Thomas Taylor
On Five Divine Dances

*D*ANCING HERE MUST NOT BE UNDERSTOOD LITERALLY, as if Terpsichore was propitious to those who engage in that kind of dancing which is the object of sense; for this would be ridiculous. We must say, therefore, as Hermeas beautifully observes, that there are divine dances:

1　In the first place, that of the Gods;

2　In the second place, that of divine souls:

3　In the third place, the revolution of the celestial divinities, *viz.* of the seven planets, and the inerratic sphere, is called a dance:

4　In the fourth place, those who are initiated in the mysteries[1] perform a certain dance: and,

5　In the last place, the whole life of a philosopher is a dance.

Terpsichore, therefore, is the inspective guardian of all dancing. Who then are those that honour the goddess in the dance? Not those who dance well, but those who live well through the whole of the present existence, elegantly arranging their life, and dancing in symphony with the universe. Erato, says Hermeas, is denominated from Love, and from making the works of Love, lovely: for she cooperates with Love. Calliope is denominated from the eye (παρα την οπα); and Urania presides over astronomy. Through these two goddesses we preserve our rational part from being in subjection to the irrational nature. For, through sight surveying the order of the celestial Gods, we properly arrange our irrational part. And further still, through rhythms, philosophy, and hearing, we elegantly dispose that which we contain of the disorderly and void of rhythm.[2]

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[1] *Επειτα και ενταυτα οι τελουμενοι τοις θεοις χορειαν τινα αποτελουσιν εν τοις μυστηριοις.*

[2] Taylor T. (*Tr.* & *Annot.*). *The Works of Plato.* (Vol. III of a set of five volumes & Vol. XI of "The Thomas Taylor Series") Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 1996. Endnote 30, *p.* 420, being Taylor's Additional Notes on Plato's *Phædrus.* [Westerink line 259d, *p.* 374; text typographically enhanced by Philaletheians]