

# THE HYMN OF ISIS

From *Thunder, Perfect Mind*

**F**ound in the Nag Hammadi Library, which was unearthed in 1945, this selection from the poetic Gnostic text *Thunder, Perfect Mind* has often been associated with Isis, since it shares many characteristics of a typical Isis aretalogy. This section, and the whole of the poem, have influenced much modern artistic expression, ranging from uses by novelists Toni Morrison, Umberto Eco, and Paulo Coelho, to filmmaker Jordan Scott (the daughter of Ridley Scott), and by the musical groups, Tulku, Current 93, and Nurse with Wound. The praises of the mysterious Feminine Divinity evoke the universality of Isis in all her manifold forms.



I am the Beginning and the End.  
I am honored and scorned.  
I am the prostitute and the saint.  
I am married and a maiden.  
I am the mother and the daughter.  
I am the limbs of my mother.  
I am barren  
    and my children are many.  
I am she who married magnificently,  
    and I have no husband.  
I am the one who brings children and I do  
    not bear children.  
I am the consolation of labor pains.  
I am the bride and the bridegroom,  
    and my husband brought me forth.  
I am my father's mother  
    and my husband's sister,  
    and he is my child.

I am the incomprehensible silence  
    and the idea often brought to mind.  
I am the voice sounding throughout the world  
    and the word appearing everywhere.  
I am the sounding of my name,  
For I am knowledge and ignorance.  
I am shame and bravery.  
I am without shame; I am full of shame.  
I am power and I am trepidation.  
I am conflict and peace.  
Listen to me,  
For I am the scandalous and magnificent one.



Statue of Isis-Persephone holding a sistrum, Roman period (180-190 CE). Archaeological Museum in Herakleion, Greece. Excavated from the Temple of the Egyptian Gods, Gortyn, Crete. Photo © 2009, Wolfgang Sauber/Wikimedia Commons.

