of parallel lines elsewhere throughout the poem, however, these provide absolutely no contrasts. In fact, there are no contrasting lines in column 21 as a whole, making it differ stylistically and thematically from the rest of the poem. These last six lines, moreover, have an ascetic tone lacking in the rest of *Thunder*. Here the emphasis is on resisting sin, incontinency, “disgraceful passions,” and “fleeting pleasures.” The language of becoming sober, while found in places such as Hermetic literature (itself an Egyptian product), also has a strong ascetic connotation. The last line on not dying again and the reference to resurrection (“spirits who have risen from the dead”) in 21.17-18 also is very new imagery and language for this poem. Given all of the differences in literary style, line length, language patterns, and theme in the final column compared with the entire previous poem, we have postulated that it was added by a later scribe (considering the new language of writing). The location of the exact seam is more difficult to apprehend. One possibility is after the line, “I am the name of the sound and the sound of the name.” After this, the language of writing emerges and head-spinning antitheses like the one just quoted disappear. On the other hand, the very large lacunae at the beginning of column 21 warn against any exact determinations. In fact, perhaps the safest guess at this stage would be that the seam is somewhere in the missing section of the MS. For a fuller discussion of this hypothesis, see Chapter 8.

And no one judges me<sup>256</sup>

Since many sweet ideas exist in all kinds of sin<sup>257</sup>

They are uncontrollable and condemning passions

And passing pleasures that people have until they become sober<sup>258</sup>

They go up to their resting place,<sup>259</sup>

And they will find me in that place

They will live and they will not die again<sup>260</sup>

---

<sup>256</sup> This assertion of authority of the author is in a more defensive and less ironic style than the rest of the book. Here the "I" claims unquestioned authority, whereas in manuscript pages 13-20 such an assertion of authority is always accompanied by an ironic twist or a complete reversal. Cf. chapters 4 and 8 for a fuller examination of these differences in 21.

<sup>257</sup> This polemic against sin seems foreign to the way sin is treated on manuscript pages 13-20. There, for instance, sin is treated with more ambiguity: "I myself am without sin, and the root of sin is from within me" (19.17). Cf. chapters 4 and 8 for a fuller examination of these differences in 21.

<sup>258</sup> Polemic against passion and pleasure does not fit with the style of the manuscript pages 13-20. Cf. chapters 4 and 8 for a fuller examination of these differences in 21.

<sup>259</sup> Interest in life after death does not fit with the general style of manuscript pages 13-20. Cf. chapters 4 and 8 for a fuller examination of these differences in 21.

<sup>260</sup> Assertion of returning to life after death is not hinted at before manuscript page 21. Cf. chapters 4 and 8 for a fuller examination of these differences in 21.