

Telete, Mysis, Epopteia



THE WORD TELETE OR INITIATION, says Hermeas, was so denominated from rendering the soul perfect, *παρα το τελειαν ψυχην αποτελειν*. The soul, therefore, was once perfect. But here it is divided, and is not able to energize wholly by itself. But it is necessary to know, says Hermeas, that *telete*, *muesis*, and *epopteia*, *τελετη*, *μυησις* and *εποπτεια* differ from each other. *Telete*, therefore, is analogous to that which is preparatory to purifications. But *muesis*, which is so called from closing the eyes, is more divine. For to close the eyes in *initiation* is no longer to receive by sense those divine mysteries, but with the pure soul itself. And *epopteia* is to be established in, and become a spectator of the mysteries. See more on this interesting subject in my Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries [TTS vol. VII].¹

The gradation of the Mysteries is given us by Proclus in the fourth book of his *Theology of Plato*.²

The *perfective* rite, [*τελετή*, *teletē*] precedes in order the *initiation* [*μύησις*, *muēsis*], and *initiation*, the final apocalypse, *epopteia*.

Theon of Smyrna, in *Mathematica*, also divides the mystic rites into five parts:

The first of which is the previous purification; for neither are the Mysteries communicated to all who are willing to receive them; but there are certain persons who are prevented by the voice of the crier since it is necessary that such as are not expelled from the Mysteries should first be refined by certain purifications; but after purification, the reception of the sacred rites succeeds. The third part is denominated *epopteia*, or reception. And the fourth, which is the end and design of the revelation, is [the investiture] the binding of the head and fixing of the crowns³ . . . whether after this he [the initiated person] becomes a torchbearer, or an hierophant of the Mysteries, or sustains some other part of the sacerdotal office. But the fifth, which is produced from all these, is *friendship and interior communion with God*.⁴

And this was the last and most awful of all the Mysteries.⁵



¹ Taylor T. (*Tr. & Annot.*). *The Works of Plato*. (Vol. III of a set of five volumes & Vol. XI of “The Thomas Taylor Series”) From: The Prometheus Trust, 1996. Endnote 17, p. 414, being Taylor’s Additional Notes on Plato’s *Phædrus*. [Westerink line 250c, p. 363]

² [*De Mysteriis, etc.*, I, ch. xi]

³ This expression must not be understood simply literally; for, as in the initiation of certain Brotherhoods, it has a secret meaning that we have just explained; it was hinted at by Pythagoras, when he describes his feelings after the Initiation, and says that he was crowned by the Gods in whose presence he had drunk “the waters of life” — in the Hindu Mysteries there was the fount of life, and *soma*, the sacred drink.

⁴ *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, T. Taylor, pp. 46, 47

⁵ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE OBJECTS OF THE MYSTERIES) XIV pp. 275-76