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## INFLUENCE OF MIDDLE PLATONISM ON EVALUATION OF GREEK PHILOSOPHIC SYSTEMS IN "PROTREPTICUS" OF CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

There exist two different opinions in the scientific literature on the influence of Greek philosophy on thinking of Clement of Alexandria.

Some researchers consider that the author evaluates different Greek philosophic systems only on the principle how they comply with the objectives of Christian creed and preaching of Clement.<sup>1</sup>

Some others think that to analyze thoughts of Clement of Alexandria it is most important to take into consideration spiritual and cultural environment of his epoch while talking about the author's evaluation of Greek philosophic systems.<sup>2</sup> Along with other philosophic influences these researchers pointed to the influence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Platonism, or as it is called in the specialist literature of Middle Platonism,<sup>3</sup> they disclosed some parallels between the representatives of Platonism and Clement's thoughts. In specialist literature, R.C.Cilla in his monograph "Clement of Alexandria" takes into consideration "protrepticus" along with other works by Clement of Alexandria. His conclusions are based on the analyses of the entire world outlook of Clement of Alexandria.

We aware the considerations of these researchers and we'll try in our paper to strengthen this viewpoint with additional arguments. We'll try to do this by the comparing the author's evaluation of Plato, Pythagorean, Epicures, and Aristotle Stoic systems fixed in "protrepticus" with the outlooks of some representatives of Middle Platonism on the same philosophical schools. In result of such analysis, in our opinion, may be specified and made complete by the supposition, that Clement's considerations on Greek philosophic schools proceed directly from Platonic schools of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

It is mentioned in the specialist literature that similarity of Clement's considerations on Greek philosophic schools with Middle Platonism is outlined around several questions:

1. attaching preference to Plato and Pythagorean teaching;
2. refusing Epicures "Atheistic Philosophy";
3. refusing Peripathetics system, who consider that divine mind spreads only till the moon in the world;
4. Refusing Stoic materialism.<sup>4</sup>

Let's discuss this similarity according to the text "protrepticus" we are interested in. It is known that among the Greek philosophers Plato was the most authoritative for Clement.<sup>5</sup> In chapter 6 "protrepticus" Clement directly appeals to Plato to assist him in his search for the Lord. "Who may I choose to support me in my search? - Maybe, Plato, then, how can we find God, Plato?" Immediately after these words Clement cites a passage from "Timaios" (28 c): "It is difficult to find father and creator of all and when you find it is difficult to reveal him to all", and next fragment: "because it's impossible to describe him".<sup>6</sup> Both citations are considered important because they express the basic of Clement's ideas on the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> H. Laemmer, p. 56. H. J. Reinkens, p. 275, 300; V. Hebert - Duperron, p. 119, J. Huber, p. 139; J. Cognat, p. 417-418; J. Patvick, p. 141-142; A. C. Ourler, ZK. 20(1940); 237-238; Volker, Der wahre Gnostiker, p. 8, 9, 14, 352; TZ3 (1947), 15-40; E. Von Ivanka "Plato Cristianus", p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Lilla, "Clement of Alexandria", Oxford, 1971; A. F. Duenne, De γλώσσει Clementis Alexandrini, p. 6; E. De Fuyé, Clement' Alexandria, p. 239; R. Arnov, DTHC, Tomexii (1932-5); R. E. Witt. "The Hellenism of Clement of Alexandria", CQ 25 (1931); E. F. Osborn. "The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria", (Cambridge, 1957); Andresen, "Justin und der, mittlere platonismus", AMW 44 (1952(3)); L. Ila, "Clement of Alexandria", Oxford, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> R. E. Witt, "Albinus and the history of middle Platonism". Amsterdam, 1971

<sup>4</sup> Lilla, "Clement of Alexandria", Oxford, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Clemens in Platon lebt und webt', W. Bousset, Judisch. Christlicher Schulvetrieb..., 227.

<sup>6</sup> Epist. vii. 341 c.

The same is expressed by one more quotation by Clement: "As he (Plato) says: God is like no one else is, that is why no one can know for sure what God is like on the basis of likeness". After that the author again appeals to Plato to search for God together: "It is good, Plato, you have reached the Truth, but don't say, no to me, join me in my search for God". Clement points that the source of Plato's wisdom proceeds from Holy Script (Old Testament): "As for your laws, being true and your belief in God, here you were assisted by Jews themselves".<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the Christian author does not refute Plato, on the contrary, he reequites divine origin of his philosophy.

It is seen from the text of "protrepticus", another philosopher considered by Clement to be a finder of Truth and worth of recognition is Pythagoras. In his opinion, Plato and Pythagoras managed best of all to approach Moses doctrine and to penetrate into the elements of Truth. Clement says: "We should not hide Pythagorians' doctrine either, who say God is one and is not beyond cosmic order as some consider but he is in it, he fully exists in the entire system (circle), rules over all created, he is a unity of all epochs, Lord of his own forces, light of all his deeds in heaven and father of all, mind and spirit of the entire circle (system), moving source of every thing. These words were written by their authors in result of divine inspiration. We have selected them. They are enough to get comprehensive knowledge on God, to assist all who can apprehend Truth even a little".<sup>8</sup>

The tendency for selecting Plato and Pythagoras from the Greek philosophers as finders of supreme truth is characteristic to Middle Platonism and is one of the peculiar traits of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century thought. Both Clement's "protrepticus" and the works of Middle Platonism representatives mention these two philosophers together, as creators of brilliant doctrines: Plutarchus respects Pythagoras and Plato as they have formed the doctrines of universe harmony and immortality of soul.<sup>9</sup> Taurus praises the method of Pythagoras' teaching,<sup>10</sup> Teon of Smirna points that Plato has often followed Pythagoras' doctrine,<sup>11</sup> Tirrel Maximus calls Plato "Interpreter of God" and "prophet",<sup>12</sup> this very religious interpretation of Plato follows across some important works by the representatives of Middle Platonism, such as: "Didaskalikos" by Albinus, "Questiones Platonicae" by Plutarchus, "De Platone et eius dogmate" by Apuleus. Another Christian apologist Justine presents a picture of Platonic schools of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Like Clement he was educated there. "I was deep engaged in studying Plato's doctrines, as hard as it was possible; I advanced every day and was successful in studying them. all my being was full of thoughts about bodiless creatures and studying of the ideas put new essence to my mental capacity. I thought that soon I'll become wise. I was naïve in thinking that I may so see the Lord, as this is an objective of Plato philosophy"<sup>13</sup> Proceeding from the said above, I think one can see in Clement interpretation of Plato and Pythagoras from the religious viewpoint and such great recognition of their doctrines.

We come across refusal of Epicurian system in the following passage of Clement's "protrepticus": "I'll exclude Epicurus philosophy from my mind with great pleasure, as he is famous for his disrespect for God and thinks that God doesn't take care of universe".<sup>14</sup> Such rejection exists in Middle Platonism as well. For example, Aticus in one of his preserved fragments refuse Epicurus together with Aristotle, because both philosophers think God does not take care of man.<sup>15</sup>

In "protrepticus" Clement expresses negative attitude to Aristotle's consideration either, according to which divine mind spreads only till the moon "First he says that the divine mind spreads only to the place where the moon is, then thinking that space is God, he contradicts himself when states that what is devoid of divine is God".<sup>16</sup> Here Clement brings Peripathetic doctrine to witness this: Aristotle says<sup>17</sup> that God does not directly take care of earthly objects and compares God with Persian King: as the provinces of his Empire were managed not directly by the King but by his satraps, the same with the lowest spheres of universe are governed by the forces determined by God the same supposition was also

<sup>7</sup> Protr. vii. 159. Paed. II. 18.i (i.166. 2,4,5), Strom. i. 10.2. (ii.8.5-6).

<sup>8</sup> Protr. vi

<sup>9</sup> De Mus. 1147, 9-17, De Vita et Poes. Hom. 122 (vii. 395. 15-17).

<sup>10</sup> Gellius. Noct. AAt.i. 9.I-8, vol. i. 59.5-60.6; Ct. Praechter, "Taurus". KE., Zweite Reihe, Neunter Habband, col. 61.

<sup>11</sup> De. Ut. Math; P. 12. 10; Andresen, "Justin und der, mittlere platonismus", ZNW 44 (1952/3).

<sup>12</sup> Or. XI. 65e. Ct. Andresen, ant. cit. 275 n.6.

<sup>13</sup> Dial. 2. vol.ii. 8. 27-105.

<sup>14</sup> Protr. 5. 151.

<sup>15</sup> Andresen, Art. Cit. 186. n. 119.

<sup>16</sup> Protr. 5. 151.

<sup>17</sup> De Mundo 397<sup>b</sup> 30-398<sup>b</sup>6.

expressed by Stoian Xrizipus, as Plutarchus says.<sup>18</sup> According to Plutarchus, Xrizipus considered that though the universe was managed on the whole well, there existed something that the divine mind did not take care of and the spheres were ruled by demons. This author also compared this with the Persian King and his satraps. These considerations according to which supreme God charged lower gods with care for men, probably follow from Plato's "Timaios" where in the end of appeal to astral gods, demiurge charges them with care for men. At the same time, Plato criticizes those who rejects that God takes care of man<sup>19</sup> and says that a divine spirit penetrates even in small things.<sup>20</sup> Thus, we can suppose that Clement's attitude to Aristotle is like the consideration of Aticus, representative of Middle Platonism who reject Epicurus and Aristotle as in Aristotle's opinion God does not take care of man.<sup>21</sup>

Clement's attitude to Stoians is clearly seen in "protrepticus", in the following quotation "I won't also avoid stoics, which consider that divine will penetrate into everything, even in the lowest ones they put shame to philosophy".<sup>22</sup>

Such attitude to Stoian materialism we may also see in Middle Platonism. Plutarchus severely criticized Xrizipus' consideration as if gods are material and immoral.<sup>23</sup> Albinus also argues with Stoians and proves that God has no body: "if God has a body, then it should be a unity of substance and form... but it is senseless to suppose that God involves substance and form, as in this case God won't be supreme, therefore, God had no body. In addition, if he has a body, then he is created from substance, in this case it should be either fire or water, earth air or something formed from all these elements; but nothing is the main one from these elements. Moreover, it should have been formed later than substance, if it is formed from substance. As all these conclusions are senseless, we should consider God having no body. It is clear that if he has no body than he is subject to decay, is created and experienced change. And to attribute all these features to him has no sense."<sup>24</sup>

We have conducted analysis to compare the considerations of Clement of Alexandria on the Greek philosophy expressed in his "protrepticus" with those presented by some representatives of Middle Platonism. This specifies the supposition concerning the influence of Middle Platonism on his thinking. In our opinion we can suppose based on this comparison that while evaluating Greek philosophical systems Clement experienced the influence of Middle Platonism. And his evaluations are dictated not only by the author's Christian belief but they also had their own philosophical sources as well. In our opinion, Middle Platonism was one of the sources for establishing Clement's considerations concerning Greek philosophy. Talking about Clement's evaluation of Greek Philosophy we should, probably, take into account this influence of Platonism characteristic to the epoch.

<sup>18</sup> De Stoic. Kep. 1051c. 4-11.

<sup>19</sup> Cows. X. 999d, 5-6. 900 62-3, 904 e. 5,905a. 4,905 6.5.

<sup>20</sup> ibid. 900c. 9-s. I,901 61-4, 902 c. 1-2. 902 e. 4,903a.3.

<sup>21</sup> Praechter, R. F. Zweite Reine. Vienter Habbund. col.6.

<sup>22</sup> Protr. V. 150.

<sup>23</sup> De Stoic. Rep. 1051 f. 9-105 2a.9.

<sup>24</sup> R. C. Lilla, Clement of Alexsandria, 49.