

THEANDRITES  
STUDIES ON BYZANTINE PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN PLATONISM

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*Explanation of the name  
Theandrites*

THEANDRITES is the name of a divinity (“god-man”) encountered by the Neoplatonist Isidore (V century) in Syria.<sup>1</sup> Proclus (412-485) apparently wrote a hymn dedicated to Theandrites. In an inscription found in Qanawat near Suwayda and Bosra in Syria there is a mention of a local cult of a divinity called Theandrios.<sup>2</sup> Thus Theandrites/Theandrios was object of a cult known to Neoplatonists in the V-VI centuries and confirmed by the archaeology of southern Syria.

Dionysius the Areopagite indicates that the activity of Christ is defined as *θεανδρική ενέργεια* (“god-human activity/energy”).<sup>3</sup> The interpretation of this sentence led to the debate of the single energy (*monoergism*) or two energies of Christ and to the decision of the sixth ecumenical council (680-681) held at Constantinople in the imperial palace, specifically on this topic. Moreover, the sentence is quoted by hesychasts when debating the exact nature of contemplation (especially in the XIV century). The theologian, John of Scythopolis (VI century), claims that there is no connection between Theandrites and theandric energy.<sup>4</sup> This demonstrates that contemporaries saw a direct connection between the Neoplatonic cult and the Christian philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>5</sup>

Theandrites is, thus, both a Byzantine philosophical name as well as a Christian platonic term.

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<sup>1</sup> Ἔγνω δὲ ἐνταῦθα τὸν Θεανδρίτην, ἀρρενωπὸν ὄντα θεόν, καὶ τὸν ἀθλητὴν βίον ἐμπνέοντα ταῖς ψυχαῖς. (Damascius, Vita Isidori 198 apud Photii Bibliothecam 242, 347b.26-28 Henry in R. Henry, Photius. Bibliothèque, Paris 1959-1977.

<sup>2</sup> [Θ]ιαμοῦ Σιδρον τ[— — — — — καὶ] | [ὄ]ιοι Σιδρος καὶ Ἀσος [— — — — —] | [θεῶ] Θεανδρίω Παββ[— — — — —]. (PPUAES IIIA.5.762 in E. Littmann, D. Magie Jr. and D. Reed Stuart, Part 5, Haurân Plain and Djebel Haurân, (1915), nos. = 601-765 in Syria. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909. Division III, Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Syria, Section A, Parts 1-7. Southern Syria, Leyden 1907-1921).

<sup>3</sup> Καὶ γὰρ, ἵνα συνελόντες εἴπωμεν, οὐδὲ ἄνθρωπος ἦν, οὐχ ὡς μὴ ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀνθρώπων ἐπέκεινα καὶ ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων ἀληθῶς ἄνθρωπος γεγονώς, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν οὐ κατὰ θεὸν τὰ θεῖα δράσας, οὐ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια κατὰ ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ’ ἀνθρωθέντος θεοῦ, καινήν τινα τὴν θεανδρικήν ἐνεργεῖαν ἡμῖν πεπολιτευμένως. (Dionysius Areopagite, Epistula 4.15-20 Heil Ritter in G. Heil and A.M. Ritter, Corpus Dionysiacum ii: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae, Berlin 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Μηδεὶς εἰς μωρολογίαν τραπεῖς, λεγέτω ὅτι θεανδρίτην τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν φησίν· οὐ γὰρ θεανδρικήν εἶπεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ θεανδρίτης σχηματίσας, ἀλλὰ θεανδρικήν ἐνεργεῖαν, οἷον Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνδρὸς συμπελεγμένην ἐνεργεῖαν. (John Scythopolis Appendix ad Opera S. Dionysii Areopagitae, Scholia in Dionysium Areopagitam PG 4.536A. NB In PG it is under the name Maximus the Confessor).

<sup>5</sup> The question has been discussed in detail by Saffrey in H.D. Saffrey, Un lien objectif entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus, *Studia Patristica* 9 (1966) 98-105 reprinted in H.D. Saffrey, *Recherches sur le néoplatonisme après Plotin*, Paris 1990, 235-248.