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ΤΜΗΜΑ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΕΘΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟΥ  
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## “Θεοκρασία (theokrasia) and Θεουργία (theurgia) as forerunners of *unio mystica*: Forcing Soul’s Union with the God Within”<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

In this presentation we will examine and present ancient Greek texts where the enigmatic notion of *θεοκρασία* (*theokrasia*, mixing with God) is to be found. Although a rare occurrence, its meaning is as clear as impressive, pointing back to Mystery elements and rites of God-‘eating’, of communion with God and of participating to God’s nature. It is mainly in works of the Neoplatonic philosophers Iamblichus and Plotinus, and coupled with the demanding character of the theurgic practices, where unseen forces (gods or δαίμονες/daemones)<sup>3</sup> are forced to help the mystic to his task, that the realization of a true precursor to *unio mystica* starts to dawn. Almost all the elements found in the descriptions of later Christian mystics can be traced in these works. Here only the main of these instances in the texts will be examined and then there will follow a presentation of the nuanced-yet-lucid connections that bring theurgy together with theokrasia and the “union with the God within.”

In his dialogue with Glaucon, in the sixth book of his *Republic*, Plato boldly states that true philosophers are only those who are capable of apprehending that which is eternal and unchanging.<sup>4</sup> In this statement one may discern underlying both the revenge of a newly initiated *Bacchus*, perhaps on behalf of Orpheus, and a foretaste of Plotinus.

Although the themes of mystical union and theurgy have been the focus of many studies, rightly so, their relation to *θεοκρασία*/theokrasia sadly remains neglected. To be more precise, this eloquent term and its relation to above mentioned mystical<sup>5</sup> endeavors still await recognition and

<sup>1</sup> Initially presented at the “Mysticism and Action” conference, organized by the Oxford *Mystical Theology Network* (March 2024, St John’s College, Oxford University, UK), slightly enriched here.

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<sup>3</sup> A δαίμων in ancient Greek sources is not the same as a *demon*, especially as we have come to understand the term today. In Plato’s *Cratylus* (397c – 398c, and especially in 398b 6), the etymology offered by Socrates is from δαήμων, who actually is an εἰδήμων, one who knows well, a sage and a specialist. Still, in his *Symposium* (202d-e) and his *Apologia* (27c-e), they are messengers and children of the gods. In Platonic (and in Neoplatonic) terms, every good man is a daemon, too.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Republic* VI.484 b: ἐπειδὴ φιλόσοφοι μὲν οἱ τοῦ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχοντος δυνάμενοι ἐφάπτεσθαι, οἱ δὲ μὴ ἀλλ’ ἐν πολλοῖς καὶ παντοίως ἴσχουσιν πλανώμενοι οὐ φιλόσοφοι, ποτέρους δὴ δεῖ πόλεως ἡγεμόνας εἶναι;

<sup>5</sup> The term “mysticism” will be avoided here due to its notorious problems and difficulties in definition, use and application.

evaluation. This task we will briefly touch in the following pages. Beforehand and only in passing, we ought to mention the ambivalent relevance of some Philonic material to *unio mystica*,<sup>6</sup> and that to the vast majority of scholars, at least ancient mystical Judaism is devoid of any notion to a union with God. The closest we find there is the description of the enthronement, crowning and metamorphosis of Enoch to the archangel Metatron in *3 Enoch* or *Sefer Hekhalot*, where he receives the name “Yahweh haQaton” and he is almost deified. Yet, *not* a union. Even the Yaḥad<sup>7</sup> mystics by the Dead Sea never claimed such an achievement.<sup>8</sup> It should also be stressed here that by and large, the content of the construct we have come to call “mystical union”<sup>9</sup> or *unio mystica* is not the same in the various texts, authors, eras and traditions.<sup>10</sup>

Now, the term θεοκρασία (theokrasia) is a really rare one. Yet, once met in a text, it immediately snatches reader’s attention. This is a composite term, from *θεός* (god) and *κράσις* (mixture). Though there is no need to delve into the term for god, *κράσις* is a noun, coming from the verb *κεράννυμι*, meaning ‘to mix’. *Κεράννυμι* is closely connected to *κραίνω*, and this one has a very interesting variety of denotations: to complete, to fulfill, to crown, to rule. From these same verbs

<sup>6</sup> See for example, K. Th. Zarras, “Φωτὶ Φῶς, Θεὸν Θεῶ - *By Light Light, By God God: Viewing some core elements of unio mystica in Philo,*” in *Synochi* 2 (Dec. 2023), 4-21.

<sup>7</sup> *Yaḥad* (‘union’) was the name for the community by the Dead Sea. In their *Angelic Liturgy* (the first to publish, John Strugnell, “The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran, 4Q Serek Sirot ‘Olat Hassabat,” *VT Suppl.* 7.1959, Leiden 1960, 318-45), they were all thought to ascend to the heavenly temple and participate to the glorification of God as one with the angelic priesthood. A similar idea is to be found in the Pauline language of being one “in Christ” or being united “in the body of Christ,” the *ecclesia*; see Eph 2:20-22. In the *ecclesia*, the new temple of God, all believers formed as one the “body of Christ.” See Craig S. Keener, “One New Temple in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22, Acts 21:27-29, Mark 11:17, John 4:20-24),” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12.1 (2009), 75-79.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Schäfer spoke of *unio liturgika*; see his *The Hidden and Manifest God*, State University of New York Press 1992, 164-65; idem, “Communion with the Angels: Qumran and the Origins of Jewish Mysticism”, in P. Schafer, *Mystical approaches to God: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH, Munchen 2006, 66. On *unio mystica* in Kabbalah, see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1988, 59-73. It should also be noted that the prophet Ezekiel and Jesus’ disciple John are mentioned as embodying the word/logos of God in the form of a heavenly scroll; see my *Jewish Readings of Gospel Passages: Jesus and the Calyx of Ancient Judaism*, Ennoia, Athens 2021, 194-197 (in Greek: *Ιουδαϊκές Αναγνώσεις Ευαγγελικών Εδαφίων: Ο Ιησούς και η Κύλιξ του Αρχαίου Ιουδαϊσμού*). E. P. Sanders, too, spoke of “participation” than mystical union in the Pauline corpus; see his *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, SCM Press, London 1977, 440-41. Yet, the “participation” he speaks about is full of mystical elements.

<sup>9</sup> See Vladimir Kharlamov, *The Authorship of the Pseudo-Dionysian Corpus: A Deliberate Forgery or Clever Literary Ploy?*, Routledge, New York 2020, 15-16, 28, 35.

<sup>10</sup> At one point, seven different types of union are mentioned; see Norman Russell, *Theosis and Religion: Participation in Divine Life in the Eastern and Western Traditions*, Cambridge University Press 2024, 90. The meaning of the phrase “in Christ” in some Pauline material (e.g., Eph 1:3-14. 2:14-16. 4:4) belongs, according to some, to the very same field of the mystical. Yet, there is an ongoing conversation concerning its definition. See what Markus Barth has to say in his *Ephesians: Anchor Bible Commentary*, Doubleday, New York 1974, 69-70.

stem three other important terms: κρατήρ, κραντήρ and κρίντωρ. The first one, κρατήρ, means the vessel, wherein the mixing of wine with water took place, and any deep opening in the face of the earth; e.g., the mouth of a volcano is still called κρατήρ/krater in modern Greek. The second term, κραντήρ, means the one who fulfills and completes something. This is closely connected to τέλος and τελεστής/mystagogue (from where τέλεσμα and talisman, of course). And the third term, κρίντωρ, means one who rules and governs, one that brings things to their completion or telos.

Thus, when in the *Life of Pythagoras* Iamblichus (245-325) writes about the many merits of friendship among initiates,<sup>11</sup> he insists that even more valuable are their teachings concerning the divine soul and the union with the divine. As he exhorted, they should be careful not to “break up the god that is within them,” Παρήγγελον γὰρ θαμὰ ἀλλήλοις μὴ διασπᾶν τὸν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς θεόν (emphasis mine). Here I must stress that the English translation of διασπᾶν as “divulge”<sup>12</sup> is plain wrong and changes altogether the meaning of the sentence. This is very important, but this is not the place to elaborate. On the other hand, the idea that God resides into humans deserves a lot of pondering; especially when found in a non-Christian work. Iamblichus continues, stressing that all the endeavor of their friendship aims at mixing the human with the divine (θεοκρασίαν), at the union with God (τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἔνωσιν), and at the communion of the human mind with the divine soul (τὴν τοῦ νοῦ κοινωνίαν καὶ τὴν τῆς θείας ψυχῆς):

οὐκοῦν εἰς θεοκρασίαν τινὰ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἔνωσιν καὶ τὴν τοῦ νοῦ κοινωνίαν καὶ τὴν τῆς θείας ψυχῆς ἀπέβλεπεν αὐτοῖς ἢ πᾶσα τῆς φιλίας σπουδὴ δι’ ἔργων τε καὶ λόγων.<sup>13</sup>

According to our approach, this is a statement of paramount importance and perhaps the most clear and direct reference to the mystical union with God in an ancient text. Herein one finds not only a view on the inner anatomy of the human entity (εαυτός-self, νους-mind, θεία ψυχή-divine soul, θεοκρασία-a mix with God), but also an undisputable statement concerning the purpose of all that esoteric education and training. Thus, in this occasion the human entity resembles a vessel

<sup>11</sup> Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica* 33, 240, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Guthries’ translation as “tear apart” is correct.

<sup>13</sup> We need to look elsewhere, too; see ancient Greek texts, where terms like θεόλημπος (one who has received God or who has been received by God), θεοφαγία (god-eating), ενθουσιασμός (enthusiasm, to be taken ecstatic by god inside), θεοφήτις (she who speaks for a god), Ορφισμός (Orphism), Τιτάνες (Titans).

wherein takes place the so-called sacred marriage<sup>14</sup> between the creature and the Creator, between the mundane and the divine. Therefore, here theokrasia clearly means the mixing of the human and the divine into one.<sup>15</sup> It is not by accident that even in their everyday habit of mixing wine with water ancient Greeks used the very same noun, *κράσις*.<sup>16</sup> Still, as presented elsewhere,<sup>17</sup> it seems that in the system of Iamblichus, before the theokrasia and the union with the One, the aspirant should proceed in magical / theurgical *hieropraxia*, where he was united with all beings. Here, the *Θεολογούμενα της Αριθμητικής* (*Theologoumena of Arithmetic*),<sup>18</sup> attributed to Nicomachus of Gerasa (c. 60 – 120 CE),<sup>19</sup> definitely known to Iamblichus, with its peculiar theosophy of numbers and the hidden qualities of stargods, must have played a role. Still, the influence of the Pythagorean *Decas* on the ten sefirot in the *Book of Creation* (*Sefer Yetzirah*) is also evident.<sup>20</sup> What's more, the mystical theokrasia in Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean material might also share a connection to the Mandaic notions on re-membering the mystical body of the otherworldly Adakas Ziwa (the 'secret glorious Adam').<sup>21</sup>

Another very significant reference to theokrasia we find in the work of the Neoplatonic philosopher Damascius (ca 462 – 538?) concerning the life of Isidore<sup>22</sup> (ca 450 - 520).<sup>23</sup> After talking about the most ancient wisdom of the Egyptians that is “hidden into the adytum of this mythological truth” (σοφία κρυπτομένη ἐν τῷ ἀδύτῳ τῆς μυθολόγου ταύτης ἀληθείας) and the calm yearning of the initiate towards God and towards the “soul's sacred dawn” (πρὸς θεὸν ἀνακλῖναι τὴν ἱερὰν αὐγὴν τῆς ψυχῆς), Damascius speaks about priests who conduct “secret rituals in secret places”.

<sup>14</sup> See that in the epistle to the Ephesians (5:22-32), apostle Paul presents the mystical body of the faithful, the *ecclesia* (church, temple), as the bride of Christ. See what Constantine R. Campbell says in his *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids 2012, 307-310.

<sup>15</sup> In one instance, theokrasia is synonymous to theogony: Ἐπτάμυχος ἦτοι Θεοκρασία ἢ Θεογονία. See *Suda Lexicon*, letter phi, 214.11. Also, Pherecydes, *Testimonia*, in “*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. 1, 6th edn.”, H. Diels, W. Kranz (eds.), Berlin: Weidmann, 1951, Repr. 1966, Fragment 2, 9.

<sup>16</sup> In modern Greece wine is mostly called *κρασί*, echoing that age-old habit and the ancient term.

<sup>17</sup> See Konstantinos Th. Zarras, *Mandaean Mystical Theology, Principles and Causes*, Ennoia, Athens 2022 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 129 (in Greek: *Μανδαίοι: Μυστική Θεολογία, Στοιχεία και Αφορμές*, Έννοια, Αθήνα 2022, β' εμπλουτισμένη έκδοση).

<sup>18</sup> The usual English translation of this title, as *Introduction to Arithmetic*, probably derives from the fact that this small enchi-ridion was actually used as an introduction to numbers for more than a thousand years. Yet, it bypasses all the esoteric and theological aspects in the work of Nicomachus.

<sup>19</sup> Konstantinos Th. Zarras, as above, 128 - 132.

<sup>20</sup> As above, 132; 92 ff.; 110 ff.; 125 ff.

<sup>21</sup> As above, 145 - 218.

<sup>22</sup> A Greek born in Alexandria, Isidore went to Athens and became one of the disciples and a close friend to the Neoplatonist Proclus, the then head of their school of philosophy there. Later, he went back to Alexandria and taught there, too.

<sup>23</sup> See Damascius, *Vita Isidori* fragm. 5, 7. Also see Photius, *Bibliotheca* 181 (Codex 242; Bekker page 335b, 2).

He speaks about the diaspora of the souls, their separation and partition and the subsequent descent to the material world, where they received an earthly body (σπαραγμοῦ διαρρήδην, ... σῶμα γήϊνον λαβοῦσαι διεσπάρσθησαν αὐταὶ ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν). Probably, when he speaks about the “God within,” it is not by chance that on the separation of the souls he uses the same verb as Iamblichus, διεσπάρσθησαν (“broke up,” “tore apart”). Then he goes on on “our souls” return and gathering to the divine, saved from partition.

To describe this state, Damascius uses very strong terms: θεοκρασία and ἔνωσις παντελής; that is, divine mix and complete or perfect union with God. It is worth noting that Damascius relates all the above to the myth of Osiris and Isis. As is known, Osiris was believed to be a god whose body members were broken apart, scattered all around earth and then miraculously and magically mended, re-membered and brought back to life. So, in this brief paragraph from Damascius one may find enough significant elements to write a monograph. First, as if a temple or a palace, mythos has innermost dimensions or chambers, adyta, wherein truth and wisdom lie hidden. Then, appear the soul’s sacred dawn and the longing to God, replete with Orphic elements. The themes of fall or descent, soul’s fragmentation, in-carnation, then return and re-membering, leading to at-onement, oneness and complete union with God, are all in their essence both Platonic and Orphic. Here union with God comes after proper αγωγή/agoge of the soul (ψυχαγωγία) that brings about memory, Mnemosyne, remembering, the end of λήθη (forgetfulness) through ἀλήθεια (truth) and nostalgia for the divine.

Elsewhere in the same work, when on the syncretistic union of two gods, Osiris and Adonis, and their relation to the animate statue of Aion, we find the expression “mystical theokrasia” (μυστικήν θεοκρασίαν).<sup>24</sup> In this occasion, Heraiscus the Egyptian priest, a visionary who had become a Bacchus (as Orphics thought of the true philosopher), is described as almost divine. He could even tell if a statue was animate or inanimate by a god. What is more, after his passing, when wrapped in the garments of Osiris, secret signs (ἀπόρρητα διαγράμματα) shone through the sheets and they all could see the gods he was in contact with, when alive, and now in their company. The text goes on saying that “his first birth was also sacred and mystical,”<sup>25</sup> meaning his physical birth, during

<sup>24</sup> See Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Codex 242 (Bekker 343a 22 and 343b 2). Also, οὕτω διέγνω τὸ ἄρρητον ἄγαλμα τοῦ Αἰῶνος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κατεχόμενον, ὃν Ἀλεξανδρεῖς ἐτίμησαν, Ὅσιριν ὄντα καὶ Ἄδωνιν ὁμοῦ κατὰ μυστικὴν ὡς ἀληθῶς φάναι θεοκρασίαν, in Damascius, *Vita Isidori* (ap. *Sudam*, Hesychium, Photium et e cod. Vat. 1950), “*Damascii vitae Isidori reliquiae*”, C. Zintzen (ed.), Hildesheim: Olms, 1967, Fragment 174, 8.

<sup>25</sup> As above, 175, 18: ἦν δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ πρώτη γένεσις τῷ ὄντι μυστική.

which he was brought to the world with a finger at his lips<sup>26</sup> (just like Horus, Helios and Harpokrates in Plutarch; that is, he is presented as a divine child by birth). Yet, I am not convinced that the reference to a “second birth” here, directly after the miraculous signs through his wrapped body, immediately after his passing, refers to an initiation during his lifetime, as some modern scholars sometimes have it. Perhaps, it is Heraiscus’ passing and his habitation now with the gods that is described as a “second birth.” Death was considered a rite of passage and when about a man who already had something divine, like Heraiscus, the ascent to the sphere of gods would be as a second birth. Then, perhaps in this case, an upperworld initiation, as opposed or even paired to the netherworld one. Of course, in Mystery cults initiation was thought to be a second birth, too.

As for θεόκρανον, there are only a few texts where this composite term appears.<sup>27</sup> It is an important derivative from θεοκρασία and difficult to translate in English. Literally, it means the one who is created or completed or perfected by God. Due to its second part, the epithet -κρανον (of course, again from κρᾶσις, κεράννυμι, and κραίνω, for ‘mix’ and ‘to mix’ or ‘mingle’ together), θεόκρανος is also one who is perfectly fused or united with God or even one who is fulfilled or driven by God. Therefore, in a comment to the play *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus we read: θεόκρανον, ἐκ θεοῦ τελεσθέν; that is, the one that is perfected by God.<sup>28</sup>

Concerning θεουργία/theurgy, there is a lot written by many, so I shall not dwell much.<sup>29</sup> Even so, a few main points should be stressed here. Again, the term is a composite one, from θεός (God) and ἔργον (work), usually meaning a divine work, a work of god(s)<sup>30</sup> or a work with or about the god(s).<sup>31</sup> After Julian the theurgist (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE), a θεουργός (theurgist) came as the evolution of θεολόγος (theologian). Though the latter only *speaks* about God, the former acts and *works* with God. In the same spirit and according to Pseudo-Dionysius, theurgy was the consummation and

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<sup>26</sup> A pose pointing to the secrecy surrounding all mystical teachings and the Mysteries.

<sup>27</sup> See Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1488; *Scholia In Aeschylum* (scholia recentiora Demetrii Triclinii), *Agamemnon*, scholion 1488, line 1. Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Christus patiens* [Dub.] (fort. auctore Constantino Manasse) 1465. *Oracula Sibyllina* 13, 112. Christodorus, *Epigrammata* 2, 1, 98. *Anthologia Graeca* 2, 1, 98. Paulus Silentarius, *Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae* 772.

<sup>28</sup> Demetrius Triclinus, *Scholia in Aeschylum* (scholia recentiora) *Agamemnon*, scholion 1488, 1.

<sup>29</sup> On the genuine and true theurgy, see Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, Pennsylvania State University Press 1995, 84-85.

<sup>30</sup> See Pseudo-Dionysius 181B. Porphyri, *Letter to Anebo* 44:12. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 33:9. 280:12. Julian, *Fragm.* 198c; 224d.

<sup>31</sup> Porphyri, *Letter to Anebo* 30.7; Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 7.4; 28.4; 29.18; 96.9; Julian, *Fragm.* 354b.

the crown of theology: ἔστι τῆς θεολογίας ἢ θεουργία συγκεφαλαίωσις<sup>32</sup> (yet, he did not perceive theurgy<sup>33</sup> in the exact same way as Iamblichus and Proclus). A theurgist was the expert on the high hieratic or priestly art<sup>34</sup> or “divine science” (θείαν επιστήμην),<sup>35</sup> actually meaning an advanced form of magic,<sup>36</sup> where one could even force or persuade God to act according to the will of the priest,<sup>37</sup> or to become manifest through a statue or a simulacrum. Again, Iamblichus was the main proponent of this method. One theurgist, called Hierotheus, was thought to be related to the Jewish mystical tradition of the Hekhaloth.<sup>38</sup>

In his *Mysteries* 1.12.10-26, Iamblichus says that by using proper invocations and by the benevolence of the gods, the theurgists receive abundant light from them and their souls are invited upwards, separated from their physical bodies, to a union with them. It is clearly stated that this aims to the salvation of the soul, as she is absorbed by the energy of the divine spectacle, purified, liberated, and united with the godly principle. Here all the elements of preparation, invocation, purification, ascent, mystical theoria and union<sup>39</sup> are to be found:

κάθαρσιν παθῶν καὶ ἀπαλλαγὴν γενέσεως ἔνωσίν τε πρὸς τὴν θείαν ἀρχὴν ἢ διὰ τῶν κλήσεων ἄνοδος παρέχει τοῖς ἱερεῦσι.<sup>40</sup>

In the same work he maintains that it is the perfect efficacy of the ritual, when divinely performed, and the mysterious power of inexplicable symbols, known only to the Gods, that may convey theurgic union:

<sup>32</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 84, 25. In Greek Fathers of the Church see *theosis* – closely connected to *theopoiesis* - as the end of all mystical activity; see Norman Russell, *Theosis and Religion: Participation in Divine Life in the Eastern and Western Traditions*, Cambridge University Press 2024, 164, 183.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., see Vladimir Kharlamov, *The Authorship of the Pseudo-Dionysian Corpus: A Deliberate Forgery or Clever Literary Ploy?*, Routledge, New York 2020, 36.

<sup>34</sup> See Proclus, *Περὶ τῆς καθ' Ἑλληνας ἱερατικῆς τέχνης* (*De sacrificio et magia*) 148.3 ff. (this is one more case where the Latin and then the English translation of a Greek text goes astray; though the Greek actually says *On the priestly art according to the Greeks*, the Latin goes *On sacrifice and magic*). Also, see Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 2.10; 3.18. In Michael Psellus (*Opuscula logica, physica, allegorica, alia Opusculum* 3.137), we read about the ἱερατικὴν τέχνην.

<sup>35</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 3.7.

<sup>36</sup> See Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 41.5; 87.5; 149.11.

<sup>37</sup> See Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 3.4-7.

<sup>38</sup> Vladimir Kharlamov, *The Authorship of the Pseudo-Dionysian Corpus: A Deliberate Forgery or Clever Literary Ploy?*, 57-58. Concerning the identity of Hierotheus, there is a debate. Sometimes he is thought to be a code name for Origen, Proclus, or others.

<sup>39</sup> On *henosis* in theurgy, see Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, 51, 112, 115.

<sup>40</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 1.12.25.

ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν ἔργων τῶν ἀρρήτων καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν νόησιν θεοπρεπῶς ἐνεργουμένων τελεσιουργία ἢ τε τῶν νοουμένων τοῖς θεοῖς μόνον συμβόλων ἀφθέγκτων δύναμις ἐντίθησι τὴν θεουργικὴν ἔνωσιν.<sup>41</sup>

As to the Christian mystic, here prayer is of utmost importance to the theurgist, linking the “priestly” art<sup>42</sup> to the gods and helping perfect the “science of gods.”<sup>43</sup> Three types of prayer are mentioned, and it is through the third and most perfect one that the “ineffable union is sealed”, where the soul is totally offered to the gods:

τὸ δὲ τελεώτατον αὐτῆς ἡ ἀρρητος ἔνωσις ἐπισφραγίζεται ... τελέως ἐν αὐτοῖς κεῖσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν παρέχουσα.<sup>44</sup>

It is prayer that kindles the “love divine” and sets alight the soul’s godly portion: τὸν τε θεῖον ἔρωτα συναύξει, καὶ τὸ θεῖον τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνάπτει.<sup>45</sup> What’s more, the theurgist achieves union with the Gods through “knowledge of arcane symbols”: τῶν ἀπορρήτων συμβόλων ἡ γνῶσις.<sup>46</sup> It is also significant that to Iamblichus<sup>47</sup> there is also a communion, an order, and a substantially infinite union of all gods, whether they are mundane and visible or supernal and intelligible.

In closing, after our brief examination of the above-mentioned texts, the significance and use of the term θεοκρασία/theokrasia should be obvious. Its undeniable meaning points to a mixing and union with God/gods, and -in other instances- even to the union between gods themselves, thus pointing to some other equally disregarded aspects of *hieros gamos*. As is also shown, in some texts theurgy was believed to lead to θεοκρασία/theokrasia, perhaps calling for a re-evaluation of the so-called “priestly art” and “divine science” in these works. Hence, with all necessary precautions, the theme of theokrasia or union with God/gods clearly predates relevant Christian texts and may have played a major role on how later Christian mystics came to envision and comprehend their *unio mystica* or their μέθεξις/methexis to God. Finally, Plato’s definition of the true philosopher may find here a most interesting, though largely unforeseen, growth.

<sup>41</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 2.11.23.

<sup>42</sup> On the *hieratike technē*, see Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, 8 and 186.

<sup>43</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 5.26.1 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 5.26.15-17.

<sup>45</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 5.26.35.

<sup>46</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 6.6.1-10.

<sup>47</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 1.19.

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