28

Clement of Alexandria

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1 Snippets of life

Clement was probably born a non-Christian and raised in Athens, and he must have received excellent grammatical and rhetorical training.[1] There is no reason to think that he studied philosophy beyond the elementary level of a gymnasium.[2] Indeed, it is likely that he discovered the value of philosophical learning only later in his career, from an already-Christian perspective.[3] He mentions six teachers in five regions of the Mediterranean; the first one in mainland Greece, the last in Egypt (*Strom.* 1.11.2). Unfortunately – with the exception of the last teacher, who may be plausibly identified as Pantaenus – we do not know who they were and what they were teachers of.[4] According to one source, Clement was known in Alexandria in the time of Commodus (180–192).[5] According to another, he taught there at the catechetical school, where Origen later replaced him.[6] The first book of his *Stromateis* was written after the death of Commodus.[7] Clement apparently left Alexandria in the first decade of the third century and died some time in the second decade, possibly in Jerusalem.[8]

2 The word "philosophy"

"Philosophy," Clement explains, "are the impeccable doctrines (*dogmata*) by each of the schools (I mean, of philosophy), which have been gathered together with the corresponding way of life into one choice set."[9] Accordingly, he uses the word "philosophy" in reference to Greek philosophical schools; not as a descriptive, but rather as a normative term: the Stoics "utterly dishonour philosophy" by their views of the divine.[10]

Sometimes "Greek philosophy" is contrasted against the philosophy of the "barbarians", i.e., non-Greeks. Many barbarians have had their "philosophers" or "those who have philosophized".[11] However, by "barbarian philosophy" Clement usually means either the philosophy of the Jews, as rendered by Scripture; or the philosophy of the Christians, which builds on and includes the latter.[12] In the former sense, he also speaks of "the philosophy according to Moses" or "Hebrew philosophy".[13] Although he never uses the expression "Christian philosophy", the notion of "philosophy based on the divine tradition" (*Strom.* 1.52.2) is of the same extension, since "divine tradition" is plainly the tradition of the apostolic church. Other synonyms include

"true philosophy transmitted through the Son" (*Strom.* 1.90.1); "our philosophy" (*Strom.* 2.5.3 and 2.110.1); and "philosophy according to Christ" (*Strom.* 6.67.1). The words "true philosophy" in the full title of the *Stromateis* ("Tapestries of Gnostic Notes in accordance with True Philosophy") are used in the same sense.[14]

What does it take to be a Christian philosopher? In *Stromateis* 4, Clement sets himself the task of showing that "both the slave and the free should philosophize, whether they happen to be a man or a woman by origin".[15] Here, "philosophizing" amounts to leading a particular way of life, namely the life of temperance (*sōphrosunē*), ready for (martyrial) death. In this sense, one may philosophize even without literacy.[16] However, elsewhere in the *Stromateis*, Clement applies the word "philosophy" to a more restricted use – one that includes a temperate way of life, but accentuates in addition theoretical knowledge. As Clement puts it in the second book, "our philosopher holds unto three things: first, study (*theōria*); second, fulfilling the commandments; third, training good men. When these things come together, they make for a perfect gnostic."[17]

3 Christian teaching

There is some sort of learning associated with faith, accompanying the life of a Christian convert from the beginning. Clement calls it *mathēsis* and describes faith as its culmination.[18] He refers to its contents as "the first bits of learning" (*ta prōta mathēmata*).[19] Most likely it corresponds to catechetic instruction summarizing the main beliefs shared within the Christian community.[20]

However, there is also another sort of learning, which presupposes but goes beyond these shared beliefs, one requiring literacy and study.[21] A major aim of Clement's writings, especially the *Stromateis*, is to defend and elaborate this advanced sort of learning, culminating in knowledge.

This is reflected in the introduction to the *Pedagogue*, where Clement outlines a plan of his literary works, setting it against the backdrop of his Logos theology. Clement insinuates that different parts of his work – at any rate the *Protrepticus* ("exhortary" oration to the Greeks) and the *Pedagogue* – correspond to different types of activities of the Logos with respect to humanity. First, the Logos *exhorts* by engendering "a desire for life now and hereafter" in the rational soul. Then it *leads* – *paidagogos* being literally a "child-leader" – by healing the soul from passions and training it for a temperate life by means of images and precepts. Finally, in its role as a teacher (*logos didaskalikos*), it trains the soul for the "life of knowledge", providing "explanations and revelations in matters of doctrine (*en tois dogmatikois*)".[22]

It is unclear if Clement promises to deal with Christian doctrine in another treatise or if anything in his preserved works corresponds to the level of teaching.[23] A natural place to look for an answer is the *Stromateis*: it refers back to the *Protrepticus* and the *Pedagogue*;[24] it is much concerned with philosophy; and it discusses knowledge and the idea of the "gnostic", that is, one who has knowledge. On the other hand, the *Stromateis* too deals mainly with ethical issues, albeit in a different way than the *Pedagogue*: it does not give practical advice of how people should behave in specific circumstances; rather it deals with Christian virtues in a theoretical manner. Thus, the difference between the *Pedagogue* and the *Stromateis* seems to correspond to the difference between practical and theoretical ethic.[25] Does the theoretical ethic belong with the "teaching" level of education, as outlined in the *Pedagogue*?

It is attractive to think so. Clement refers to the contents of the *Stromateis* as *ēthikos topos* or *ēthikos logos*, ethical "area" or "account", traditionally distinguished from other parts of philosophy.[26] Moreover, in his plans for the continuation of the *Stromateis*, he envisions some sort of physics (*phusikē theoria*, *phusiologia*) culminating in theology.[27]

On the other hand, if the goal of the *Stromateis* is to explain and reveal certain doctrines, Clement does not follow this goal in an open and straightforward manner:

> The *Stromateis* will contain the truth mixed in the doctrines of philosophy, or rather covered and concealed by them, as the edible part of the nut is covered by the shell. For it is fitting, I suppose, that the seeds of truth be kept solely for the husbandmen of faith.[28]

When dealing with particular issues, Clement often proceeds by way of quoting, paraphrasing, and commenting upon a variety of sources. His primary source is Scripture, but biblical passages are often accompanied by other material, including Greek philosophical doxography and frequent and substantial quotations from Plato.[29]

There seems to be more than one goal in this procedure. On the one hand, Clement believes that this method enables those with a correct pre-understanding ("the husbandmen of faith") to arrive at a correct insight regarding the issues at stake.[30] On the other hand, Clement's interest is also polemical. His discussion is supposed to expose the Greeks as "thieves" of "barbarian philosophy", who have, among other things, "plagiarized and debased the most important doctrines".[31] Thus the cryptic way of presenting true doctrines by mixing them in those of Greek philosophy additionally serves the purpose of exposing Greek doctrines as debased copies of the true ones.

What, then, are the doctrines belonging to Christian philosophy? It would be futile to expect an exhaustive answer of course, not least because only a fraction of the planned work has been preserved. But we may at least arrive at a somewhat clearer idea by paying attention to the interconnection of topics dealt with in the *Stromateis*, and to programmatic passages hinting at the overall plan.

4 Ethical doctrines in the *Stromateis*

In the introduction to *Stromateis* 2, Clement provides a list of issues to be discussed in the framework of "the part before us" – by which he apparently means "the ethical part", whose starting point is the virtues.[32] The items on the list are "the virtues of truth", namely faith, wisdom, knowledge, science, hope, love, repentance, self-control, and fear of God.[33] Later on, Clement takes on four traditional virtues – courage, temperance, prudence, and justice – adding to them perseverance, patience, chastity, self-control, and piety.[34]

The discussion starts with a section that sets the agenda of the whole "ethical discourse". It is an outline of divine education according to sapiential passages in Scripture.[35] Employing philosophical and Christian jargon, Clement refers to divine education as "providential dispensation" and "the economy of God".[36] This recalls the "theological" introduction to the *Pedagogue*.[37]

The discourse on the virtues of truth is a development of these remarks. Virtues of truth are virtues contributing to the attainment of truth according to divine economy. Echoing Proverbs 3:6, Clement notes that there are various ways for wisdom to "turn our ways straight to the way of truth"; the "way of truth" being faith, or rather "*the* faith", a particular sort of faith, by which the believer accepts Scripture and the apostolic preaching (*kērugma*) as means of divine economy, which leads humanity to salvation.[38] In the following paragraphs Clement further elaborates on various aspects of this particular sort of faith, focussing especially on its role as the foundation of knowledge and criterion of truth.[39]

Another "virtue of truth" is a particular sort of fear, namely the fear of God.[40] Once again, it is treated against the backdrop of divine economy, where fear is associated primarily with the Mosaic law, understood as an instrument of education.[41] Against the critics who claim that

fear is an irrational passion, Clement defends its rationality (*Strom*. 2.32–40) and points out its connection with other "virtues of truth", namely faith, repentance, hope, love, and knowledge (2.41.1–2.55.5).[42] Turning to repentance (*metanoia*), he then deals with the related notions of sin and "that which is up to us" (2.56–71), and concludes by showing that the relation between God and man is based on will, not nature: God wishes to save human beings though the Law, the Prophets, and the Son; human beings, in turn, either wish to accept this gift or not (2.72–77).[43]

Lurking behind these discussions is the doctrine of the interdependence of virtues, further grounded in a particular view of progress (*prokopē*) and sequence of virtues according to divine education.[44] In Clement's view, all virtues are interrelated on the basis of the integrity of the Logos in the economy of salvation. They are also unified on account of their common goal. In a section largely relying on Philo's treatise *On Virtues*, Clement focusses on specific precepts of the Mosaic law to show how they are conducive to virtues (*Strom*. 2.78–100.1).[45] He argues that the law "educates to Christ" (cf. Galatians 3:24) and further specifies the goal of this education as becoming "similar to the Lord as far as it is possible for us, who are mortal by nature".[46] This interpretation of the goal is, of course, grafted in Greek philosophical ethics; but Clement hopes to show that it was the Greeks who developed their ethical views on the basis of Scripture.[47]

A virtue that seems to be particularly close to this goal is self-control (*enkrateia*). Clement defines it as "the condition of not transgressing that which appears in accordance with right reason".[48] Underlying this definition is a psychology of action going back to Stoicism. Animals move on the basis of impulse and impression; but the human soul is additionally endowed with rational capacity, by which it distinguishes among impressions, assenting to some and rejecting others.[49] Self-control, then, consists in an ability "to hold oneself in check to the extent of not being moved by impulses contrary to right reason".[50] The "impulses contrary to right reason" are also called "passions" (*pathē*).[51] Thus, self-control is the control of one's passions, based on the ability of our rational capacity to follow the "right reason" (*orthos logos*). Now the "right reason", Clement explains, is the Logos, i.e., Christ.[52] Passions, on the other hand, are "imprints" made in our souls by evil powers, against whom the believers in Christ wage their fight (cf. Ephesians 6:12).[53] As human beings, we have a natural tendency to succumb to passions; but, under good education, we may learn to control them, and even aspire at reaching the state of "freedom from passions" (*apatheia*), which by nature belongs to the Logos only. In this way, by controlling our passions, we aspire at making our condition proximate to the divine nature.[54] The divine law, Clement believes, prepares us for this fight by its commandments.[55]

It is not surprising, then, that the debate on self-control (*Strom*. 2.105–126) passes into a section dealing with the goal of life. A "doxographic" part, recounting the opinions of Greek philosophers from Epicurus to the Presocratics and back (2.127–131.1), is followed by a summary of the views of Plato and the Old Academy about the goal of life (2.131.2–133).[56] Promising to respond to these opinions in due time, Clement concludes by setting out the Christian view of the goal, backed up by quotations from the Prophets and Pauline epistles (2.134–136).[57]

The last ten paragraphs of the second and the whole third book of the *Stromateis* may be described as a digression pertaining to the virtue of self-control.[58] The main question is the following: is the ideal of self-control compatible with married life, or does it imply total abstention from sex, as preached by the so-called Enkratites, radical Christian ascetics? The question is an occasion for Clement to deal with a wide spectrum of views on marriage, bodily pleasure, the value of procreation, celibacy, and related topics; and to explain the correct biblical stance on these issues.

The fourth book, in turn, picks up on the theme of the goal. It explores some aspects of the embodiment of virtues in the life of a perfect Christian, whom Clement calls "the gnostic".[59]

Specifically, it explores the attitude of the gnostic to suffering and death, and the virtues exemplified by the ultimate "witness" (*martus*) of Christian faith – the martyr.[60] The inquiry is part of a larger question of "who the perfect one is" and whether everyone – irrespective of social status or gender – can aspire to this goal.[61] Clement answers the second question affirmatively, suggesting that "the entire church" is the place where it happens.[62] Further, building on the epistles of Paul and Clement of Rome (4.92.2–110.5), Clement further elaborates on the types of perfection and the goals and virtues of gnostic ethic.

In books 5 and 6, Clement appears to be primarily concerned with the virtue of knowledge; again, it is a particular sort of knowledge, whose object is the Logos, as revealed by Scripture and the teaching of Christ. In the fifth book, Clement distinguishes two kinds of faith – a "common faith" (that is to say, faith shared by all Christian believers), serving as the foundation of both salvation and knowledge – and a "special faith" – added as a "mustard seed" (cf. Matthew 17:20 par.) – which instigates the soul towards inquiry.[63] Depicting the way to knowledge as an initiation of sorts, Clement takes up the topic of "symbolic genre" – a genre which, as he points out, characterizes the "barbarian philosophy" of Scripture; and he outlines the way towards its correct interpretation, whose initial stage corresponds to baptism.[64]

In book 6, after a preliminary definition of knowledge (*Strom.* 6.3.1–2), Clement draws contrasting pictures of two sorts of wisdom – one pursued by philosophical schools, and one revealed by the Lord through the prophets and through his own coming (*parousia*); and he explores the relation between the two.[65] Christian philosophers, he argues, are those who love true wisdom, that is, the Son of God, the teacher by whom everything was made.[66] The goal of their philosophy is knowledge, further characterized as contemplation (*theōria*) of the past, the present, and the future, as "transmitted and revealed by the Son of God".[67] At the same time, it is a state of perfection associated with freedom from passions and beneficence, which renders the one who has reached it – the gnostic – "equal to angels".[68]

Finally, the seventh book deals with the piety of the gnostic, defending him against the charge of atheism (7.1.1–54.4); and it brings the ethical part to a close by enhancing the ideal of gnostic perfection beyond the level of temperance to perfect knowledge and love (7.55.1–87.7).[69]

5 Physics and theology

In *Stromateis* 1, Clement makes a fourfold division of "philosophy according to Moses" into historical, legislative, liturgical, and theological part.[70] This is an adaptation of a scheme found in Philo, except that Clement's "theological" part replaces Philo's "prophetic".[71] Clement identifies the theological part with epoptics or metaphysics, indicating that the former designation is Platonic, whereas the latter Aristotelian; in addition, he subordinates the historical and legislative parts to ethics, and the liturgical to physics, further adding, beyond the Philonic scheme, dialectic.[72]

The association of physics with the liturgical part could be based on a cosmological interpretation of the architecture of the Jerusalem temple and the vestments of the High Priest, as described in Exodus 26–28. Philo's exegesis of these chapters is cosmological throughout, and Clement follows suit to some extent.[73] At any rate, Clement's project of physics includes cosmogony based on Scripture, the Book of Genesis in the first place.[74] In the continuation of the *Stromateis*, Clement had planned to precede the exposition on physics with a critique of opinions about the principles of nature, including the "most important inventions" of Greek philosophers.[75] We do not know if Clement ever fulfilled these plans. Occasionally in the extant books, especially books 5 to 7, he seems to give a foretaste of these polemics and expositions.[76]

For instance, in book 5, Clement rehearses the theme of Greek plagiarism, focussing on bits of doctrine pertaining to cosmology and anthropology (both of which must have belonged within his "physics"), as well as theology. He broaches such topics as the existence of matter, the generation of the world, cosmic evil, the distinction between the intelligible and sensible worlds, the end of the world, etc.[77] In book 6, while dealing with the principles of the gnostic hermeneutic, Clement proposes a "gnostic clarification" of the Decalogue, revolving around similar themes.[78] Eschatological doctrines were also part of the projected "physics".[79]

Clement's theology is not extant, but it would have been based on the trinitarian scheme of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which Clement accepts as part of the apostolic tradition.[80] His notion of faith includes the acceptance of particular views concerning God, "the things said in faith".[81] As mentioned earlier, he speaks of "common faith" in this connection. Although he never cites its content, it probably corresponds to some version of the baptismal confession formula, which would have involved the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[82] Hinting, in all likelihood, at the part concerning the Son, Clement makes a distinction between *believing* certain facts about the Son ("that he is the Son and that he came and how and why, and about his passion") and *knowing* who the Son of God is.[83] No doubt the aim of his theology is to articulate the latter.

Clement holds that the Father is known through the Son and cannot be known otherwise.[84] His main reference texts are Matthew 11:27: "No one knows God, except the Son and those to whom the Son reveals him";[85] and John 1:18: "No one has even seen God. The only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has expounded him."[86] The "bosom of the Father", Clement explains, refers to the invisibility and ineffability of God;[87] and he draws a contrast between the Son, who is the object of knowledge and even proof, and the Father, who is beyond both.[88]

This contrast seems to be due mainly to the fact that the Father, as the first cause of everything, is ungenerated (*agennētos*), whereas the Son is generated by the Father.[89] As others before him, Clement describes the generation of the Son as his "going forth" (*proelthōn*) from the Father.[90] Some Christian thinkers had explained this process as analogous to the expression of thought in speech; hinting at the Stoic distinction between the *logos endiathetos* (internal word, i.e. thought) and *logos prophorikos* (external word, i.e. speech), they depicted the Son as the speech of the Father.[91] Clement rejects this depiction.[92] For him, the Son is not an expression of the Father's thought, but rather the very act of that thought. Clement draws a parallel between that which "the barbarians" have called *logos tou theou* (hinting probably at the Johannine *Prologue*) and the Platonic "idea", understood as "the thought of God".[93] This *logos*-thought originates in God, who is referred to as "the place of ideas" (*chōra ideōn*).[94] Clement links this expression – which he seems to have found in Philo (*Cher.* 49) – with Plato's account of the "supercelestial place" in the *Phaedrus*, a place of "colourless, formless, and impalpable being that truly is, beholdable only to the pilot of the soul, the intellect".[95] According to Clement, this "beholdability", i.e. intelligibility, of God is made possible precisely by the Logos, which "goes forth as the cause of creation, and afterwards begets even himself, when the Logos becomes flesh, so that he could be beheld."[96]

While constantly emphasizing the intelligibility of the Logos, Clement contrasts it against the unintelligibility of the Father. And though he sometimes describes the Father as "intellect" (*nous*),[97] at the same time he claims that the Father transcends the intelligible realm.[98] This need not involve a contradiction, insofar as the intellect is not conceived of as the actuality of intelligible entities, but as the origin of intelligible entities which is itself beyond them.[99] In any case, Clement draws the contrast between the Son and the Father along the following lines: Whereas the Son is "by birth the eldest among the intelligible [entities]", the Father is "the cause beyond".[100] Similarly, after a well-known account of the way of "analysis" – the way of

removing dimensions from bodies and the position from points, culminating in "the greatness of Christ" from which we proceed to the "void" – Clement submits that the first cause is "above place, time, name, and intellection".[101] Therefore, he concludes, "the inquiry of God is formless and invisible and the grace of knowledge comes from him through the Son."[102]

Perhaps the most interesting adumbration of Clement's theology is found in *Stromateis* 4. First, Clement outlines the distinction between the Father and the Son, noted earlier; then he proceeds to the Spirit, describing it as a plurality of powers, which "contribute" to the Son:

> God, then, being not a subject of demonstration, cannot be the object of science. But the Son is wisdom, knowledge, and truth, and all else that is akin to it. Therefore, he allows for demonstration and description. And all the powers of the Spirit, becoming together one thing, contribute to the same thing, that is, the Son. But no concept of any of his powers is indicative of him.[103]

How do the powers contribute to the Son? Clement's point seems to be epistemological. Having stated that the Son allows for demonstration and description, Clement conceives of the powers of the Spirit as particular attributes of the Son, indicating perhaps that their description and demonstration contribute to the description and demonstration of the Son.[104] Nonetheless, Clement continues, "no concept of any of his powers is indicative of him"; that is to say, none of these attributes suffices to reveal the nature of the Son. In the next step, Clement further elaborates on the nature of the Son as unity in plurality, as opposed to unity pure and simple on the one hand, and plurality on the other:

> Thus the Son is not simply one as one, nor many as parts, but rather [one] as all-one; whence he is also the all. For he is the circle of all powers that turn towards one and become unified.[105]

This distinction is clearly inspired by a metaphysical interpretation of the first two hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides*.[106] It is likely that Clement reserves the first type of unity ("one as one") to the Father. In another passage, he addresses the difficulty of speaking about and pointing at the "first and eldest principle" of everything, namely the Father, the difficulty being due, among other things, to the absence of any division and limit in the "one".[107]

Clement proposes several ways of dealing with these limits of language, which also appear to be the limits of his theology. One is the way of negation, by which "we might, in one way or another, draw near to the intellection of the almighty, not recognizing what he is, but what he is not."[108] Another way is relying on a plurality of "beautiful names", none of which expresses God, but all of which together indicate his power.[109] Yet another way is "silent worship and holy awe".[110]

6 Dialectic

Clement uses the word "dialectic" in two ways, one of which may be labelled "Aristotelian" and the other "Platonic".[111] In the first sense, dialectic is an art dealing with syllogisms; it is an "exercise of a philosopher concerning reputable opinions for the sake of the capacity to produce a counterargument".[112] More generally, it is the art of asking and answering questions.[113] Mastering it is useful for Christians, as it helps them "not to succumb to the attacks of the heresies".[114] Jesus himself was a good dialectician, as he knew how to respond to the devil's temptation (cf. Matt 4:4).[115]

Dialectic in the second sense is "a science enabling one to discover the clarification of things" (cf. Plato, *Pol.* 287a); it is pursued by a wise man "not for the sake of speaking and acting before men, . . . but that he may be able to speak and to do everything, so far as possible, in a manner pleasing to God" (cf. Plato, *Phdr.* 273e). Like Plato, Clement associates it with the art of division:

> For the true dialectic is knowledge capable of making divisions among the objects of thought and showing purely and pristinely what lies underneath each thing; or, it is a capacity to make divisions among the genera of things, descending all the way to the most peculiar and making each thing appear purely as it is.[116]

Clement does not explain these definitions; but he takes them as descriptions of the way to true religious knowledge:

> True dialectic, by inspecting things and testing powers and principalities, ascends above them to the most mighty substance of all and dares even beyond, to the God of the universe. It promises the science of things divine and heavenly, followed also by the appropriate way of handling human affairs, as regards both words and acts.[117]

Notwithstanding the Platonic origin of most of these formulations, Clement insists that true dialectic is mediated by the Son;[118] and it is applied in scriptural interpretation, where it helps getting hold of "the continuity of the divine teaching".[119] Unfortunately, Clement does not give much detail of how dialectic should be applied to Scripture. At one point he suggests that the gnostic should be able to distinguish between names and objects in Scripture and pay attention to cases when one word has several meanings or several words have one meaning, as it will help him to "answer correctly".[120] This is an application of dialectic in the "Aristotelian" sense, but it is subordinated to the programme of "true dialectic".

Associated with it is also the notion of proof: "Rational exposition concerning things that have been grasped by thought, aligned with choice and assent, is called dialectic. It confirms the things said about truth by demonstration, while disposing of difficulties brought up against them."[121] Clement had planned to practise this sort of dialectic in the continuation of the *Stromateis*, where he had promised to solve some "difficulties" (*aporiai*) raised against Christian faith by the Greeks and the barbarians.[122] His interest in the theory of demonstration, attested in the so-called eighth book of the *Stromateis*, was probably part of a project of "true dialectic" as the method of Christian philosophy.[123]

7 The use of Greek philosophy

Clement defends Greek philosophy against believers who claim that it exhausts us in vain and detains us by things not contributing to our goal; that it ruins our lives, being discovered or instigated by an evil power; that it is a demiurge of false realities and bad deeds, dragging us away from faith; merely a human invention without any benefit – and, in consequence, reject all philosophy and Greek education and require sole faith.[124] Clement argues that an evil power cannot give rise to anything good; and even if philosophy were instigated by the devil, it would not be able to mislead those eager to learn, had it not contained something true; that human reason is of divine origin; and, generally, that philosophy is more or less directly a work of divine providence, in other words, that it belongs within the economy of salvation.[125]

In particular, Clement applauds the ability of Greek philosophy to "improve the soul", i.e., to reach roughly the effect of the "pedagogical" phase of divine education.[126] He acknowledges that, before the coming of Christ, philosophy had been capable of bringing the Greeks to temperance and justice to some extent;[127] and he sets it in parallel with the Jewish law.[128] It is apparently in this respect that, in the *Protrepticus*, Clement proclaims Greek philosophy obsolete after the coming of Christ.[129]

Nonetheless, in the *Stromateis*, Clement maintains that philosophy is useful even for Christian education.[130] He mentions several reasons why it is useful; the most interesting one being that it "exercises the mind" and "stimulates intelligence", which, in turn, "generates sagacity capable of searching by means of true philosophy".[131] Thus he suggests that philosophical training gives rise to intellectual virtues, which can then be employed in service of the Christian type of inquiry. Clement also describes philosophy as a "propaedeutic for those who bear the fruit of faith through demonstration".[132] This appears to mean that philosophical arguments in favour of certain doctrines can be adapted in such a way as to render the standpoint of Christian faith more convincing. The method of comparing philosophical doctrines with relevant scriptural passages and rethinking these doctrines against the backdrop of divine economy seems to play an important part in this procedure.[133] Finally, Clement also appreciates the ability of Greek philosophy to expose sophistic arguments.[134] Again, he hopes to exploit this feature in the service of faith, over against its critics among the Greeks, as well as against the "heterodox" schools of barbarian philosophy.[135] None of this, however, is such as to make Greek philosophy indispensable for a Christian thinker, since "the teaching according to the Saviour", that is to say, Christian philosophy, is self-complete and needs nothing else.[136]

8 Conclusion: Clement's philosophy

It has been shown in particular by S.R.C. Lilla that Clement's project of "true philosophy" runs parallel to certain trends in contemporary Platonism; and Clement comes close to his Platonist peers in many points of detail.[137] On the other hand, Lilla's contention that, in his version of Christianity, Clement sought to solve the problems of contemporary Platonism is hard to sustain.[138] The backbone of Clement's thought is the "salvific economy" of the Logos: a chain of divine epiphanies mediated by Scripture, culminating in the advent of Christ, and further handed down by the apostolic church.[139] This notion is neither derived from Greek philosophy nor is it really similar to anything found in it. Clement's main concern as a philosopher is to draw ethical, cosmological, and theological consequences from the salvific economy; and though he takes advice from a variety of sources – and does not shrink from appropriating anything he finds useful – his sources never divert him from the main concern of his thought; on the contrary, they are always adapted to it.

Notes

1 Non-Christian: Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*. 2.2.64; but see Riedweg 1987: 117–123; Méhat 1966: 43. Raised in Athens: Epiphanius, *Panarion* 32.6.1; Tollinton 1914: 3f. For the system of education in Clement's time, cf. Hadot 1984: 215–261. For Clement's extraordinary rhetorical and literary competence, cf. Steneker 1967; Le Boulluec 2017: 86–94, 103–106.

2 Against Rizzerio 1996: 10–17, who suggests that Clement studied with Atticus. Cf. also Tollinton 1914: 5f. For a different (but equally speculative) account of Clement's formation, cf. Ashwin-Siejkowski 2008: 19–31.

3 His earliest known work *Protrepticus* betrays a much less sophisticated and more hostile attitude towards Greek philosophy than the one displayed in the *Stromateis*. Cf. esp. *Protrepticus* 64.1–3; 66.1–67.2;

112.1. Even references to Plato are crudely condescending; cf. *Protr.* 68.1–3. This is surely part of the rhetorical strategy of this piece; but it could also reflect an early stage of Clement's own development.

4 For some suggestions cf. Ferguson 1974: 14; Ramelli 2009: 29f. For Pantaenus, cf. Eusebius, *Church History*. 5.11.1; Ramelli 2017: 106–110; Le Boulluec 2017: 60–65.

5 Julius Africanus in Cedrenus, *Compendium of History* 1.441 (Bekker).

6 Eusebius, *Church History* 5.11.1. For the catechetical school cf. van den Hoek 1997; Wyrwa 2005; Le Boulluec 2017: 65–72.

7 Cf. *Stromateis* 1.144.3–5.

8 Scholars have derived the *terminus ante quem* of Clement's death from two sources: 1. Eusebius, *Church History* 6.14.8–9, quoting a letter from Alexander, the bishop of Jerusalem, written after Clement's death. However, the letter has been dated alternatively to 216 (Zahn) or 233 (Nautin). 2. Julius Africanus' *Chronologies*, completed by 221. According to Méhat (1966: 49), Africanus' remark on Clement, mentioned earlier, is suggestive of being written of a deceased man. For further details of Clement's biography, see Le Boulluec 2017: 58–74.

9 *Strom.* 6.55.3.

10 *Protr.* 66.3.

11 Cf. *Strom.* 1.68.1; 1.71.4–6. Cf. also *Strom.* 6.35.2; 6.37.3; and 6.38.1. Clement attributes this generous view of philosophy to Plato, in contrast to Epicurus, "who supposes that only the Greeks are capable of philosophizing" (*Strom.* 1.67.1); for the Platonic background cf. Wyrwa 1983: 87–101.

12 Cf. e.g. *Paed.* 2.100.4 as opposed to *Strom.* 1.99.1; 2.5.1; 5.56.2–3; 6.67.1–2 and 8.1.2.

13 Cf. *Paed.* 2.18.1; *Strom.* 1.64.5; 1.72.4; 1.73.6; 1.176.1.

14 Cf. Havrda 2016: 129, with references.

15 *Strom.* 4.1.1. Clement possibly alludes to Aristotle's (lost) *Protrepticus*, cited (anonymously) in *Strom.* 6.162.5. I'm grateful to Mark Edwards for drawing my attention to this.

16 *Strom.* 4.58.3. Similarly *Strom.* 4.62.4; 4.67.1; 4.69.4. For faith without literacy cf. also *Paedagogus* 3.78.2; *Strom.* 1.99.1.

17 *Strom.* 2.46.1. Cf. *Strom.* 7.4.2; Alcinous, *Didascalia* 3.1 (153.25–28 H).

18 Cf. *Paed.* 1.29.1; *Strom.* 5.2.6.

19 *Paed.* 1.39.1; *Strom.* 5.62.3.

20 Cf. *Paed.* 1.30.2; *Ecl.* 28.3; *Strom.* 5.13.1.

21 Cf. *Strom.* 1.35.2.

22 *Paed.* 1.1.3–3.3. For the philosophical backdrop of this scheme, cf. Havrda 2019.

23 For this contested issue, cf. Le Boulluec 2017: 116–119.

24 *Strom.* 6.1.3–4.

25 Cf. Méhat 1966: 92–94; Wagner 1968; Havrda 2019, whose conclusions are accepted by Le Boulluec 2019: 94–95.

26 *Strom.* 4.1.2; 6.1.1; 7.110.4. For parts of philosophy as *topoi*, cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.40.

27 *Strom.* 1.15.2; 4.3.1–2; 6.168.4. Clement possibly dealt with these issues in some of his lost works: the *Hypotyposeis*, which could have been the continuation of the *Stromateis* (cf. Bucur 2009: 6–27; Rizzi 2012); or *On Principles and Theology*, mentioned in *QDS* 26.8. For the tripartite division into ethics, physics, and theology, see further later.

28 *Strom.* 1.18.1; cf. 7.111.3.

29 Cf. Méhat 1966: 115–135; Wyrwa 1983.

30 Cf. *Strom.* 1.20.3.

31 *Strom.* 2.1.1. For the plagiarism theme, cf. Lilla 1971: 31–41; Wyrwa 1983: 87–100, 298–316; Droge 1989; Ridings 1995; Schneider 1999: 55–58. Clement relies on Jewish scholar Aristobulus (186–145 B.C.) claiming that parts of the Torah had been available in Greek translation before the Septuagint was commisioned by Demetrius of Phaleron: "So it is clear that [Plato] took many things [from there], for he was a very erudite man, just as Pythagoras also transferred many things from us to his own body of doctrine" (*Strom.* 1.150.1–3).

32 *Strom.* 2.1.1–2; 2.78.1; cf. Havrda 2016: 52.

33 *Strom.* 2.1.1.

34 *Strom.* 2.78.1.

35 *Strom.* 2.4.1–5.5, based mainly on Proverbs 3:5–12 and Wisdom 7:17–21.

36 *Strom.* 2.4.2–3.

37 Cf. Havrda 2019.

38 *Strom.* 2.4.2. For the Christian content of faith cf. e.g. *Strom.* 2.25.3; 2.29.2–3.

39 *Strom.* 2.7.1–2.31.3. On faith as criterion, cf. *Strom.* 2.7.2; 2.12.1. For the whole section, cf. Wyrwa 1983: 142–173. For Clement's notion of faith (*pistis*), cf. esp. Lilla 1971: 118–142; Schneider 1999: 282–291.

40 *Strom.* 2.32.1–40.3 and 2.46.1–54.5.

41 *Strom.* 2.37.2–3. Hence the importance of fear in the *Pedagogue*; cf. Schneider 1999: 272–275.

42 Cf. Ashwin-Siejkowski 2008: 68–78.

43 For the notion of will, cf. Havrda 2011.

44 Clement outlines different versions of this sequence. Cf. *Strom.* 2.30.2; 2.31.1; 2.45.1; 2.105.1. See further Černušková 2012: 172n33, with references. For the philosophical background, cf. Lilla 1971: 83f. For the notion of progress, cf. Kovacs 2001.

45 Cf. van den Hoek 1988: 69–115.

46 *Strom.* 2.91.1 and 2.80.4–5.

47 Cf. *Strom.* 2.78.1; 2.100.3–101.1. Cf. Wyrwa 1983: 176–189; Havrda 2011: 37f., with references.

48 *Strom.* 2.80.4.

49 *Strom.* 2.110.4–111.2. For "assent", cf. 2.111.4.

50 *Strom.* 2.80.4. Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Mathesis* 9.153; SVF 3.274 and 275 (Arnim).

51 Cf. *Strom.* 2.59.6.

52 Cf. *Strom.* 2.19.1–2; 2.134.2; cf. *Paed.* 1.101.1–102.4. Cf. Völker 1952: 133f.

53 *Strom.* 2.110.1–3. Clement calls this interpretation a "simple account of our philosophy". For the fight against evil powers, cf. also *Strom.* 2.109.2; 2.120.2–3; 2.126.1.

54 Cf. *Strom.* 2.80.5–81.1; 2.103.1. For *apatheia*, cf. Lilla 1971: 103–106; Schneider 1999: 204–230; Kovacs 2012.

55 Cf. *Strom.* 2.105.1.

56 Cf. Wyrwa 1983: 173–175.

57 Cf. Wyrwa 1983: 187f.

58 Cf. Wyrwa 1983: 190f.

59 Clement adopts this term from his "heterodox" opponents; cf. *Paed.* 1.31.2; 1.35.1; 1.52.2; *Strom.* 2.10.2; 2.117.5; 3.30.1; 4.15.5; 4.114.2; 4.116.1; 5.1.5. The most complete account of Clement's depiction of the gnostic remains Völker 1952.

60 Cf. esp. *Strom.* 4.13–57.1; controversial aspects of martyrdom are further dealt with in 4.70–92.1.

61 Cf. *Strom.* 4.1.1; van den Hoek 1993.

62 *Strom.* 4.57.2–69, esp. 4.58.2–59.3; 4.67.1–68.2; 4.118–129.1.

63 *Strom.* 5.2.4–3.1; Havrda 2010: 4f.

64 *Strom.* 5.19.3–13; 5.88.5. For the "symbolic genre", cf. Le Boulluec 2017a.

65 Cf. *Strom.* 6.54.1–56.1.

66 *Strom.* 6.55.2.

67 *Strom.* 6.61.1–3.

68 *Strom.* 6.105.1. For the *apatheia* of the gnostic, cf. 6.71–79.

69 Cf. Havrda et al. (eds.) 2012.

70 *Strom.* 1.176.1–2.

71 Cf. van den Hoek 1988: 60–62.

72 *Strom.* 1.176.2–3. For the triad ethics, physics, epoptics/metaphysics, cf. Perkams 2015. As Wyrwa points out, dialectic is neither equivalent to epoptics, nor an additional part of philosophy, but rather "the whole philosophy from a specific point of view" (Wyrwa 1983: 124). See further later.

73 Cf. *Strom.* 5.32–40; Van den Hoek 1993: 116–147.

74 Cf. *Strom.* 1.15.2; 2.5.1; 4.3.2–3; 6.168.4. For Clement's cosmology, cf. Lilla 1971: 189–199.

75 Cf. *Strom.* 4.2.1.

76 Cf. Lilla 1971: 190, regarding cosmogony.

77 Cf. *Strom.* 5.89–139; Wyrwa 1983: 305–316.

78 *Strom.* 6.133–148; cf. Edwards 2015.

79 Cf. *Strom.* 2.87.1; possibly also 4.162.2, referring back to 4.161.2–162.1. For Clement's eschatology, cf. Ramelli 2012.

80 Cf. *Paed.* 1.42.1; 3.101.2; *Strom.* 5.103.1; *QDS* 34.1; 42.19–20; *Ecl.* 29.1. Cf. Lebreton 1947; Ziebritzki 1994: 124–126.

81 Cf. *Strom.* 1.35.2; cf. *Strom.* 2.17.3.

82 For Clement's hints to the trinitarian confession, cf. *Strom.* 5.73.2 (and *Exc.* 80.3); cf. also *Strom.* 1.31.5; van den Hoek 1988: 39f. For "confession", see further *Paed.* 2.36.2; *Strom.* 4.70–73; 5.71.2; 7.67.1; 7.90.1–2.

83 *Strom*. 5.1.2; cf. Havrda 2010: 2–4.

84 Cf. *Strom*. 5.71.5; 7.2.2–3; and references below, notes 91–94.

85 *Protr*. 10.3; *Paed*. 1.20.2; *Strom*. 1.178.2.

86 *Strom*. 1.169.4; 5.81.3; *QDS* 37.1; *Exc*. 8.1–2.

87 *Strom*. 5.81.3.

88 Cf. *Strom*. 4.156.1; 5.82.3–4.

89 For the contrast, cf. esp. *Strom*. 6.58.1; 6.78.5.

90 *Strom*. 5.16.5. Cf. Ignatius, *Magnesians* 7.2; Justin, *Trypho* 100.4; Tatian, *Oration* 5.4; Athenagoras, *Embassy* 10.3. The term is also used in a relevant sense by the Valentinians; cf. Clement, *Excerots from Theodotus* 7.1–2; 32.2; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.14.5. Cf. Krämer 1964: 238–254.

91 Cf. Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2.22.3–4, and (despite Edwards 2000: 160) Justin, *Trypho* 61.2; cf. Casey 1924: 50–56; Mühl 1962: 44–50.

92 *Strom*. 5.6.3. Cf. already Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.28.5–6, against the Valentinians; cf. Edwards 2000: 162f. and 169f., on Clement.

93 *Strom*. 5.16.3. For ideas as thoughts of God, cf. Boys-Stones 2018: 135f., with references.

94 *Strom*. 4.155.2; 5.73.3.

95 Plato, *Phaedrus* 247c4–8, quoted in *Strom*. 5.16.4. Cf. Wyrwa 1983: 262f. For the notion of God as "place", cf. also Gyurkovics 2017.

96 *Strom*. 5.16.5.

97 Cf. *Protr*. 98.4; *Strom*. 4.155.2; 4.162.5.

98 *Strom*. 5.38.6; cf. Havrda 2010: 14–18; Le Boulluec 2016: 131.

99 Cf. Wyrwa 1983: 130, interpreting the intelligible entities as angels. Cf. also Havrda 2010: 17f. For the Platonist background, cf. Boys-Stones 2018: 152–159.

100 *Strom*. 7.2.3.

101 *Strom*. 5.71.5. For the way of analysis, described in *Strom*. 5.71.2–3, cf. Hägg 2006: 217–227, with references; cf. also Havrda 2010: 18–21.

102 *Strom*. 5.71.5; cf. Philo, *Posterity of Cain* 15.

103 *Strom*. 4.156.1.

104 The powers of the Spirit probably correspond to the "first-created angels", mentioned by Clement on other occasions; cf. Bucur 2009: 28–32. Clement must have planned to include angelology in the theological part of his project; relevant passages in the *Excerpts from Theodotus* and *Prophetic Extracts* – fragmentary texts whose origin and purpose is disputed – seem to bear witness to this intention.

105 *Strom*. 4.156.2.

106 Cf. Whittaker 1969; Lilla 1971: 205f.; Lilla 1994: 38. Cf. already Osborn 1957: 17f. For the Platonist reception of *Parmenides*, see further Boys-Stones 2018: 60, with references.

107 *Strom*. 5.81.6.

108 *Strom*. 5.71.3. For parallels, cf. Lilla 1994: 37f.; Boys-Stones 2018: 162.

109 *Strom*. 5.82.1–2. Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Diss*. 2.10; Le Boulluec 2016: 126.

110 *Strom*. 7.2.3; cf. Hägg 2012: 132–135; Perrone 2012: 145f., with references.

111 For the first sort of dialectic, cf. Schneider 1999: 254f. For the second, cf. Wyrwa 1983: 125–131, with references. Cf. also Osborn 2005: 62–68.

112 *Strom*. 1.26.4; 1.39.5; 1.41.2.

113 *Strom*. 1.45.4 *ad* Prov 22:21.

114 *Strom*. 1.99.4. Cf. *Strom*. 6.81.4.

115 *Strom*. 1.44.4.

116 *Strom*. 1.176.3.

117 *Strom*. 1.177.1.

118 *Strom*. 1.178.1–2.

119 *Strom*. 1.179.4.

120 *Strom*. 6.82.3. Clement has either disputes with the "heretics" or teaching in mind.

121 *Strom*. 6.156.2.

122 *Strom*. 6.1.4. Cf. *Strom*. 7.89.1; Havrda 2012: 263f.

123 For *Stromateis* 8, cf. Havrda 2016.

124 Cf. *Strom*. 1.18.2–3; 1.20.1–2; 1.43.1; 6.66.1; 6.80.5; 6.93.1.

125 Cf. *Strom*. 1.18.3; 1.44.4; 1.94.2; 6.62.4; 6.66.1–5; 7.5.5–6.4. Cf. Lilla 1971: 9–31; Recinová 2012: 110f.

126 Cf. *Strom*. 7.3.2; cf. *Paed*. 1.1.4; 1.67.1 (cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 477a); 1.74.3.

127 Temperance: *Strom*. 1.80.5. Justice: *Strom*. 1.28.1; 1.37.5; 1.94.2; 1.99.3; 2.7.1; 6.45.5; 6.159.9. Clement regards temperance and justice as inferior, "human" virtues, in contradistinction to "prudence" (φρόνησις) and "piety" (ὁσιότης); *Strom*. 6.125.4–5.

128 *Strom*. 1.28.3; 1.99.3; 6.44.1; 6.45.5; 6.110.3; 6.159.9; 6.161.5; 7.11.2.

129 *Protr*. 112.1. Cf. *Strom*. 6.55.2: "We call 'philosophers' those who love wisdom, the artificer of everything and a teacher, i.e. the knowledge of the Son of God; the Greeks call 'philosophers' those engaged in arguments about virtues."

130 Cf. Schneider 1999: 232–264.

131 *Strom*. 1.32.4.

132 *Strom*. 1.28.1; cf. 1.20.2.

133 Cf. *Strom*. 1.20.3. Clement effectively describes the attitude of a Christian thinker to Greek philosophy as one of a thief; cf. *Strom*. 6.89.3.

134 Cf. *Strom*. 1.29.4; 1.100.1; 6.81.4.

135 *Strom*. 1.28.4; 1.100.1; 6.81.4.

136 *Strom*. 1.100.1; cf. 6.162.1.

137 Cf. Lilla 1971. For the project of "true philosophy", parallels between Clement and Numenius are particularly instructive; cf. *Strom*. 1.57.6; 6.57.3 and Numenius, frs. 24 and 1a (Des Places); cf. Waszink 1965: 155–158; Droge 1989: 146–149; Boys-Stones 2001: 140n20 and 192f.

138 Lilla speaks of "Neoplatonic problems"; cf. Lilla 1971: 232–234. For the debate on Clement's "Platonism", cf. Wyrwa 1983: 14–23.

139 Cf. esp. Schneider 1999: 63–82 and *passim*.

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