

THE CONCENTRIC TRINITY

The Kether Glyph as a Figure of the Triune Supernals: Three Persons, One Center, One Figure

Christopher E. Etter · Catharturgy Corpus · 2026

Abstract

The glyph established for Kether — the figure of the Supreme Ultimate, three concentric circles sharing a single center, the innermost an undivided white field bearing the black point of the Monad — turns out to be a precise figure of the triune structure of the supernal spheres. Read as the three supernal Monads, the glyph renders the Trinity: Kether the innermost circle (the Father), Chokmah the middle (the Son, the Logos), and Binah the outermost (the Holy Spirit). Its decisive feature is that all three circles are concentric upon the one point — the Father's Monad — so that the Son and the Spirit have their center, and therefore their being and their personhood, from the Father, while remaining three distinct circles. The figure thus holds together what trinitarian orthodoxy must hold together and what looser images lose: the real distinction of the three Persons (three circles), their single unoriginate source (one shared center), and their consubstantial unity (one figure). It avoids tritheism, which would give three centers, and modalism, which would give one circle under three names. The glyph carries this along two perpendicular axes at once — an ontological depth from the innermost Father outward through the Son to the Spirit, the order of procession; and the existential lateral polarity of white Chokmah and black Binah, the active and receptive characters of the two who proceed. Yet the glyph is not a diagram of a sequence: as a single figure it is the three-in-one, the procession readable within a unity that is never divided. The double banding of the outer circles — each bearing both white and black — figures the mutual relations of the Persons as Aquinas sets them out in the *Compendium Theologiae*: the Son is Knowledge and the Spirit is Love, each receiving its Being from the Father at the shared center, and each receiving the other's proper character (the Son's knowing suffused with the Spirit's love, the Spirit's loving informed by the Son's knowledge), so that the figure shows the perichoresis of the three. At its center the glyph also marks the oldest grammar of number: the limitless white field as the zero of the Wuji, and the black point as the one of the Taiji, the first limit arising within the limitless — the Father's Monad from which the Persons proceed.

I. The Figure and Its Reading

The Kether glyph, as established in *The Luminous Pillars* and refined thereafter, is a nested figure of three concentric circles upon a single shared center. At that center is an undivided white field — the wuji, the limitless ground — bearing at its exact midpoint a single small black point, the Monad, the first point of origin. Around this core run the rings in which the supernal polarity oscillates, white and black. The figure was developed to show the emanation of the Supreme Ultimate: the limitless ground, the first point arising within it, and the polarity that the rest of the tree elaborates.

It is worth marking what the center of the figure is, in the oldest language of number. For the Pythagoreans and for Iamblichus there was no numeral zero — the concept did not exist in Greek mathematics — and the Monad, the One, was accordingly not a number among numbers but the principle, source, and limit from which all number proceeds, the first determination of being. Had they possessed the zero, it would have named precisely what their system pointed toward but could not write: the limitless itself, the unbounded ground prior to all number and all limit. In the terms of this corpus, zero is the Wuji — the limitless, the no-thing-yet, the white field without boundary; and one is the Taiji — the Supreme or Primary Limit, the first point, the Monad as the first determination of the limitless. The center of the glyph shows exactly this passage: the undivided white field is the zero of the Wuji, the limitless ground; and the black point at its midpoint is the one of the Taiji, the first limit arising within the limitless. Zero becoming one, the limitless receiving its first determination — and that first point is the Father's Monad, from which, as we shall see, the Persons proceed.

Read now with attention to the three supernal spheres themselves, the same figure discloses a further structure. The three concentric circles are the three Monads of the supernal triad. The innermost is Kether, the Crown, the Father — the circle that immediately surrounds and bears the Monad-point, the sphere of the unoriginate source. The middle circle is Chokmah, the Son, the Logos — the active and outflowing intelligence, figured in white. The outermost is Binah, the Holy Spirit — the receptive and containing comprehension, figured in black. Three circles, three Persons; and the whole of what follows is the reading of their relation as the geometry presents it.



The Kether glyph read as the triune Supernals. Three concentric circles — the Father (Kether, the inner field, Being), the Son (Chokmah, Knowledge), the Holy Spirit (Binah, Love) — share the one center, the Father's Monad. Each outer circle is banded in both colors: the Son's white is his own Knowledge and his black the Love he has from the Spirit; the Spirit's black is his own Love and his white the Knowledge he has from the Son — each grounded on the Father's Being at the center. Three Persons, one center, one figure: distinct without division, mutually indwelling, having their being from the Father.

II. The Shared Center: Being and Personhood from the Father

The load-bearing feature of the figure is that the three circles are concentric: they share one center, and that center is the Father's Monad. This is not incidental to the image; it is its theological substance. The Son and the Spirit do not possess centers of their own. There is one point of origin, and the circles of the Son and the Spirit are organized around it, drawn about it, given their form by their relation to it. In the grammar of the figure, to have one's center in another is to have one's being and one's personhood from that other; and the Son and the Spirit have their center in the Father.

This is precisely the trinitarian relation as the creeds confess it. The Son is begotten of the Father;

the Spirit proceeds from the Father; both have their being eternally from the one unoriginate source, the Father who is himself from no one. The shared center renders this exactly: the Father is the principle, the fount of divinity, the single point from which the other two have their origin without being made or created, for they are circles of the same figure and not marks drawn elsewhere. And yet — this is the second half of what the figure must show — the Son and the Spirit are genuinely distinct: three circles, not one, three Persons each whole and each itself. The concentricity gives the distinction; the shared center gives the single source. Personhood is real and threefold; origin is one.

III. What the Figure Excludes: Tritheism and Modalism

The figure is a good figure of the Trinity precisely in what it makes impossible. Consider the two perennial failures of trinitarian thought, and how the geometry forecloses each.

Tritheism — the error of three gods — would require three centers: three circles each organized about its own separate point, three independent sources of being. The figure has no such thing. There is one center only, and all three circles are concentric upon it. Three Persons who shared no center would be three beings; three circles that share one center are one figure. The single shared point is the visible refusal of tritheism: the three cannot be three gods because they do not have three origins, but one.

Modalism — the error of one Person under three names, three masks worn in succession — would require that there be finally only one circle, the distinctions being merely apparent, names for one undifferentiated thing. The figure has no such thing either. There are three real circles at three radii, none of which is any other; the Son is not the Father and the Spirit is not the Son. The genuine plurality of the circles is the visible refusal of modalism: the three cannot collapse into one because they are really three, distinct and abiding. Between these two errors the orthodox confession runs its narrow way — three Persons, one God — and the figure runs exactly there: three circles, one center, one figure. It holds the distinction without division and the unity without confusion.

IV. Consubstantiality: One Figure, One Substance

Beyond the distinction and the shared source, the figure shows a third thing: that the three are of one substance, consubstantial, homoousios. For the three circles are not three different kinds of figure but three circles of one and the same concentric figure — the same sort of thing, drawn about the same center, belonging to one image. They differ in their radius, that is, in their relation of origin and in their lateral character, but not in their nature: each is fully a circle, each fully of the one figure. The Son is not a lesser thing than the Father, nor the Spirit a lesser thing than the Son; the outer circles are not fainter or partial. They are the same figure at another radius. This is the homoousion shown: not three substances in degrees, but one substance in three Persons, each possessing the whole undivided nature.

It follows that the order of the circles, inner to outer, cannot be a hierarchy of being, a ranking of greater and lesser divinity. The Son is not subordinate in nature to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son; subordinationism is as foreign to the figure as tritheism. What the order does carry is something else — the relation of origin, the order of procession — and this is the matter of the depth axis, to which we now turn.

V. The Double Bands: Being, Knowledge, and Love

There remains a feature of the figure not yet accounted for, and it proves to carry the richest content of all. The circles are not flatly colored. Each of the two outer circles is banded in both white and black — the very oscillation of the supernal poles from which the glyph was first drawn. Why should the Son's circle and the Spirit's circle each contain both colors, rather than the Son being simply white and the Spirit simply black? The answer is that each Person possesses not only what is proper to itself but also what it receives from the other, and the figure shows this by giving each outer circle both colors. To read this rightly we turn to the structure of the Trinity set out by Thomas Aquinas in the *Compendium Theologiae*, the *Shorter Summa*, where the inner life of God is named as Being, Knowledge, and Love.

Aquinas's account proceeds by the two processions. The Son proceeds from the Father by way of intellect, as the Word that God speaks in knowing himself — the Son is the Father's Knowledge, the *Verbum*, the act of divine understanding proceeding as a person. The Holy Spirit proceeds by way of will, as the Love by which the Father and the Son love one another and themselves — the Spirit is divine Love proceeding as a person. And beneath both, as their common source and their shared substance, is the Being of the Father, the divine *esse* from which the Word is spoken and the Love is breathed. Being, Knowledge, Love: the Father the unoriginate Being, the Son the Knowledge, the Spirit the Love — each fully God, each possessing the one undivided essence, distinguished by the relations of their origin.

Now the banding of the figure can be read exactly. At the center is the Father's Monad: Being itself, the divine *esse* from which both of the others have their being. This is the point shared by all three circles, and it is why both outer circles are anchored upon it — the Son and the Spirit each receive their Being from the Father at the center. The second circle is the Son, who is Knowledge. Its white is the Knowledge proper to him — the active, expressive, luminous Word. But his circle also bears black, and the black is the Love he has from the Spirit: the Son's knowing is never a bare knowing but a knowing suffused with love, for he receives the Spirit's love as the Spirit receives his knowledge. The third circle is the Spirit, who is Love. Its black is the Love proper to him — the receptive, uniting, formative will. But his circle also bears white, and the white is the Knowledge he has from the Son: the Spirit's loving is never a blind loving but a love informed by knowledge, the love that proceeds through the Word. Each outer circle thus shows three things at once — its own proper character (the Son's white knowledge, the Spirit's black love), the character it receives from the other (the Son's black love-from-the-Spirit, the Spirit's white knowledge-from-the-Son), and, in the shared center upon which it is drawn, the Being it receives from the Father.

This is the figure's rendering of what the tradition calls *perichoresis* or *circumincession* — the

mutual indwelling of the divine Persons, each wholly in each, none separable from the others. Knowledge and Love are not partitioned between the Son and the Spirit as though one had intellect and the other will and never the twain; in the one simple God the Son's knowledge is a loving knowledge and the Spirit's love is a knowing love, because the Persons possess the one essence wholly and indwell one another completely. The double banding is precisely this: the Son's circle holds the Spirit's color and the Spirit's circle holds the Son's, while both are grounded on the Father's Being at the center. What would be, in flat circles, three separated things, is shown in the banded figure as three Persons who mutually contain one another and have all that they are from the Father and from each other. The Taiji banding — the very oscillation of white and black that makes the glyph a glyph rather than a set of plain rings — turns out to be the figure's way of showing that in God, Being, Knowledge, and Love are one life, given and received among the three.

VI. The Two Axes of the Figure

The glyph carries its trinitarian meaning along two perpendicular axes at once, the very two axes this corpus distinguishes throughout its account of the Tree: an ontological axis of depth and an existential axis of lateral character. The figure is the place where these two axes are seen together in the inner life of God.

The ontological axis is the radial depth, read from the innermost circle outward: Father, then Son, then Holy Spirit. This is the axis of origination — not of degree of being, for the three are consubstantial, but of the relation of procession, the order in which the Persons have their origin from the one source. The Father is the unoriginate depth at the center; the Son is begotten; the Spirit proceeds. Read inward to outward, the figure shows the eternal coming-forth of the Persons from the Father, the ontological depth of the Godhead's own self-giving, in which the Son and the Spirit receive the whole divine nature from the Father who holds nothing back. This is the vertical axis of the corpus — here the vertical of origination within the Trinity itself.

The existential axis is the lateral polarity of the circles' character: Chokmah white and Binah black, the Son and the Spirit in their active and receptive, brightening and darkening modes. The Son, the Logos, is the white — the active, outflowing, expressive principle, the Father's Word spoken forth. The Spirit is the black — the receptive, containing, formative principle, the breath that gives boundary and brings to completion. This is the lateral axis of the corpus, the existential character of the two who proceed, the manner of their distinct personhood expressed in the primordial polarity of light. The two who have the same center and the same nature are nonetheless not the same Person, and their difference is figured laterally, in white and black, as their difference in the economy is figured in the Word who is spoken and the Spirit who is breathed.

These two axes are perpendicular, as throughout the corpus: the depth of origination is not the lateral of character, and neither is reducible to the other. The Son's being begotten (a relation of origin, the depth axis) is not the same as the Son's being the active Logos (a character, the lateral axis); the Spirit's proceeding is not the same as the Spirit's receptivity. The figure holds both at

once because the Trinity is both at once — an order of eternal origination and a communion of distinct personal characters — and the glyph is the rare image in which the two can be seen in one figure.

VII. The Three in One: The Figure as Unity

It would mistake the figure to read it as a diagram of a sequence — as though it depicted first the Father, then the production of the Son, then the production of the Spirit, in stages. The procession is readable within the figure, along the depth axis; but the figure itself is not a sequence. It is a single image, drawn at once, in which all three circles and their one center are simultaneously present. The glyph is the three-in-one: not three things assembled, but one figure in which threeness and oneness are given together and neither is prior. The unity is not a fourth thing added to the three, nor the three a division of the one; the figure is irreducibly both, as the Godhead is irreducibly Trinity and Unity at once.

This is the final fidelity of the figure. The shared center is never a separate Person beside the three — it is the Father's own point, the Father being himself the principle of unity, the fount from whom the others come and in whom the one divinity is held. There is no quaternity, no impersonal divine essence standing behind the Persons; the unity is personal, the Father's, and the Son and Spirit are one with him not by being absorbed but by sharing his center and his nature while remaining themselves. The glyph at the crown is therefore not merely the Supreme Ultimate of the contemplative traditions, nor merely the union of the supernal poles, but — read in its three concentric circles upon the Father's Monad — a figure of the Holy Trinity: three Persons, one center, one figure; distinct without division, united without confusion; the Son and the Spirit having their being and their personhood eternally from the Father, and the three being, in the one figure, the one God.

VIII. Conclusion

The Kether glyph, devised to figure the Supreme Ultimate and the emanation of the supernal polarity, proves on inspection to be a figure of the triune Supernals. Three concentric circles render the three Persons; the single shared center, the Father's Monad, renders the one unoriginate source from whom the Son and the Spirit have their being and their personhood; the one figure renders the consubstantial unity. Tritheism is excluded by the single center, modalism by the genuine threeness of the circles, subordinationism by their consubstantial sameness of nature. Along its depth the figure shows the order of procession, Father to Son to Spirit; across its lateral polarity it shows the active and receptive characters of the Son and the Spirit, white and black. And the figure is, finally, the three-in-one — not a sequence but a single image in which the Trinity's threeness and oneness are given together. What the creeds confess in words, the glyph holds in geometry: the one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

References

Etter, Christopher E. 'The Luminous Pillars: Light, Color, and Octave on the Tree of Life.' Catharturgy Corpus, 2026.

Etter, Christopher E. 'Wuji, Taiji, and the Limitless Ground.' Catharturgy Corpus, 2026.

Etter, Christopher E. 'The Two Axes and the Conflation of the Tradition.' Catharturgy Corpus, 2026.

Etter, Christopher E. 'The Structure of the Human Soul.' Catharturgy Corpus, 2026.

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381). (Begotten of the Father; the Spirit who proceeds from the Father.)

Athanasius of Alexandria. Orations Against the Arians. (The consubstantiality of the Son.)

Gregory of Nazianzus. The Theological Orations (Orations 27–31). (The distinction of the Persons by relation of origin; the monarchy of the Father.)

Augustine of Hippo. De Trinitate. (The unity of substance and the relations of the divine Persons.)

Thomas Aquinas. Compendium Theologiae (the Shorter Summa). (Being, Knowledge, and Love; the Son proceeding by intellect as the Word, the Spirit proceeding by will as Love.)