SPIRITUAL CONTEMPLATION IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA’S STROMATEIS: ADAPTATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL CATEGORY ΘΕΩΡΙΑ

RICHARD ALAN BAKER

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

2000

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SPIRITUAL CONTEMPLATION IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S STROMATEIS:
Adaptation of the Philosophical Category θεωρία

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Divinity for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor

R.A. Baker

St Mary's College University of St Andrews December 2000
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ABSTRACT

Although scholars have often acknowledged the spirituality in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (cir. 150-215 AD), a thorough study of the Platonic category \( \text{εκποία} \) as it appears in this second century Father has never been undertaken. Most studies on Christian spirituality either ignore Clement’s role altogether, or rush past him with little comment in favor of the great Origen (cir. 185-255 AD).

\textit{Stromateis}, Clement’s most enigmatic work, contains over 75 occurrences of \( \text{εκποία} \). A close examination of these texts reveals that his use of the term is somewhat different from two of his greatest philosophical and spiritual mentors, Plato and Philo. Clement uses this term (usually translated “contemplation”) to refer to a spiritual experience which occurs in space and time, as well as an ethereal one and one which occurs in the mind. A possible explanation for this difference lies with Clement’s claim in the opening chapter of the work: he is the recipient of an oral tradition which has never been recorded, but which he plans to include in the \textit{Stromateis}.

This thesis demonstrates: 1) that Clement is the first Christian writer to adapt this philosophical category into Christian spirituality; 2) the primary purpose of \textit{Stromateis} is to present the third stage in a spiritual pathway — to reveal \( \text{εκποία} \) as the spiritual “meat” for the advanced believer; and 3) to present God and His contact with the Christian as immediate. In a radical move, going against the philosophical setting of the day, Clement presents this Platonic category as a means for the Christian to experience an immanent God.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr J.S. Alexander for his guidance and supervision in this thesis. He has remained an absolute gentleman; his patience with me in my inexperienced zeal as the stereotypical American has been remarkable. A note of thanks is also in order for his wonderful wife, Tricia, who has always been so kind to us as a family.

I would also like to acknowledge my appreciation to Dr Deryck Lovegrove for his input into my experience. Our shared times of conversation over tea in the Ecclesiastical History ‘club’ will forever be good memories. As a part of the Ecclesiastical History faculty, I was honoured to be once named the recipient of the Dr Kenneth Briand Trust scholarship, for which I am grateful.

My thanks to the library staff who have been so patient and willing to help: Colin Bovaird over at St Mary’s was so encouraging in those first few months when I was struggling to learn the cataloging system. Frank Storey did the same for me over at the Main Library. Marjorie Farmer and Linda Innocent have always been so kind and helpful. A big thank you to the staff of Special Collections for giving me such leniency in the use of the older volumes. My gratitude goes to the Library Staff at Besson Divinity School on the Samford University campus (Birmingham, Alabama) for the use of that library during my last few months of making corrections. A note of appreciation to the Administrative Staff at St Mary’s is in order: ‘thank you’ to Susan Millar, Debbie Smith and Marjorie Morrison. Marjorie’s help online prior to my arrival and her continued encouragement and interest have been so nice.

My thanks to Dr Barry Vaughn; I doubt St Mary’s would have accepted me without his kind recommendation. Also to Michael Keeling; his class on Christian Spirituality was extremely helpful. His kindness to host me for 4 days in Durham, reading some of my work and discussing it with me was a great source of encouragement.

A special note of thanks to David Meldrum, fellow minister and French Instructor in Musselburgh, for his help with various French texts. Also to Patrick Schnabel, German Divinity student, for his help with the Völker text.

My congratulations to Dr Steve Guthrie for his successful completion of the program. Steve and I began together and his friendship throughout my time here will never be forgotten. He was in a small group of research students along with me which met for around a 2-3 month period. This small group was a tremendous help to me in my work; my thanks to Steve, Jack Wisemore and Stuart Watson. My most recent research friend, Chris Craun, has been a welcomed fellow southerner. Friends are so important when you are in this lonely endeavor called “research.”
I want to pay special tribute to three men who have inspired me on a personal level through their example of academic achievement coupled with spiritual pursuit: Dr Robert Marsh, Brady Bobbink and Greg Smith. This study of Clement is text based, something I would not have been able to accomplish without the exegetical training I received under Brady. A debt of gratitude is due to my good friends John Gibson and Carl Kennedy, for giving me a gentle shove to pursue this dream. Then, to Phillip Gibson who gave me a good example of taking on a mid-life career change to go back to graduate school.

So special has been the financial support of friends who have continued to help us through this endeavor, far too many to list. Their generosity has all been recognised in a personal fashion. Without the help and financial support of my parents and my wife’s parents (and siblings!) this thesis would have never happened. It is so difficult to express what this support has meant. My last few months were spent completing the task at my parent’s home; they graciously allowed me to set up an office on their dining room table!

My children have been so patient to give me time and room to work at all hours around the house. Other than random moments of discipline or times when their children’s songs would not leave my mind, they have been wonderful. Lastly, I owe so much to my wife, Heather, who has worked so hard both at a part-time job and at home to make life and research more easy. I hope and plan to make it up to her soon.

R.A.B.
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# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACW</td>
<td>Ancient Christian Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGJU</td>
<td>Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urtchristentums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>Adversus Haeresies, Irenaeus</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANCL</td>
<td>Ante-Nicene Christian Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANRW</td>
<td>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</td>
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<td>AOAT</td>
<td>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCL</td>
<td>Biblical Classics Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAH</td>
<td>The Cambridge Ancient History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
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<td>Classical Philology</td>
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<td>CWS</td>
<td>The Classics of Western Spirituality</td>
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<td>Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition</td>
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<td>Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller</td>
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<td>Historia Ecclesiastica, Eusebius</td>
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<tr>
<td>HeyJ</td>
<td>Heythrop Journal</td>
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<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>JECS</td>
<td>Journal of Early Christian Studies (formerly Second Century)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JoR</td>
<td>The Journal of Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSNTSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCC</td>
<td>Library of Christian Classics</td>
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<td>Septuagint</td>
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<td>NICNT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the New Testament</td>
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<td>NT</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
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<td>NovT</td>
<td>Novum Testamentum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
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<td>Paid</td>
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<td>QDS</td>
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<td>RSR</td>
<td>Recherches de Science Religieuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Studies in Antiquity and Christianity</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBLDS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>Sources Chrétiennes</td>
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<td>Studies in Early Christianity</td>
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<td>SHR</td>
<td>Studies in the History of Religions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Society for New Testament Studies</td>
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<td>Strom.</td>
<td>Stromateis, Clement of Alexandria</td>
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<td>TDNT</td>
<td>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vigiliae Christianae</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>WS</td>
<td>World Spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>WUNT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</td>
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My interest in Early Church History began more than 20 years ago with the second century apologists. It began as a quest to find extra-biblical evidence for the Christian faith. Later my interest in the Ante-Nicean era was fueled by the desire to see how the early Church operated in hopes that the modern Church could “get it right.” My interest in contemplative spirituality began a few years later when a friend gave me a copy of the devotional book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by the French monk known only as Brother Lawrence. Henri Nouwen took me a bit further with his small study on the Desert Fathers, *The Way of the Heart*. And finally Gary Thomas’ *Seeking the Face of God* convinced me to do research work in this area. So this thesis flows not just from an academic interest, but a personal one as well.

Reading the various spiritual writers of the Church has been one of the great delights of my time here in St Andrews (being surrounded by historical ruins, the late summer nights and golf on the truly majestic courses would be the other delights). Reading Clement of Alexandria has been a great experience: first, I truly disliked him — I deemed him boring and verbose, droning on endlessly about minutiae — only every now and then saying something of interest. After reading some later spiritual writers I began to wonder if I could stand to work intensely with his text for any length of time. But on my second reading of *Stromateis* I began to see more clearly... and now, having read major portions over and over, I have a deep respect for Clement and for his writings.

The development of Christian spirituality is especially interesting. The resurgence of interest in this topic, and how moderns are returning to the spirituality writings of the Fathers, speaks of the enduring nature of the truth therein. It is my opinion that the neglect of this ‘mystical’ aspect of faith has been one the great misfortunes of the Western Church. The tradition probably survived solely because of the monastic movement. Whether or not the Fathers are trying to communicate a tangible experience will continued to be debated, but certain things need to be remembered: the men and women who handed this tradition from one age to the next were highly devoted, their lives centred on this pursuit of God. Also, most of those who wrote of these matters were not lacking in academic agility; yet these writings are full of spiritual passion and intensity. The argument that moderns are guilty of reading these texts anachronistically is a valid concern, yet it is my opinion that there are spiritual principles which transcend epochs, cultures and sects. It is my desire to see Clement’s spirituality writing in circulation. I think many moderns would recognise his spontaneous spirituality.

Over these past three years I have consistently burst into song as I viewed the spectacular Scottish landscape either while walking on the hillsides, riding my bike on the winding country roads, or driving in the car. The lyrics of a song, already
one of my favorites, would echo more loudly in my heart and mind as I worked with Clement's text. The combination of the Scottish landscape, certain texts from *Stromateis*, and the biblical text all converge in the lyrics; the voice of Glenn Kaiser and the music of Rez only enhanced the impact:

Across these fields, where daylight travels  
I want to yield, despite this veil of tears  
When will you, when will you be returning  
I cast my lot beyond the fear  

Across these fields, I take my pleasure  
Force of your will, no matter what may come  
Through the mist, I've found the treasure  
Worth my life, the kingdom soon to come  

Face to face, no more alone  
I shall know, as I am known  
And with you, I am alive  
Lord with you, I am satisfied  
Across these fields, beyond the stars  
Above this pale, endless universe of ours  
Where dreams were born  
All mysteries unfold  
Where love is a person to behold.

Glenn Kaiser

"Across These Fields Reprise," *Lament*, Rez (Chicago 1990), used with permission.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why Clement of Alexandria, why \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \)?

Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford 1886) provides a good starting point for the study of Clement.\(^1\) From that time numerous studies were published setting the tone for Clementine research by focusing on theological and/or philosophical issues.\(^2\) While most scholars made mention of Clement's views on prayer, spirituality and even on his use of the Platonic term \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \),\(^3\) these were not the major issues they addressed. The opinion voiced by Bigg (*Christian Platonists*, p.98) on this concept held the day: Clement had a mystical side, but this aspect of early Christianity was not developed until Origen came along. Thus, Clementine studies continued to develop mainly along two lines: the theological/philosophical and the literary critical.\(^4\)

---

1 Bigg deals with Philo first, but his main concern was Clement and Origen. Bigg made use of the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library* (ANCL), ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh). This is the translation which I have principally used as well: *Clement of Alexandria*, ANCL 4 and 12 (Edinburgh 1867 and 1869), ET by William Wilson (full details in the bibliography). The Wilson translations are based on the PG series (ANCL 4, p.16), which now represents an inferior edition: Migne, J.P., *Patrologia Graeca* 8-9 (Paris 1857). Otto Suhrin’s critical edition in the *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* series (GCS) from 1905 (full details in the bibliography) made the Greek text more manageable and the Register (Band 4) in 1936 became perhaps the single most important research tool in the study of Clement of Alexandria.


3 The focus of this study is \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \), "primarily means looking at things, whether with the eyes or with the mind; in either sense it can be contrasted with doing things..." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F.L. Cross (3rd ed. by E.A. Livingstone), Oxford 1997, p.409. See our full discussion on the development of this term in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 What is Spirituality, or Mysticism?

We must address this question before moving on. After admitting that definitions are “hotly disputed,” Louth defines it as a “union with God, a union that is real, and therefore doubtless experienced.”

Williams refers to the concept in more wholistic terms;

‘Spirituality’ becomes far more than a science of interpreting exceptional private experiences; it must now touch every area of human experience, the public and social, the painful, negative, even pathological byways of the mind, the moral and relational world.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church states this in its definition on mysticism;

Psycho-physical phenomena, such as dreams, locutions, trances, visions, and ecstasies, have been frequent concomitants of mystical experience. But while these are recognised by Christian spiritual writers as possible accessories of true mystical insight, they are not held to be essential to it...

The problem, evidenced by this definition, is that there exists a wide range of what might be called “mysticism.” From the heart searching of Augustine to the negative theology of Psueo-Dionysius and the visions of Teresa of Avila:
“mysticism” comes in great variety. The definition offered above causes one to think of the extremes like seeing visions, hearing voices, falling into a trance, out of body experiences, and conversing with angels. But, there also seems to be a mystical faith which is not so extreme yet is quite different from the normal Christian experience. This kind of mysticism would include hearing an inner voice which would be attributed to God, or prayerful experiences which would be described as intimate and very personal. In addition to the more extreme description given above, *The Oxford Dictionary* also reports that mysticism is,

...an immediate knowledge of God attained in this present life through personal religious experience. It is primarily a state of prayer and as such admits of various degrees, from short and rare Divine ‘touches’ to the practically permanent union with God.  

Many believers speak of “epiphany” experiences: times where the senses are charged with the knowledge of the nearness of God. Perhaps a mystic would experience these times on a consistent basis.

Another aspect of this definition problem is that many are not comfortable with using the term “mysticism” and prefer “spirituality” instead. In his preface to Gregory’s *Life of Moses*, John Meyendorff states;

One wonders, however, whether this term is adequate in the context of Eastern Christian spirituality. To the Western mind, mysticism is associated with forms of subjective, individual and necessarily esoteric knowledge, which, by definition, cannot be communicated to all.

Meyendorff is correct when he says that “mysticism” is typically thought of as a form of esoteric knowledge which is beyond description. The method of gaining this knowledge is understood by many “mystics” to be a state beyond the senses.

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Meyendorff goes on to include the celebration of the Eucharist in the Eastern understanding of “mysticism.” Louth (see note 5) sees this same emphasis on the sacraments.
where the soul is in union with God, who is beyond description, and this is usually referred to as "contemplation," which is how θεωρία is usually translated.\textsuperscript{13}

Whether one speaks of "mysticism" or "spirituality," it is a concept not easily grasped or defined.\textsuperscript{14} When dealing with the "mystical" aspects of Christianity it seems satisfactory to use either term.\textsuperscript{15} Along with the dissatisfaction of terms is the difficulty of diversity and of those who attempt to make the spirituality of the Fathers synonomous with all sorts of modern versions. Wakefield responds to this by saying,

Christian spirituality may seem to suffer from an embarrassment of riches. Confused syncretism and retreat into 'pietistic' and bigoted sentimentality are both to be deplored.\textsuperscript{16}

I agree with Wakefield and Louth:\textsuperscript{17} the spirituality of the Fathers is quite a different thing from much of what passes as "spirituality" in our day. This leads to one final point concerning our study of Clement: the discussion about Christian mysticism or spirituality, certainly everything said thus far in this section, is mostly based on writers after Clement. Historically, as we will see in the following two sections, studies on Clement have neglected spirituality and studies on spirituality have neglected Clement. This study addresses this gap in research.

\textsuperscript{13} Many examples could be cited here: Gregory of Nyssa (\textit{Life of Moses} II.162-165); John of the Cross (\textit{The Dark Night of the Soul} I.9.7); John Cassian (\textit{Conferences} IX); Psuedo-Dionysius (\textit{Mystical Theology} I.1). Most dictionaries use 'contemplation' in the definition for 'mysticism' and/or 'spirituality': "As used here, mysticism refers to experiencing God in depth through contemplation and through a deep love relationship that transcends human reason," \textit{A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs}, ed. by David W. Bercot (Peabody, MA 1998), p.469.

\textsuperscript{14} For discussions of mysticism, other than the ones already mentioned, see Evelyn Underhill's \textit{The Mystic Way} (London 1914), Lossky, V., \textit{The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church}, 2nd ed. (London 1991); W.R. Inge, \textit{Mysticism in Religion} (London 1933).

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church} says as much, "All works on Christian spirituality are necessarily largely concerned with Mysticism," p.952 n.


\textsuperscript{17} Louth, Andrew, "Mysticism," \textit{WDCS} (Philadelphia 1983), pp.272-274.
1.1.2 Studies on Clement which undervalue the importance of $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$

Most studies on Clement note his use of $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$, but fail to discuss it in any significant way. Comments about his mysticism, spirituality or prayer almost always mention this Platonic category, but scholars either admit some difficulty in knowing exactly what Clement means by this term, or they simply do not discuss it. A few examples will suffice,

Clement's point of orientation is spiritual vision or contemplation, the $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$. For Clement, the aim of true dialectic... is to ascend to God...\(^{18}\)

And it seems, if you count all the doctrines of Clement's gnosis, that it is a charisma composed of access to superior vision, a certain contemplation ($\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$) of truth, a wiser intellectual knowledge of things, and in a sense, mystical...\(^{19}\)

He uses the word gnosis for various activities of spiritual life which are connected with each other, but culminate in the contemplation of God, of truth, etc. More than one investigator has made the complaint that Clement does not give a clear definition of such contemplation...\(^{20}\)

Wytzes compounds the difficulty by asserting a synonymous relationship between $\gamma\nu\sigma\iota\varsigma$ and $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$.\(^{21}\) We see that he is not alone: Mondésert,\(^{22}\) Völker,\(^ {23} \) and Daniélou\(^ {24} \) appear to do the same. We will see in our study that $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$ is certainly within Clement's system of $\gamma\nu\sigma\iota\varsigma$, but in order to understand the

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\(^{18}\) Van den Hoen (Clement-Philo, pp.67; 142-147).
\(^{19}\) Mondésert (Clément, p.111 n4).
\(^{20}\) Wytzes, J., "The Twofold Way: Platonistic Influences in the Work of Clement of Alexandria," Part II VC 14 (1960), pp.129-153; this citation, p.129. Other scholars (just to cite a few) who note $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$ without significant discussion: Butterworth, G.W., "The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria," JTS 17 (1916), p.159; Casey, R.P., "Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Platonism," HTR 18 (1925), pp.92-93; Hanson, R.P.C., Origen's Doctrine of Tradition (London 1954), "...he claims that the 'gnosis' handed on to the select few by the apostles assists $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$ (spiritual vision, or mystico-intellectual contemplation)," p.64; see also pp.71, 81-82. Chadwick, Early Christian Thought, "...a way of prayer in which the contemplative passes beyond verbal prayer to a purely mental act...", p.54. Daniélou, links $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$ completely with the ascent of the soul, (Gospel Message, pp.448-453).
\(^{21}\) Wytzes (II, p.129 n4).
\(^{22}\) Mondésert (Clément, p.111 n4).
\(^{23}\) Völker, p.316 n3.
\(^{24}\) Daniélou (Gospel Message, pp.447-448).
importance of this term for Clement we must isolate and investigate it. To conclude this section we will look more closely at just two studies which appear in all Clementine bibliographies, but which fail to go into enough detail in their discussion of this key term.

1. Völker

Völker's study of Clement covers the same ground of ethics, theology, and philosophy. He does however, offer one of the best studies on the spirituality of Clement. In his section on “The Permanent Vision of God” (pp.403-432) he introduces the reader to the various important Greek terms (pp.403-405), but his definitions and explanations are kept too brief. He rightly admits to difficulties along the way in understanding Clement’s thought, but often his work is more observation than analysis. One aspect of Völker’s study did set him apart from the scholarship up to his day: he says of Clement “that he does not speak only in theory, but from personal experience” (p.412), and thus Völker, against Bigg and Casey,25 sees Clement as one who experienced something more than an intellectual contact.26 Although Völker sees Clement as describing a real experience, “Clement is afraid of too close a proximity, he has...a vivid feeling that we basically only touch God’s periphery and that even the highest peaks of our prayers do not lead us much further.”(p.411) We will see in this study27 that

25 Bigg’s assessment that “Clement shrank from his own conclusions. Though the father of all the Mystics he is no Mystic himself. He did not enter the ‘enchanted garden’ which he opened for others,” (Christian Platonists, p.98) is based on a comparison with Origen. This is what many scholars do when looking at Clement. See Völker’s discussion on this point where he disagrees with both Bigg and Casey, pp.427ff.
26 This comes in a discussion (Völker, pp.424-432) which is more concerned with whether Clement knew passive or “infused” contemplation, a term Völker admitted “the old fathers do not know” (p.431).
27 Chapter Six, pp.276-277.
Völker has not given enough attention to this contact as revealed in *Strom.* VII.7. Nonetheless, this is a helpful study on prayer in Clement.

In the end it would be unfair to say that Völker “undervalues” θεωρία; more accurately, his study fails to fully explore Clement’s use of the term.

2. *Lilla*

Lilla’s study\(^{28}\) is another good example of the gap we find in the field of Clementine studies with respect to θεωρία. His study of γνώσις (pp.142-189) is full of valuable insights and cross references with various ancient texts, and he certainly makes the connection with θεωρία:

...from the theoretical point of view it [gnosis] mainly consists in the ideal of the contemplative life...The idea of *gnosis* appears therefore often in connection with, and is sometimes also expressed by, such terms as θεωρία, ἐποπτεία, θέα. (p.163)

Indeed, the translators consistently translate these three words in the same way — but a more thorough investigation of Clement’s use of these terms would have been helpful.\(^{29}\) Throughout the section on γνώσις important aspects of θεωρία and other categories are hurriedly presented with a multitude of textual support, but little interaction with any text.\(^{30}\) Lilla’s study is not specifically on θεωρία, so these criticisms may be unfair, but it does show the need for further investigation on this topic.

\(^{28}\) Lilla (*Clement* 1971). See note 4 for full details.

\(^{29}\) Again he notes that “ἐποπτεία and θεωρία cannot be separated...” (Ibid., p.163 n4).

\(^{30}\) An exception to this is his treatment of the Tabernacle text in *Strom.* V.6 which has a parallel in *Ex Theo.* 27, (Ibid., pp.173-181).
1.1.3 Studies on Spirituality which fail to discuss Clement adequately

When we look at studies which more fully discuss spirituality from the standpoint of later history we find that Clement's place is either wholly ignored or given a poor representation. The amount of general studies offered on spirituality are numerous, therefore we will look at only a few.

1. Two studies from the turn of the 20th century

Two general studies on mysticism which came out around the turn of the 20th century actually give Clement more credit than later studies we will note. Inge's assessment leans heavily upon Clement's use of terms which come from the Mystery religions; this is not an accurate method for reading Clement. He does adopt the imagery of the hierophant in the Eleusinian Mysteries leading the initiate into the brilliant light, but uses it to present the Christian faith. Nonetheless, Inge places Clement where he ought to be in the discussion of mysticism, between Philo and Origen (pp.86-89). I think Inge reads far too much into Clement's use of mystery language. As we will see in our study, there is much more to Clement's spirituality than this borrowed language conveys, or than Inge admits.

Underhill follows Bigg and Inge in her assessment of Clement, but also gives

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31 Only within the past 20 years has the term "spirituality" replaced "mysticism." Consequently, some of the studies we will mention use the latter term for what, for all practical purposes (at least for our purpose), is synonymous with the former. Even in 1899 W.R. Inge bemoans the use and misuse of "mysticism" and finally gives this definition, "Religious Mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realise the presence of the living God in the soul...the attempt to realise, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal," Christian Mysticism (London 1899), p.5 [emphasis original].


33 Inge's Appendix B (pp.349-355) should be consulted. It focuses on the Church's use of the Mystery Religions, but his discussion of Clement in the main text (pp.88-89) tends to revolve around this topic as well. See our discussion on Clement's use of this language, (§3.3, pp.104-105).

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him plenty of credit for his role in the development of Christian mysticism.\(^\text{35}\)

From these two scholars she takes up the discussion of the Mystery religions; she
follows Bigg by saying of Clement that “his witness to the mystical life-process is
rather that of a looker-on than of one who has indeed participated...”\(^\text{36}\) Underhill
does, however, credit Clement with being the first to isolate a threefold pathway of
ascent.\(^\text{37}\) She also gives him credit for his affirmations of contemplation, though
she (overly affected by Bigg, I think) misreads him on one crucial point,

Though for him the true \textit{gnosis} is still...something into which man must
grow...he holds out to the neophyte the promise of a more abundant
knowledge rather than a more abundant \textit{life}, [this] shows him to be already
affected by the oncoming tide of Neoplatonic thought. (p.283)

As we will see later (pp.217-237 and pp.258-260), this assessment completely
misses one of the most important driving forces in Clement’s system: the
\textit{gnostic}\(^\text{38}\) experiences \textit{Θεωρία} in space and time, and must be engaged in this life
with his fellow man.

2. \textit{Louth}

Andrew Louth’s study,\(^\text{39}\) referred to as “probably the best and most reliable
book in English on the appropriation and transformation by Christians of the
Platonic world of reference,”\(^\text{40}\) deserves this praise. Louth’s opening chapter is
“Plato,” followed by “Philo,” “Plotinus,” and “Origen.” He then covers larger
segments of history and movements until he devotes chapter VII to “Augustine.”

\(^\text{36}\) Ibid., p.282. She follows Bigg who says that Clement is “no Mystic” (\textit{Christian Platonists}, p.98).
\(^\text{37}\) Ibid., though the text she points to (Strom. I.27) is dubious, we must agree with her point. See the
discussion of Clement’s pathway in Chapter Four.
\(^\text{38}\) Clement refers to the true Christian as “gnostic.” This is done, in part, as a polemical device against
the heretical Gnostics. I will refer to Clement’s use as \textit{gnostic} (in italics) and the heretics as Gnostics
(with a capital letter).
\(^\text{40}\) Williams, Rowan, \textit{The Wound of Knowledge} (London 1990), p. 185.
The concept of contemplation is effectively traced through various ancient writers.

My criticism is with the absence of Clement. Origen is the starting point for Louth’s Christian mysticism. Clement is only mentioned in passing; he is not even credited with having been an influence in Origen’s system of thought. Louth has moved from Philo to Origen without even acknowledging Clement’s critical place in the history of Alexandrian Christianity!

Interestingly, Louth does bring Clement into the picture in his conclusion. He cites *Strom.* V.11.71 as an example of reduction and the abstraction from the senses. No doubt due to limited space, Louth has chosen to skip over Clement to the admittedly more influential Origen.

3. *Jones, Wainwright & Yarnold*

This voluminous work traces the history of Christian spirituality. Clement of Alexandria is featured in a chapter which we will discuss presently, but what I want to note here is that Clement is given only four pages. Origen gets about the same, while Augustine receives just over 10 pages. It is true, as Louth says in his opening comment on Augustine, “We probably know more about Saint Augustine than anyone else in late antiquity,” but more could have been said about both Clement and Origen. The Cappadocians are lumped together so that Gregory of Nyssa receives very little coverage, but the amount of space given to the Eastern tradition is generous. It is understandable that in a survey work of this nature some

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41 “He [Origen] was not a convert from philosophy like Justin Martyr or Clement of Alexandria, and he had none of their welcoming attitude towards philosophy...” (*Origins,* pp.53-54).
42 Ibid., p.194.
fathers/movements will not receive the coverage of others; this could also depend on the individual authors rather than an editorial decision meant to deny space to any particular Father. Let us now look specifically at the chapter on Clement.

Meredith’s treatment of Clement reflects the trend in scholarship which we observed at the beginning of this chapter. The sources listed reflect this philosophical/theological tendency; the only work on spirituality listed is Louth’s study, which we have seen falls short with regard to Clement. Meredith confirms our observation when he says of Clement’s works, “Paedagogus (the Tutor) and Stromateis (Miscellanies), offer a wide variety of instruction on ethical and theological subjects.”

Meredith almost completely misses the contemplative aspect of Clement’s work. In his second paragraph, commenting on Clement’s sources, Meredith mentions Plato, “whose contemplative ideal is perceptible in Str. vii” (p.112), but when he finally discusses Stromateis VII (the most spiritual part of Clement’s corpus!), he completely neglects the contribution which makes to Clement’s system. More, his analysis of Clement’s prayer scheme is disputable:

Clement seems to dispense with the need both for vocal and religious prayer... Above all there is an absence of any invitation to petitionary prayer or to the sacraments... there is little in Clement’s conception of perfect prayer to distinguish it from the private intellectual contemplation outlined by Plato in the Republic... 48

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46 Meredith, p.112 (emphasis mine).
47 Although all of the texts he cites in the remainder of his article come from Strom. VII, he succeeds in missing all 26 occurrences of θεοπλαστα. See Appendix I (p.296).
48 Meredith, p.115. Clement does strongly affirm silent prayer, but he also affirms vocal and religious prayer, Strom. VII.7.35,6; 40,4; 49.3-4. Clement certainly encourages petitionary prayer; Meredith cites Strom. VII.7.41,5 without acknowledging that this is the end of a polemical attack on those who hold “the doctrines about there being no necessity to pray...” Strom. VII.7.41,1. Strom. VII.12 is filled with encouragement for the gnostic to pray with and for others; see the discussion in §5.7.3 (pp.258-260). Though the sacraments are not fully discussed in Stromateis, Clement does not neglect them; see §4.2.3, pp.159-167. As for the comment on Clement’s prayer being no different from Plato’s contemplation in the Republic, the entirety of our study will show this to be wrong.
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This current study will attempt to give a more complete picture of the prayer and spirituality in the life of Clement's gnostic.

4. Williams

The approach to Clement in *The Wound of Knowledge*\(^4^9\) is very similar to that of Louth except that it focuses more on the inner struggles which might have directed the Fathers in their quest after God. The focus is on how they "attempted to articulate their vision of the Christian calling" (p.2) rather than specifically on their theology or philosophy (although Williams certainly addresses these concerns).

The treatment of Clement is far more balanced than in other studies we have mentioned.\(^5^0\) For example,

Clement's is by no means a static model. And, although the 'gnostic' enjoys a spiritual vision superior to that of other believers, this does not exempt him from sharing the worship and life of the community. (p.37)

The section on Clement is preceded by a short discussion of Philo and the importance of θεορία. (p.34) Williams rightly points out that Clement has a positive view of creation, "paradoxically, material goods can be enjoyed precisely because they are insignificant." (p.38) This relates to the role of discipline in Clement's spirituality and Williams could have done more to show its frugal, somewhat austere nature (best illustrated in *Paidagogus*). He accurately makes the point that what drives Clement is the illusory nature of this world, a Platonic concept.\(^5^1\) Overall, Williams rightly anchors the spirituality of Clement's gnostic

\(^{4^9}\) Initially published in 1979, see note 40.

\(^{5^0}\) It is easy to present Clement from only one angle (as Meredith does on Clement's prayer, see note 48 above) without consideration to the complexities of his thought.

\(^{5^1}\) I would agree with the Platonic/Stoic influence, but would also add that the NT is not devoid of this discipline towards worldly things, though motivating factors could be debated: Matt 6:16-21; Acts 13:2; Rom 14:17-21; 1 Tim 2:9,10; 6:6-10; 1 Pet 1:13; 1 John 2:15-16.
in space and time. The shortcoming of this study, like the others, is the lack of discussion of Clement’s idea of θεωρία and its place in his thought.

1.2 The Purpose of this Study

It becomes clear from the previous section, and my critique of the studies mentioned, that the purpose of this study is to examine Clement’s system of spirituality, if indeed he had a system. The first question asked was, ‘How prevalent is Clement’s use of the term θεωρία?’ Once it was determined that his use of this term was more than a casual one (he uses θεωρία more than 90 times in Stromateis), the next step was to examine his usage of the term to see if any patterns emerged. Because an extremely large percentage (around 96%) of the occurrences of θεωρία are in Stromateis, and because of the promise made in the opening chapter of that work to reveal an oral tradition, it was decided that this study would focus on that single work in Clement’s corpus.

An initial survey of texts from Stromateis indicated the possibility that Clement’s use of θεωρία is either the same, or very similar, to that of the later Fathers and is typically translated “contemplation.” From this point, the general direction was to study the spirituality in Stromateis using the θεωρία texts as the guide. Several questions gave impetus to the investigation: ‘Does Clement’s use of θεωρία anticipate what can be seen in later Fathers such as Origen and Gregory of Nyssa?’; ‘What are the background influences of his θεωρία?’; even the first cursory reading led to the question, ‘Is the immaterialist characteristic (which

52 The verb form (θεωρέω) also occurs, therefore all discussions and listings will be inclusive unless otherwise noted. See Appendix 1 (p.296) for the complete listing of θεωρία/θεωρέω and all variations.
53 A discussion of Clement’s works and the literary problems can be found in Chapter Four.
includes not only the abstraction from the senses, but other categories such as the ascent of the soul) the norm or the anomaly in his use?'; lastly, 'Does his use of θεωρία have any direction?', that is, 'Does he have a plan, a scheme, or some kind of system?' These questions dictated the plan of the study.

1.3 The Plan of This Study

Because the focus of this study revolves around Clement's use of the term θεωρία, I begin with a survey of literary witnesses to answer the question, 'Where did Clement learn his use of this word?' Thus, Chapter Two looks at the origins of θεωρία and how Clement uses the word compared to the major writers/sources prior to his time.

One possibility in the research of origins is that of an oral tradition. It has already been mentioned that the opening chapter of Stromateis helped determine the course of the study; Clement's claim in this chapter of a hidden oral tradition which he intended to reveal posits some interesting solutions to consider. This subject of esoteric oral traditions is a contentious one, but needs to be re-examined.

The next question which seemed to present itself was that of Clement's proposed plan. At the beginning of Paidagogus (I.1.1,3) he indicates that he has a plan; comments at the end of that same work (Paid. III.12.97,3-98,1) imply that Stromateis contains the more advanced teachings. If he had a plan and intended to reveal some special oral traditions, how might θεωρία fit into this plan? Thus, Chapter Four proposes that Clement did have a plan and followed it; his three main works (Protrepticus, Paidagogus and Stromateis) are meant to present a
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spiritual pathway and θεωρία is shown to be the final stage of that pathway.

The place of θεωρία in Clement’s plan had become clear in Chapter Four, but the nature of Clement’s θεωρία remained unclear. Thus, I insert Chapter Three to attempt an answer to the question, ‘What does Clement mean by θεωρία?’

A listing of characteristics was made from all of the θεωρία passages in Stromateis in order to isolate those aspects which were most frequent and most significant. These passages (along with their corresponding categories) were then carefully examined to determine the importance of both the passage itself, and the categories contained therein. Thus, Chapter Three identifies the categories which are critical in (and might define) Clement’s use of θεωρία. Somewhere during the research for this chapter (coupled with the conclusions drawn from Chapter Four) it became clear that Clement’s use of θεωρία was not haphazard and could be referred to as a system.

Because Clement had stated that Book VII would be his clearest explanation of the spiritual man, Chapter Five began as a simple review of this data. It became clear, however, that there were many important aspects of θεωρία which had not been recognised earlier. Thus, Chapter Five contains possibly the most important aspects of Clement’s system; he has paradoxically and masterfully, both hidden and revealed his teaching in clear and simple language. We see in this chapter how this conceal/reveal is the modus operandi for the whole work. In Strom. VII.7 he uses practical aspects of θεωρία to reveal the immanent God of the Christian faith.

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Finally, in Chapter Six I propose answers to many of the questions raised by this study, and address whether Clement's ὑποτύπωσις anticipates what was to become the full-fledged notion of contemplation in the later history of Christian spirituality.

1.4 Historical Background

At this point, a short biographical sketch might prove useful. Every writer works within a philosophical/cultural milieu; knowing that background makes it easier to understand the writer.

1.4.1 The man and his city

Almost everything we know about Clement comes from his own writings, given in bits and pieces rather than handed down in biographical style. We also glean some items of interest from Clementine fragments preserved by Eusebius. From his own historical chronology in Strom. I.21 we know Clement is writing in the reign of Septimius Severus. It appears that Clement studied under Pantaenus in a catechetical school of some kind, then became the teacher of the school. From the report of Eusebius he must have fled from Alexandria around 202, Origen taking up leadership of catechetical training shortly thereafter. It appears that Clement's writings were used as notes for teaching catechumens.

54 From Hypotyposeis: HE I.12,1-3; II.1,3-5; II.9,2; II.23,3; VI.13,1; 14,1-7; De Pascha: HE IV.26,4; VI.13,9.
55 He uses the death of Commodus as his terminal date, I.21.139,2; 139,5; 140,6-7; 144,3. Also, see Eusebius, HE VI.6,1.
56 HE V.10-11; VI.6,1; VI.11,6,VI.13,2. See the discussion on the catechetical school in Alexandria (§4.2.3, pp.159-167).
57 HE VI.3,1.
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Alexandria was one of the most important cities in the Roman world. 58 Because of its location at the mouth of the Nile it was a major exporter of grain, papyrus, glass and other products, thus an important centre of trade. 59 By the first century CE, the population of Alexandria is estimated at half a million. 60 From the middle of the second millennium BCE Alexandria had become known as a seat of higher learning, boasting possibly the greatest library of the era. 61 Housed in the temple of the Muses, it was the intention of the curators to have the best collection of ancient texts in the world. It was in Alexandria that the OT was first translated into Greek by seventy-two Jewish scholars in the second century BCE; this further enhanced the famous library. 62 This happened in part because Alexandria was home to the largest Jewish population outside of Palestine. 63

1.4.2 The influence of philosophy

Philosophy and religion were also important in this Greek city-state. We have an early witness to Platonism in the person of Eudorus. There is evidence in his writing of a vibrant philosophical tradition in Alexandria; Dillon concludes that

60 CAH X, pp.693-694.
61 Bell, pp.53-54; CAH VII-1, pp.73, 170-172; CAH X, p.700.
62 See Clement’s own account of this, Strom. I.22.148-149. Also, CAH VII-1, p.78. This translation became known as the Septuagent, the LXX.
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Eudorus must have learned his Platonism in Alexandria. The witness of Philo (cir. 20 BCE - 45 AD) reveals a Judaism which has absorbed Platonic thought for “the distinction between what is Greek...and what is Jewish or even original, is not in practice always easy to make.” Throughout this study the influence of both Plato and Philo on Clement will be acknowledged; here we simply want to mention the importance of Platonism in ancient Alexandria.

The influence of Stoicism was also significant: Philo’s ethics were basically Stoic and Clement follows his lead. Bigg comments on this influence,

[Clement’s] leading principle is the ζητεῖν κατὰ φύσιν of the Stoics...that pleasure as such is not to be desired by the Christian, and that to be ‘according to nature’ it must be strictly limited to the end which God intended.

Clement’s last exhortation before launching into the guidelines for daily living (Paidagогus II and III) is very similar to Zeno and Chrysippus,

Everything that is contrary to right reason is sin....But that which is done right, in obedience to reason, the followers of the Stoics call προσηκον and καθήκον, that is, incumbent and fitting.

Clement, however, clearly distinguishes the life of his gnostic from Stoicism in three ways: first, the soul is led into this discipline by Christ (Paid. I.7.53,3); secondly, the goal is not the disciplined lifestyle, but to become a gnostic, “perfect

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64 Dillon, John, Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220 (London 1977), p.115. Dillon tells us that little is known of Eudorus, in fact we cannot be certain of when he lived other than he must have written prior to Strabo (64 BCE - 19 AD) who cites him, Ibid.
66 Dillon (Middle Platonists, pp.146-155); Lilla has a good discussion on the Stoic nature of Clement’s ethics (Clement, pp.92-117). Also, Eusebius tells us Pantaenus was a Stoic, HE V.10.2.
67 Bigg (Christian Platonists, p.90 n1). A few other examples: Paid. II.1.1.3; 1.16.4.
68 Paid. I.13.101,1 and 102,1-2. See Lilla (Clement, pp.84-87) for discussion on this text.
[in] knowledge of the truth” (Paid. I.1.3,1); and thirdly, moderation of passion
(μετριοπάθεια) is replaced with the eradication of passion (ἀπάθεια). 69

In addition to the philosophical influences, there were two men, Basilides and
Valentinus, who seem to have had a huge influence on the development of
Christianity in second century Egypt. Because this study only touches the Gnostic
problem tangentially, we will be content to give only an overview here.

1.4.3 Gnosticism

Just how prevalent Gnosticism was in second century Egypt has been the focus
of debate; 70 there are indications that various sects existed, some more Gnostic
than others and some more Christian than Gnostic. Some of these sects are
witnessed to by various Gnostic texts such as the Gospel of the Egyptians and
The Gospel of Truth — curious mixtures of pseudo-Platonism, the mystery religions,
and biblical Christianity. Prior to Clement’s time a more orthodox Christianity
seems to have coexisted with these more Gnostic brands of Christianity. Two
important Christian Gnostics cannot be ignored: Basilides and Valentinus.

The account given by Irenaeus is the closest account we have of the doctrine of
Basilides. 71 Irenaeus is most concerned with his cosmological errors; Clement

69 Strom. III.7.57-59; VI.9 (entire chapter); also see Lilla’s discussion (Clement, pp.92-117). We will
discuss the concept of ἀπάθεια more fully in §3.2, pp.97-104.
70 Bauer, Walter, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, first English edition (London 1972),
pp.44-60, holds to the view that Gnosticism was the dominant feature of second century Egypt;
276). Birger Pearson points to their Christian sources in disagreement with Bauer’s position: Pearson,
Birger A. Pearson (Minneapolis 1991), pp.455-466. See also, Pearson, B.A., “Earliest Christianity in
Egypt: Some Observations,” in SAC: The Roots of Egyptian Christianity, edited by Pearson and
Goehring (Philadelphia 1986), pp.132-156. See also, Yamauchi, Edwin M., Pre-Christian Gnosticism
71 Pearson (“Pre-Valentinian Gnosticism,” p.461 n29). Irenaeus speaks of his system in Ad. Her. I.24,3-7
which has similarities with the Apocryphon of John in the Nag Hammadi corpus.
mentions him in every book of *Stromateis* in reference to many different topics.\(^{72}\) Basilides was active in Alexandria around 132-135 AD and left writings behind, most important his *Commentaries*, which Clement knew and used.\(^{73}\) Although Clement cites and disagrees with Basilides, the citations are not always for the purpose of disagreement.\(^{74}\)

There is perhaps more to say on Clement’s interaction with Valentinus. He was active in Alexandria between 117-138 AD, then he went to Rome (cir. 136-140) where he became involved in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.\(^{75}\) Ultimately there was controversy over his teachings and he disappears from the scene.\(^{76}\)

Another item which forces more attention on Valentinus is the treatise attributed to him, a sermon, *The Gospel of Truth*. Here is Layton’s introduction to this document,

*The Gospel of Truth* is a Christian sermon on the theme of salvation by acquaintance with god (*gnosis*). One of the most brilliantly crafted works of ancient Christian literature, in the original Greek it must have had a rhetorical power that ranked with the great masterpieces of Christian prose.\(^{77}\)

In this brief overview we want to make just a few observations: first, there are

\(^{72}\) *Strom.* I.21.146,1; II.3.10,1-3; 6.27,2; 8.36,1; 20.112,1; 20.113,2-3; III.1.1,1; 1.4,1; IV.12.81,1; 12.83,2-84,1; 12.86,1; 13.89,4; 24.153,4; 25.162,1; 26.165,3; V.1.4,2-3; 11.74,3-4; VI.6.53,2; VII.17.106,4; 17.108,1.

\(^{73}\) Layton, Bentley, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (New York 1987), pp.417-418. Layton has isolated the only fragments we have from Basilides in this text, seven of which come from Clement, pp.427-444.


\(^{76}\) Epiphanius, *Haer.* XXXI.7,1-2; *Adv. Haer.* III.4,3; III.15,2. Lietzmann holds to this testimony as evidence that Valentinus was forced to leave Rome (II, pp.287-288), however Layton holds the more accepted view discounting the evidence of Epiphanius and Irenaeus, (*The Gnostic Scriptures*, pp.220-221).

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Platonist borrowings in Valentinus.\(^{78}\) Secondly, it is basically Christian, alluding to, but modifying various biblical passages to suit his own theological perspective.\(^{79}\) This subtle erroneous usage of biblical text is precisely why the Valentinians were regarded as dangerous opponents of the orthodox. Clement becomes a valuable witness to the teachings of Valentinus because, as with Basilides, he does not always disagree with him.\(^{80}\)

As with Basilides, Clement refers to Valentinus (or his followers) numerous times throughout *Stromateis* and in *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, a document dedicated to disputing with the teachings of the Valentinians.\(^{81}\) Of the many Valentinian issues which Clement addresses, the tripartite division of mankind concerned him most. There were basically three kinds of people to Valentinus: those who were basically earthly (*somatics*), those whose nature was soulish (*psychics*) to which belonged the “orthodox,” and the truly spiritual ones (*pneumatics*) — the Valentinians.\(^{82}\) It seems clear that Clement’s designation for the truly pious Christian, the *gnostic*, is a rhetorical device used against the Valentinians, whom he calls “these falsely named [gnostics]” (οἱ ψευδόνυμοι).\(^{83}\) We will see in later discussion that Clement engages in polemics against this *psychic/pneumatic* position in at least two key texts: *Paid.* I.6 and *Strom.* V.6.

In our study of *Stromateis* we can never completely forget about the struggle

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\(^{78}\) See Dillon’s discussion, (*Middle Platonists*, pp.384-389). Layton thinks he must have been familiar with Philo, (*The Gnostic Scriptures*, p.217).

\(^{79}\) Layton (*The Gnostic Scriptures*, p.251).

\(^{80}\) See note 74.

\(^{81}\) *Strom.* II.3.10,2; 8.36,2; 20.114,3; III.1.1,1; 4.29,3; 7.59,3; 13.92,1; 17.102,3; IV.9.71,1; 13.89,1; V.1.4,3; VI.6.52,3; VII.17.106,4; 17.108,1; *Ex. Theo.* 2.1; 6.2; 16; 17.2; 21.1; 23.1; 24.1; 25.1; 28; 37.

\(^{82}\) See *Strom.* II.3.10,1-2; IV.13.93,1; see also Chadwick’s discussion (*Alexandrian*, pp.32-33).

\(^{83}\) *Strom.* IV.4.17,4. Here Clement is referring to the Valentinian view on martyrdom. His use of *psuedo* is an allusion to 1 Tim. 6:20.
against the Gnostics. Clement always keeps one eye on the “pseudo-gnostics” as he attempts to show that his gnostic is the only truly pious man.

1.5 Methodology and Presentation

1.5.1 Patristic Testimony

My methodology for this study has been fairly straightforward: to try, whenever possible, to accept Clement at face value. When he says he has a plan, I have looked for it to unfold. When he says he intends to include a secret oral tradition within the pages of his work, I have not immediately dismissed him, but have looked for evidence of this tradition. When he has stated his intention to hide this teaching so that the unlearned will not find it, I have tried not to be frustrated with the difficulty of manoeuvering through his work; instead, I have watched for the subtle ways he might be carrying out his announced plan.

Our best historical data are the writings of the Fathers themselves even if their testimony is often our only evidence. I have already mentioned some of the issues which we will face in Stromateis, but there are others: the evidence given by Clement on the beginnings of Christianity in Egypt along with the evidence of Eusebius on the school in Alexandria. Another issue is the Eusebian testimony on the number of books and the layout of Stromateis. Along the way we will look at these and other questions; I will give the patristic evidence due weight as primary sources as well as making full use of modern scholarship on each subject.

One last comment needs to be made concerning Clement’s understanding of the biblical text: he refers to 14 NT epistles as Pauline, including Hebrews!
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.5.2 The Text of *Stromateis*

This will be a text based study on Clement’s use of θεοφίλα in *Stromateis*. I will use writings from other parts of the Clementine corpus, but my focus is on *Stromateis*. Because of the difficult nature of *Stromateis*, it is not uncommon for scholars to retrieve numerous bits of data from other works to explain a text. I will do this sparingly, but my first course of action will be to exegete *Stromateis*. It is my opinion that *Stromateis* is written purposefully, with a plan; therefore, an important part of my exegesis has been contextual.

Another aspect of dealing with texts has been the use of Stählin’s Register. In all searches I have endeavored to list only the texts which were relevant (some have required comment), therefore some listings are not exhaustive; the majority of listings only give the references from *Stromateis*. The reader will recognise that I do not typically give these listings without comment; too many studies misuse occurrences in Clement without fully appreciating how he does not always use a word or phrase consistently. I have tried to avoid this mistake.

1.5.3 Presentation

I have included numerous citations of text from *Stromateis* (in translated form) throughout the study. For those who are familiar with Clement these might be a distraction, but I have done this to allow the reader to follow my thought without the necessity of looking up every citation.

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84 *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller: Clemens Alexandrinus*, Band I-IV.1 (see bibliography for full details) has been my critical edition; this reference is to Register, Band 4 (Leipzig 1936). In all citations of Clement I will give the Book, chapter, and section numbers where appropriate (for example, *Strom*. 1.3.2,3). This will enable the reader to consult either Stählin or the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition.

85 As was mentioned in note 1, I am using the ANCL translation by Wilson which is based on the Migne edition. In most cases Wilson provides an adequate translation which is fairly representative of the
Also, I refer to chapters within *Stromateis* as units. The division into chapters did not come about until the Lowth/Potter edition of 1715. Méhat has demonstrated that Clement does divide the work by using κεφάλαια, but his analysis shows that these "headings" do not coincide with our chapters. These things understood, I refer to movements within *Stromateis* which can be generally located in the chapters; the exceptions will be noted.

1.6 The Thesis

My thesis is that Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromateis* marks an important, though often overlooked, stage in the development of Christian spirituality. Clement presents for the first time a synthesis of the Platonic concept of θεωρία with NT spirituality. I intend to show that the presentation of the third stage in a spiritual pathway is Clement’s primary reason for writing *Stromateis*; thus *Stromateis* is to be read as the continuation of a threefold work, following *Protrepticus* and *Paidagogus*. Therefore, the θεωρία system contained within *Stromateis* is of primary importance for understanding this enigmatic work. I will also show that θεωρία, in addition to an immaterialist aspect, includes a practical spirituality; Clement’s gnostic interacts with an immanent God in space and time.

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improved GCS edition. Where I have noted a Greek word or phrase it comes from the GCS unless noted otherwise. In rare exceptions I have used a translation other than the ANCL; these are duly noted.


87 See Méhat’s summary of these divisions, pp.276-279.
CHAPTER TWO
THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN θεωρία

Our thesis, that Clement represents the first literary witness to the contemplative spirituality tradition in the Early Church, begs a couple of questions: Where did he get this tradition? From whom did he inherit these ideas? Or, was he the originator of this tradition? There are two lines of investigation which we will pursue for an answer: a survey of the word, θεωρία, and secondly, Clement’s own claim that he is not the originator of this teaching, but merely a recipient of an established tradition handed down to him by others. This view has been disputed; we will examine one representative study. It has been suggested by others that a non-Pauline, non-Petrine tradition existed among the Hellenistic Jews of the first century; we intend to show that this was the tradition which Clement inherited, what we will call a “minority apostolic tradition.” We will also examine Clement’s concept that Truth always has a hidden element, which he manifests as well. Finally, we will look at some evidence which shows that Clement links θεωρία to his tradition.

In order to understand and fully appreciate Clement’s use of θεωρία, we must first understand the development of the word. We will trace the use of θεωρία through Clement; we will concentrate our efforts on two writers: Plato and Philo, who we will see greatly influenced Clement. We will then be able to more fully understand and appreciate Clement’s use of the word.

1 The verb form (θεωρέω) consistently occurs with much the same meaning, therefore all discussion and listings will be inclusive of all variations unless otherwise noted.
2.1 The Development of θεωρία as a Concept

The writings of Aeschylus are the first recorded usage of θεωρία; he uses the word to mean "to view something."² From the ancient writers, Plato is the first to use θεωρία in any significant way and with him the word began to take on new meaning.³ Several times he uses the word simply as "to look upon," or to "gaze upon," or "to look at intently."⁴ However, he then uses the word to indicate "looking" in a figurative sense; "to think about something in depth," or "to study" (he also uses βλέπω and θεάσθαι in the same sense).⁵ In addition to these, he also uses θεωρία for what we would call "scientific investigation." This is the majority use given the word by Aristotle as well.⁶ This represents an important step in the development of the word (one which Clement will follow), therefore we will look at one example of this usage in a text. The passage comes from Timaeus. Timaeus is giving his explanation of cosmogony in which he has just explained the basic elements and the numerous combinations of them.

These, then, are the causes of the making of the uncompounded primary bodies. But whereas there are several varieties within their kinds, the reason of this is to be found in the structure of either unit, to wit that God did not in the beginning create either triangle of one magnitude only; he made them greater and lesser, and the number of these differences is the same as that of the varieties within the kinds. Hence the endless complexity of their combinations with themselves and each other, which

² Michaelis, W., in TDNT 5, Friedrich, Gerhard, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids 1983), pp.315-382; this citation, p.318. θεωρία comes from the root ὑπόθεω, "to be aware of." Homer never uses a derivative of θεωρέω (Ibid., p.318 n20). He does use θεάσθαι, but this is not anything like the later use in Plato for "seeing" with the mind, (Ibid. p.322 n42).
³ Ibid., pp.321-322.
⁴ Republic I.327B; V.467A; 467C; VII.529B; VII.537A; VIII.556C; X.606B; Phaedrus 247C; 276B-D, just to give a few examples. I am mainly using Republic (Rep. hereafter) because it has the most occurrences for our word study. The Greek text I am using for all of Plato's works cited is by Ioannes Burnet, Platonis Opera, Vol. I-IV, Oxonii, 1905. The various English translations are listed in the bibliography.
⁵ Michaelis, p.321. θεωρία, or θεωρέω, used for "to study." Rep. II.372E; VI.511C; (X.601A θεωρέω is used to speak of "judging" between two options).
⁶ Clark, p.28.
must consequently be contemplated (θεωροῦς) by him who is to discourse of nature with probability.7

Here Plato describes “seeing” something abstract, the Ideas.8 Thinking deeply about mathematics or other sciences is the preparation for “studying the ultimate unseen reality.”9 This is an intellectual contemplation using the mind. A passage from Book VII of Republic is a good one to prepare us for the discussion of Plato and θεωρία,

‘...instead of the vulgar utilitarian commendation of astronomy, for which you just now rebuked me, Socrates, I now will praise it on your principles. For it is obvious to everybody, I think, that this study certainly compels the soul to look upward and leads it away from things here to those higher things.’ ‘It may be obvious to everybody except me,’ said I, ‘for I do not think so.’ ‘What do you think?’ he said. ‘As it is now handled by those who are trying to lead us up to philosophy, I think that it turns the soul’s gaze very much downward.’ ‘...for apparently if anyone with back-thrown head should learn something by staring at decorations on a ceiling, you would regard him as contemplating them with the higher reason and not with the eyes. Perhaps you are right and I am a simpleton. For I, for my part, am unable to suppose that any other study turns the soul’s gaze upward than that which deals with being and the invisible. But if anyone tries to learn about the things of sense, whether gaping up or blinking down, I would never say that he really learns — for nothing of the kind admits of true knowledge’...‘these sparks that paint the sky, since they are decorations on a visible surface, we must regard, to be sure, as the fairest and most exact of material things; but we must recognize that they fall far short of the truth...’10

2.1.1 Plato’s use of θεωρία

Plato also uses θεωρέω to mean “to contemplate,” or “to penetrate beyond the senses.”11 Of over twenty occurrences of the word in Plato, only three or four

7 Timaeus 57c-d. I have used the translation of Taylor, A.E., Plato: Timaeus and Critias (London 1929).
8 See Louth (Origins, pp.8-12). This “seeing” the abstract occurs in Symposium 210d.
11 See Rep. VI.486A; VII.517D; Phaedrus 247d.
point to this concept of contemplation, therefore it is clear that this usage is the minority one. Yet the passages where he means “contemplation” in this incorporeal sense are critical ones. We will consider only one, possibly the most important, Plato’s explanation of the cave analogy,\(^\text{12}\)

‘...the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good....and do not be surprised that those who have attained to this height are not willing to occupy themselves with the affairs of men, but their souls ever feel the upward urge and the yearning for that sojourn above....do you think it at all strange,’ said I, ‘if a man returning from divine contemplations (\(\theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\omega\nu\)) to the petty miseries of men cuts a sorry figure and appears most ridiculous, if, while still blinking through the gloom, and before he has become sufficiently accustomed to the environing darkness, he is compelled in courtrooms or elsewhere to contend about the shadows of justice or the images that cast the shadows...[with] those who have never seen justice itself?’\(^\text{13}\)

This passage sums up Plato’s philosophical system: the “seeing” of “higher things,” and secondly, trying to help others “see.” The quest for “higher things” dominates the writings of Plato,

It could be argued that mystical theology, or perhaps better, a doctrine of contemplation, is not simply an element in Plato’s philosophy, but something that penetrates and informs his whole understanding of the world.\(^\text{14}\)

The Republic, which opens with an old man’s remarks about approaching death and apprehension of what may come after death, and ends with a myth of judgment, has all through for its central theme a question...How does a man attain or forfeit eternal salvation? For good or bad, it is intensely “other-worldly.”\(^\text{15}\)

We see by these few examples and by the context of Plato’s writings (being saturated with discussion of perceiving the unseen realities with the mind) that the meaning of \(\theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) is moving towards abstraction. It is correctly argued that when Plato speaks of “higher things” he means not something abstract, but something

\(^{12}\) Rep. VII.514-517.

\(^{13}\) Rep. VII.517B-C.

\(^{14}\) Louth (Origins, p.1).

\(^{15}\) Taylor, pp.265-266.
very real, more real than what is seen.\textsuperscript{16} This would be a correct reading of this passage on the cave,

\begin{quote}
Even so this organ of knowledge must be turned around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, like the scene-shifting periact in the theatre, until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being. And this, we say, is the good...\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Plato also demands that once this “reality” has been observed the true philosopher must then put action into his understanding by helping others who have not yet seen “the Good.”\textsuperscript{18} From the standpoint of the world of senses, however, Plato’s use of \textit{\theta\epsilon\omega\pi\alpha} is moving towards abstraction, contemplating the unseen reality beyond the world of senses. The next writer we look at will take this concept from Plato and develop it further.

\textbf{2.1.2 Philo of Alexandria and \textit{\theta\epsilon\omega\pi\alpha}}

Philo is unique in the history of the Church: though Jewish, his works survived only because of the early Christian Fathers.\textsuperscript{19} He is also unique because he bridges the gap between the Greek philosophical tradition (Plato) and Christianity,

The scholarly discussion over whether Philo is primarily Jewish or Greek is actually misguided. In Philo’s time much Judaism was significantly Hellenized. Philo’s commitment to and passion for the law of Moses was genuine and controlling. Philo, too, drank deeply at the philosophical well of the Platonic tradition and saw it as strengthening and deepening his understanding of the God of Moses.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} This concept even precedes Plato. Fritz, von K., “NOOS and NOEIN in the Homeric Poems,” CPh 38 (1943), pp.79-93. Fritz shows how \textit{\nuo\omicron\nu} carries a sense of vision and perception in Homeric poems, “...we have a \textit{\nuo\omicron\nu} which sees or is aware of things which are not present in such a way that we can see them with our bodily eyes...a mental vision, which not only penetrates deeper but also ‘sees farther’ both in space and time...” (p.91). Sullivan, Shirley Darcus, “NOOS and Vision: Five Passages in the Greek Lyric Poets,” SO 63 (1988), pp.7-17, gives support to Fritz’ study.

\textsuperscript{17} Rep. VII.518C-D.

\textsuperscript{18} Rep. VII.519D.


\textsuperscript{20} Yonge, C.D., \textit{The Works of Philo}, (updated edition) with introduction by David M. Scholer (Peabody, Mass. 1993), p.xiii. All citations of Philo come from this work and will be cited using the standard Latin name/abbreviation. The Greek text which I have used is the Loeb edition (full details in bibliography).
Clement is highly dependent upon Philo,\textsuperscript{21} though he rarely cites him by name, he refers to him over 275 times.\textsuperscript{22} In addition to his usage of \textit{θεωρία}, Philo is also important in this discussion because of the size of his corpus, his Alexandrian origin, and his place in Middle Platonism.\textsuperscript{23} It is obvious why we must trace the use of \textit{θεωρία} through him. However, before we investigate Philo's use of \textit{θεωρία} we should take a quick look at his Scripture, the LXX.\textsuperscript{24}

\subsection*{2.1.3 The LXX and \textit{θεωρία}}

There are only a few examples of \textit{θεωρία} in the LXX.\textsuperscript{25} All of the occurrences are translated "to look at," or "to gaze at" except Daniel 7:2 which is the prophet "seeing" in a dream or vision. \textit{θεωρία} occurs only a few times and is meant as a "sight or spectacle" each time. Furthermore, \textit{θεωρία} never occurs in the Pentateuch, yet the Pentateuch represents over 95% of Philo's scriptural quotations.\textsuperscript{26} Philo's use (this applies to Clement as well) of \textit{θεωρία} is not influenced by the LXX.

\subsection*{2.1.4 Development from Plato to Philo}

We have a similar usage of \textit{θεωρία} in Philo as in Plato, but we see further movement away from physical "seeing" towards abstract contemplation. Philo uses \textit{θεωρία} 57 times;\textsuperscript{27} not once does he use the word for sense perception (he

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{22} See Stahlin (Band IV.1 , pp.47-49).
\textsuperscript{24} Armstrong, \textit{Cambridge History}, p.137.
\textsuperscript{26} Using Yonge's index, pp.913-918.
\textsuperscript{27} Michaelis (TDNT 5, p.335).
\end{flushright}
prefers ὑπόσκω and βλέπω). Θεωρία is used for both the scientific thinking about data (as opposed to προσέξει), and for spiritual "seeing." Unfortunately, most of the texts which seem significant for our purpose simply use the word without much context or explanation; Philo expects the reader to understand the meaning. We can illustrate Philo's usage however, with the following text which does give us some indication,

But the light of the mind is wisdom; as, on the contrary, the darkness of the soul is folly. For what the light discernible by the outward senses is to the eyes, that is knowledge to reason with a view to the contemplation (Θεωρία) of incorporeal things discernible only by the intellect, the light of which is continually shining and never extinguished.

This text and the others which give no explanation can be better understood by the following two texts;

This then is the sense in which we must understand this passage; he led the mind forth into the outermost place, for what was the use of his leaving the body and fleeing to the outward senses... For it is fitting that the mind which is about to be led forth, and to be dismissed in freedom should be emancipated from all corporeal necessities, from all the organs of the outward senses, from all sophistical ratiocinations, and plausible persuasions, and last of all from itself.

...the contemplation of God himself and of his most sacred powers, are quite sufficient for a man who is fond of contemplation... When, therefore, the mind walks abroad among the affairs of the ruler of the universe, it requires nothing further as an object of contemplation, since the mind alone is the most piercing of all eyes as applied to the objects of the intellect...

Here we see the role of νοῦς clearly described; this takes us fully into the realm of intellectual contemplation and away from bodily senses. Then the well-known

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28 For scientific thinking: Agr. 12; Congr. 11, 16, 17, 20, 23, 46, 49; Spec. Leg.I. 176, 269; Mos. 66; Vit. Cont. 64, 90. For clear references to "contemplation:" Leg. All. III.141; Mig. 70, 72-80; Mos. II.69; Vit. Cont. 1, 11-13.
29 Armstrong (Cambridge History, p.144).
30 Spec. Leg. 1.288.
31 Leg. All. III.41.
32 Mig. 76, 77.
CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN θεορία

treatise *De Vita Contemplativa* (*On the Contemplative Life*) is devoted to the description of a community which practices “the speculative life” (θεορία). The passage in Sections 10-13 is an important one,

...I am speaking here not of the sight of the body, but of that of the soul, by which alone truth and falsehood are distinguished from one another. But the therapeutic sect of mankind, being continually taught to see without interruption, may well aim at obtaining a sight of the living God, and may pass by the sun, which is visible to the outward sense, and never leave this order which conducts to perfect happiness...they who apply themselves to this kind of worship...are carried away by a certain heavenly lore...[they have] desire for an immortal and blessed existence, thinking that their mortal life has already come to an end they leave their possessions to their sons or daughters...for it followed of necessity that those who have acquired the wealth which sees, as if ready prepared for them, should be willing to surrender that wealth which is blind to those who themselves also are still blind in their minds.

*Vit. Cont.* gives us a very practical definition of what Philo means by θεορία. It must be mentioned here that *Vit. Cont.* also includes an important section where the Therapeutai incorporate bodily response in their practice of θεορία.34

2.1.5 Conclusions on Philo

From the information above, we can conclude three things about Philo’s use of θεορία: first, his usage basically follows Plato, sometimes meaning simply “to look at,” but other times “seeing” with the eye of the soul, or the νοος. Secondly, he is not following the usage in the LXX and therefore this understanding does not flow from his Judaism, but from his Platonism. Thirdly, he represents further movement away from physical “seeing,” towards something else, a spiritual contemplation, illustrated by the Therapeutai.

33 *Vit. Cont.* 1.
34 *Vit. Cont.* 66.5-12; 84.2-4. See §5.4, pp.216-217.
2.1.6 θεορία and the New Testament

As we continue our study of θεορία we should look at one more possible link in the chain leading to Clement — the New Testament. Clement cites the apostle Paul (and the NT) more than any other writer (or document). As with the LXX, the NT mainly uses θεορία as “to look at” or “to behold.” Θεορέω is used 58 times; there are only two instances where the word is used for a purpose other than “to see,” (Hebrews 7:4 and John 14:17). Both of these verses speak of “seeing” in a figurative sense. θεορία is used only once (Luke 23:48) and is used more in the classical sense, referring to a spectacle.

It is clear that θεορία in the NT follows the usage in the LXX and is not in the trajectory which Plato and Philo represent. We have two more sources to investigate before we look at Clement: the Apostolic Fathers and the writings of the Gnostics.

2.1.7 The Apostolic Fathers

We need to look at what is now known as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Clement quotes from several works which come to us in this corpus: the Epistle of Barnabas, 1 Clement, The Shepherd of Hermas, the letters of Ignatius, and the letter of Polycarp To the Philippians. Our key term, θεορία, never occurs in these writings. Derivatives of θεορέω occur five times, all but one as “seeing” in the

35 From Stählin (Band IV.1): Clement refers to Plato over 600 times (90 from Rep.), pp.50-53; over 275 times he refers to Philo, pp.47-49. Though his citations of these two authors combined is close to 900 times, this does not equal his citations to the Apostle Paul (1273 times), pp.18-24. See Van den Hoek, VC 50 (1996), p.240 n44,45,51. I have not bothered to count his NT references in full, but a quick look at Stählin’s Register would confirm that no “document” comes close.
38 Ibid., p.81. A few of the passages with θεορέω are similarly used; Mark 5:38; John 7:45 and Acts 9:7.
physical sense.\textsuperscript{40} It is clear that the use in this corpus follows the pattern of the LXX and NT rather than that of the literary trajectory in which Clement belongs.

\textbf{2.1.8 The Nag Hammadi texts}

\textit{Θεόρησε} is used around 20 times in the NH texts.\textsuperscript{41} It becomes clear upon reading these texts that there is little affinity with what we have seen in Philo and maybe a bit more with Clement. There is one example, perhaps the only occurrence of consequence for our purpose here, from \textit{The Teachings of Silvanus},

Furthermore, I shall speak of what is more exalted than this: the mind, with respect to actual being, is in a place, which means it is in the body; but with respect to thought, the mind is not in a place. For how can it be in a place when it contemplates (\textit{Θεόρησε}) every place?\textsuperscript{42}

This text has similarities with Clement; but \textit{Silvanus} is not considered a Gnostic text. In fact, it comes from the same Alexandrian Christian background. Most of the occurrences of \textit{Θεόρησε} in the Gnostic texts refer to the beatific “vision,” the moment of revelation usually connected to the ascent of the soul into the higher heavenly levels (see §3.5, pp.121-136). We will see in Chapter Three that Clement does share some words/concepts with the Gnostics, but we will also see that his system is quite different. We also note that \textit{Θεόρησε} occurs most similarly in texts with an Alexandrian provenance.\textsuperscript{43} For now we simply note that the Gnostic use of \textit{Θεόρησε} seems to be in the same trajectory as that of Clement.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 1 Clem 16:16; 35:8; Tral 1:1; Mag 6:1; Mar 2:2. In \textit{Trallians} 1:1 Ignatius uses \textit{Θεόρησε} in a figurative sense, as he “beholds” the Trallian community in his mind’s eye.
\textsuperscript{41} Siegert, Folker, \textit{Nag Hammadi Register}, WUNT 26 (Tübingen 1982), p.182.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Silvanus} VI.99, 22-28. All references from the NH texts come from J.M. Robinson, \textit{The Nag Hammadi Library in English} (Leiden 1977). Unless otherwise noted, all citations from this edition will be referred to as NHLE and will list the codex number, page and line. See Zandee, J., “\textit{The Teachings of Silvanus}” and \textit{Clement of Alexandria} (Leiden 1977) for a comparative study of \textit{Silvanus} with Clement.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Discourse of the Eighth and Ninth} VI.56, 27; 59, 16; 59, 27; \textit{The Teachings of Silvanus} VII.97,14; 99,28.
\textsuperscript{44} We will see in §5.6.4 (pp.253-255) that \textit{The Discourse of the Eighth and Ninth} (NH VI.6) also shares this concept and has been addressed by Segelberg, Eric, “Prayer among the Gnostics? The evidence of
2.1.9 Clement of Alexandria and \( 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which directs the inquiry of this study. These texts include the abstraction from the senses, the ascension of the believer into the heavenlies, and experiencing the beatific vision of God.\textsuperscript{46} In addition to these clear spiritual contemplation texts, many of the 40+ texts where the meaning is not clear point in this direction as well. We will investigate these and other aspects of Clement’s θεωρία in our next chapter and throughout this study. The overwhelming evidence is that Clement wants to move the reader beyond the intellectual θεωρία to some kind of spiritual contemplation.

As with Plato and Philo, Clement sometimes uses θεωρία without explanation; he assumes the reader will either know what he is talking about or he wants it to remain hidden if the reader is ignorant.\textsuperscript{47} More than our other authors, however, Clement gives us several passages which help to explain and define what he means by θεωρία. We will begin with a passage which is fairly paradigmatic;

“For both is it a difficult task to discover the Father and Maker of this universe; and having found Him, it is impossible to declare Him to all. For this is by no means capable of expression, like the other subjects of instruction,” says the truth-loving Plato. For he heard right well that the all-wise Moses, ascending the mount for holy contemplation (τὴν ὀργάνην θεωρίαν), to the summit of intellectual objects, necessarily commands that the whole people do not accompany him. And when the Scripture says, “Moses entered into the thick darkness where God was,” this shows to those capable of understanding, that God is invisible and beyond expression by words.\textsuperscript{48}

First, we notice Clement’s quotation of Timaeus\textsuperscript{49} by “the truth-loving Plato.”

\textsuperscript{46} Strom. IV.25.155.4; V.2.14.2; V.11.67.1 (the whole of chapter 11 really) and VI.14.108,1 just to list a few which speak most clearly on these particular topics. See our discussion of how Clement makes this distinction using the same text in different ways, §4.3.3 (pp.177-184); also, §6.3 (pp.271-276).

\textsuperscript{47} I.1.15.1; VII.18.110.4. See §2.4-2.5 (pp.72-84) for the discussion of the hidden nature of Stromateis.

\textsuperscript{48} Strom. V.12.78.1-3.

\textsuperscript{49} Timaeus 28c. This text is also cited in Strom. V.14.92.3 and Protrepticus VI.68.1. See Daniélou (Gospel Message, pp.107-114) for a discussion of the patristic use of this text. See also, Dillon, John, “The Riddle of the Timaeus: Is Plato Sowing Clues?”, in Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition: Essays Presented to John Whittaker, ed. by Mark Joyle (Aldershot, UK 1997), pp.25-42 and The Golden
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This reinforces what we have previously mentioned: Clement openly acknowledges Plato’s influence in a very positive way, specifically in his understanding of θεωρία. Next, we see that he is using Moses as his example; clearly influenced by Philo, Clement sees great spiritual depth in the illustration of Moses ascending the mountain. The idea of incorporeality also has a part in Clement’s θεωρία as the following passage shows,

Now the sacrifice which is acceptable to God is unswerving abstraction from the body and its passions ... For he who neither employs his eyes in the exercise of thought, nor draws aught from his senses, but with pure mind itself applies to objects, [this man] practises the true philosophy. This is, then, the import of the silence of five years prescribed by Pythagoras, which he enjoined on his disciples; that, abstracting themselves from the objects of sense, they might with the mind alone contemplate (ἐποπτεύοντες) the Deity. It was from Moses that the chief of the Greeks drew these philosophical tenets.

Although this passage does not contain θεωρία, it follows a text where “mystic contemplation” (ἡ ἐποπτευκή θεωρία) is named as “the comprehension of the divine power and essence.” (V.10.66,2) We will see in our next chapter (§3.4, pp.114-121) that ἐποπτεύοντες is very closely related to our key term, being used by Clement either synonymously with, or to strengthen θεωρία.

We see that Clement’s use of θεωρία follows, and builds upon, Plato and Philo in that he aims to focus the reader on “seeing” with more than the physical eyes. An abstraction from the body, the passions, even the senses, is part of what θεωρία means for Clement. In the next chapter we will consider many of Clement’s


50 See Van den Hoek (Clement, pp.150-152; 174-176) on this text; also pp.116,117; 142,143 for discussion of the ascent theme. We will investigate Clement’s use of Moses in §4.3.2 (pp.176-177) and §§5.5.1 (pp.218-220)

51 Strom. V.11.67,1-3.
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θεωρία passages more closely, investigating some of the categories which appear to give definition to this term.

As we continue our investigation to discover Clement’s source for his usage of θεωρία we need to look closely at the opening chapter of Stromateis. Here Clement identifies a source for us: παράδοσις, the sacred traditions of the Church.

2.2 Παράδοσις, A Secret Oral Tradition

It is clear when one reads the opening chapter of Stromateis that Clement is preparing the reader for what he believes will be a special encounter. He portrays himself as the caretaker of an apostolic tradition, a παράδοσις,

Now this work of mine in writing is not artfully constructed for display; but my memoranda are stored up against old age, as a remedy against forgetfulness, truly an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was privileged to hear, and of blessed and truly remarkable men...they preserving the tradition (παράδοσιν) of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul, the son receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), came by God’s will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds. And well I know that they will exult; I do not mean delighted with this tribute, but solely on account of the preservation of the truth, according as they delivered it. For such a sketch as this, will, I think, be agreeable to a soul desirous of preserving from escape the blessed tradition (τὴν μακαρίαν παράδοσιν). 52

This tradition is not just apostolic — Clement believes it to be secret (or private) teachings from Jesus,

He [Jesus] did not certainly disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; but to the few to whom He knew that they belonged, who were capable of receiving and being moulded according to them. But secret things are entrusted to speech, not to writing... 53

[Christ] Himself taught the apostles during His presence; then it follows that the gnosis...which is sure and reliable, as being imparted and revealed

52 Strom. I.1.11,1-12,1.
53 Strom. I.1.13,2.
by the Son of God, is wisdom...the end of the wise man is contemplation...and the gnosis itself is that which has descended by transmission to a few, having been imparted unwritten by the apostles.\footnote{Strom. VI.7.61,1-3.}

The concept of an unwritten esoteric tradition in the Early Church is a very interesting and divisive one. \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\sigma\varsigma\), “a handing down,”\footnote{Liddell-Scott, \textit{Greek-English Lexicon} (Oxford 1989), goes on: “3. the transmission or handing down of legends, doctrines, etc., tradition.” Comes from \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\delta\sigma\omicron\mu\iota\), p.521.} is the word used by the Fathers to denote oral tradition. Clement uses the term around 30 times; ten of these occurrences clearly represent oral tradition and three of these occur in the opening chapter.\footnote{Stählin, (Band IV, pp.622-623). The occurrences which point to an oral tradition: \textit{Strom.} I.1.11,3; 1.12,1; 1.16,2; 12.55,1; 56,2; VI.5.39,4; 7.61,1-3; 15.124,5; 15.131,5; VII.10.55,6; 17.108,1-2.} Before we continue our study of \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\sigma\varsigma\) we need to consider the critical role of this first chapter in understanding the work as a whole.

\textbf{2.2.1 \textit{Stromateis} I.1: A Promise to Reveal and Conceal}

We have already mentioned that the opening chapter of \textit{Stromateis} is like an invitation to a special encounter. Clement argues for the right to give this written account; if others can compose blasphemies, those who proclaim Truth should not be restricted.\footnote{Strom. I.1.1,2. On the special nature of \textit{Strom.} I.1 see: Osborn, E.F., “Teaching and Writing in the First Chapter of the \textit{Stromateis} of Clement of Alexandria,” \textit{JTS} 10 (1959), pp.335-343; Ridings, Daniel, “Clement of Alexandria and the Intended Audience of the \textit{Stromateis},” \textit{SP} 31 (1997), pp.517-521; and Fortin, E.L., “Clement of Alexandria and the Esoteric Tradition,” \textit{SP} IX-3 (1966), pp.41-56.} He then urges the reader, indirectly through the quotation of Proverbs 2:1-2, to hide his teaching.\footnote{Strom. I.1.1.3. We say this is the first reference to hidden teaching since the text of \textit{Stromateis} is missing the beginning; the manuscript begins in mid-sentence, apparently quoting from \textit{The Shepherd of Hermas} (Vision V.5), an exhortation from the shepherd to write down his mandates. Because the manuscript begins here we do not know if Clement had already made any reference to hidden teaching prior to this; see Osborn (\textit{JTS} 1959).} From that point forward this opening chapter is loaded with terms such as \(\kappa\rho\omicron\nu\iota\varsigma\), \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\), \(\acute{\alpha}\gamma\rho\alpha\omicron\omicron\varsigma\), \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\sigma\varsigma\), \(\mu\omicron\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\varsigma\), and \(\acute{\alpha}p\omicron\rho\omicron\rho\iota\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma\).\footnote{All references here are to section numbers from \textit{Strom.} I.1: \(\kappa\rho\omicron\nu\iota\varsigma\): 1,3 (2x); 13,3 (3x); 18,1; \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\): 2,1; \(\acute{\alpha}\gamma\rho\alpha\omicron\omicron\varsigma\): 7,1; 10,1, 14,2; \(\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\sigma\varsigma\): 11,3; 12,1; 13,3; 13,4; 15,2 (2x); 16,2; \(\mu\omicron\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\varsigma\): 13,1; 13,4 (2x); 15,3 (2x); \(\acute{\alpha}p\omicron\rho\omicron\rho\iota\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma\): 13,2; 14,2; 15,1.} Clement makes it clear right away that he intends to
divulge secret teaching, but that he will do so in a guarded fashion:

And we profess not to explain secret things sufficiently--far from it--but only to recall them to memory....Some things my treatise will hint; on some it will linger; some it will merely mention. It will try to speak imperceptibly, to exhibit secretly, and to demonstrate silently....The Stromata will contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell.60

This promise to reveal while concealing in the opening chapter of Stromateis is a motif which marks the whole work. There are many who recognise this intention of Clement to communicate esoteric tradition, but have concluded that, in fact, he really had no such tradition.61

There are a few items in this opening chapter which we need to note and which set the tone for the whole work: the repeated promise that the Stromateis would be written in such a way as to reflect the hidden nature of Truth, repeated references to an oral tradition, the use of θεωρία, comments about philosophy, and finally, comments on spiritual “food” and “meat.”

The first comment indicating that the Stromateis will be written in such a way to hide divine Truth is not a clear reference, but is nonetheless, interesting: “Now this work of mine in writing is not artfully constructed for display...” (11,1).62

This comment, along with others, has been seen by many scholars as Clement’s


61 Mondéret acknowledges the claim of Clement to an esoteric teaching (Clément, pp.48-49), but concludes that it is “qu’une attitude ésotérique, et non pas un ésotérisme proprement dit,” p.61. We will comment further on Mondéret’s view in §2.4.2 (pp.76-81). Osborn (JTS 1959, p.341 n1), obviously follows the lead of Mondéret. In our next section we will look closely at a study by R.P.C. Hanson which comes to the same conclusion. Held against these studies would be Lilla (Clement, pp.144-163); Daniélou (Gospel Message, pp.154-155); and Stroumsa, Guy G., Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism, SHR 70 (Leiden 1996), see the discussion following in §2.2.2 (pp.46-55).

62 All references in the remainder of this section will refer only to the section number in Book I.1 unless noted otherwise.
excuse, or rationale for his inability to construct a systematic work. We have already mentioned other references to Stromateis being written to reveal/conceal (14,2; 15,1 and 18,1). Clement refers to this purposeful hidden nature of his work from time to time to keep his reader aware of it; he hopes by this the diligent seeker will be encouraged to continue the hunt. In these texts, he not only says that he is trying to hide his teaching, but that it is good for the reader to have to work hard to find it. This he also makes clear in the opening chapter (10,1-3 and 16,3). We will see later in this chapter (§2.4, pp.72-81) how Clement acknowledges the hidden nature of the Scriptures and of the philosophers; he is using these two examples as his model for Stromateis.

Another theme which is prominent in this opening chapter and which recurs several times in the work is this oral tradition, which is the focus of our current section. We do not want to belabour the point here since we will discuss this aspect further in the following two sections; suffice it to say that Clement refers to an oral tradition several times in this opening chapter and several times throughout the whole work.

At this point we want to note Clement’s use of theorite in this opening chapter. He specifically tells us that his notes in outline form nicely accommodate theorite

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63 See Mondésert (Clément, p.49); Lietzmann comments on Clement’s lack of ability without pointing to these texts, (History II, p.287); Tollinton (I, pp.x-xi). Also, see Osborn’s excellent discussion (Clement, pp.7-12) where he sees Clement’s style as purposeful and not from a lack of skill.

64 Strom. I.2.20,4-21,3 (the whole of chapter two is another defense for his style and use of Greek philosophy); I.12.55-56 (the whole chapter); IV.2.4,1-7,4 (again, this whole chapter is an explanation of how/why Stromateis conceals); VI.1.1,4-2,3; VII.18.110,4-111,3.

65 Strom. I.1.1,2-3; 3,3; 4,1 (these first three probably refer to the oral traditions which Clement is now putting into writing); 7,1; 11,1; 11,3-12,1; 13,2-4; 14,1-3; 16,2. These references cannot be simply to the canon of Scripture since Clement quotes from his existing canon exhaustively. As the following sections will show, Clement is referring to something beyond that which is contained in the Scriptures.

66 Strom. I.12.55,1; V.12.80,6; VI.7.61,1-3; 15.131,5.
like a relish on an athlete's food. He also says that he will oppose "the dogmas taught by remarkable sects" (the heretics) with the "profoundest contemplation of the knowledge" (τὴν ἐποπτικὴν θεωρίαν γνώσεως) which is part of the "canon of tradition." As we have already seen (§2.1.9, pp.35-38) Clement uses θεωρία throughout Stromateis, but he gives us no real indication in this opening chapter as to what it means. What he does tell us in Strom. 1.1 is that θεωρία will stand in opposition to the dogmas of the heretics; this takes our discussion to the final point we want to consider.

We want to note Clement’s comments in Chapter One concerning Greek philosophy. After the very early pejorative reference (1,2), he says that Greek philosophy is like a nut, not wholly edible. This, of course, implies that it is partly edible; the whole of this opening chapter and the rest of Stromateis bear this out as well. He makes an interesting comment about philosophy in 15,2-3:

The dogmas taught by remarkable sects will be adduced; and to these will be opposed all that ought to be premised in accordance with the profoundest contemplation of the knowledge, which, as we proceed to the renowned and venerable canon of tradition, from the creation of the world, will advance to our view; setting before us what according to natural contemplation necessarily has to be treated of beforehand, and clearing off what stands in the way of this arrangement. So that we may have our ears ready for the reception of the tradition of true knowledge; the soil being previously cleared of the thorns and of every weed by the husbandman, in order to the planting of the vine. For there is a contest, and the prelude to the contest; and there are some mysteries before other mysteries.

67 Strom. 1.1.16,1. We will see that Clement consistently refers to θεωρία in terms of "meat" and "food" throughout Stromateis. Also, he continues, and builds upon, his treatment in Paidagogus of the Eucharist. He moves from "milk" in Paidagogus to "food" and "meat" in Stromateis; see §4.2.4 (pp.170-174).
68 See §3.4.2 (p.120) for discussion of texts which contain both θεωρία and ἐποπτεῖα.
69 Strom. 1.1.15,2. Other occurrences of θεωρία in 1.1: 10,4 and 17,1 (both of these are used in the physical sense, "to see").
70 Strom. 1.1.7,3. He makes a similar statement in 1.1.18,1.
71 We have already seen Clement’s positive comments and use of Plato (pp.35-38). We will also see his positive use of philosophers to illustrate the hidden nature of Truth (§2.4, p.77). See Chadwick, Henry, Alexandrian Christianity LCC II (London 1954), pp.17-21.
Clement tells us that he will examine and refute the teachings of the heretics. He will proceed by first “clearing off what stands in the way” through and in “natural contemplation” (τὴς φυσικῆς θεωρίας). Here he is using another analogy which he utilises throughout Stromateis, the husbandman and his garden.\textsuperscript{72} He must rid the garden of all that hinders (thorns and weeds) the growth of the good seed, then the ground will be ready to receive the gnostic tradition. What constitutes thorns and weeds? The philosophical errors expounded by the philosophers and the Gnostics. Clement’s clearest polemical writing is in Book Three where he writes against Gnostic teaching on sexual issues, but their teachings also led to unorthodox ideas with respect to cosmogeny, anthropology and other philosophical categories.\textsuperscript{73} It is clear that to answer and oppose these two groups demanded engagement with philosophical ideas; this is why Clement says he will use “natural contemplation” (τὴς φυσικῆς θεωρίας) to oppose the heretics.\textsuperscript{74} The study of these philosophical ideas represents the minor mysteries which must be “cleared away” before looking into the greater mysteries.\textsuperscript{75} This is made clear by Clement’s comments in Strom. IV.1.3,1-4 where, referring to this same process of learning, he speaks of clearing away certain subject matter, “ascending thence to the department of theology.”\textsuperscript{76} Indeed, there is virtually nothing said in this introduction about philosophical categories; if these represent the “thorns” and

\textsuperscript{72} Strom. I.1.15,3; 18,2; II.1.3.3; IV.2.7,1-4; VII.18.110,4-111,2.

\textsuperscript{73} I would point to the Gnostic writings here. Clement clearly engages such categories in Ex.Theo.

\textsuperscript{74} See Chadwick (Alexandrian, pp.22-33); also Lilla (Clement, pp.189-199). Lilla points out (p.189) that Clement intends another work which will deal more fully with origins and other philosophical categories (Strom. IV.1.2,1-3,4).

\textsuperscript{75} Lilla (Clement, p.190 n1).

\textsuperscript{76} Strom. IV.1.3.2. See also, Strom. I.28.176-179 (the entire chapter). A similar comment is made in VII.3.20,2.
“weeds” there is no need to include them in his introduction. It seems then that Clement is preparing the reader in this opening chapter for philosophical discussion, but only in order to finally address what he holds to be most important, the gnostic tradition.

This is not to imply that Clement is opposed to philosophical discussion — quite the contrary. In the following discussion on the “food” of the gnostic (the final aspect of Strom. I.1 we want to note) we will see that he both uses, and defends the use, of philosophy.

Finally, we want to notice Clement’s use of “food” and “meat;” this will be a recurring theme which will help us know when he is revealing. We have already mentioned two of the references to “food” in Strom. I.1 in our previous discussion above, but we want to highlight this theme here. The first reference is a quotation of a text (John 6:27) which Clement will come back to in Book VI,

‘Labour,’ says the Lord, ‘not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.’ And nutriment is received both by bread and by words....and nourish for the life which is according to God, by the distribution of the bread, those ‘that hunger after righteousness.’ For each soul has its own proper nutriment; some growing by knowledge and science, and others feeding on the Hellenic philosophy, the whole of which, like nuts, is not eatable. 77

We will show later (see §2.5, pp.81-85) how he uses this text and theme of “meat” to end a section of concealment and to bring his purpose back into focus.

In I.1.16,1 Clement says,

Our book will not shrink from making use of what is best in philosophy and other preparatory instruction....The nicety of speculation, too, suits the sketch presented in my commentaries. In this respect the resources of learning are like a relish mixed with the food of an athlete, who is not indulging in luxury, but entertains a noble desire for distinction.

77 Strom. I.1.7,2-3.
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Here it is readily admitted that the best of philosophy will be used and it appears that θεορία is part of "best." He refers to θεορία here as "a relish mixed with the food of an athlete." We need to note that from his first mention of this "food" aspect (I.1.7,2-3) the topic for discussion has been "Hellenic philosophy." (7,3) Clement's defense for using philosophy is a prominent theme for the remainder of the chapter.78 This defense is concluded with another text (I.1.17,4-18,1) which refers to the "food" of the gnostic,

For, like farmers who irrigate the land beforehand, so we also water with the liquid stream of Greek learning what in it is earthy; so that it may receive the spiritual seed cast into it, and may be capable of easily nourishing it. The Stromata will contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell.

Clement again refers to philosophy with the analogy of the partly edible nut, as he did in I.1.7,3. What we will see as we continue our study, is that he comes back to this "food" analogy in several places. We will show that this is part of his conceal/reveal strategy.

To conclude our discussion of Strom. I.1, I want to summarise what I think Clement is doing in his opening chapter. He wants to alert the diligent seeker/reader that he has been the recipient of a secret apostolic oral tradition which has been cautiously passed down through the years. He has included much of this tradition within his work, but has done so (by necessity) in a diffuse way, to protect it from the unworthy. He cannot clearly state the enclosed contents, especially in his introduction, otherwise it would not remain protected. And so his

78 This underlines the problem Clement faced which helps to explain why he uses this concealment technique: he must face critics from three sides, not only from the philosophers, but also from the Gnostics, and the "simple" believers. See Ridings (SP 1997).
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Introduction tells the reader that if he is diligent he will ferret the gnostic tradition out. Those interested in lesser things will get bogged down in the various subservient categories and tangents. However, Clement has left some hints:

Now the Scripture kindles the living spark of the soul, and directs the eye suitably for contemplation (θεωρίαν); perchance inserting something, as the husbandman when he ingrafts, but, according to the opinion of the divine apostle, exciting what is in the soul. (10,4)

The dogmas taught by remarkable sects will be adduced; and to these will be opposed all that ought to be premised in accordance with the profoundest contemplation of the knowledge (τὴν ἐποπτευτὴν θεωρήματα γνώσεως)...(15,2)

The nicety of speculation (τὴς θεωρίας), too, suits the sketch presented in my commentaries. In this respect the resources of learning are like a relish mixed with the food of an athlete... (16,1)

While philosophical ideas are important to him, especially when dealing with Greek converts, they serve only as “relish” mixed in with the most important ideas: “The Stromata will contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell.” (I.1.18,1) We will see that this “meat,” this gnostic “food” which is implicitly promised here in Book I.1, is the philosophical category of θεωρία. This is not the only “edible” part of philosophy, but it is the part which Clement desires to communicate in Stromateis; the rest is used either as “relish” or concealment.

The purpose of Stromateis is to record the gnostic oral traditions. Now we will examine two studies which represent the scholarly debate on this issue.

2.2.2 A Recent Study on Oral Tradition

Guy Stroumsa published a collection of essays, Hidden Wisdom (SHR 1996), in which he investigates the existence of an oral tradition in the early Church.

79 Strom. VI.11.89,2.
80 Full citation in note 59.
Stroumsa reviews a wealth of evidence drawn from the patristic writings to show a general acknowledgment of esoteric oral tradition within the Church, then discusses the disappearance of those same traditions.

In a review of Stroumsa’s work, Charles Kannengiesser complains that no evidence exists for these esoteric traditions:

The truth of the matter is that the present collection of popular essays demonstrates in perfect clarity, though unwillingly it seems, that a quest for proper esotericism in early Christianity leads nowhere. The author never tries to describe such traditions, nor does he suggest that they could be identified by noncomparative methods...

After all is said, these traditions remain so esoteric that their phantasmal existence best seems postulated only on the basis of proliferating studies about their pre-supposed ‘disappearance’. Kannengiesser is correct on some points; he claims that most studies do not give hard data showing the content of these esoteric traditions. In fact, Stroumsa admitted that to try to do so would be seen as “speculative.” The very nature of the subject makes this task highly problematic: finding hard data for a tradition which is both “secret” and “oral” is difficult. Although this argument does not satisfy the need and desire for hard data, objectivity demands that in the face of solid circumstantial evidence the lack of hard data should not preclude the

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81 Ibid., Chapter 2, “Paradosis: Oral Traditions,” pp.27-45 for a discussion and citation of the following texts (this is only a sample of Stroumsa’s citations) which are not addressed in this chapter; Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, III.3.1; Tertullian, Prescription of Heretics, XLI; Egeria’s Itinerary, XLVI, 2 and 6; XLVII, 2; Epiphanius, Panarion, XLII, 3.3; Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechumen, V, 12 (this reference doesn’t seem to be very significant); John Chrysostom, Homily on 1 Corinthians, LX, 1; Basil, Treatise on the Holy Spirit, XXVII, 66. See Lilla (Clement, pp.144-158) for a similar discussion.


83 Stroumsa, p.29. He then says, “Nevertheless it seems that one may not only attest to their existence, but also state their origin and contents with precision.” Although he does give evidence for παράδοσις in the early fathers, Stroumsa does not produce on the ‘contents’ part of his claim (another point where Kannengiesser was correct). Even his best evidence he admits is “somewhat disappointing with respect to the content of the oral traditions, and that he [Basil] alludes only to doctrines which are on the whole quite trivial,”p.36.
existence of these traditions. Stroumsa’s circumstantial evidence was not vague; he cites numerous patristic texts, from the Papias fragments to comments by Augustine, including references from Origen and Basil, all showing that some kind of esoteric oral tradition continued in the Church at least through the fourth century. Kannengiesser fails to comment on any of these texts, and says that Stroumsa’s work is “entertaining [to] the less prepared reader.” Unfortunately, some of Stroumsa’s citations justify Kannengiesser’s comment (see notes 81 and 92), yet his overall presentation is solid. One wonders if Kannengiesser’s basic problem with this study is that which Stroumsa addresses in his introduction when he states that both Catholic and Protestant scholars view esotericism with suspicion. From the beginning, secrecy was associated with heresy by Catholics, and Protestants have shunned Catholic traditions suspecting them of being tainted with esoteric doctrines.

We have already seen in Stromateis that Clement openly reports himself to be the recipient of some kind of oral tradition. It is perhaps impossible to know for sure whether or not his claim is true, but other evidence (such as Stroumsa gives in his work) can be taken into account and seems to verify that Clement is not the only early Father to believe in this tradition. After looking at some of this evidence from other sources we will come back to Clement.

84 Just as our evidence of the Gnostics (the heresiologists) prior to the Nag Hammadi texts was considered by some to be doubtful; see Wisse, Frederik, “The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologists,” VC 25 (1971), pp.205-223. Wisse shows that although the NH texts do not exactly fit the description of Irenaeus, we now see how the Gnostic “movement” grew and mutated from the reports of the fathers. Wisse is critical of those who quickly accept the testimony of the fathers, but we have seen many times that patristic evidence cannot be easily dismissed though it is admittedly prejudiced at some points.
85 See note 79.
86 Kannengiesser (JoR, p.269).
87 Stroumsa, pp.1-2.
The Papias fragments represent one of the earliest recordings of this oral tradition.

...as the Presbyters who had seen John the Lord’s disciple remembered that they had heard of him, how the Lord used to teach concerning those times...[a lengthy eschatological statement about blessings from God]...And these things Papias also, who was a hearer of John and companion of Polycarp, an ancient man, testifies in writing in the fourth of his books: for there are five books compiled by him.

The eschatological content of this Papias witness is not critical for our purpose.

The fact that he relates an oral teaching originating from the apostles, and that Irenaeus does not seem to discredit this report, is central to our discussion.

Irenaeus reports this oral tradition here even though he argues against such a tradition elsewhere. Eusebius also reports that Papias claimed an oral tradition.

But I will not hesitate also to set down for thy benefit, along with the interpretations, all that ever I carefully learnt and carefully recalled from the elders, guaranteeing its truth....For I supposed that things out of books did not profit me so much as the utterances of a voice which liveth and abideth.

It appears from this entry that Eusebius had some of the Papian writings in front of him; Munck argues that his disagreement with the millennial view of Papias leads Eusebius to neglect the Papian writings. This evidence shows that the Eusebian witness is not dependent upon that of Irenaeus, but is an independent one.

88 For a review of the scholarship, see Schoedel, William R., “Papias,” in ANRW 27.1 (Berlin 1993), pp.235-270. Schoedel reports the dating of these fragments from late in the first century to 140 A.D., with the most accepted dating being around 110 A.D. (pp.237; 261-262).
90 Irenaeus opens his treatise with this statement; “Forasmuch as there are some, who, putting the truth away from them, introduce in its stead false tales...adulterating the oracles of the Lord.” A.H. I.1, preface. See Stroumsa, pp.35-38. Stroumsa only mentions this passage in passing while giving more attention to A.H. III.3.1. (p.35)
91 Munck, Johannes, “Presbyters and Disciples of the Lord in Papias,” HTR 52 (1959), pp.223-243, evaluates Eusebius’ treatment of Papias. See also, Walls, A.F., “Papias and Oral Tradition,” VC 21 (1967), pp.136-140, for a short, but incisive article showing that Papias is not denigrating written documents in this passage.
93 See Munck, pp.223-243.
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There is also testimony of this παράδοσις after Clement in Origen. In Contra Celsum, arguing against the accusation that the Christian doctrine is secret, Origen makes the following statement;

Moreover, the mystery of the resurrection, because it has not been understood, is a byword and a laughing-stock with the unbelievers. In view of this it is quite absurd to say that the doctrine is secret. The existence of certain doctrines, which are beyond those which are exoteric and do not reach the multitude, is not a peculiarity of Christian doctrine only, but is shared by the philosophers. For they had some doctrines which were exoteric and some esoteric.  

It is very interesting that Origen makes this statement in the context of refuting a secret tradition, thus giving this reference an ambiguous tone (just as that of Irenaeus, see Stroumsa, p.35). Origen makes a much clearer statement on oral tradition in Contra Celsum VI.6;

Jesus, who was superior to all these men, is said to have spoken the Word of God to his disciples privately, and especially in places of retreat. But what he said has not been recorded. For it did not seem to them that these matters ought to be described at some length or orally for the masses. And, if it is not an impertinence to speak the truth about such great men, I affirm that, because they received their thoughts by the grace of God, these men saw better than Plato what truths should be committed to writing, and how they should be written, and what ought under no circumstances to be written for the multitude, and what may be spoken, and what is not of this nature.

Here Origen is arguing against the same claim of Celsus that the Christian doctrines are secret. This time rather than trying to refute Celsus (while trying to avoid the denial of oral tradition), he takes the other side of the argument. He cites the biblical examples of Ezekiel, John, and Paul in support of keeping certain

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94 Origen, Contra Celsum I.7. I am using Henry Chadwick’s translation of Contra Celsum (Cambridge 1953). This passage is cited with comments, by Stroumsa on pp.32-33. It must be noted that Stroumsa’s footnote on this passage (p.33 n20) wrongly gives Contra Celsum II.60 (a simple typo which is meant to be III.60) as a cross reference for Jesus speaking privately to his disciples. This is not the only such error in his citations of Contra Celsum; on page 34 he gives Contra Celsum III.60 as containing a similar reference to Mark 4:34. The passage he is attempting to point to is Contra Celsum VI.6, which he does ultimately cite (p.34). This may have been another concern of Kannengiesser although, as has been noted, he never mentions any specific citation.
teachings unwritten, then brings Jesus into the argument. “But what he said has not been recorded...” is a clear reference to some kind of oral tradition. Daniélow says that Origen’s position here is more pronounced than that of Clement,

Like Clement, Origen contrasts a higher teaching, reserved to the chosen few, with the general catechesis as expressed in the Creed. But he draws more sharply than Clement the line between the ordinary teaching given in the community and the strictly esoteric teachings reserved to the few. 95

We find good evidence of oral tradition prior to Clement (in Papias and Irenaeus) and after Clement (in Origen; for others see Stroumsa’s study). It makes the case for an oral tradition in Clement much more probable.

It is critical in this discussion to understand the difficulty which παράδοσις presented to the early Church. 96 We have already noted in passing that both Irenaeus and Origen address this issue with some ambiguity. Oral traditions would often be tainted by the unorthodox which necessitated orthodox writings. 97 Then the unorthodox would make claim to certain documents, forcing the Fathers to sometimes distance themselves from these documents. 98 Irenaeus and Origen seem to be unwilling to deny such tradition, but are also wary of fully embracing it. Stroumsa reminds us that by the time of Augustine the Church had begun to deny the legitimacy of oral traditions: “It stands to reason that one of the main causes of their progressive disappearance from what came to be known as

95 Daniélow (Gospel Message, p.155); this comment is given in Daniélow’s critique of Hanson’s study which we will cover in our next section, see §2.2.3 (pp.55-62).
96 Again, see Stroumsa, pp.35-38. See also Bauer, pp.170-190; and Lietzmann (History II, pp.71-104).
97 This was the impetus behind the five books of Papias, Explanations of the Sayings of the Lord (Bauer, p.184). See H.E. III.39.1-3, where Papias purposes to recall what he learned from “the elders,” as opposed to those who speak “foreign commandments.”
98 For example, the Valentinian preference for the fourth gospel (Bauer, pp.184-187, also 204,205). It should be noted that this struggle for authoritative texts differed from region to region and that the Fathers were not in agreement either; see H.E. III.25.1-7 where Eusebius admits the Apocalypse of John with hesitation, but rejects others such as the Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, and Didache which Clement freely quotes/uses as authoritative. If the unorthodox misused what was accepted as Scripture the Fathers were then forced to simply argue against their position, see A.H. I.9.1 and III.11.7.
‘mainstream’, or ‘orthodox’ Christianity is directly related to their use and abuse by Gnostics and other ‘heretics’.

The evidence of secret traditions and doctrines is well documented in the Nag Hammadi texts. The idea that the Church gradually had to distance itself from various oral traditions for protection against the Gnostics is Stroumsa’s thesis (pp.3-6), and the evidence he produces seems to make a good case. The only point which I would add to his argument is the development of the NT canon. It seems that the more standardised the written record became, the less the oral tradition was needed. This is, in fact, the context of Eusebius’ comments in H.E. III.25.1-7.

We now want to look more closely at Clement’s claim to a secret oral tradition. In the Clementine fragment known as the Letter to Theodore Clement makes some interesting comments which affect our understanding of oral tradition in second century Egypt. The fragment was discovered by Morton Smith in 1958 in the library of the Mar Saba monastery, a few miles outside of Jerusalem in the desert. The lengthy time between the discovery and his publication in 1973, some of his speculative interpretations of the fragment, and the fact that no other scholar has been able to see this fragment (Smith included black and white photographic plates in his 1973 publication) have all combined to make this document a controversial one. Although Smith offered strong internal evidence to show the authenticity

99 Stroumsa, p.93.
100 The Apocryphon of James I.1,9-2,16; The Apocryphon of John II.1,1-5 and 31,29-32,3; The Book of Thomas the Contender II.138,1-4 and 138,21-25; The Gospel of the Egyptians III.69,6-7; The Apocalypse of Adam V.85,19-27. It is common in these texts to declare their esoteric nature in the opening lines; see Stroumsa, pp.39-41 and Lilla (Clement, pp.150-154).
101 Smith, M., Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark (Cambridge,USA 1973), contains the translation, critical analysis and notes as well as photographs of the fragment which is now referred to as the Letter to Theodore (Ltr. Theo. from this point forward). The controversy is over Smith’s view that the Secret Gospel of Mark (SGM) represents an earlier gospel than the canonical one (pp.87-194), his
of the fragment, the debate which followed questioned both the authenticity of the letter and the existence of a *Secret Gospel of Mark*, referred to in the fragment. Although the issue of authorship has not been fully satisfied, the fragment is considered by some as Clementine and appears in the 1980 Stählin edition.\(^{102}\) In the *Letter to Theodore*\(^ {103}\) Clement is responding to questions asked of him about a secret gospel of Mark used by the heretical sect, the Carpocratians. According to Clement, this secret gospel was corrupted,

> Carpocrates...so enslaved a certain presbyter of the church in Alexandria that he got from him a copy of the secret Gospel, which he both interpreted according to his blasphemous and carnal doctrine and, moreover, polluted, mixing with the spotless and holy words utterly shameless lies. From this mixture is drawn off the teaching of the Carpocratians.\(^ {104}\)

This evidence agrees with the evidence in Irenaeus, who says of the Carpocratians,

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\(^{102}\) Band IV.1, pp.xvii-xviii.

\(^{103}\) Citations from the *Letter to Theodore* (*Ltr. Theo.* hereafter) will give the Plate number and line number from the Greek text in Smith’s work (pp.448-452), followed by the GCS page and line number only.

\(^{104}\) *Ltr. Theo.* II, 3-10 (GCS, IV.1, p.xvii, 31-35).
In this letter we see one of Clement’s approach to the problem of shared points with the Gnostics: he is aware of this *SGM* and believes it to have divine authority, but claims that the Carpocratians have added to it, thus making their copy useless. But he does not take the safe approach of rejecting the *SGM*; the authentic secret gospel “even yet is most carefully guarded,” says Clement, “being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries.” The secret nature of this gospel is emphasised when Clement warns that “when they put forward their falsifications, one should not concede that the secret Gospel is by Mark, but should even deny it on oath.” The remainder of the letter contains Clement’s account of two pericopes which have been changed by the Carpocratians. He gives Theodore the actual reading of the *SGM* text, implying that it should continue to be used! This is evidence that Clement believed in an esoteric tradition, however this “secret” gospel was only part of Clement’s guarded *γνώσις* which was to be committed to the advanced believers.

Whereas Irenaeus and Origen are wary of embracing oral tradition, Clement openly affirms an oral tradition (written, but esoteric in the case of *Ltr.Theo.*)

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105 A.H. I.25.5. Stroumsa cites this text (p.38) with comment, although he is not making this connection with the *Ltr.Theo.*
106 Like Irenaeus and Origen, Clement’s response is not consistent. Clement’s approach to docetism is instructive: he engages in polemics against the docetists; *Strom.* III.17.102ff; VI.9.71,1-3; *Ex Thea.* 4.1; 16; 19.1-5; yet it should be noted that in *Strom.* VI.9.71, Clement shows a docetic tendency as he also does in *Strom.* III.7.59.3. See Chadwick (*Alexandrian*, pp.31-32).
109 For a good review of Smith’s work (especially the two pericopes), see Levin (ANRW 25.6, pp.4270-4292).
belonging to the Church. In the opening chapter of *Stromateis*, after claiming that he learned from men who had preserved oral tradition, Clement says of Jesus:

> He did not certainly disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; but to the few to whom He knew that they belonged, who were capable of receiving...secret things are entrusted to speech, not to writing..."  

He clearly states that he is committing this esoteric oral tradition to writing, fearing that it would be forgotten otherwise,

> For such a sketch as this, will, I think, be agreeable to a soul desirous of preserving from escape the blessed tradition...many things, I well know, have escaped us, through length of time, that have dropped away unwritten..."

This intention of Clement is also recorded by Eusebius: "...he was compelled by his companions to commit to writing traditions that he had heard from the elders of olden time, for the benefit of those that should come after..." So we see that Clement’s esoteric tradition is both written and oral. His intention is that this now written tradition would be continued by those who follow him. Several times he outlines three goals of the *gnostic*, communicating this hidden γνωσις occurs in all three texts. He also makes this intention clear in his opening chapter by quoting 2 Timothy 2:2 as his model, which is a call to continue oral tradition.

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110 In addition to the evidence which follows from *Stromateis*, see Eusebius, *H.E.* II.1.3-5 (reference to *Hypotyposes*); VI.13.9 (reference to *On the Pascha*). Other texts showing this oral tradition are *Strom.* V.10 (entire chapter); VI.7.61.1-3; VI.8.68.1-3; VI.15.131.5.

111 *Strom.* I.1.13.2-3.

112 *Strom.* I.1.12.1 and I.1.14.2. This text actually indicates that Clement believed some of this tradition to have already been lost. He continues; “There are then some things of which we have no recollection; for the power that was in the blessed men was great. There are also some things which remained unnoted long, which have now escaped; and others which are effaced, having faded away in the mind itself, since such a task is not easy to those not experienced.” *Strom.* I.1.14.3. See also I.1.15.1. To the question as to whether *Stromateis* represents *all* of Clement’s oral tradition, see *Strom.* V.8.54, 2-4. Based on the above passages and also in consideration of other Clementine fragments such as *Hypotyposes*, the *Extracts of Theodotus*, *On the Pascha* cited by Eusebius, and *Stromateis VIII*, we know our text of *Stromateis* is not complete, therefore probably does not contain *all* of Clement’s oral tradition.

113 *H.E.* VI.13.9. This comes from Clement’s *On the Pascha*.

114 *Strom.* II.10.46.1; *Strom.* VII.1.4.2; VII.3.19.2 and VII.7.44.6-8. See §5.7 (pp.255-260).

115 *Strom.* I.1.3.3-4.
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2.2.3 R.P.C. Hanson and Oral Tradition

This issue of secret oral tradition was addressed in a study by R.P.C. Hanson, some important points in his study need to be considered. I will first briefly outline Hanson’s study, which focused on Clement and Origen, then I will interact with some of his observations.

Hanson generally agrees with the historical data in Eusebius that Origen learned under Clement, though he believes it was for a very short time (p.90 n1). He says that “Origen owes more to him [Clement], perhaps, in his treatment of these subjects than he does on any other point...”(p.53) Both of the Alexandrian fathers profess to draw their doctrine from the Scripture (ibid.), but Hanson shows that this is not entirely true. Where Prestige sparingly cites Clement as one who speaks of “knowledge traditioned through the Scriptures,” Hanson gives ample evidence to show that Clement believed he inherited a secret teaching. In the introduction of his chapter on Clement, Hanson confirms this,

...he says that the teachers under whom he studied preserved τὴν ἀλήθη τῆς μακρίνος διδασκαλίας παράδοσιν, meaning secret teaching not divulged to all, distinguished from the Scriptures. Clement certainly believes that he has access to a secret tradition of doctrine, which he usually calls γνώσις, but sometimes παράδοσις.118

Hanson also connects γνώσις with διδασκαλία and πίστις (p.56), thus part of Clement’s παράδοσις is “an unwritten tradition of interpreting the Scriptures,” the

116 Hanson, R.P.C., Origen’s Doctrine of Tradition (London 1954). He interacts with G.L. Prestige’s book, Fathers and Heretics (London 1940). Prestige deals with παράδοσις in Lecture I of his work, “Tradition: Or, the Scriptural Basis of Theology,” in which he basically says that “for most practical purposes the tradition is enshrined in the Bible, first in the Old Testament, which witnesses throughout to Christ for minds that rightly understand it, and then, as the canon of the New Testament Scriptures gradually came to be determined...in the Gospels and Epistles.” (p.27)

117 Prestige, p.29, citing Strom. VII.16.105,1.

118 Hanson (Origen’s, p.53).
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allegorical method (p.57). This leads Hanson to say that “in Clement’s theological system the ‘gnosis’ is the ‘canon’, and the ‘canon’ is the ‘gnosis’.”

Hanson mentions several others aspects of this tradition, but finally rejects the whole idea on two grounds: first, it is just too Alexandrian to have originated from Jesus or the other apostles; and secondly, it clearly is derived from Philo and the Epistle of Barnabas (p.68). He concludes that Clement only thought he was the recipient of a secret tradition, but what we see has “no connection with any oral teaching given by our Lord or his Apostles.” (p.71)

Hanson concludes Chapter Four of his work, “Clement’s Doctrine of Secret Tradition,” commenting,

It is clear, then, that Clement has confused in his theory of secret tradition at least three separate things: First, his own private speculations, which are often of a Gnostic cast; second, a tradition of doctrinal speculation inherited from eminent teachers before him, not least among whom were (as we can see from Clement’s own writings) Philo, and (as he tells us himself) Pantaenus, a tradition which he attributed quite mistakenly to Barnabas, whom he imagined to have derived it through the Twelve from our Lord; third, what Prestige calls διδασκαλία, the Church’s interpretation of her tradition in teaching and preaching. (pp.71-72)

119 Hanson implies that this allegorical method of biblical interpretation is the sum of this secret tradition, ibid., pp.57-58. L.G. Patterson, “The Divine Became Human: Irenaeus Themes in Clement of Alexandria,” SP 31 (1997), pp.497-516, gives good support for Hanson’s argument, though he does not completely agree with him either. Patterson admits a problem “between the clarity of Clement’s use and adaptation of Irenaeus on the rule of faith in relation to the scriptures in books 6 and 7 and the relative unclarity of his remarks on these subjects in the earlier books,” p.514 n22. My position on this point satisfies this concern. We will see where Clement does link θεορία with the allegorical method (§3.3.3, pp.108-113), but this is only one aspect of θεορία. Besides this, the allegorical reading is always meant to point to something beyond the text; Van den Hoek (Clement), points out that the allegorical reading of the High Priest in Strom. V.6.32-40 “represents the Gnostic who moves upward to an unceasing contemplation,” p.117.

120 Hanson (Origen’s, p.61). I cannot agree with Hanson when he wants to make these terms in Clement synonymous. There do seem to be times when Clement uses terms interchangeably, especially γνώσις, which does seem to cover a broad range of concepts, but those instances should not lead us to make the kind of blanket statement which Hanson makes on this point. For an example where I claim terms to be used synonymously, see p.119. Also, see Daniélou (Gospel Message, p.154), where he disagrees with Hanson on this very point. See R. Mortley, “The Mirror and 1 Cor.13,12 in the Epistemology of Clement of Alexandria,” VC 30 (1976), pp.109-120. Mortley opens this article by declaring that “Clement’s gnosia can of course be considered in two ways: as a body of esoteric teachings, or as a manner of grasping the deity...a certain kind of approach to God,” p.109.
Hanson's study is a good one, but there are a few points we must challenge. His theory of dependence on Philo and Barnabas cannot be ignored, but to reject Clement's claim to apostolic oral tradition based mainly on this is premature. In our next section we will discuss this point more fully as we look at the evidence for a minority apostolic tradition which seems to have an Egyptian provenance.

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter in our discussion of θεωρία, Clement's oral tradition includes a teaching on contemplative prayer which cannot be fully explained by any of the literary precedents which were at his disposal; either he developed this concept on his own or it has come to him, at least in part, through this παράδοσις. Hanson acknowledges θεωρία as a part of this tradition, but gives no substantive comment.121

In the end, Hanson has determined that Clement was "confused."122 On the influence of Barnabas Hanson says,

Clement of Alexandria was influenced enough by his reading of the Epistle of Barnabas, and by the existence of quite a large body of legend about the Barnabas of the New Testament...he persuaded himself that this supposed secret teaching of Barnabas had been maintained independently of the New Testament up to his own day. (p.69)

In a later work Hanson does alter his position with regards to Clement's use of Philo and Barnabas, endorsing Daniélou's view a bit more fully.123 I agree with Hanson's treatment of many of the legendary traditions in Clement's writings

121 Hanson (Origen's, pp.64, 71, and 82).
122 See Daniélou's response to Hanson on the three points of confusion, (Gospel Message, pp.154-156). Daniélou disagrees with Hanson along different lines of thought than I do, but also says, "The word παράδοσις thus becomes charged for him [Clement], as do a number of other terms, with a great wealth and variety of overtones..." (p.154) Daniélou credits the "Judaeco-Christian apocalyptic material" as the source for Clement's oral tradition, Ibid.
123 Hanson, R.P.C., Tradition in the Early Church (London 1962): "But it seems to me now that Daniélou's hypothesis is more likely to be correct," (p.26 n4). However, he continues to hold the position that Clement is "confused" (pp.26, 44) about this tradition which is "disconcertingly like the spurious [traditions of]...the Gnostics...", p.47.

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(Tradition, pp.47-48), and I also acknowledge the validity of Daniélou’s view on Jewish apocalyptic material.\(^{124}\) This current study, however, shows that there are no clear literary witnesses to fully explain Clement’s use of θεορία. It is clear from Hanson’s review of Morton Smith’s book\(^ {125}\) that his position on oral tradition changed very little over the 20 year period between the two writings. In this review he says,

Investigators of the history of the early Church today spend much of their time in the period of oral tradition, that is to say in the period before the documentary evidence which we have was written down...It is a field of study which deals almost entirely in hypothesis, that is, to put the matter in a drier light, in guesswork...every man’s guess is as good as everybody else’s.\(^ {126}\)

Yet this seems to be what he has done with the documentary evidence which we have in Clement. The evidence is clear: Clement clearly says he is the recipient of a secret oral tradition; he also assumes the Barnabas of Acts to be the author of Barnabas and calls him an “apostle” (probably because he traveled with Paul and, Clement claims, was among the 70 followers of Jesus),\(^ {127}\) and, Origen agrees with Clement on both of these points.\(^ {128}\) Hanson clearly has chosen to dismiss this testimony as mere speculation. We certainly cannot accept this testimony without question, but neither should we quickly discount it because it does not fit our schemes for dating documents and trends in the first and second centuries. Authorship and dating (and the influence of Philo) for Barnabas are still open for

\(^{124}\) See especially, Daniélou, J., The Theology of Jewish Christianity, ET by John A. Baker (London 1973), pp.49-52. It should be noted that Daniélou is pointing mainly to angelology (the προσόκτιστοι) and the exegesis of Genesis (pp.49-50), neither of which are primary concerns in Stromateis. See our discussion on both of these points, §3.5.3 (pp.126-130, especially note 145).


\(^{126}\) Ibid., p.520.

\(^{127}\) Strom. II.6.31.2; II.7.35.5 for the designation “apostle.” See H.E. II.1.4-5 for being in the 70; also, see the discussion in the next section.

\(^{128}\) See the discussion in the next section for Origen; also see Hanson (Origen’s, p.139).
debate. Hanson advocates in his review of Smith that "sane scholarship will try to control hypothesis by the documentary evidence."\(^{129}\) Clement's testimony is documentary evidence and at the very least should not be easily dismissed until proven false (or doubtful) with other solid documentary evidence. We must reject Hanson's "guesswork" that Clement is "confused" about his sources and offer another possible solution (in §2.3.5, pp.68-71).

Hanson's main work is with Origen; our study of Clement demands that only cursory comments be offered here. Although Hanson gives a listing of the contents of Origen's secret tradition, he admits that Origen was ambiguous towards this concept.\(^{130}\) Hanson maintains that Origen did not hold to any source of doctrine outside the Bible.\(^{131}\) Given the evidence we have seen from *Contra Celsum*, we are forced to disagree with Hanson. Hanson maintains Clement as a major influence in Origen's doctrine of tradition, thus Origen did have at least one source outside the Bible. Again Daniélou disagrees with Hanson on this same point, using a different, but again a valid argument;

Origen, while equally the heir of traditional Judaeo-Christian gnosis, makes more room alongside it for personal speculation. Again, he claims to derive these higher teachings from Scripture, which makes him appear more biblical than Clement. But in addition to all this he introduces an element more personal to himself, based on philosophy. In theory more severe in his attitude to philosophy than Clement, he is in fact much more profoundly influenced by it, whatever Hanson may say.\(^{132}\)

After telling us that "Clement was, quite clearly, the main source from whom

\(^{129}\) Hanson (JTS 1974, p.520). Hanson is speaking about the quest for the "historical" Jesus in this review and I agree with him completely. Dubious as it might seem, however, the Mar Saba fragment is documentary evidence until it has conclusively been proven to be a forgery or historically invalid, neither of which is the case.

\(^{130}\) For this listing, see Hanson (*Origen's*, pp.78-79, 82). These contents included the resurrection, the Holy Trinity, allegorical method, and the Eucharist. For Origen's ambiguous attitude, p.84.

\(^{131}\) Ibid., pp.84, 87, 191.

Origen drew, at least in his doctrine of tradition, and all scholars are agreed that they both belong to the same school of thought." Hanson reminds us (p.89) that Origen never mentions Clement in the many writings which survive. This has always been a curious feature of the relationship of these two Alexandrian fathers. Hanson holds the view that Origen wanted to distance himself from Clement. I must agree with Hanson’s guesswork on this point and add my own.

Following Hanson (p.90), I think Clement fell into disrepute through many of his less than orthodox writings and doctrinal positions. Hanson points out the evidence in his study so there is no real need to cover it again. The only evidence I would add is that from the *Ltr. Theo.* and the *SGM.* This tradition would only add to Origen’s desire to distance himself from Clement.

After reviewing Hanson’s study I am convinced that we must accept Clement’s claim to a secret oral tradition until it can be proven wrong. Along with this pronouncement of confidence I would add one caveat: Clement’s sense of oral tradition does seem to include what we now call *apocryphal* works. In *Strom.* VI

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133 Hanson (*Origen’s*, p.48). Other places where Hanson speaks of Clement’s influence: pp.53, 72-73, 87-88, 89, 184.

134 Ibid., on p.90 he says it seems likely that “Origen composed his περὶ Ἀρχαίων as a sort of counterblast, as an orthodox corrective...of that suspect and unmentionable man, Clement of Alexandria.” See p.90 n3,4. Hanson also says Origen "disapproved of the heretical tendencies in Clement’s thought." (p.184)

135 L.G. Patterson, *God and History in Early Christian Thought* (London 1967), p.48, offers another plausible explanation that Origen was disappointed in Clement’s decision to flee during persecution. If we remember that Origen lost his father during persecution it makes for an interesting psychological study, but “guesswork” is all we have on this issue.

136 This might also explain why Origen is not as positive about St Mark’s gospel; see Barnard (HTR 1964).

137 Joseph Trigg makes an interesting comment at the end of a recent article on the negative theology in Clement, “Receiving the Alpha: Negative Theology in Clement of Alexandria and its Possible Implications,” *SP* 31 (1997), pp.540-545: “...it may be the case that Clement and Origen, along with the later figures known as Origenists, belonged to a larger theological tradition from which relatively few works have survived. Clement himself considered himself (sic.) to belong to such a tradition, and I think we should take him seriously.” Although Trigg is commenting here on a rather different topic, it simply shows yet another aspect of Clementine evidence which seems to support the possibility of some kind of oral tradition.
he refers to such a tradition which comes from the *Assumption of Moses*.\(^{138}\) If this can represent oral tradition to Clement, then other sources could as well.\(^{139}\) Now we need to look at a possible explanation for Clement’s claim that this oral tradition came from an apostolic source.

2.3 A Minority Apostolic Tradition

It is an unfortunate and well-known fact that our knowledge of Egyptian Christianity until the time of Clement is scant. We do not have any early orthodox literary witnesses clearly linked to Egypt like we do in other regions (such as Ignatius, Polycarp and Justin Martyr). No doubt this is part of what fuels the fires of scepticism towards Clement’s claim to an apostolic oral tradition; there is simply no sure way to verify his claim. There are, however, four strands of data which point to an early apostolic tradition emanating from Alexandria, three of which have a testimony from Clement: the tradition that St Mark founded the church in Alexandria; Clement’s appellation of “apostle” to Barnabas and his reference to the epistle bearing the same name as being “Scripture;” the NT letter to the Hebrews; and the Lukan description of Apollos in NT Acts of the Apostles. In this section we will briefly examine these four strands of data. The nature of our study will not allow us too much room for critical analysis,\(^{140}\) but we will consider a theory as to how these data impacts our understanding of both Clement’s testimony and early Christianity in Egypt.

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\(^{139}\) Other such works which Clement cites: the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, and the *Traditions of Matthew*. See Stählin (Band IV.1, pp.26-29); also, Daniélou (*Gospel Message*, pp.453-458).

\(^{140}\) I will cite the studies which have guided me to the various data and will attempt to cite studies which do more in the way of critical analysis.
2.3.1 The Church in Alexandria founded by St. Mark

The testimony of the beginnings of Christianity in Egypt is presented to us by Eusebius. He records that Peter went to Rome in order to oppose Simon Magus and that Mark was asked to put Peter’s gospel in writing (the text seems to indicate that he did this in Rome). In this same passage Eusebius records that Clement had given this story in his Hypotyposeis and that Papias had also recorded this same tradition. The next statement from Eusebius, “Now it is said...” introduces the tradition that Mark traveled to Alexandria and was the first to preach the gospel which he had written. The use of the word φασίν suggests that Eusebius is moving from Clement to another source, probably an accepted oral tradition, but possibly a written one. This tradition of Mark coming to Alexandria agrees with the datum in Clement’s Ltr.Theo. One piece of data which seems to contradict this is the Pseudo-Clementine Homily which records that Barnabas is

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142 H.E. II.14.4-16.2.

143 Eusebius cites from Clement’s Hypotyposeis in VI.14.6,7 and from Papias in III.39.15. See Schoedel (ANRW 27.1); Munck (HTR 1959); Walls (VC 1967); and Lee (SP 1975).

144 H.E. II.16.1.

145 Barnard (HTR 1964, p.149), agrees that this points to another credible source, while Lee (SP 1975, p.425) shows that φασίν in many cases refers to a written source.

146 Ltr.Theo. 1.15-20 (GCS IV.1, p.xvii, 26-29). See Smith (Clement, pp.19-22; 279-281) for an account of the witnesses which agree with this datum.
the first person to preach in the streets of Alexandria. However, it is possible that Barnabas and Mark could have traveled together to Alexandria; this would account for Barnabas (the elder of the two) being named as the first to preach.

The documentary evidence is sketchy, but we do have at least three ancient witnesses to an early “apostolic” presence in Alexandria.

2.3.2 Barnabas and the Epistle of Barnabas

Clement refers to Barnabas as “the apostle” on two occasions and cites Barnabas as Scripture. Koester maintains, “the suggestion that Barnabas, Paul’s fellow missionary in Antioch, wrote this book [Barnabas] is not entirely impossible,” yet few scholars would take this position. Clement however,

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147 Ps-Clem 1.8; Bigg (Platonists, p.36). Barnard rates this tradition as “very doubtful,” (HTR 1964, p.145).
148 Acts 15:39 has them sailing for Cyprus. If the Jerusalem Council was around 48 A.D. (Koester, Introduction II, p.103) and if Peter goes to Rome around 54 A.D. (Bruce, Men, p.45), it is conceivable that Mark’s first visit to Alexandria was only preaching and that later (56 A.D., Ibid., p.46) he returned with his written gospel.
149 Levin (ANRW 25.6, p.4276) reminds us that nothing either confirms or contradicts Clement’s testimony on this point.
150 For further discussion see: Lietzmann (History I, pp.217-221); Koester (Introduction II, pp.276-279); Barnard, L.W., “The ‘Epistle of Barnabas’ and its Contemporary Setting,” ANRW 27.1 (1993), pp.159-207; Bruce (Men, pp.62-64).
151 Strom. II.6.31,2 and II.7.35,5. Origen follows Clement, see Danielou (Gospel Message, p.495).
See also, H.E. VII.2.1 where Clement mentions Barnabas among those who are given a special impartation of knowledge.
152 Koester continues, “...but [it is] highly unlikely in view of its radical rejection of the validity of the old covenant.” (Introduction II, p.277)
153 Barnard (ANRW 27.1, p.172) maintains that there is no historical connection between the Barnabas of Acts and the Barnabas epistle. He does list S. Tugwell, The Apostolic Fathers (London 1989), as one who takes this position. Against Barnard I would have to add the testimony of Clement and Origen as historical connections, some of the clearest historical witnesses we have. Jefford and Barnard lay out the arguments for three dating theories, both arguing against the early date (which would allow for Barnabas to be the author), based mainly on reasons why Barnabas would not have written it. Most view the anti-Jewish tone as the strongest argument. I would suggest that after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul (the latter having been initiated by the Jews) that perhaps Barnabas saw the destruction of the Temple as God’s judgment against the Jews. This could have been the emotional impetus to push him to the negative assessment we see in the epistle. The end of Jewish worship, as he had always known it, could have caused him to have the same kind of transformation in thinking as did Paul, who had been “a Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil. 3:4-6). See Danielou’s comments on the Jewish tone of Barnabas, (The Theology, pp.33-36). The arguments for the middle and later dates (based on dates and rules of various Roman emperors) seem extremely difficult to uphold; these dates are based on the author’s interpretation of apocalyptic texts cited from OT Daniel, (Barnabas XVI). Danielou points to a date around 120 AD based on the possibility of the Temple being rebuilt, (The Theology, p.36).
seems to have viewed Barnabas as the author of the writing. With the inclusion of Barnabas in the Codex Sinaiticus it is clear that this writing had authority early in the Egyptian Church; this also adds more evidence for why Barnabas is referred to as an “apostle” by Clement. Authorship aside, Barnabas is generally accepted as having an Alexandrian provenance; many scholars would also place the writing in the same genre as that of the NT Hebrews.  

2.3.3 The NT letter to the Hebrews

The “Letter to the Hebrews” represents another strand of data pointing to an early Alexandrian tradition. According to Eusebius, both Clement and Origen attributed Hebrews to the apostle Paul. The West was much more reluctant: Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus were among the early fathers who did not attribute authorship to Paul. The debate of authorship is not as relevant here, but there is another aspect of this NT document which has direct bearing on our discussion — that of content and provenance. It has been suggested that Hebrews shares ideas which are clearly reflective of Philo. F.F. Bruce says the writer was

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154 Koester (Introduction II, p.277); Bruce (Men, p.72); and Lietzmann (History I, pp.206-211).
156 Most scholars have concluded that this writing has an Alexandrian provenance: Guthrie, p.676; Bruce (Men, p.80); Koester (Introduction II, p.272); Lietzmann (History I, p.211); Hurst seems to be most convinced of a connection between Hebrews and Acts 7, the speech of Stephen, thus the Hellenistic Jews which would indirectly link it to Alexandria, (pp.89-106). He goes as far as to say, “When modern writers speak of ‘Hellenistic Judaism,’ what is meant is ‘Alexandrian Judaism’; we have almost nothing else,” p.12. Bruce (ANRW 25.4, p.3506) maintains that the writer had enough literary content in Moses to keep him from being dependent on the Philo/Plato connection.
157 H.E. VI.14.4; also II.17.12. Eusebius is quoting from the lost Hypotyposeis. Eusebius continues quoting from the homilies of Origen (H.E. VI.25.11-14) that he also had received the tradition that Paul was the author. It is possible that Origen heard this tradition from Clement, but he does credit “the men of old time” for this tradition. Origen acknowledges that the Greek is not the normal “rudeness in speech” which typifies Paul, but he says that the thoughts are Pauline.
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"not a Philonist, although he shares Philo’s intellectual background...the writer to the Hebrews did not absorb Plato’s doctrine into his system as Philo did."159 The consensus among scholars is that the author was most likely in the Hellenistic Jewish group, familiar with Philonian thought, possibly an Alexandrian.160 With scholars coming to this conclusion, it is curious that Apollos was never considered until Martin Luther first suggested him as the author161 — which takes us to our final strand of data.

2.3.4 The appearance of Apollos in the NT 162

In Acts 18 we have the enigmatic introduction of Apollos onto the scene:

Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John...he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.163

Numerous items come to our attention: first, Apollos comes from Alexandria; he was educated; he knew the Scriptures; he strongly refuted the Jews; and finally, he seems to be a Christian, but only knew John’s baptism. Our study will only allow us a brief look at this curious man, but his significance in the understanding of

159 Bruce (Men, p.81). Bruce also admits (ANRW 25.4, p.3507) that “there is enough resemblance in vocabulary to make it probable that the author of Hebrews knew some of the writings of Philo...” Hurst’s excellent study, The Epistle to the Hebrews, shows problems with the Philonian connection, however cannot discount it fully, “Philo and Wisdom probably demonstrate a much broader movement of Hellenistic Judaism than that limited to Egypt...Enough indications exist to point to a reasonable conclusion that Auctor developed certain OT ideas within the Jewish apocalyptic framework, while Philo developed the same themes within a Platonic framework,” pp.41,42.

160 Bruce (Men, pp.62, 80); Hurst, ch. 4 “The Stephen Tradition,” pp.89-106; and Koester (Introduction II, pp.272-274).


162 For further discussion see: Bruce W. Winter, Philo and Paul among the Sophists, SNTS Monograph 96 (1997); Bruce (Men, pp.65-76); Beatrice (ANRW 26.2).

Christianity in Alexandria is currently being reconsidered by some scholars.\footnote{Beatrice gives the most radical interpretation on Apollos and says in his introduction, “Such an important figure as Apollos, whom even Luke felt compelled to mention, may have hidden unsolved mysteries, which have been buried for centuries beneath a thick pall of censorship which has obliterated all historical record of them,” p.1235. I cannot agree with his argument in many places, especially that Apollos is the figure in conflict with Paul (in a direct and personal way) behind the 1 Cor. letter. Beatrice does make some excellent observations and, in combination with Winter’s study (SNTS Mono.96) brings us closer to understanding this problem in the Corinthian Church. M. Smith, “Paul’s Arguments as Evidence of the Christianity from which He Diverged,” in Christians Among Jews and Gentiles, edited by Nickelsburg and MacRae (Philadelphia 1986), pp.254-260, while acknowledging the apparent tension between Paul and Apollos, argues that a libertine group in support of the apostle Peter is also in conflict with Paul. In the middle of this debate is B. Peterson, Elocuence and the Proclamation of the Gospel in Corinth, SBLDS 163 (Atlanta 1998), who concludes that Paul’s opponents “are probably Jewish Christian missionaries who had adopted the style and standards of hellenistic society,” (p.162) and that these missionaries could have come from Antioch (pp.72-73, 73 n131).}

There is some discussion as to whether Apollos originated from Alexandria. The Western Codex D adds to 18:25 that he had been instructed “in his home city.”\footnote{Bauer believes he is from Alexandria, but doubts this could point to orthodox faith, (pp.46-47); Bruce says Alexandrian provenance is “highly probable,” (Men, p.67 n4); Winter shows this to be a possible reference to provenance without necessarily meaning “full citizenship.” He goes on to say it probably speaks more to the education of Apollos, (p.175 n142); also, see Beatrice, pp.1239-1240.}

The description of Apollos as ἀνήρ λόγιος deserves some attention. Winter shows that this adjective, along with Luke’s descriptive διδασκάλου (18:24) and ἐπιδείκνυμι (18:28) “have rhetorical connotations, so that the Acts account of Apollos would have conveyed to the readers that this Christian Jew from Alexandria depended on his rhetorical skills...”\footnote{Winter, p.176, especially notes 143 and 144. This is an expression used by Philo to describe those who have been trained in rhetoric (Ibid.). Beatrice informs us that this is an hapax legomenon, but fails to make the direct connection with Philo, (p.1236). He takes this expression further suggesting that it has “a deeper meaning”, he goes on to posit the theory that not only was Apollos already a believer, but that ζέκοι νὰ πενιαστ� ἔλαξε “refers without any doubt to his spiritual gift of speaking with tongues.” (p.1236 n7) His explanation for this exegesis is quite weak; the only part which I could agree with is the closeness of Luke’s description of Apollos with the Hellenists deacons in Acts 6, p.1237. His exegesis of} But Luke makes it clear that Apollos was not just a rhetorician; “he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately.” (Acts 18:25) Luke also says that “he had been instructed (ἤν κατηχημένος) in the way of the Lord.” The use of κατηχημένο here seems significant; the context demands that Apollos had been well-trained in the
Christian faith prior to his arrival, yet needed further instruction about baptism. We do not know how Apollos came to faith, but if "we wish to solve this particular difficulty, Luke's account is very important because it shows a type of pre-Pauline Christianity..." The only other NT information we get about Apollos is in the first Corinthian letter where some of his followers are apparently guilty of inappropriate conduct. We will conclude our section on Apollos with Bruce's concluding comments on the same discussion (which is the end of his chapter on the Hellenists),

Any attempt to reconstruct the course of early Alexandrian Christianity, and of Hellenistic Christianity in general, must reckon seriously with the implications of the little we are told about Apollos, this cultured Alexandrian Jew with a mastery of the scriptures and an accurate knowledge of the story of Jesus, who for a brief space traverses the Pauline circle and endears himself to its members and their leader, makes a powerful impression on fellow-Jews and fellow-Christians in Ephesus and Corinth, and then vanishes from our sight.

2.3.5 Conclusions concerning the Minority Apostolic Tradition

We have four strands of data here which all point to Alexandria. We have Clement's testimony concerning three of them (he says nothing of the NT Apollos). We have at least two early "apostolic" documents (Epistle of Barnabas and NT Hebrews) for Clement which seem to have an Alexandrian provenance. The tradition of the founding of Christianity in Alexandria involves two men of

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1 Cor. is equally radical, but he does give a caveat (which could have come much earlier), "This [interpretation] will not be without risks and the results will obviously be incomplete and at times problematic..." p.1251.
167 Bruce points out the significance of the "disciples" account (Acts 19:1ff) following that of Apollos, as possibly showing this phenomenon of the gospel moving outside the set "apostolic" route, (Men, pp.69-70).
168 Beatrice, p.1238.
169 The most extensive discussions I have seen: Beatrice, who has determined that Apollos himself (and his brand of Christianity) is the problem; Winter, who sees the struggle as Paul versus sophists, pp.145-230; and Koester, who refuses to try to speculate, (Introduction II, pp.120-126).
170 Bruce (Men, pp.84-85).
apostolic authority from Clement’s point of view, Barnabas and Mark (as was Luke to Paul) as the author of Peter’s gospel. The history of Apollos (the little we know), his Alexandrian/Hellenistic-Jewish connections, go without comment by Clement, but point to an early non-Pauline witness which had some impact in Corinth as well as in Ephesus, and originated in Egypt. Each individual strand of evidence has only a small amount of significance, but when taken together as indicators, form an argument not easily dismissed.

I would suggest the following scenario as a possible way the Egyptian Church was established: taking the Lukan account, Egyptian Jews (probably some from Alexandria) were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11). They are exposed to a primitive gospel which they take back to Egypt. At a later time Barnabas and Mark travel to Egypt to bring “apostolic” authority to the region (Acts 15:39). After the parting of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40) it would make sense that Barnabas would want to take a closer look at the Hellenistic Jewish Christianity which seems to have stilled earlier conflict (similar in nature to the Gentile problem) in the Christian community — the problems mentioned in Acts 6 with the Hellenist widows and Stephen’s speech in Acts 7.

171 Perhaps the parting of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40) had more to do with the issue of table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians rather than what to do with Mark? See Esler, Philip Francis, Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts, SNTS Monograph 57 (Cambridge 1987), p.107. While I do not agree with much of Esler’s thesis ([Luke] “re-writes the history of early Christianity relating to this subject...” p.107), there are many points which I do agree with — this possible reason for the parting of Paul and Barnabas being one of them. Rather than re-writing the history I think Luke has selective recall.

172 Ibid., pp.131-163. Esler wrongly criticises F.F. Bruce (p.136) for neglecting this issue in his Acts commentary when he does so in another work (Men and Movements 1979, pp.49-85). Bruce’s work should be consulted alongside Esler’s. The following statement by Esler (p.135) deserves comment: “Unfortunately, we do not possess any sources Luke may have used in writing the narrative in Acts 6.1-8.3 and no earlier account than his of these events exists for the purpose of comparison. This makes redactional analysis difficult.” That we have no other source (see Bruce on this, pp.55-57) here points not to a Lukan redaction, but to a Lukan report on what was a common Hellenist position. Bruce on this issue: “It is best to regard Stephen’s speech as a manifesto of the group in which he was a leader — a
the separation, Barnabas heads with Mark to Cyprus and then goes on to Alexandria.\textsuperscript{173} Clement’s testimony might not be completely grounded in historical fact, but it seems likely that the traditions are based on some kind of visit by these two men. The description of Apollos (Acts 18:24) indicates the presence of an Egyptian Christianity with some kind of philosophical background.\textsuperscript{174} This could be Jewish Christians who had been influenced by Philonian thought prior to coming under the influence of the Christian gospel. Acts 18:24-28 says Apollos makes a positive contribution into the Pauline circle; it is plausible that Paul took some interest in the Philonian ideas presented by Apollos. This might explain the presence of Paul’s allegorical use in Galatians 4:21-31 and the “milk...meat” analogy in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.\textsuperscript{175} What if Paul has been influenced by Philonic thought which included ideas about prayer and θεωρία? What if those ideas were developed by Paul and his circle? or by Apollos?\textsuperscript{176} Or maybe Beatrice is correct in his exegesis of 1 Corinthians — Apollos is the problem because he stressed the philosophical (including θεωρία) too much for Paul’s liking.

There are some real problems with this theory besides the fact that it is based on one speculation on top of another. We do not know enough about the

\textsuperscript{173} Travel and trade between Cyprus and Alexandria were well established; it would have been a natural route for Barnabas to take. See \textit{CAH VII-1}, pp.134, 161.

\textsuperscript{174} See the studies listed in §2.3.4 (pp.66-68 notes).

\textsuperscript{175} See Hurst (SNTS Mono.65); Winter (SNTS Mono.96); and Beatrice (ANRW 26.2).

\textsuperscript{176} Hurst’s study (SNTS Mono.65) discusses some of these possible connections and should be consulted. Also Brenk, F.E., “Plutarch, Judaism and Christianity,” in \textit{Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition}, ed. by Mark Joyle (Aldershot, UK 1997), pp.97-117, makes the interesting suggestion that Paul was familiar with Middle Platonism and gives evidence to this through the address in Acts 17 where he speaks against the Stoics and Epicureans with no mention of Platonists. Brenk observes that if Paul was familiar with the former groups he must have also been familiar with the Middle Platonists, see especially pp.104-107.
background of Apollos — whether or not he had been exposed to Philonian philosophical thought. The lack of any real evidence in Paul of this contemplative prayer presents a problem. But there could be room in his “message of wisdom” for such ideas.\textsuperscript{177} We must not deny the possibility that he kept some of his ideas out of his letters. I agree with Lilla on this point.\textsuperscript{178}

This data urges reconsideration of Clement’s claim to an esoteric apostolic tradition. This does not mean that we assume Clement’s oral tradition to be exactly what he claims; it is entirely possible that his oral tradition comes from an Encratic Christianity corrupted by Philonian ideas (something like what Beatrice has suggested) and that he has wrongly been taught that it originated from Jesus. If so, then Hanson is correct. It is also possible that this oral tradition represents an “apostolic” strain which is in a minority tradition such as NT Hebrews, Barnabas, and Apollos (the Hellenists) represent. As Beatrice said, this could be a “pre-Pauline Christianity.”\textsuperscript{179} This might help to explain why the Alexandrian “school” stands out from the rest of early Christianity and also why it persisted (and still persists). It is also possible (however unlikely) that this tradition is exactly what Clement claims it to be: a tradition “handed down” from Jesus to His main apostles. More work will have to be done in this area (and maybe some additional documentary evidence will surface) before a definitive answer can be found.

\textsuperscript{177} See 1 Cor. 2:6-15. Also, he says in 2 Cor. 12:4 he “heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.” The whole “milk...meat” presentation (1 Cor. 3:1-3) seems to fit this idea as well as does Hebrews 5:11-14.

\textsuperscript{178} Lilla sees an esoteric tradition in 1 Cor. 2-3. (Clement, pp.147-148). See p.80 n203 below.

\textsuperscript{179} Beatrice, p.1238.
Whatever the source for this oral tradition, Clement says he will record it in *Stromateis*, yet makes it clear that he will do so in a way which will keep the unlearned from finding it. Though now written, he is following the ancient examples for keeping truth hidden.

### 2.4 The Hidden Nature of *Stromateis*

We have seen that Clement claims to be the recipient of an apostolic oral tradition and that he intends to put this tradition into writing in the *Stromateis*; it is also clear that he intends this tradition to be hidden. Why does he hide this tradition? He addresses this question numerous times;

Some things I purposely omit, in the exercise of a wise selection, afraid to write what I guarded against speaking: not grudging—for that were wrong—but fearing for my readers, lest they stumble by taking them in a wrong sense; and, as the proverb says, we should be found “reaching a sword to a child.” 180

But since this tradition (παράδοσις) is not published alone for him who perceives the magnificence of the word; it is requisite, therefore, to hide in a mystery the wisdom spoken, which the Son of God taught...And even now I fear, as it is said, “to cast the pearls before swine, lest they tread them under foot, and turn and rend us.” For it is difficult to exhibit the really pure and transparent words respecting the true light, to swinish and untrained hearers...“But what ye hear in the ear,” says the Lord, “proclaim upon the houses;” bidding them receive the secret traditions of the true knowledge, and expound them aloft and conspicuously...181

This παράδοσις is guarded so that the heretics do not make claim to it. We have already seen (according to the *Ltr. Theo.*) what happened to the *SGM* when it fell into the wrong hands. This gives us another example of how Clement deals with shared points of contact and the Gnostics; he refuses to abdicate this tradition, but in wisdom he will keep it hidden.182 Also, Clement assumes that his writing will be available to a wider audience and he fears that this γνώσις could be

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180 *Strom.* I.1.14,3.
181 *Strom.* I.12.55.1,3-4; 56,2.
182 Notice the NT text (Matt. 10:27) Clement uses in the above passage (I.12.56,2) to defend the hidden nature of his παράδοσις actually seems to betray his position. See I.1.13,3 where he does something similar.
misunderstood to the detriment of the hearer. A young, untrained believer could misuse the γνώσις, bringing trouble both to himself and to others. There is also possibly a "marketing" concern. Clement is competing for students in an environment rich with philosophical/religious ideas. As we have seen, many of these systems included some kind of esoteric teaching. There is a certain attraction which a "secret" doctrine brings. Perhaps Clement is offering his coursework with this in mind. All of these are more practical reasons for hiding this παράδοσις, and I believe each plays a part (some more than others) in Clement's motivation. But I think his main reason for hiding this tradition is a philosophical/historical one. Let us briefly consider this issue.

Clement takes great care to illustrate to his reader the historical precedents for hiding Truth; he turns to the philosophers, the OT, Jesus, and to the apostle Paul. Clement actually only discusses this hidden nature of truth on four occasions, but his main discussion covers a large section of Book V. We need to pause here to look more closely at this very important section of Stromateis.

2.4.1 Books I-IV: A Plan Hidden by Disorder

We cannot at this time become engrossed in a discussion on the layout and plan of Stromateis; we do this in Chapter Four. But to get an understanding of the

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183 See Strom. I.1.14,3 where Clement speaks of this being like handing a sword to a child.
184 The following helpful comments were offered to me by Prof. John McGuckin during a conversation at the Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church conference, Sydney, February 1999, used with his permission. See his article, "Christian Asceticism and the Early School of Alexandria," in Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition, SCH 22 (Padstow 1985), pp.25-39.
185 See Mondesert (Clement, pp.56-57). Mondesert describes Clement as having been "seduced" by the idea of an esoteric tradition, "it is always flattering and a bit dangerous to claim for oneself that which does not permit any contradiction," p.57.
186 Short discussions are contained in the whole chapter of Strom. I.1 and the short chapter of I.12. Then there is the section VI.15.124,5-132,5. In Book V this discussion runs from chapter 4 to 12.
importance of *Stromateis* V, we need a brief explanation. Books I-IV seem to be the extension of Clement’s discussion of ethics which he began in *Paidagogus*, a work largely used to train catechumens. Mondésert’s list of the basic theme of the books in *Stromateis* is probably about as close as one can get in one sentence.\(^{187}\) Although the feel in *Stromateis* is not as parochial as *Paidagogus*, Clement is really still acting as an instructor. We have already seen (§2.2.1, pp.39-46) Clement’s warning that he would hide the oracles amongst philosophical categories; the whole of Book I is an apology for using philosophy. In Book II he promises to get into different subject matter, “the department of symbol and enigma,” (II.1.1,2) but this does not happen until Book V. Before we get there, Clement discusses numerous other topics, some important, others redundant: faith, hope, the response to God from fear or love, second repentance, then back to the Mosaic Law and ethics (somewhat like the end of Book I), and as he comes to the end he seems to stumble onto one last subject — marriage. Then we come to Book III, his most polemical writing against the Gnostics concerning marriage and the proper understanding of sexuality. Book III was most likely a separate work which Clement simply stuck into *Stromateis* because it fit the immediate need to discuss marriage.\(^{188}\) Here is the wandering style, what I believe to be the purposeful haphazard approach which Clement has chosen to hide the παράδοσις. He tells the reader where he wants to go (II.1.1,2), and then wanders around hoping to lose

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\(^{188}\) It seems we have just glossed over a huge section of *Stromateis* with a very broad brush. I do not at all mean to say that these topics are not important to Clement; every category which he addresses is important to him. But this is the style he himself promised, “Some things my treatise will hint; on some it will linger...the truth mixed up...or covered over and hidden.” *Strom.* I.1.15,2 and 18,1. For the discussion on Book III, see §4.1 (pp.141-152).
the easily discouraged; the diligent reader, he knows, will continue the hunt.

The main reason we must jump ahead to Book V is that our study is concerned with Clement's use of θεωρία. It is obvious from the frequency of our term (see Appendix 1, p.296) that Books II-IV are not as critical. Book I has numerous occurrences of θεωρία, but it is mostly introductory in nature. Book II has only a few passages which are important for our purposes; we will discuss these few texts as we move along in our study, but they are, in Clement's words, "hints." It will be noted in Appendix 1 that there are no occurrences of θεωρία in Book III. We see this as evidence that this was a separate treatise written prior to the remainder of Stromateis, but more importantly, shows the lack of relevance for our study. When we come to Book IV Clement again mentions his most immediate target, "in the sequel...we shall set forth the department of symbols." (IV.1.1,2) Here we must also note that he alerts the reader to yet another topic he wants to discuss, first principles. (IV.1.2,1) But he admits that before he gets to this, he must "complete the discourse on ethics." (IV.1.3,2) Book IV is very much like Book II for our study: there are a few hints dropped here and there, but mainly Clement is going over ground of little use to us. The main thrust of Book IV is on martyrdom.

To conclude our comments on Books I-IV we need to make one more observation.

We will see as our study progresses that Clement does leave hints along the way, foreshadowings of important things to come. He does this at the end of Book IV,
Those, then, who run down created existence and vilify the body are wrong, not considering that the frame of man was formed erect for the contemplation of heaven.\textsuperscript{189}

Then follows a strange discussion, facilitated with what appears to be gnostic allegorical exegesis, on communicating with heaven (IV.26.169-170) which ends with another promise of future discussion, “...the Pythagoreans....[did not think] the Divinity could not hear those who speak silently....We shall, however, treat of prayer in due course by and by.” (IV.26.171,1-2) Here Clement mentions the concept of silent prayer for the first time; we will see that this is an extremely important topic (see §5.6, pp.237-255). This brings us to Book V.

2.4.2 Book V: the Revealing Begins to take Shape

“Of the gnostic so much has been cursorily, as it were, written.” (V.1.1,1) What a beginning to one of the most important books in the \textit{Stromateis}. As Mondésert correctly points out, Book V is critical as evidence for the esoteric teaching which Clement claims to produce.\textsuperscript{190} The entire book is given to the discussion which he has previously promised (II.1.1,2 and IV.1.2,1), how the ancients used symbols and enigmas to conceal their teaching. Very early in the chapter he reveals why he will spend so much time on this symbolism,

For, bound in this earthly body, we apprehend the objects of sense by means of the body...But if one expect to apprehend all things by the senses, he has fallen far from the truth. Spiritually, therefore, the apostle writes respecting the knowledge of God, “For now we see as through a glass, but then face to face.” For the vision of the truth is given but to few.\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{189} \textit{Strom.} IV.26.163,1. There are other examples of this foreshadowing such as the texts about Moses throughout \textit{Stromateis}; see our discussion in §5.5.1 (pp.218-220).

\textsuperscript{190} See “L’ésotérisme,” Mondésert (Clément, pp.47-62).

\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Strom.} V.1.7,4-5.
Mondésert says that the main idea in Book V is “symbolisme, et non pas de l’ésotérisme,” but he fails to see why symbolism is so important to Clement. He tells us in the passage above that anyone who expects to understand higher things with only the senses will fail miserably — this understanding is only given to a few. The whole point of Book V is to bring the astute reader to the understanding that one must go beyond the senses to understand the gnostic teaching. Symbolism has always been used to hide the esoteric truths which Clement wants to reveal here in Stromateis. The focus for Clement is not the symbolism, but to show what those symbols have been concealing.

Mondésert is correct when he says that Clement misunderstands the text of Paul quoted in V.10.64,4. He then attempts to show with an outline of Book V how the context proves his point, but his entire argument fails on one simple fact which seems to escape him (and those who take his lead on this point): the main idea of Book V is symbolism, but Clement is showing how esoteric teachings have been hidden through symbolism. Mondésert eventually points to the allegorical method as Clement’s esoteric tradition. In the same way that he has missed the purpose of symbolism, he has missed the point of the allegorical method. The allegorical method is important, but more important is the purpose for that special reading of Scripture. The allegorical method reveals the hidden teachings.

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192 Mondésert (Clément, p.54).
193 Ibid., pp.52-55. It is not entirely clear to me which biblical quotation Mondésert is referring to, but since Clement seems to misuse (by our 20th century standards) many of the Pauline citations in this section it really does not matter. Mondésert’s discussion is important because both Hanson (Origen’s, pp.54-58) and Osborn (JTS 1959, p.341) follow him in his basic ideas. Lilla (Clément, pp.144-150) does not agree with this position.
194 Mondésert (Clément, p.110). He builds to this conclusion through Chapter IV, “Le mystère de l’Écriture.” Again, both Hanson and Osborn follow this conclusion (see note 59 above), that the esoteric tradition is the allegorical method.
This brings us back to Clement’s reason for citing the historical precedents in *Strom.* V.4-10. Clement shows the use of this symbolism and allegorical method in the philosophers, the OT, Jesus, and finally in the apostle Paul. He does this to justify his own methodology of hiding the esoteric teachings he has promised. We obviously cannot go over this whole section, but we should look at some examples which Clement uses in each of these four categories listed above.

Clement cites numerous examples of philosophers hiding their teachings; in V.4 he cites the Egyptian use of letters and shapes and in V.5 the symbols of the Pythagoreans. In V.9 and 10 he reveals the secrecy of the Greeks,

It was not only the Pythagoreans and Plato, then, that concealed many things; but the Epicureans too say that they have things that may not be uttered, and do not allow all to peruse those writings….And the disciples of Aristotle say that some of their treatises are esoteric, and others common and exoteric. Further, those who instituted the mysteries, being philosophers, buried their doctrines in myths, so as not to be obvious to all. Did they then, by veiling human opinions, prevent the ignorant from handling them; and was it not more beneficial for the holy and blessed contemplation of realities to be concealed? 195

Rightly then, Plato, in the epistles, treating of God, says: “We must speak in enigmas; that...he who reads may remain ignorant.” For the God of the universe, who is above all speech, all conception, all thought, can never be committed to writing, being inexpressible even by His own power.196

One interesting thing to note in his citations of the philosophers is that he consistently sprinkles biblical witnesses into the discussion, as if to keep “the orthodox” from reacting against it. Yet overall, the philosophers are shown in a positive light. In V.10.66,3 Plato is cited as “truth loving;” the Pythagorean vow of silence is shown to be not only good, but something taken from Moses.197

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195 *Strom.* V.9.58,1-5. Notice here the reference to θεοπία among the philosophers.
196 *Strom.* V.10.65,1-2.
197 *Strom.* V.11.67,3. See the discussion on silence, §5.6 (pp.237-255).
The OT gets sprinkled in here and there, but V.6 is devoted to the mystical meaning of the Tabernacle and the High Priest.\(^{198}\) The chapter opens; “It were tedious to go over all the Prophets and the Law, specifying what is spoken in enigmas; for almost the whole Scripture gives its utterances in this way.”\(^{199}\) This section on the High Priest begins; “Now the high priest’s robe is the symbol of the world of sense.” (V.6.37,1) Though we do not want to discuss this critical passage here, it must be noted how the *gnostic* sheds his robe (the senses, V.6.39,3) in order to be “replenished with insatiable contemplation face to face.” (V.6.40,1) Again, we see the direction of Book V leading the reader away from the senses.

It is interesting that this lengthy section in Book V only has one quotation of Jesus speaking about hidden Truth (V.12.80,6). Only four other times in all of *Stromateis* does Clement quote the words of Jesus referring to hidden Truth.\(^{200}\) When Clement seeks NT prooftexts for the hidden nature of Truth he prefers Paul.

The apostle Paul is cited many times throughout Book V to support hidden tradition.\(^{201}\) We will focus our attention on a section which contains three Pauline passages;

> “Howbeit we speak wisdom among those that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor or the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery...” Wherefore he adds, “But we preach, as it is written, what eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and hath not entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love Him. For God hath revealed it

\(^{198}\) Strom. V.6.37,1-40.4. See §4.3.4 (pp. 184-190) where we discuss this text more fully.

\(^{199}\) Strom. V.6.32.1.

\(^{200}\) Strom. I.1.2,3; I.12.56,2; VI.15.124,5. Clement uses all of these in the context of Jesus speaking in parables. One other example is I.1.13,3 where Clement uses a text which seems to speak against hidden Truth, yet interprets it in the opposite way.

\(^{201}\) I count 14 citations from “the apostle Paul” from the sections on hidden Truth which are clearly used as prooftexts; this includes nine from 1 Corinthians, one from Ephesians, three from Colossians, and one from Hebrews.
to us by the Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God...”

...“Brethren, I could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, not with meat: for ye were not able...” 202

Three separate NT texts are quoted here by Clement, two of them used again in Book V, and one which is a significant text used elsewhere. All three come from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, the important second and third chapters. These are important chapters because Paul appears to be speaking about an esoteric knowledge; this is exactly why Clement is drawn to these texts. The first text (1 Cor. 2:6-8) contains the important phrases, “we speak wisdom among the perfect...the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery.” Clement’s use of this text seems obvious within the larger context of Book V where he seeks NT verification of the hidden nature of Truth. He uses this text twice more in Book V with the same purpose in mind. 203 To continue the V.4.25 text, Clement continues in almost commentary fashion with 1 Cor. 2:9,10 where he quotes, “God hath revealed it to us by the Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God.” (V.4.25,4) This passage is not used again in Book V, but is cited in two other places to indicate this same revealing of hidden Truth. 204 Finally, he cites 1 Cor. 3:1-3, a text which is critical to Clement, “Brethren, I could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal...I have fed you with milk, not with

202 Strom. V.4.25,2-26.1. Clement is citing: 1 Cor. 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 2:9,10; and 1 Cor. 3:1-3.

203 Strom. V.10.65,5; V.12.80,4. I agree with Lilla’s assessment (Clement, pp.147-148) that Paul is speaking of an esoteric knowledge in 1 Cor. 2-3. On this Pauline text see Pearson, Birger, “Philo, Gnosis, and the New Testament,” SAC, Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity (Minneapolis 1990), pp.165-182. Pearson shows that Paul is dealing with Philonian influence in Corinth, but maintains that full blown Gnosticism could not have been present for Philo or Paul, pp.181-182. Beatrice takes this Philonian theory a bit further by suggesting that the problem is a struggle between Apollos (and his followers) and Paul, p.1264.

204 Strom. II.2.7.3. This text points to allegorical method as the hidden teaching, and Strom. VI.18.166,3; this text points to the hidden teaching being revealed, of necessity, by God.
CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN θεώρια

meat...” We have already seen (§2.2.1, pp.39-46) the importance of the “food” theme; in our next section we will discuss the significance of this “milk...meat” passage in more detail — right now we just want to notice that it represents the πίστις believer and the γνώσις believer. In Book V Clement is urging the reader to become a γνώσις believer: to embrace this movement, expressed through symbols and enigmas, away from the senses and towards something better — his παράδοσις.

2.5 θεώρια: Part of the Secret παράδοσις

There are two significant sections of Stromeàteis which give us some evidence that this oral tradition includes θεώρια, a mystical teaching of spirituality and prayer. In these sections Clement introduces his discussion on θεώρια with comments about oral tradition.

We have just seen that Book V is the most lengthy presentation of the hidden nature of Truth. In Chapter 10 Clement demonstrates how and why the apostle

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205 This text is critical in Clement’s catechetical instruction manual, Paidagogus. See our discussion on the catechetical school in Alexandria, §4.2.3 (pp.157-167).

206 D. Brakke, Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism (Oxford 1995), wrongly says “Clement did not use these verses to distinguish among different kinds of Christians, but rather between Christians and non-Christians,” p.178n. He is correct with respect to Strom. I.11.53,3, but he is not correct with respect to Paid. I.6.34-45 and he seems to have missed the example I have cited here. See Judith L. Kovacs, “Concealment and Gnostic Exegesis: Clement of Alexandria’s Interpretation of the Tabernacle,” SP 31 (1997), pp.414-437. Kovacs shows that Clement’s use of the “milk” text in Paid. I.6 (as well as in the example from Strom. V) is meant to be his defense of the “ecclesiastical Christians” (p.415n) against Valentinian criticism. (p.450f) Clement is indeed using this “milk/meat” distinction as a way of showing the difference between πίστις Christians and γνώσις ones. Clement puts Valentinian ideas “to work in the service of his own ecclesiastical γνώσις...he maintains that γνώσις is built on the foundation of πίστις... and he substitutes the idea of two stages of salvation for their [the Valentinian] notion of two ways of salvation.” (pp.418-419)

207 Kovacs gives four purposes of Book V.6 (which could be used for the whole of Book V): 1) to demonstrate how Scripture uses concealment, 2) serves as an example of Gnostic exegesis/concealment itself, 3) engages against the Valentinians, and 4) prepares the reader for the next step into a higher level of spirituality, p.437.

208 Strom. V.10.62,2-66,3; VI.7.61,1-8.62,2. There are two other passages where Clement makes this connection: Strom. VI.8.68,1-3 (this text is not completely clear) and VI.15.131,5-132,5. These three clear texts will be discussed below.
Paul concealed and revealed both in his writings and ministry. He cites several texts to show this, then he says,

For there were certainly, among the Hebrews, some things delivered unwritten. "For when ye ought to be teachers for the time...ye have again need that one teach you which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food....solid food belongs to those who are of full age...let us go on to perfection."\(^{209}\)

Here we have the "food" theme again; this alerts the reader that a revealing section has come. This text leads the reader to another very important one; to avoid a long citation I will give V.10.63,1-66,1 in an elliptical fashion,

Barnabas, too, who in person preached the word along with the apostle in the ministry of the Gentiles, says, "I write to you most simply, that ye may understand." Then below, exhibiting already a clearer trace of gnostic tradition...Blessed be our Lord, brethren, who has put into our hearts wisdom, and the understanding of His secrets.\(^{210}\)

For the prophet says, "Who shall understand the Lord's parable but the wise and understanding, and he that loves his Lord?" It is but for few to comprehend these things...[several OT texts which speak of hidden truth] Wherefore instruction, which reveals hidden things..."For I know," says the apostle, "that when I come to you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ," designating the spiritual gift, and the gnostic communication, which being present he desires to impart to them.... But only to a few of them is shown what those things are which are contained in the mystery. Rightly then, Plato, in the Epistles, treating of God, says: "We must speak in enigmas..."

...this is what the holy Apostle Paul says, preserving the prophetic and truly ancient secret from which the teachings that were good were derived by the Greeks: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them who are perfect... but we speak the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery." Then proceeding, he thus inculcates the caution against the divulging of his words to the multitude in the following terms: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, even to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, not with meat: for ye were not yet able; neither are ye now able. For ye are yet carnal."

\(^{209}\) Strom. V.10.62,2-4. Here Clement is citing Hebrews 5:12-6:1 (as Pauline). I have deleted parts, but Clement cites the text in full with short parenthetical comments.

\(^{210}\) Clement quotes Barnabas 6:5, 8-10b. I have included only 6:5, 10a. In this text "Barnabas" is explaining the hidden meaning of Ex.33:1-3. This is an interesting passage: Clement is quoting Barnabas who is paraphrasing an OT text mixed with gnostic exegesis. See Prigent, Pierre and Kraft, Robert A., Épître de Barnabé SC 172 (Paris 1971), pp.120-123.
Here Clement uses various citations, mainly Paul and OT, to support the argument he has been presenting throughout Book V — God's truth is hidden. But notice, he inserts comments along the way which imply that he is about to reveal some "gnostic communication" (64,5). We also notice that he uses some of the same Pauline texts which he had introduced earlier (V.4.25,2-26,1; see note 197), ending with the "milk...meat" analogy. This section introduces a very important passage,

If, then, "the milk" is said by the apostle to belong to the babes, and "meat" to be the food of the full-grown, milk will be understood to be catechetical instruction—the first food, as it were, of the soul. And meat is the mystic contemplation (ἡ ἐποπτικὴ θεωρία); for this is the flesh and the blood of the Word, that is, the comprehension of the divine power and essence. For the knowledge of the divine essence is the meat and drink of the divine Word. 211

Three times in Book V 212 he uses the analogy of "milk...meat" to illustrate two levels of believers, and now "meat" is "the mystic contemplation." We need to note the connection Clement has made: he uses the symbolic nature of philosophy coupled with the Scriptures to "awaken in the perceptive reader a desire for the true γνώσις." 213 Then he uses Paul's references to an esoteric teaching (the "milk...meat" analogy), and now he has revealed: "meat is mystic contemplation."

This confirms what we have seen in our discussion of Clement's use of the "food" theme in Strom. I.1 — this gnostic "food" is θεωρία. We have just seen how Clement ends Strom. V.10; V.11 then begins with the following pronouncement;

Now the sacrifice which is acceptable to God is unswerving abstraction from the body and its passions...For he who neither employs his eyes in the exercise of thought, nor draws aught from his senses, but with pure mind itself applies to objects, [this man] practises the true philosophy. 214

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211 Strom. V.10.66,2-3.
212 Added to the text above: Strom. V.4.26,1-2; 10.62,2-4.
213 Kovacs, p.437; see footnote 207 above.
CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN θεόπια

From this context, this abstraction appears to be Clement’s definition of θεόπια, his understanding of what it means to receive this spiritual “meat.” Notice also, he says this person “practises the true philosophy.” He then proceeds with a discourse on apophatic theology, which covers Strom. V.11 and 12.

The remainder of Book V represents a digression into the familiar topic of “the plagiarism of the Greeks from the Barbarian [Hebrew] philosophy.” This digression will last through Book VI.5, but not without a hint of the revealing discussion he has left behind. Book VI opens with a reminder of the “meat;” “For the Lord enjoined ‘to labour for the meat which endureth to eternity.’” We have already mentioned (§2.2.1, pp.39-46) that Clement uses the gnostic “food” theme to cue the reader of a revealing section. Here he is not revealing, but reminding the reader of the important topic he had discussed in Book V. He reminds the reader of the role the Paidagogus played in preparing the believer for this meat.

He also brings the layout of the Stromateis to remembrance;

...promiscuously variegated like a meadow. And such being the case, my notes shall serve as kindling sparks; and in the case of him, who is fit for knowledge, if he chances to fall in with them, research made with exertion will turn out to his benefit and advantage. For it is right that labour should precede not only food, but also, much more knowledge.

So just as our discussion here has taken a slight detour, Clement throws the casual reader off the trail with “the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden.” But he does continue, as was his announced plan, to

215 We will see in Chapters Three and Five that this is not the sum of his “definition,” but up to this point (Strom. V.11) it is the closest thing he has given to a definition.
216 Strom. V.14.89,1. Clement has already given such a discourse in Book I, Chapters 13-17, Book II, Chapter 18, and in a similar way in the discussion of hidden Truth in Book V.
217 Strom. VI.1.1.2.
218 Strom. VI.1.1.3.
219 Strom. VI.1.2.2.
220 Strom. I.1.18,1.
give hints along the way. After this extended amount of wandering, he comes back to this theme of mystical contemplation (Book VI.7), again introducing it with a comment on oral tradition;

[Christ] Himself taught the apostles during His presence; then it follows that the gnosis...which is sure and reliable, as being imparted and revealed by the Son of God, is wisdom. And if, too, the end of the wise man is contemplation, that of those who are still philosophers aims at it, but never attains it...And the gnosis itself is that which has descended by transmission to a few, having been imparted unwritten by the apostles. Hence, then, knowledge or wisdom ought to be exercised up to the eternal and unchangeable habit of contemplation.

So we see that the concept of contemplation is clearly introduced, or connected with, oral tradition in at least two major sections. We also must note that Clement is challenging the philosophers — they can never attain true θεωρία, only the gnostic “practises the true philosophy.” (V.11.67,1-2)

In Strom. VI.8 Clement returns again to this “milk...meat” theme saying that “milk” is the study of philosophy, which must mean that “meat” is again contemplation. As we have mentioned, this “milk...meat” analogy is an example of Clement’s subtle way of dropping hints to the reader and is part of his revealing.

2.6 Conclusions

In this chapter we have seen that the concept of θεωρία is first used significantly by Plato as a physical “seeing,” but that he also uses the term in a figurative sense, “seeing” abstract ideas. It should be remembered that although the category of Ideas dominates his system, he only uses θεωρία in this context a

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221 Strom. I.1.15,1; IV.2.4,1.
222 Strom. VI.7.61,1-3.
223 Strom. VI.8.62,1-2. The “meat” as θεωρία is implied into this text from VI.7.61,2-3.
few times. When we come to Philo both the occurrences of θεωρία, and the context of “seeing” in an incorporeal sense, increase. There is a sense that he is speaking of a spiritual “seeing,” but this is the minority usage.

Neither the LXX nor the NT belong in the θεωρία trajectory which is represented by Plato, Philo and Clement. Both of these use the term typically as “seeing” in the physical sense. We must also rule out the writings of the Apostolic Fathers as an influence upon Clement. The Gnostics (as represented by the Nag Hammadi texts) do share a similar trajectory with respect to θεωρία, but he has the most in common with other writings of Alexandrian (or generally Egyptian) origin.

Clement’s use of θεωρία has been influenced by Plato and Philo, yet his is not a simple borrowing. Clement has either inherited this usage, or he is the originator of a new development. His claim to have been a recipient of a secret oral tradition (although there is disagreement as to the source of this tradition) should be given consideration. There is no solid argument for discounting his testimony. There is good evidence, however, that Clement represents a “minority apostolic tradition” which emanates from Alexandria. There are indicators of this tradition coming from several places: the tradition of Barnabas and Mark founding the Church in Alexandria, Philo, the author of NT Hebrews, NT Apollos, and the Epistle of Barnabas.

We have also seen throughout this chapter that Clement’s modus operandi will be to reveal and conceal. This is critical for understanding Stromateis. We will see in Chapter Five how Clement finally uses this reveal/conceal methodology in Strom. VII, the pinnacle of the work.
Finally, we see that θεωρία is a significant word and concept in Stromateis. Indeed, what we see is a use of θεωρία which is greater than the sum of its parts. This evidence also points to Clement’s παράδοσις, the oral traditions which he received from “blessed men” who had preserved “the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles...”224 This secret γνώσις, this “apostolic” tradition, includes a teaching of θεωρία, a spiritual contemplation, the spiritual “meat” for the gnostic. Following the Apostle Paul, Clement has given great importance to the concept of two levels of believers and their particular foods, “milk” and “meat.” We have seen in this chapter how Clement designates the “meat” as the advanced food for the gnostic, the θεωρία.

In Chapter Four we will look more closely at this aspect of his system; we will see that Clement has a spiritual pathway which he intends the gnostic to follow — and θεωρία is the highest stage on this pathway. Before we do this we need to get a better understanding of what Clement means when he speaks of θεωρία; this will be the focus of Chapter Three.

224 Strom. I.1.11,2-3.
CHAPTER THREE

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF ὑποτήρια

The survey of ὑποτήρια helps us to understand the development of the word up until the time of Clement. We acknowledged that Clement's use of the word represents a further development from an intellectual "seeing" to something different, a spiritual "seeing," or contemplation. In this chapter we want to look at several categories which occur in Clement's use of ὑποτήρια: apophaticism, or the via negativa, ἀπάθεια (the absence of all passions), μυστήριον (the concept of mystery), ἐποπτεία (the mystic vision of the soul), and a few categories which are associated with the ascent of the gnostic soul into the heavenly realms.

Because the scholarly focus is usually on Clement's theology or philosophy, these categories tend to be examined in that context. There has been very little discussion on how these categories relate to Clement's concept of ὑποτήρια. We will examine each category first by offering a general discussion of the word/concept, then by looking at its frequency and use with our key term. We will look closely at the most crucial texts where both words/concepts occur; using this method we should be able to detect how important each category is in Clement's overall scheme of ὑποτήρια.

It must be remembered that some of these categories are represented in Stromateis with very little data. In these instances caution must be used in the discussion in order not to give undue attention or importance to a category which Clement himself has not sufficiently addressed.
CHAPTER THREE: TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF \( \theta \varepsilon o \varphi i \alpha \)

3.1 The Apophatic Nature of \( \theta \varepsilon o \varphi i \alpha \)

Clement portrays God as transcendent, yet immanent. This immediately causes both theological and philosophical problems which certainly cannot be fully addressed in this study, yet can neither be ignored. For our purpose here we will begin with transcendence because it is from this concept that the other categories flow; God’s nature as other demands the abstraction of the soul from the senses, to strive for apatheia, to experience the mystery of the beatific vision, and to rise up beyond this world into the heavenly realms. These are all categories which we find associated with \( \theta \varepsilon o \varphi i \alpha \) in Stromateis.

3.1.1 The Ineffable God

Clement clearly presents God as transcendent, wholly different from man and ineffable. In his discussion on this topic, Casey offers this comment, “Clement’s conception of God’s transcendence is from the historical point of view probably the most significant portion of his theology” (p.74). He clearly shows that Clement, though not the first Christian writer to use the word \( \delta \sigma \omega \mu \alpha \tau \sigma \zeta \) (“without body”), was the first to understand its meaning and philosophical implications referring to him as “a pioneer” in his expression of immateriality. Casey argues

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1 We will discuss the aspect of transcendence in this chapter, leaving our discussion of immanence for Chapter Five.

2 R.P. Casey’s discussion on the concept of transcendence in Clement is still one of the best, (HTR 1925, pp.39-101). Also, see Mortley (Connaissance, especially pp.5-25). MacLeod’s article should also be consulted for the unique place of Christian influence with respect to transcendence, “'Ανάλογος: A Study in Ancient Mysticism,” JTS 21 (1970), pp.43-55. Finally, see Trigg (SP 1997, pp.540-545); Trigg makes some interesting comparisons between Clement and Origen, “...Clement’s negative theology has... implications for the larger history of Christian thought, and, in particular, for the history of Origenism...” (pp.543-544). He sees Clement holding more firmly to transcendence than even Origen (pp.544-545). See Osborn (Clement, Appendix B, “Negative Theology” pp.184-186), where he disagrees with Völker on various points, opening with the statement, “Clement is not either a philosopher or a theologian. He is both. The task he set himself was to bring together Greek philosophy and Christian theology...” (p.184)

3 Casey (HTR 1925, p.78ff). Casey is much less generous to Justin than is Osborn (The Beginning, pp.34-37) when he says, “Justin’s reference to the Stoics shows no considerable knowledge of their
against Inge’s comparison of Clement with Plotinus, mainly because Clement presents Christ as the great Logos element which breaks the veil of transcendence.\textsuperscript{4}

In order to see just how clearly Clement communicates this transcendence, we will look at a quite lengthy passage from Book V.\textsuperscript{5}

And John the apostle says: “No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him,” — calling invisibility (\textit{\epsilon\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron\alpha\omicron\tau\omicron\nu\omicron}) and ineffableness (\textit{\epsilon\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\eta\pi\tau\omicron\nu}) the bosom of God. Hence some have called it the Depth, as containing and embosoming all things, inaccessible (\textit{\alpha\nu\kappa\nu\epsilon\omicron\nu\pi\tau\omicron\nu}) and boundless (\textit{\alpha\nu\pi\epsilon\omicron\nu\rho\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\nu}). This discourse respecting God is most difficult to handle. For since the first principle of everything is difficult to find out, the absolutely first and oldest principle, which is the cause of all other things being and having been, is difficult to exhibit. For how can that be expressed which is neither genus, nor difference, nor species, nor individual, nor number; nay more, is neither an event, nor that to which an even\textsuperscript{[t]} happens? No one can rightly express Him wholly. For on account of His greatness He is ranked as the All, and is the Father of the universe. Nor are any parts to be predicated of Him. For the One is indivisible (\textit{\alpha\omicron\tau\omicron\upiota\omicron\nu\epsilon\omicron\omicron\omicron\iota\omicron\tau\omicron\nu}), wherefore also it is infinite (\textit{\alpha\omicron\kappa\epsilon\omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron}), not considered with reference to inscrutability (\textit{\alpha\omicron\iota\omicron\nu\epsilon\omicron\omicron\iota\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu}), but with reference to its being without dimensions (\textit{\alpha\omicron\iota\omicron\nu\iota\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron}), and not having a limit. And therefore it is without form (\textit{\alpha\omicron\sigma\chi\nu\iota\omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron}) and name (\textit{\alpha\nu\omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron}). And if we name it, we do not do so properly, terming it either the One, or the Good, or Mind, or Absolute Being, or Father, or God, or Creator or Lord. We speak not as supplying His name; but for want, we use good names, in order that the mind may have these as points of support, so as not to err in other respects. For each one by itself does not express God; but all together are indicative of the power of the Omnipotent. For predicates are expressed either from what belongs to things themselves, or from their mutual relation. But none of these are admissible in reference to God. Nor any more is He apprehended by the science of demonstration. For it depends on primary and better known principles. But there is nothing antecedent to the Unbegotten.\textsuperscript{6}

There are numerous items in this passage which must be noticed. First, the abundant use of the alpha privative. Undoubtedly, this is the most \textit{negatively}

\textsuperscript{4} Casey (HTR 1925, pp.79-80).
\textsuperscript{5} We have already seen (§2.4.2, pp.76-81) how critical Book V is to Clement’s discussion on the hidden nature of Truth.
\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Strom.} V.12.81,3-82,3.
loaded passage one will find in *Stromateis*; it certainly points to the apophaticism which can be found in Clement. This passage is the conclusion of a lengthy discussion on immateriality which begins at V.11.67,1. He scoffs at those who try to make the incorruptible God in their own image, failing to understand that God has given man “ten thousand things in which He does not share.” He then makes a statement of the negative way of abstraction which leads to the place of saying, “we may reach somehow to the conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not.” Daniélou sees the influence of Albinus here, but says that Clement “marks an epoch in the history of human thought...The supreme affirmation, therefore, which the human mind can make is to acknowledge that God in his essence is wholly unknowable.”

Secondly, we note that other than the opening citation from St. John, he does not cite another text from scripture in this passage. This brings up an important point in the study of Clement’s apophaticism: it is not primarily driven by biblical text. In the apophatic passages, he cites from the biblical text sparingly, sometimes not at all. In each of the passages listed below where he does cite a biblical text

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7 In addition to the alpha privative there is also an abundance of negative conjunctions such as μὴ and oó (there are 18 such negatives). See Trigg’s article on the alpha privative and his comments on this text, (SP 1997, pp.540-545).
8 *Strom.* V.11.68,1-3.
9 *Strom.* V.11.71,3. H.A. Wolfson, “Negative Attributes in the Church Fathers and the Gnostic Basilides,” HTR 50 (1957), pp.145-156, claims this to be a paraphrase of Albinus, but J. Whittaker, NeoPythagoreanism and Negative Theology,” *SO* 44 (1969), pp.109-125, convincingly refutes Wolfson’s claim showing these concepts to be commonplace in the philosophical climate of the day (pp.110-111). This is also the opinion of John Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford 1993), see pp.109-110. Dillon discusses in his introduction exactly who this Albinus was (pp. ix-xiii), but we will continue to refer to the author of *Didascalikos* as Albinus.
10 Daniélou (*Gospel Message*, pp.342-343). Daniélou continues, “Only the Word of God...can bring it [the soul] to the knowledge of God...the only access to God is by way of the Word and his grace.” (p.343) While Daniélou sees the influence of Albinus, Osborn seems less convinced (*The Beginning*, pp.240-242).
11 Passages where no biblical text is cited in support of the apophatic theme: *Strom.* II.16.72-75; IV.25.155,1-156,1; V.6.36,1-4; 10.65,1-2; 11.77,2 (*Apocalypse of Zephaniah*), see Daniélou on this text.
it is clearly done according to “the godly tradition....and according to the canon of the truth”\textsuperscript{12} (that is, according to Clement’s \textit{gnostic} rule of allegorical interpretation).\textsuperscript{13} The biblical texts which he cites are not direct references to an apophatic theology, but are allusions. The Platonic tradition is the main influence for Clement’s apophaticism. We have two more items to notice (in \textit{Strom.} V.12.81,3-82,3); both will confirm our last statement.

The concept of an ineffable God for Clement is derived from a synthesis of Plato and Philo as seen through the lens of the biblical text. When I say Clement’s apophatic theology comes not from the Scriptures, but from the Platonic tradition I do not at all mean that it (apophatic theology) is not a biblical idea/category. However, the biblical text does not address the \textit{negative} as much as it does the \textit{positive} aspects of theology. Osborn sees this same “synthesis,”\textsuperscript{14} but gives more credit to the Pauline influence than I think is warranted. I think he is correct when he reads between the lines of Clement’s text to see the Pauline influence, but the actual text betrays his analysis. The text he highlights (pp.48-49) is the same one we have chosen above, \textit{Stromateis} V.12.81f. Osborn is correct that the context is “dominated by the themes of faith and mystery” (p.46), but as we follow the flow of \textit{Strom.} V and the use Clement makes of biblical citations, it is clear that the

\textit{(Gospel Message,} p.456); VI.5.39,1-2 (he cites the \textit{Preaching of Peter}); VII.7.37,1-2; VII.12.76,4-6. The following passages have citations from the scriptures: \textit{Strom.} II.2.5,3-6,4; II.17.77,4; V.11.71-74; V.12.78-82; VI.18,166,1-3.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Strom.} VI.15.124,4-5.

\textsuperscript{13} I agree with Hanson’s explanation of the \textit{παράδοσις} of Clement in part (Origen’s, pp.57-58). He says that the allegorical method of biblical interpretation was the whole of Clement’s secret tradition; though I have shown that it is not limited to this (§2.5, pp.81-85), I do agree that allegorical method was included. The term (\textit{παράδοσις}) occurs four times in this discussion (\textit{Strom.} VI.15.124-125). See Tollinton’s discussion on this as well (II, pp.206-230).

\textsuperscript{14} See Osborn (The Beginning, pp 45-50).
Scriptures are being used to verify his Platonic ideas. In fact, he does not cite a single biblical text after his use of John 1:18 at the beginning of the passage (V.12.81,3). The remainder of the passage, as Osborn shows in his exegesis (pp.48-49), contains allusions to Plato and to Middle Platonism, mainly Philo. Overall I agree with Osborn’s analysis, my disagreement is only one of emphasis: Osborn is stressing the biblical framework of Clement’s apophaticism while he acknowledges the philosophical language, “Recent Pauline study has made it easier to link Paul with this theme [he has just cited Acts 17:22-23]....The further one goes into the letter to the Romans the greater is the sense of walking between immensities or of handling mysteries.” (pp.49-50) While Osborn stresses the biblical framework, I see the biblical text as confirmation of the Platonic framework. It is not until Book VII that Clement purposes to neglect the citation of the Scriptures; if Osborn were correct, we would see more biblical citations in this passage.

To continue our discussion of Clement’s apophaticism, further comment needs to be made on Philo’s influence. Wolfson says that Clement understands Plato in terms of Philo and cites several examples to illustrate this point. Lilla rejects Wolfson’s claim of Philo being the originator of the ineffable God, and shows quite convincingly that this concept was already present in Plato. Runia goes

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16 See H.A. Wolfson, *Philo*, Vol. II (Cambridge, USA 1948) pp.94-164, especially p.119. Lilla points to E.R. Dodds and A.J. Festugiére for his opinion, (Clement, pp.218-220). Lilla also points out that this concept was known in Gnostic circles as well. This would not have affected Philo and it seems doubtful, in light of Clement’s use of Plato and Philo, that he would have followed the Gnostics in this. See also, Lilla, S., “The Neoplatonic Hypostases and the Christian Trinity,” in *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition: Essays Presented to John Whittaker*, ed. by Mark Joyle (Aldershot, UK 1997), pp.127-189. Mortley (*Connaissance*, p.10) also shows transcendence in Middle Platonic writers, but does admit that it is through Philo that this concept comes into Christian thought. Chadwick pointed out this shortcoming.
further with regard to this issue by saying, "we can actually prove that Clement was aware of the close connection between Platonism and Philonic thought." 17

Philo was the first to use certain words to describe God, such as "unutterable" (ἀπωτός), which is used by Clement several times. 18 Clement's usage of ἀπωτός is our third item to notice in the text which preceded this discussion.

Though Clement's use of ἀπωτός might have been inspired by Philo, his use of the word points to this synthesis we have mentioned above. From the eight times he uses the word referring to the concept of God, three clearly reflect the influence of Philo, four include a biblical text, and three actually name Plato. 19 This only confirms what we have already noted: Clement is highly influenced by Plato, Philo and the Scriptures. In relation to this synthesis Runia comments,

> It cannot be emphasized enough that in all probability Clement, because he had had a pagan philosophical training before he became a Christian, will have read Plato before he gained acquaintance with Philo. Most likely he did not come across Philo until he reached Alexandria and joined his last teacher Pantaenus. This means that Philo did not teach Clement Platonism, but rather how to connect his Platonism to biblical thought... 20

It should be noted that utter transcendence of God was vital in second century in a review of Wolfson's study almost before the ink had time to dry; see CR 63 (1949), pp. 24-25. Lastly, see Osborn's insightful comments on Wolfson's study, (The Beginning, p. 220 n1; pp. 240-244, especially p. 241 n4).

17 Runia (Philo-Literature, p. 147).
19 Passages in Stromateis where Clement uses ἀπωτός in reference to God: Strom. II.2.5.3-4; V.6.34.7; V.10.65.2; V.12.78.3; 79.1; 81.3; VI.17.154.1; VII.7.37.2.
20 Runia (Philo-Literature, p. 155), although he would probably not want to use the word "synthesis," see p. 151 n81.
CHAPTER THREE: TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF ΘΕΩΡΙΑ

Platonism.\textsuperscript{21} This brings us to our final item to notice in our main passage, and a summation: it is full of categories which fit Middle Platonism better than the Scriptures.\textsuperscript{22}

So it is clear that Clement’s God is transcendent and ineffable. We now need to isolate passages in \textit{Stromateis} where Clement links θεωρία with this ineffable God; this will give us an indication of how apophaticism fits into his scheme of spirituality.

3.1.2 ΘΕΩΡΙΑ, the doorway into the invisible realm

If God is ineffable and unapproachable, then how is one to have any kind of contact with this Being? Indeed, if God is not at all like us, and “like only can know like,”\textsuperscript{23} then the Christian has no hope of any contact. Where many second century Platonists affirmed this inability for man to make contact with the Divine,\textsuperscript{24} Clement has too much biblical faith to do so; his answer is to be found in the grace of the Incarnation and in the concept of θεωρία. God made the initial contact through the Logos in the incarnation,\textsuperscript{25} and the gnostic makes continual contact through θεωρία. In this section we want to look at the passages where the \textit{via negativa} and θεωρία occur together.

\textsuperscript{21} Whittaker, John, “Plutarch, Platonism and Christianity,” in \textit{Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honor of A.H. Armstrong}, edited by H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London 1981), pp.50-63. Whittaker points out that Plutarch held to transcendence and immanence (p.52), but this does not necessarily mean that Clement was influenced by him. Osborn humorously shows that verbal similarity does not automatically mean literary dependence, (\textit{The Beginning}, pp.241-242 n1).

\textsuperscript{22} See Lilla’s discussion (\textit{Clement}, pp.210-217) where he comments or mentions most of this text. Interestingly, it is here that Daniélov says, “This is no longer Middle Platonism, but the God of the Bible, the \textit{deus absconditus}. Equally, however, it is not the dualism of the Gnostic.” (\textit{Gospel Message}, p.342) Daniélov is showing how Clement’s system includes immanence, which we will discuss in Chapter Five.

\textsuperscript{23} Ἐνά δὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ὄντος θεοφράστου, \textit{Strom.} V.1.13,2. This phrase comes from Plato (\textit{Laws} IV.716C) and Clement refers to it at least three other times: \textit{Strom.} II.22.132,4; V.3.18,5; 14.95,4.

\textsuperscript{24} Lilla (\textit{Clement}, pp.217-221).

\textsuperscript{25} This is the whole aim of \textit{Protrepticus}; §4.2.2 (pp.155-157). See also, \textit{Strom.} V.11.71,5; V.12.82,4.
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Right away it must be said that there are very few clear references where θεωρία occurs within an apophatic text; we only count two (Strom. V.12.78,1-2 and VII.12.76,7). The clearest citation happens to be the one we noted in the last chapter (p.36 above), Strom. V.12.78,1-3:

“For both is it a difficult task to discover the Father and Maker of this universe; and having found Him, it is impossible to declare Him to all. For this is by no means capable of expression, like the other subjects of instruction,” says the truth-loving Plato. For he heard right well that the all-wise Moses, ascending the mount for holy contemplation (διὰ τὴν ἄγιαν θεωρίαν), to the summit of intellectual objects, necessarily commands that the whole people do not accompany him. And when the Scripture says, “Moses entered into the thick darkness where God was,” this shows to those capable of understanding, that God is invisible and beyond expression by words.

There are several items which must be discussed; we will begin with Clement’s quotation of the well known Platonic text, Timaeus 28c. The first thing to notice is that Clement quotes the text accurately, probably from a copy of Plato rather than from an anthology. He accurately indicates that this “Father and Maker” is difficult to discover, but not impossible. In the same way, it is not impossible to declare Him, just impossible to declare Him to all. Secondly, Clement gives us his interpretation of Plato by referring to God who is “invisible and beyond expression by words (ἀναφηματικός)” (78,3). He uses ἀναφηματικός here and will use it twice more (79,1 and 81,3) in this lengthy section which extends through V.12.82,3 and opened our discussion of apophaticism. This further confirms the apophatic nature of this passage. Next, we see that the whole thrust of the passage, though apophatic in nature, is actually pointing to the possibility of making contact

27 Dillon shows how this passage from Timaeus was often misquoted in order to invoke Platonic authority, (“Tampering,” pp.50-72). See Chapter Two (p.36 n49) for a listing of works on this text.
with God: Moses ascends “to the summit of intellectual objects” through holy contemplation (διὰ τὴν ἁγίαν θεωρίαν). This is confirmed with the citation of 2 Cor. 12:2 where Paul describes being raised up into the third heaven where he heard “unutterable” words (ἀφρητὰ ῥήματα). Clement is showing here that the God beyond expression of words can, with difficulty, be discovered. How? By “ascending the mount for holy contemplation.”

Our second passage (Strom. VII.12.76,4-5) linking apophaticism with θεωρία does not hold the same weight of argument as our first passage. It says the gnostic, through contemplation, “sees the Lord, directing his eyes towards things invisible...”, but this passage appears in the midst of Strom. VII where Clement gives the practical side of θεωρία. As we have mentioned, we will discuss in detail these practical aspects of θεωρία in Chapter Five.

3.1.3 Conclusions on the apophatic and θεωρία

What can we conclude from our review of the apophatic texts with respect to θεωρία? First, we again see the three major influences on Clement: Plato, Middle Platonism (mainly through Philo), and the Scriptures. Clement has either shaped his own Christian apophaticism from these three systems, or this is part of the παράδοσις. Secondly, there is not enough direct textual evidence to link θεωρία with Clement’s apophaticism; if there is a link we will have to verify it through the association of other ideas and categories. This will be our task for the remainder of this chapter.

28 Strom. V.12.78.2.
29 Strom. V.12.79.1.
30 Strom. V.12.78.2.
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3.2 Ἀπάθεια, the Absence of all Passion

Ἀπάθεια is a category in Clement which has received a great amount of attention over the years. It is because of Ἀπαθεία that Clement holds forth Jesus as having something more than a normal corporeal body:

The Gnostic is such, that he is subject only to the affections that exist for the maintenance of the body, such as hunger, thirst, and the like. But in the case of the Saviour, it were ludicrous [to suppose] that the body, as a body, demanded the necessary aids in order to its duration. For He ate, not for the sake of the body, which was kept together by a holy energy, but in order that it might not enter into the minds of those who were with Him to entertain a different opinion of Him; in like manner as certainly some afterwards supposed that He appeared in a phantasmal shape (δοκίμων). But He was entirely impassible (ἐπαθηκός), inaccessible to any movement of feeling--either pleasure or pain.

Here Clement has opened the door to a docetic Christ while, at the same time, he mentions the need to keep the same door shut. This passage occurs in the most important chapter on the subject of Ἀπάθεια, Strom. VI.9. In another place (Strom. III.7.59,3) Clement approvingly cites a letter of Valentinus which supports this same position. It should be added that Clement does not hesitate to attack the docetists. To conclude our comments on Clement’s Ἀπάθεια with respect to Jesus, it is important to see that Clement had been influenced by the philosophical

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33 Ἀπάθεια occurs 5 times in this chapter: VI.9.71,2; 72,2; 73,2; 73,6; and 74,1.
34 See Chadwick's comment on this text and the letter to Agathopus who we know nothing about, (Alexandrian, pp.32-33).
35 Strom. III.13.91,1; 17.102.1-3.

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current around him; since God is ἀπάθητος, the Logos must be as well. Now we must move on to see how this concept of ἀπαθεία affects Clement’s anthropology.

Clement’s gnostic is to “become like his Teacher in impassibility.” The whole of Strom. VI.9 is devoted to this concept:

The Gnostic is such, that he is subject only to the affections that exist for the maintenance of the body, such as hunger, thirst, and the like. (71,1)
Nor, consequently, does he fall into any desire and eagerness... (72,1)
For it were ridiculous to say that the gnostic and perfect man must not eradicate anger and courage... (72,3)
For knowledge (gnosis) produces practice, and practice habit or disposition; and such a state as this produces impassibility, not moderation of passion. (74,1)
And what necessity for self-restraint to him who has not need of it? For to have such desires, as require self-restraint in order to their control, is characteristic of one who is not yet pure, but subject to passion. (76,2)

This state of passionlessness is expressed in numerous other places; this gnostic is not even subject to temptation. Here we see where Clement’s understanding of sanctification has been overly influenced by his eclectic philosophy. The apostles, according to Clement, had mastered all passions, even those “as seem good, [like] courage, zeal, joy, desire...” Though Clement stood against various Gnostic groups who opposed marriage, his gnostic does not engage in sexual relations with his wife, treating her instead “as a sister.” Clement does, however, distinguish his ἀπαθεία from the philosophical equivalent; the gnostic cannot attain this state on his own.

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36 Lilla (Clement, pp.110-111).
37 Strom. VI.9.72,1.
38 Strom. II.20.103,1; III.7.57-59 (though ἀπαθεία does not appear in Book III, the concept certainly does); IV.6.40,1; 22.138,1; 22.139,4; 23.147,1-2; 23.152,1; VI.13.105,1; 16.138,3; VII.2.10,1; 3.13,3; 11.67,8; 14.84,1; 14.88,2.
39 Strom. VI.9.71,3.
According to Clement, ἀπάθεια is only attained by a process of discipline and purification assisted by the Logos:

As then, for those of us who are diseased in body a physician is required, so also those who are diseased in soul require a paedagogue to cure our maladies; and then a teacher, to strain and guide the soul to all requisite knowledge when it is made able to admit the revelation of the Word. Eagerly desiring, then, to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benignant Word, who first exhorts, then trains, and finally teaches. 41

We will discuss how this aspect fits into Clement’s spiritual pathway later (§4.2.3, pp.157-160). It is sufficient here to note that the Logos acts as the doctor to heal and purify, but the gnostic has the duty to train himself; “It is good if for the sake of the kingdom of heaven a man emasculates himself from all desire.” 42 However, our discussion here is concerned with how this category relates to θεωρία.

3.2.1 Prerequisite for θεωρία

For Clement, one had to be pure in heart to “see” God. As we will see in §4.3.3 (pp.177-184), the use of “seeing” God “face to face” is a recurring theme in Clement’s use of θεωρία; being pure in heart is required for the gnostic to have this encounter. 43 There are only four passages where ἀπάθεια and θεωρία occur linked together; 44 we will look at the clearest one of these first,

And since there are two paths of reaching the perfection of salvation, works and knowledge, He called the “pure in heart blessed, for they shall see God”....Pure then as respects corporeal lusts, and pure in respect of holy thoughts, he means those are, who attain to the knowledge of God,

41 Paid. I.1.3.3. Other texts which illustrate the work of Christ in this process: Paid. I.2.6.1-4; 6.51.1; III.12.98.2. Lilla (Clement, pp.96-97, 112-117) shows how Clement’s system is similar to other schools of the time, yet different in this important element of assistance by the Logos.
42 Strom. III.7.59.4. Wytzes discusses Clement’s views on ἀπάθεια and maintains that he did not understand biblical grace, (VC 1957, pp.229-232).
43 These are passages where Clement either uses or alludes to Matt. 5:8: Strom. I.19.94.6; II.20.104.2; IV.6.39.1, V.6.40.1; VI.14.108.1; VII.3.13.1, 10.56.5; 11.68.4. It is difficult in some of these passages to know if the allusion is to Matt. 5:8 or to 1 Cor. 13:12. See Volker, p.407; Wytzes says that purity leads to θεωρία and θεωρία to purity (VC 1960, p.147).
44 Strom. IV.6.40.1; 23.152.1; VII.2.10.1-2; 3.13.1-3.
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when the chief faculty of the soul has nothing spurious to stand in the way of its power. When, therefore, he who partakes gnostically of this holy quality devotes himself to contemplation (τῇ θεωρίᾳ), communing in purity with the divine, he enters more nearly into the state of impassible (ἀποθεώσας) identity...45

This passage contains each of the three elements we have mentioned: ἀπάθεια, θεωρία, and “seeing” God. It also indicates what we have already established, ἀπάθεια is a prerequisite for θεωρία; but Clement is also saying that when the gnostic engages in θεωρία “he enters more nearly into the state of impassible identity.” This could be an allusion to the state of perfection in the next life,46 but for now we recognise this to be the only occasion where Clement gives this reading. Lilla points to this passage saying that “ἀπάθεια and θεωρία cannot be separated from each other.”47 Two of the other passages confirm this connection,

...and man, when deified purely into a passionless (ἀπάθειαν) state, becomes a unit....In the contemplative life (τῷ θεωρητικῷ βίῳ), then, one in worshipping God attends to himself, and through his own spotless purification beholds (ἐπονεᾶτε) the holy God holily...IV.23.152,1-3

...the soul, which is ever improving in the acquisition of virtue and the increase of righteousness, should obtain a better place in the universe, as tending in each step of advancement towards the habit of impassibility (ἀποθεώσας), till “it come to a perfect man,” to the excellence at once of knowledge and of inheritance....to the transcendent and continual contemplation (θεωρίας) of the Lord in eternity. VII.2.10,1-2

It is clear that to have the encounter of “seeing” God (θεωρία), the gnostic must first be purified (ἀπάθεια).48

3.2.2 Abstraction from the Senses

We have seen (pp.89-91) how Clement seems to follow a common method of abstraction; we now need to examine two particular texts where he does this:

46 See §3.5.2 (p.123) for this discussion.
47 Lilla (Clement, p.163 n4).
48 The following passages where purity is linked to θεωρία without the use of ἀπάθεια should be added to this list: Strom. IV.5.21,1; VI.9.74-75; VII.7.44,6-7. The texts in note 43 should also be consulted.
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Now the sacrifice which is acceptable to God is unswerving abstraction from the body and its passions....For he who neither employs his eyes in the exercise of thought, nor draws aught from his senses, but with pure mind itself applies to objects, [this man] practises the true philosophy. This is, then, the import of the silence of five years prescribed by Pythagoras, which he enjoined on his disciples; that, abstracting themselves from the objects of sense, they might with the mind alone contemplate (ἐποπτευόμεν) the Deity.

...the greater mysteries, in which nothing remains to be learned of the universe, but only to contemplate (ἐποπτευόμεν) and comprehend nature and things....If, then, abstracting all that belongs to bodies and things called incorporeal, we cast ourselves into the greatness of Christ, and thence advance into immensity by holiness, we may reach somehow to the conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not. And form and motion, or standing, or a throne, or place, or right hand or left, are not at all to be conceived as belonging to the Father of the universe, although it is so written. But what each of these means will be shown in its proper place. The First Cause is not then in space, but above both space, and time, and name, and conception.49

Lilla shows the presence of this kind of abstraction in Plato,50 then in Philo as well.51 This makes it all the more likely that Clement is simply building on the systems of these two which is consistent with most of the other data we have seen.

I would suggest that Clement is struggling to reconcile the philosophical concept of transcendence and the ineffable nature of God with his understanding of immanence, neither of which he is willing to relinquish. In the discussion of transcendence Clement sees this immateriality, this abstraction, as a way to hold on to transcendence without giving up immanence. If “like understands like,” then the gnostic must somehow be able to shed this corporeal essence in order to have the “face to face” communion which Clement seems to think is possible.

49 Strom. V.11.67,1-3 and V.11.71,1-4. Lilla’s discussion on this is good (Clement, pp.163-169) although I do not agree with the limitations which he places on ΘΕΟΡΙΑ, as “contemplation of the intelligible world,” p.163. He shows the similarities between Clement and Plato, as well as similarities with Middle Platonism including Philo. We have already seen these concepts to be the common stock of Middle Platonism, thus Clement simply adopts them from the general philosophical milieu of the day.
50 Ibid., p.166.
51 Ibid., pp.168-169.
Both of the above texts include the use of ἑποτεία, but both are used to indicate intellectual contemplation. We will look more closely at Clement’s use of this term in §3.4 (pp.114-121), but for now we simply want to note the concept of abstraction linked with the “seeing” of the mind.

It is also important to see the flow of Strom. V (§2.4.2, pp.76-81 and §2.5, pp.81-85); this will help to understand Clement’s use of abstraction. Clement has used the entire discussion of symbols in Strom. V to bring the reader to the place of understanding that “if one expect to apprehend...by the senses, he has fallen far from the truth.” Kovacs maintains that one purpose of Clement’s exegesis of the Temple in V.6 is to prepare the reader for “the insatiable vision of God.” After this text where the High Priest is shown to be “putting off his consecrated robe” (V.6.39,3), the world of the senses, these abstraction texts follow to reinforce the message. Then, Clement goes back to old material, a short defense of philosophy followed by what Mondésert calls “a long, very long chapter. One of those which tested the patience of the reader...[with] the monotony, and weakness of the arguments...” We have seen that this is how Clement conceals the παράδοσις — he bogs the reader down with extraneous material. As we have seen in §2.5 (pp.84-85), he opens Strom. VI with a promise to reveal more, but he digresses again. These abstraction texts are part of Clement’s symphonic movement carrying the reader (he hopes!) to Strom. VII where he says he will give the clearest presentation of the gnostic.

52 Strom. V.1.7.4.
53 Kovacs, p.437. See Chapter Two, p.81 n207 and p.83.
54 Mondésert (Clément, p.55).
3.2.3 Conclusions on \( \dot{\alpha}p\dot{\alpha}\theta\varepsilon\iota\alpha \) and \( \theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \)

We conclude that \( \dot{\alpha}p\dot{\alpha}\theta\varepsilon\iota\alpha \) is an integral part of Clement’s system of \( \gamma\nu\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) and therefore it affects his concept of \( \theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \). Clement’s assumption is that the soul which enjoys the contemplation of God must be pure. If one ceases from this purity, \( \theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \) would also cease.\(^{55}\) The abstraction from the senses, another aspect of \( \theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \), facilitates the attainment of purity; when one leaves the senses behind, he is ascending into the realm of pure mind and thought. We will see in our discussion of silent prayer (§5.6.3, pp.243-245) that purity of thought also concerns Clement; the concept of purity touches every aspect of his \( \gamma\nu\omega\varsigma\varsigma \).

We will see that \( \dot{\alpha}p\dot{\alpha}\theta\varepsilon\iota\alpha \), or purity, will never be far removed from any aspect of this study. The concept of discipline, the building of virtue, will come up again in our overview of \textit{Paidagogus} (§4.2.3, pp.157-160). This is part of Clement’s plan which leads to \( \dot{\alpha}p\dot{\alpha}\theta\varepsilon\iota\alpha \) and \( \theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \). We will see throughout the discussion in Chapter Five that purity is a critical element of Clement’s practical presentation of the \textit{gnostic}. Finally, we will see this concept to be one of the three main objectives of the \textit{gnostic} in life (§5.7.2, p.257). As Lilla has correctly said, “\( \dot{\alpha}p\dot{\alpha}\theta\varepsilon\iota\alpha \) and \( \theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \) cannot be separated from each other.”\(^{56}\)

3.3 The Concept of Mystery

Because God is transcendent and categorically \textit{other} in essence, the knowledge of God is a mystery. Clement comments on this theme in a great many places; there are 91 occurrences of \( \mu\nu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu \) in Clement.\(^{57}\) With such an amount of text

\(^{55}\) This seems to be the implication in \textit{Strom. IV}.5.21,1.
\(^{56}\) Lilla (\textit{Clement}, p.163 n4).
\(^{57}\) Stählin (Band 4, pp.574-575) and Marsh, H.G., “The Use of \( \mu\nu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu \) in the Writings of Clement of Alexandria with Special Reference to His Sacramental Doctrine,” \textit{JTS} 37 (1936), pp.64-80, see p.64 n1.
to analyse, it is amazing that just what Clement means by μυστήριον is not completely clear.\(^{58}\) We will look at some of these texts which will give us some indication, then move to our focus: how Clement uses μυστήριον with θεωρία. But first, we must briefly examine two possible sources which may have influenced him: the mystery religions and the Apostle Paul.

### 3.3.1 The Mystery Religions

The first thing to recognise is how Clement has adopted the religious language around him. Bigg proposed that Clement was personally involved with Eleusinian mysteries because he shows familiarity with the ideas and shares the language, but he also admits that the language was common with Platonists of the day.\(^{59}\) It is most likely, as Mayor maintains, that Clement is simply using the mystery language to show how the Church had something better; his polemical attack in *Protrepticus* 12-24 indicates his lack of acceptance of their veracity.\(^{60}\) At the same time, he does use the language of the mysteries, but hangs that language on a Christian framework: in *Protrepticus* 12.120,1-2 he speaks of the “holy mysteries” and says “My way is lighted with torches...I become holy whilst I am initiated. The Lord is the hierophant (ιεροφαντεύεται κυρίος)...” Yet is also “the only true God, the Word of God...This Jesus, who is eternal, the one great High Priest of the one God and of His Father...” Clement is clearly co-opting the language of the mysteries. We will now look briefly at his use of Paul when he speaks of mystery.

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58 Marsh, p.65.
3.3.2 The Apostle Paul, μυστήριον and Clement

Clement quotes the Apostle Paul in many of his sections where μυστήριον is the focus.61 Six times in Strom. V.10 Clement quotes Paul referring to a mystery text.62 We have already seen the importance of Book V in Clement's overall scheme (§2.4.2, pp.76-81); we confirm this here by recognising the prominent place given in this book to mystery. In §2.4.2 we have seen how Clement devotes the whole of Book V to the hidden nature of God's wisdom; Clement confirms this with his use of Paul. Almost every Pauline quotation (see notes 62 and 63 below) speaks of the mystery being hidden. Although there is a concentration of such quotations in Strom. V.10, there are others in Book V which point to Clement's use of Paul to substantiate his position on mystery.63

It is not altogether clear just what Paul means when he uses μυστήριον,64 but most agree that it includes the revealing of something which has been concealed, or hidden. At times he seems to be referring to the gospel as a whole, which was a

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62 Strom. V.10.60,1 (Eph. 3:3-5); 60,3 (Col. 1:25-27); 61,4 (Col. 2:2-3); 62,1 (Col. 4:3-4); 64,6 (Rom. 16:25-26); 65,5 (1 Cor. 2:6,7).
63 Strom. V.4.19,3 (1 Cor. 2:13); 25,2 (1 Cor. 2:6-8); V.12.80,1 (1 Cor. 2:6-9); 80,5 (Col. 2:2-3).
64 The scholarship on Paul and mystery is immense. I will list the works which I have consulted as a sample: Nock clearly shows that Paul's use of μυστήριον is consistent with the LXX and has not been influenced by the mystery religions, ("Hellenistic," pp.805-814). Nigel Turner, Christian Words (Edinburgh 1980), pp.282-283, gives mystery broad meaning from the many ways Paul uses it; F.F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians, NIC, Ephesians and Colossians (Grand Rapids 1979), "something formerly concealed and now revealed." (p.218) Bruce includes as a distinct mystery the inclusion of the Gentiles (p.218 n168); Gordon Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, NIC (Grand Rapids 1987), points to other studies which show no link between Paul and the mystery religions, (pp.104 n27, 160 n9). His opinion on mystery is very similar to that of Bruce; Thorsten Moritz, A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians, Supplements to NovT 85 (Leiden 1996), pp.137-148, speaks mainly of the mystery of marriage text in Eph. 5:31 where "the emphasis falls not on the mysteriousness but on the magnitude of that which has been hidden," (p.142); L.L. Welborn, Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles (Macon, GA USA 1997), pp.32-36, believes Paul has co-opted the language of the trouble-makers in Corinth and is using their own language to convince them of his position. He maintains that mystery is "unmistakably" from the mystery religions (pp.32; 34).
stumblingblock and foolishness because it did not seem to make sense; “human wisdom...is unwilling, indeed unable, to embrace the apparently absurd message of the crucified messiah.” Among the many NT themes referred to as mystery: the doors of salvation have been opened wide for the Gentiles (Eph. 3:3; Col. 2:2), the transforming of the corporeal body into something incorporeal (1 Cor. 15:51), the analogical relationship of husband-wife/Christ-Church (Eph. 5:32), and probably many other things which he had seen in his vision (2 Cor. 12:1-4). Add to all of these items the implication that Paul carried an esoteric message for those who were able to receive it (1 Cor. 2:6-15 and 3:1-3) and we realize that the concept of μυστήριον for Paul was vast. Commenting on 1 Cor. 2:6,7 Welborn says, “Paul understood that if he was to regain his position as the teacher and guide of the community, he must persuade the Corinthians that he possessed σοφία ἐν μυστήριῳ (2:7).” Regardless of whether Paul really had an esoteric tradition, Clement clearly believed he did and uses Paul’s mystery texts extensively.

65 Garrison, Roman, The Graeco-Roman Context of Early Christian Literature, JSNTSup 137 (Sheffield 1997), p.15. Neither Garrison, nor Welborn took advantage of the study done by Beatrice, ANRW 26.2 (1995), on the conflict in Corinth (see the discussion above, pp.66-68). Welborn’s study (his section on 1 Corinthians) was originally published prior to the Beatrice study. Although I do not agree with all of his conclusions, I think the Beatrice study deserves consideration.

66 Welborn, p.35-36. Although I cannot dispute the parallels Welborn finds in the political writings of Paul’s contemporaries, I cannot fully agree with his line of thought or conclusions. In his opening paragraph of the Preface Welborn states, “As it turns out, Paul was thoroughly familiar with the conventions of ancient political life, and used them to dissuade his converts from faction...Paul could count on the Corinthians’ familiarity with the traditions of Greco-Roman politics. He did not need to discuss politics overtly. He could make use of political ideas and tactics to shape the Christian community.” (p.vi) Although I would not at all be surprised to find that Paul was aware of his political/cultural/social surroundings (as any good motivator/preacher/rhetorician would be), and that he was influenced (it could have been on a subconscious level) by them, I doubt that he is purposing to “make use of political ideas and tactics” in his letters. That his techniques of argumentation would have been similar can be accounted for by the simple principle that they are to be found across the sphere of human interaction. Paul would have sooner been influenced by the examples of rhetoric and argumentation found in the OT.
Clement follows Paul (probably by default) in his use of \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \), using it in many different ways. The allegorical method seems to be the most obvious, but he also uses the word referring both to the Incarnation and the Eucharist. Marsh points to two texts where Clement seems to use \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \) in a way which means "symbol." However, as we have already stated, the bulk of Clement's use of the term is difficult to pin down. Before we move on to investigate whether there is a link between \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \) and \( \theta e \omega \rho \iota \alpha \), we should quickly summarize what we know for certain about Clement's use: first, he is mostly influenced by the Apostle Paul. Following this, he represents \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \) in terms of being hidden, yet available to the gnostic. Lastly, though he does use \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \) to refer to several key categories, the allegorical method of biblical interpretation — but chiefly what that allegorical reading reveals — seems to be at the heart of Clement's understanding of the word.

3.3.3 Clement's use of \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \) and \( \theta e \omega \rho \iota \alpha \)

There are only a few examples where Clement clearly links \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \) with \( \theta e \omega \rho \iota \alpha \). Nevertheless, three of these passages seem to be quite significant. We

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67 Marsh's study (JTS 1936) is still the best one for this topic.
68 Marsh, pp.65-67; Lilla (Clement, pp.144-155); and Hanson (Origen's, pp.57-58).
69 For the Incarnation: Protrep. 111,2; Paid. III.1.2,1; for the Eucharist: Paid. I.6.43,1.
70 Strom. IV.17.109,2 and V.9.73,2; see Marsh, pp.66-67. The thrust of Marsh's article is to show that Clement did not use \( \mu \sigma \tau \rho \iota \nu \) to represent the sacraments.
71 Lilla (Clement, pp.144-158) shows the similarities of Clement with all the other literary sources and concludes "a literary dependence" (p.154), but I think his quotations from biblical sources (especially the ones we have seen from Paul) show the main influence. His biblical quotations are always used as the ultimate prooftext of his argument.
72 This is where I see Clement using/following Paul in the clearest way. The texts we have cited (notes 62 and 63 above) bear this out. Almost all of Clement's biblical quotations in Strom. I.1 point to this concealed, yet revealed motif which is the guiding principle of the whole work.
73 Strom. I.1.15,2-3; I.28.176,1-2; V.9.58,4-5; V.10.64,4-66,2; and VI.2.4,1-3.
In Strom. VI.2.4,1-3 Clement uses \( \theta e \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) as "scientific investigation" and thus does not help us in this discussion. In a curious passage, Strom. I.28.176,1-2, he also uses \( \theta e \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) as "scientific investigation,"
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will look at these three passages closely to see if we can make any conclusions.

As we have already discussed (pp.39-46) and will mention again (§4.2.4, pp.168-174), Strom. 1.1 is the key for understanding the whole work. In his opening chapter Clement wrestles with the idea of putting into writing these “apostolic seeds,” this “blessed tradition.” It is after he seems to have convinced his reader (and himself) that it is best to leave a written account of this tradition, that we find the first example of μυστήριον and θεωρία mentioned together:

Some things my treatise will hint; on some it will linger; some it will merely mention. It will try to speak imperceptibly, to exhibit secretly, and to demonstrate silently. The dogmas taught by remarkable sects will be adduced; and to these will be opposed all that ought to be premised in accordance with the profundest contemplation of the knowledge (ἐποπτικὴν θεωρίαν γνώσεως), which, as we proceed to the renowned and venerable canon of tradition, from the creation of the world, will advance to our view; setting before us what according to natural contemplation (τὰς φωνικὰς θεωρίας) necessarily has to be treated of beforehand, and clearing off what stands in the way of this arrangement. So that we may have our ears ready for the reception of the tradition of true knowledge; the soil being previously cleared of the thorns and of every weed by the husbandman, in order to the planting of the vine. For there is a contest, and the prelude to the contest; and there are some mysteries before other mysteries (μυστήρια...μυστήριον).

Here we have a passage which uses the language of the mysteries (ἐποπτεία and μυστήριον), but in the context of ecclesiastical terms such as “apostolic,” “tradition,” and “canon.” Clement is preparing the reader (advanced catechumens in the first instance, see §4.2.4, pp.168-174) to enter into the mysteries which belong to the Church. He has already introduced μυστήριον (13,1-2) as that

but μυστήριον also occurs alongside ἐποπτεία, which seems to be used in place of θεωρία. We will discuss this passage further in our next section, §3.4 (pp.114-121).

74 Strom. 1.1.12, 1.
75 Strom. 1.1.15.1-3.
76 Clement's comments in the Letter to Theodore are interesting in light of this passage, "Thus he [Mark] composed a more spiritual Gospel for the use of those who were being perfected....he left his composition to the church in Alexandria, where it even yet is most carefully guarded, being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries," LtrTheo. 1.21-II.2 (GCS IV.1, p.xvii, 27-29).
which Christ has spoken and is now being communicated to others, and he has already introduced \( \text{\textgamma} \) (10,4). Though the use of \( \text{\textgamma} \) in this passage is not completely clear, it is safe to assume (without clear evidence to the contrary) that it refers to a spiritual "seeing." This position is strengthened here with the use of \( \text{\textgamma} \) (see §3.4, pp.114-121) and by the fact that "natural contemplation" (φυσικής \( \text{\textgamma} \)) seems to be held in opposition to it.

Clement is presenting the process of moving from the physical to the metaphysical, and then to the spiritual. This is what makes this passage important for our purposes: in this introductory chapter Clement gives us a hint of his spiritual pathway. He describes the use of "natural contemplation" as "clearing off what stands in the way....the thorns and of every weed by the husbandman." This is needed to prepare the reader for these "apostolic seeds." After this, one is ready for the \( \text{\textgamma} \), the "seeing" of spiritual things, just as in the mystery religions "there are some mysteries before other mysteries."

As was clear in our discussion of the opening chapter of Stromateis (pp.39-46), the nature of the work is described in terms of being hidden and secret, and thus declared in a cryptic fashion. The next two passages we will look at come from Book V, which we have seen (pp.76-81) contains Clement’s critical discussion of the hidden nature of Truth.

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77 One of the results of this study is to show Clement's role in this development.
78 Strom. I.1.12,1.
Towards the end of a section where Clement has been pointing to the practice of the Egyptian religions and the Greek philosophers to conceal certain teachings, he says this,

Further, those who instituted the mysteries (τὰ μυστήρια), being philosophers, buried their doctrines in myths, so as not to be obvious to all. Did they then, by veiling human opinions, prevent the ignorant from handling them; and was it not more beneficial for the holy and blessed contemplation (θεωρίας) of realities to be concealed? 80

We see the use of mystery and theoria here, but the interest for us is that we have Clement referring to θεωρία specifically among the philosophers. We have already seen this,81 but here he goes on to say that the philosophers followed “the tenets of the Barbarian [Jewish] philosophy” and both must be “expounded allegorically, not absolutely in all their expressions.” (V.9.58,6) Here we have a reference which links allegory to θεωρία as Hanson has insisted (§2.2.3, p.57 n119), but Clement could easily be indicating that θεωρία is being hidden by the texts which only the allegorical reading brings out. This passage follows the exposition in Strom. V.6 where Clement does just this: he uses an allegorical reading to show that the High Priest represents the θεωρία of the gnostic.82

Strom. V.10 follows this last passage; this chapter is Clement’s reading of how the Apostle Paul (and other biblical writers) hid the mysteries of the faith. This is the beginning of a critical section of Chapter 10 which runs from V.10.60-12.82.83

After establishing the hidden nature of the Scriptures by the quotation of various

80 Strom. V.9.58,4-5.
82 Strom. V.6.40,1; see Van den Hoek (Clement-Philo, pp.116-147) and our discussion, §2.4.2 (pp.76-81 and §4.3.4 (pp.184-190).
83 Here we will discuss only the passages concerned with μυστήριον and θεωρία. See §2.4.2 (pp.76-81) for a discussion on the significance of this section as it fits into the whole of Book V.
bibilical texts, Clement comes to his point: quoting 1 Cor. 2:6,7, he intends to reveal “the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery.” Next he quotes 1 Cor. 3:1-3, linking it to this previous passage,

...but we speak the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery.” Then proceeding, he thus inculcates the caution against the divulging of his words to the multitude in the following terms: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, even to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, not with meat: for ye were not yet able; neither are ye now able. For ye are yet carnal.”

In effect, Clement is offering his commentary on St. Paul throughout this chapter; he reads in Paul the teaching of a higher level, the meat, which is a mystery. Now he gives us his explanation of what Paul is referring to,

...ye are yet carnal.” If, then, “the milk” is said by the apostle to belong to the babes, and “meat” to be the food of the full-grown, milk will be understood to be catechetical instruction--the first food, as it were, of the soul. And meat is the mystic contemplation (ἐποτική θεωρία), for this is the flesh and blood of the Word, that is, the comprehension of the divine power and essence.

Because of the use of the “milk/meat” analogy, this is perhaps the most important text linking μυστήριον with θεωρία. We have already seen (pp.76-81) and will see again (pp.167-172) just how critical this analogy to food is for Clement in his discussion on θεωρία. Here we need to notice that Clement says the knowledge of

84 Mondésert (Clément, p.54) describes the biblical quotations in this chapter as “an abundance of incoherent citations from the N.T.” It is obvious from the conclusions he draws (pp.56-57) that he works from the presupposition that there cannot be the kind of esotericism which Clement espouses. Though he never explicitly says, it seems clear that Mondésert would reject the idea that there could be an esoteric content behind St. Paul’s comments in 1 Cor. 2-3. This, of course, would lead him to describe Clement’s quotations as “incoherent” and “badly understood.” To the reader who is not committed to this presupposition about the apostle Paul, Clement’s quotations are not incoherent, in fact, they make perfect sense. In the end, whether or not Paul’s comments contain an esoteric element is not the point; the point is that Clement sees an esoteric element there and his quotations and exposition flow from this perspective. I am not defending Clement’s claim on this point, nor am I contending here for such esotericism in Paul. Lilla does, however, defend both Clement’s reading of St. Paul and the presence of an esoteric element in Paul, (Clément, pp.147-148, 147 n2).
85 Strom. V.10.65,5
86 Strom. V.10.65,5-66,1.
87 Strom. V.10.66,1-2.
the divine essence (οὐσίας) is θεωρία. We will discuss this point more fully later (Chapter Five); for now we simply want to notice the inclusion of this philosophical category in Clement’s working definition of θεωρία.

3.3.4 Conclusions on μυστήριον and θεωρία

We can now draw some conclusions as to how μυστήριον fits into Clement’s understanding of θεωρία. It is clear that Clement uses the term and concept of μυστήριον with the mystery religions in mind; he co-opts this language to show that Christianity has the greater mysteries. It is also clear that his understanding and use of μυστήριον is highly influenced by Paul; Clement sees in Pauline mystery a hidden aspect which only the mature can receive. The allegorical method of biblical interpretation is part of μυστήριον for Clement, but mainly in that it hides the deeper sense of a text. The allegorical method in itself could hardly be a hidden mystery since Paul used it quite openly in his writings, as did Philo. Though we only find three passages which clearly link the two, we conclude that θεωρία is a mystery which Clement has chosen to reveal in Stromateis through the allegorical method. This is exactly what Clement does in his allegorical discussion of the High Priest text in Strom. V.6. This is also made clear, not just on the weight of the passages we have considered above, but also by the important context of the last passage: it not only appears in the midst of the extremely important section of V.10.60-12.82, but it is tied directly to the critical “milk/meat” analogy.

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88 He ends V.10.66,2 with this comment, then restates it again in 66,3.
89 See our discussion, pp.79-81 and pp.184-190.
3.4 The Beatific Vision: ἐποπτεία and θεωρία

It is not coincidental that ἐποπτεία occurs in two of the passages we have just considered under the category of μυστήριον; both terms are borrowed by Clement from the language of the mystery religions. We need to add some information to this background: Daniélou reminds us that the term ἐποπτεία does come from the mystery religions.90 The noun (ἐπόπτης) usually means “one who sees,”91 while the verb form (ἐποπτεύω) can mean “to consider,” or “to ponder,”92 thus has a meaning similar to θεωρία. The word does not occur in the LXX in the verb form and only four times as a noun, all referring to God.93 The word does not occur in Philo at all.94 Only three occurrences are found in the NT,95 none in a way related to the mysteries. There are only two occurrences in the Apostolic Fathers,96 neither of which occur in the way Clement uses the word. Lastly, there is no occurrence in the Nag Hammadi texts.97 It is useful to note that the word typically refers to the mystery ceremonies which involve the initiate moving from the darkness of the night into a brilliantly lighted temple where the sacred relics were displayed by the hierophant.98 It is obvious that Clement has not gained the use of this word from some of his usual sources, but has co-opted this word from the mysteries.

91 Michaelis (TDNT 5, p.373).
92 Ibid., p.374.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.; Mayor shows, however, that Philo did clearly refer to the mysteries, p.liii.
96 Ibid., p.375. Michaelis gives 1 Clem. 55:6 and Goodspeed (Index Patristicus, p.89) lists 1 Clem. 59:3.
97 No listing in Siegert (WUNT 26, 1982).
98 See the discussion of Mayor, pp.1-lx.
3.4.1 Clement’s use of ἐποπτεῖα

In Stromateis there are 13 occurrences of ἐποπτεῖα, eight of which are linked with θεωρία.99 Clement takes this term from the mystery religions and uses it in his own unique way.100 We will look at three non-θεωρία passages, then move on to those with the θεωρία focus.

The first passage we will look at is Strom. II.2.5,5:

...For the power of God is always present, in contact with us, in the exercise of inspection (ἐποπτεῖα), of beneficence, of instruction.

In this text the use of ἐποπτεῖα is not completely clear. Wilson’s translation here indicates that Clement is speaking of God’s view over mankind. Ferguson agrees with this rendering, “Yes, the power of God is always present, touching us with a power that is observant, beneficent, and educative.”101 Van den Hoek differs somewhat, “…for the power of God is always present, taking hold of us through the faculty of contemplation, beneficence and instruction.”102 To fully appreciate Clement’s use of ἐποπτεῖα here we must compare it to another very similar passage in Strom. V.71-79. Because the passage in Book V is quite lengthy I will only show the sections which correspond to the Book II passage:103

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strom. II.2.5,3 - 6,4</th>
<th>Strom. V.11.71,3 - 12.79,1</th>
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| 5,3 You have, in brief, the professed aim of our philosophy...when pursued with right course of conduct, leads through Wisdom, the artificer of all things, to the Ruler of all, | 78,1 “For both is it a difficult task to discover the Father and Maker of this universe; and having found Him, it is impossible to declare Him to all. For this is

99 Stählin, Register, p.423. The texts given in bold are linked with θεωρία: Strom. I.1.15,2; I.28.176,2; II.2.5,5; II.10.47,4; IV.1.3,2; IV.23.152,3; V.10.66,2; V.11.67,3; V.11.71,1; V.14.138,3; VI.14.108,1; VII.10.57,1; VII.11.68,4.
100 Van den Hoek: “Clement, indeed, appears to be a pioneer in the use of the term in a Jewish and Christian context,” (Clement-Philo, p.61).
101 (Clement-Philo, p.149). Emphasis given by van den Hoek to indicate the influence of Philo.
102 (Clement-Philo, p.149). Emphasis given by van den Hoek to indicate the influence of Philo.
103 Van den Hoek’s discussion of these two passages should be consulted, (Clement-Philo, pp.148-152 and 168-176).
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— a Being difficult to grasp and apprehend, ever receding and withdrawing from him who pursues, by no means capable of expression, like the other subjects of instruction,” says the truth-loving Plato.

Both passages contain a reference to Timaeus 28c. The thrust of both passages is the contact the gnostic has with God,

5.4 But He who is far off has—oh ineffable marvel—come very near. “I am a God: that draws near,” says the Lord. He is in essence remote; “for how is it that what is begotten can have approached the Unbegotten?” But He is very near in virtue of that power which holds all things in its embrace.

5.5 “Shall one do aught in secret, and I see him not?” For the power of God is always present, in contact with us, in the exercise of inspection, of beneficence, of instruction.

71.5 God is not capable of being taught by man, or expressed in speech, but to be known only by His own power. For inquiry was obscure and dim; but the grace of knowledge is from Him by the Son....

74.1 Thence says the apostle: “Now we see as through a glass, but then face to face,” by those sole pure and incorporeal applications of the intellect.

Van den Hoek points out how Clement has changed the “powers” in Philo to “a singular power of God (δόναμις)” in II.2.5,4 and in V.11.71,5 “[God] can be apprehended only through his power, δόναμις, which exists in the gift of knowledge by the Son.”

6.1 Whence Moses, persuaded that God is not to be known by human wisdom, said, “Show me Thy glory;” and into the thick darkness where God's voice was, pressed to enter—that is, into the inaccessible and invisible ideas respecting Existence.

71.5 Wherefore also Moses says, “Show Thyself to me;”—intimating most clearly that God is not capable of being taught by man, or expressed in speech, but to be known only by His own power...

78.2 For he had heard right well that the all-wise Moses, ascending the mount for holy contemplation, to the summit of objects...

78.3 And when the Scripture says, “Moses entered into the thick darkness where God was,” this shows to those capable of understanding, that God is invisible and beyond expression by words...

104 See Chapter Two for the importance of this text (p.36 n49 above).
105 Van den Hoek shows how Clement uses Philo in both passages: “The proximity of God is stressed more strongly than the idea of his remoteness,” (Clement-Philo, p.152).
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., p.172. See her comments on p.175.
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Here we see the important role Moses plays in Clement’s θεωρία scheme; in both of these difficult passages where he is laying some of his philosophical foundations, the encounter of Moses with God is used as his paradigm.

6,1 For God is not in darkness or in place, but above both space and time, and qualities of objects.

6,2 Wherefore neither is He at any time in a part, either as containing or as contained, either by limitation or by section.

6,3 “For what house will ye build to Me?” saith the Lord? Nay, He has not even built one for Himself, since He cannot be contained. And though heaven be called His throne, not even thus is He contained, but He rests delighted in the creation.

71,3 ...we may reach somehow to the conception of the Almighty, knowing not what He is, but what He is not.

71,4 And form and motion, or standing, or a throne, or place, or right hand or left, are not at all to be conceived as belonging to the Father of the universe, although it is so written...The First Cause is not then in space, but above both space, and time, and name, and conception.

74,5 Further, the Word, prohibiting the constructing of temples and all sacrifices, intimates that the Almighty is not contained in anything, by what He says: “What house will ye build to Me? saith the LORD. Heaven is my throne,” and so on....

The context of both passages is a philosophical discussion to show that God is not bound in the material world, but is rather eternal and transcendent. Both utilise the Isaiah 66:1 text. Finally, both passages have a statement as to the purpose of the discussion,

6,4 It is clear, then, that the truth has been hidden from us; 79,1 ...and indicating that what is divine is unutterable by human power;

It is clear that these two passages are similar, if not parallel. Van den Hoek’s discussion of these two passages (see note 103) confirms this. What we need to note here is that the use of ἐποπτεῖα in the II.2.5 text mirrors τὴν ἁγίαν θεωρίαν in V.12.78,2. The construction of the sentence could point to ἐποπτεῖα as a function of God’s operation; this would certainly make sense. On the other hand, it does not do violence to the text to translate it as van den Hoek has, “through the faculty of contemplation.” Taken in this latter sense, the example of Moses who
enters “into the thick darkness” (II.2.6,1) would be both an example and an explanation of ἐποπτεῖα in the contemplative sense.

Our next passage is Strom. VII.11.68,3-4:

The Gnostic, consequently, in virtue of being a lover of the one true God, is the really perfect man and friend of God, and is placed in the rank of son. For these are names of nobility and knowledge, and perfection in the contemplation (ἐποπτεῖαν) of God; which crowning step of advancement the gnostic soul receives, when it has become quite pure, reckoned worthy to behold everlastingly God Almighty, “face,” it is said, “to face.”

This passage has the more straightforward tone typical of Book VII. Here the gnostic is spoken of as the “friend of God.” In a similar text Clement describes the gnostic as one who “feasts eternally and insatiably on the boundless joy of contemplation (θεωρίας),” then refers to him as “the friend of God.”108 We also see the use of “face to face,” which is a biblical reference Clement favors when discussing θεωρία (§4.3.3, pp.177-184). Along with the “friend of God” phrase, “face to face” communicates close contact, an intimacy with God. Thus we have another passage where ἐποπτεῖα seems to be used in the same way as θεωρία.

The third passage we want to notice is Strom. IV.1.3,1-4:

On completing, then, the whole of what we propose in the commentaries, on which, if the Spirit will, we ministering to the urgent need, (for it is exceedingly necessary, before coming to the truth, to embrace what ought to be said by way of preface), shall address ourselves to the true gnostic science of nature, receiving initiation into the minor mysteries before the greater; so that nothing may be in the way of the truly divine declaration of sacred things, the subjects requiring preliminary detail and statement being cleared away, and sketched beforehand. The science of nature, then, or rather observation (ἐποπτεῖα), as contained in the gnostic tradition according to the rule of the truth, depends on the discussion concerning cosmogony, ascending thence to the department of theology. Whence, then, we shall begin our account of what is handed down, with the creation as related by the prophets, introducing also the tenets of the heterodox, and endeavouring as far as we can to confute them.

108 Strom. VI.9.75,1 and 76,3.
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This is an extremely interesting passage in that it mirrors one which we have already noticed (Strom. I.1.15,2-3; p.109). In both passages Clement tells the reader that he will refute the teachings of the heretics with the traditions of the Church.109 Both passages speak of “clearing away...preliminary” (IV.1.3,1) subject matter which “stands in the way” of more important topics. Among the extraneous material which must be “cleared of the thorns and of every weed” (I.1.15,3) is the discussion of cosmogeny.110 In both passages this will lead from the lesser to the greater mysteries. This philosophical category will be analysed using natural science, which will lead to the higher level of discussion — to theology, or contemplation.111 We will come back to this data later to show how Clement is using philosophical categories to hide the gnostic tradition.

If we take these three passages (II.2.5,3 - 6,2; VII.11.68,3-4; and IV.1.3,1-4) we can make a good case that Clement uses ἐποπτεία in a synonymous fashion with θεωρία. We will discuss this a bit further after we have considered the passages where the two words occur together.

109 In Strom. I.1 he refers to τῶν...δογματιζόμενα αἱρέσεων while in Strom. IV.1 he says τῶν ἐπερχόμενων παρατηθέμενοι. In I.1 he uses “the renowned and venerable” τῆς παραδόσεως κανόνα while in IV.1 he says τῆς ἀξιωματικῆς κανόνας γνωστικῆς παραδόσεως.
110 In I.1 Clement refers to τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως and in IV.1 to κοσμογονίας...γενέσεως.
111 In I.1, τὴν ἐποπτικὴν θεωρίαν γνώσεως, and in IV.1, ἐποπτεία, or θεολογικόν. As with “natural science,” this distinction is not easy; the passage in I.1 seems altogether more clear than IV.1. However, in Strom. I.28.176,1-2 Clement clearly refers to τὸ θεολογικὸν as ἡ ἐποπτεία. As Van den Hoek points out concerning this text (Clement-Philo, pp 60-61), Clement’s division here of Mosaic law is not entirely clear, but she does maintain that it “reflects the idea of progress from literal understanding up to spiritual knowledge,” p.61.
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3.4.2 \textit{ἐποπτεία} and \textit{θεωρία} together in \textit{Stromateis}

There are seven passages in \textit{Stromateis} where \textit{ἐποπτεία} and \textit{θεωρία} occur together.\textsuperscript{112} Four of these clearly show the two words used synonymously,\textsuperscript{113} two seem to use \textit{ἐποπτεία} to modify (strengthen) \textit{θεωρία},\textsuperscript{114} and one (I.28.176,1-2) uses \textit{φυσικής θεωρίας} as “physical science,” while using \textit{ἐποπτεία} for the spiritual concept of contemplation. In other words, \textit{ἐποπτεία} is either used to modify \textit{θεωρία} or is interchanged with it in every passage where these two words occur together. The evidence for this conclusion is very clear,

For Scripture, by the frequent reiteration of the expression, “I am the LORD your God,” shames in such a way as most powerfully to dissuade, by teaching us to follow God who gave the commandments, and gently admonishes us to seek God and endeavour to know Him as far as possible; which is the highest speculation (\textit{θεωρία μεγίστη}), that which scans the greatest mysteries (\textit{ἡ ἐποπτεία}), the real knowledge, that which becomes irrefragable by reason. This alone is the knowledge of wisdom, from which rectitude of conduct is never disjoined.\textsuperscript{115}

In the contemplative life (\textit{τῷ θεωρητικῷ βιώ}), then, one in worshipping God attends to himself, and through his own spotless purification beholds (\textit{ἐποπτείει}) the holy God holily; for self-control, being present, surveying and contemplating (\textit{θεωροθέου}) itself uninterrupted, is as far as possible assimilated to God. IV.23.152,3

Then become pure in heart, and near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation (\textit{τῇ θεωρίᾳ})...through the mystic stages of advancement; till it restores the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest; teaching to gaze (\textit{ἐποπτεύει}) on God, face to face, with knowledge and comprehension. VII.10.56,5-57,1

Two of these passages (VI.14.108,1 and VII.10.57,1-5) bring in three more categories: \textit{hebdomas}, \textit{ogdoas}, and the concept of \textit{rest}. We will discuss these passages and categories in our next section.

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Strom.} I.1.15,2-3; 28.176,1-2; II.10.47,4; IV.23.152,3; V.10.66,2; VI.14.108,1; VII.10.56,5-57,1.
\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Strom.} I.10.47,4; IV.23.152,3; VI.14.108,1; VII.10.56,5-57,1. Van den Hoek also refers to his use of these two words as “synonymous,” (Clement-Philo, p.157).
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Strom.} I.1.15,2; V.10.66,2.
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Strom.} II.10.47,4. See Van den Hoek on this text (Clement-Philo, p.157).
3.4.3 Conclusions on Clement’s use of ἐποπτεῖα

This word (ἐποπτεῖα) represents another category where Clement co-opts language from another system and uses it in his own unique way — he makes it work in his “Christian” philosophical system. Using the image of the mystery ceremonies, Clement substitutes ἐποπτεῖα for θεωρία or simply uses it to strengthen his representation of the Christian “vision,” where the gnostic meets with God “face to face.”

The occurrences of ἐποπτεῖα are few, but as we have seen, Clement uses it synonymously with θεωρία. Because of this, we include these texts in our study (and include these occurrences with those of θεωρία in Appendix 1, p.296). Wilson rightly translates ἐποπτεῖα as “contemplation” when the text calls for it, though he makes no comment on this procedure. Daniélou has followed this procedure as well.

3.5 The Ascent of the gnostic Soul

Our last category will cover several concepts in Clement’s thought, but it will be clear that these are interconnected. We will consider the rising of the soul which will lead to the seventh and eighth spheres of heaven (ἐβδομάς and ὕγιόμας) and the rest (ἀνάπαυσίς) which all perfect souls achieve when, through the shedding of passions (ἀπάθεια), they “see” God “face to face.” The discussion on this issue usually comes down on two sides: Daniélou sees this language as

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116 ANCL series (Vol. 4 and 12).
117 Daniélou defines and translates every instance he cites as “contemplation,” (Gospel Message, pp.315, 341, 450 and 453). Van den Hoek follows this procedure in two instances, (Clement-Philo, pp.149, 164). Hort (Hort-Mayor translation of Book VII, which has been referred to previously as Mayor when referring to notes) translates VII.10.57.1 as “to look,” (p.99) while he translates VII.11.68,4 as “vision,” (p.119) following the usage in the mystery religions.
mainly influenced by the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, while Lilla claims that the ascent theme cannot be explained outside the Gnostic and Platonic traditions.\textsuperscript{118} There is no need to examine these arguments here, but we will refer to them as we examine the specific passages in Clement.

3.5.1 The Rising of the Soul

Clement speaks numerous times about the \textit{gnostic} soul rising up to meet God.\textsuperscript{119} The most important thing to note in this ascent theme is the focus: the soul moves upward for contemplation,

Such, according to David, “rest in the holy hill of God,” in the church far on high, in which are gathered the philosophers of God, “who are Israelites indeed, who are pure in heart, in whom there is no guile;” who do not remain in the seventh seat, the place of rest, but are promoted, through the active beneficence of the divine likeness, to the heritage of beneficence which is the eighth grade; devoting themselves to the pure vision of insatiable contemplation.\textsuperscript{120}

These salutary revolutions...are distinguished both by times, and places, and honours, and cognitions, and heritages, and ministries, according to the particular order of each change, up to the transcendent and continual contemplation of the Lord in eternity.\textsuperscript{121}

Most of the occurrences of the ascent theme are in Book VII where Clement says he intends to give the clearest presentation of the “truly pious” \textit{gnostic}.\textsuperscript{122} After considering ascension passages which include the various categories we have mentioned, we will conclude with an examination of the ascension passages which focus on \textit{θεοφια}.

\begin{flushright}

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Strom.} IV.18.116.2-117.2; IV.25.155.4; 159.2; V.6.40.1; VI.14.108.1; VII.2.10.2; VII.3.13.1; VII.7.40.1-4; VII.10.56.5-57.3; VII.11.65.4; 68.1-5; VII.13.82,4-7.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Strom.} VI.14.108.1.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Strom.} VII.2.10.2.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Strom.} VI.1.1,1-2 and VII.1.1,1-2.
\end{flushright}
3.5.2 Life or Afterlife?

It seems that one of the first things which must be addressed as we examine this rising of the soul is whether Clement is speaking about this life or the afterlife. The problem here is that Clement is not altogether clear; sometimes he seems to be speaking of this life, and other times of the afterlife. Although Osborn thinks the ascent and unceasing contemplation of the gnostic occurs upon his death,\(^\text{123}\) Daniélou and Lilla understand them to be during this lifetime.\(^\text{124}\) Of the dozen clear ascent passages we have listed, only two clearly speak in terms of the afterlife,\(^\text{125}\) while only three clearly speak in terms of the earthly life.\(^\text{126}\) The remaining seven passages do not give any clear indication. Our discussion of Book VII in Chapter Five will give evidence that Clement wants to emphasise the life of the gnostic in space and time. This position is confirmed by possibly the clearest ascension passage on this issue, VII.13.82-83. After the ascension passage Clement says,

\[
...\text{he lives at once perfectly and with a good conscience, mingling faith with hope, in order to the expectation of the future. For he is conscious of the boon he has received, having become worthy of obtaining it; and is translated from slavery to adoption.}...\text{Rightly, then, he is not disturbed by anything which happens...Nor is he ashamed to die, having a good conscience, and being fit to be seen by the Powers. Cleansed, so to speak, from all the stains of the soul, he knows right well that it will be better with him after his departure.}\]

But where does the soul of Clement’s gnostic go? This will be our first category.

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\(^{123}\) Osborn (Clement, pp.80-83). It should be noted, however, that he then makes room for διασκεδαστισις in this life, pp.92-94, also pp.160-166 where Osborn admits, “This ascent and vision belong to the life after death; but the gnostic anticipates these things while still on earth.” (p.163)


\(^{125}\) Strom. IV.25.159,1-2 and VII.11.68,1-5.

\(^{126}\) Strom. VII.10.57,1-3; VII.11.65,4; VII.13.82,4-7.

\(^{127}\) Strom. VII.13.82,6-83,1.
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3.5.3 The Seventh and Eighth Abodes

It is clear that Clement envisioned spiritual stages, or levels, which the soul had to traverse to get to the place of highest contemplation. Perhaps the clearest textual example is VI.14.108,1 (see p.122). In this passage Clement uses ἐβδομάς and ὀγδοάς to refer to spiritual levels. We need to address some studies which have discussed Clement’s use of these categories. In a discussion of “seven” and “eight,” we see that other topics emerge: angelology, the πρώτοκτιστοι (the “first-created,” highest angels),\(^\text{128}\) and discussion of the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day.

1. Studies by Daniéllou, Lilla and Van den Hoek

Daniéllou shows the similarities between Clement and the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition with regard to these topics.\(^\text{129}\) He also points to the “primitive tradition” which we have discussed in detail (see pp.38-62).\(^\text{130}\) Both Daniéllou and Lilla recognise the symbolism of seven and eight referring to the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Lord’s Day.\(^\text{131}\) Van den Hoek gives a full discussion of these topics dealing with the High Priest passage in Strom. V.6.\(^\text{132}\)

\(^{128}\) Daniéllou (Gospel Message, p.459).
\(^{129}\) Ibid., pp.450-464.
\(^{130}\) Ibid., p.453f. Lilla acknowledges the Judaeo-Christian influence, but maintains that there are aspects of this gnostic ascent theme “which cannot be adequately explained without resorting to Gnosticism and to Platonism.” (Clement, p.181) Throughout his study Lilla gives numerous examples from Gnostic and Middle Platonist texts, and it becomes obvious that these ascent categories were commonplace in the philosophical and spiritual milieu of the second century.
\(^{131}\) Daniéllou (Gospel Message, pp.451-452); Lilla (Clement, p.184). See Collins, A. Y., “Numerical Symbolism in Jewish and Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature,” ANRW Band 21.2 (1984), pp.1221-1287. In his section “Numbers as Signs of Cosmic Order” (pp.1249-1268) Collins shows the importance of the Pythagorean number system in the ancient world and the influence of this system on both Aristobulus and Philo. Clement surely has picked up some of his numbering from this influence. See also, Everett Ferguson, “Was Barnabas A Chiliast? An Example of Hellenistic Number Symbolism in Barnabas and Clement of Alexandria,” in Greeks, Romans, and Christians, ed. by Balch, Ferguson, and Meeks, (Minneapolis 1990), pp.157-167.
\(^{132}\) Van den Hoek (Clement-Philo, pp.116-147). There is another section where she points to Clement’s use of Aristobulus, pp.201-204.
Her conclusion, that Clement is mostly influenced by Philo, agrees with the positions of both Daniélou and Lilla, yet she points out that Clement went his own way in numerous places, putting his own emphasis on matters which concerned him:

Clement takes over a few cosmological elaborations without placing the same emphasis on them that his source had. He remodels Philo's cosmology.... Clement does not seem interested in cosmology as such and for that reason transforms the cosmology that had been, in part, transmitted through Philo....[after mentioning other influences such as St. Paul and Gnostic sources]...this material was presumably taken over from his opponents by Clement.134

These comments by Van den Hoek provide a good bridge for my comments on these categories.

2. The Overemphasis of these Categories

First it must be said that Daniélou and Lilla are correct in seeing the Judaeo-Christian and Gnostic influences on Clement's thought. As we have seen thus far in our study, Clement draws from sources all around him. I agree with Van den Hoek: as we have said with other categories, Clement co-opts both the language and the concepts around him and uses them to develop his own system. I also agreement with her statement, "Clement does not seem interested in cosmology as such..." If we look at Clement's use of ἐβδομάδα and ὁγδοὰς more closely we find that perhaps too much has been made of these categories with respect to the ascension theme in Ὀστεοφία.

133 Ibid., see especially pp.145-147.
134 Ibid., pp.145-146.
135 See Daniélou's comments on this, (Gospel Message, p.453f).
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There are numerous examples of Clement using the numbers seven and eight in Stromateis: both words occur more than 15 times, but many of these simply refer to the numbers and have very little significance. However, Clement gives the numbers themselves significance when he says they contain a "gnostic mystery." There are several passages which seem to reveal his thinking on the matter, but of our dozen ascent passages (see note 119 above) these two words only occur four times. Each of these passages clearly refer to this concept of the gnostic soul rising up into higher levels, but it remains only four occurrences. The idea of "levels" does occur in other ascent passages, and it is not difficult to associate Clement's use of other terms ("abode," "throne," "place," and "seat") with the ἐβδομάς and the δύσοας. However, it should not go unnoticed that ἐβδομάς and δύσοας only occur in the one passage in Book VII where the majority of the ascent passages are located.

None of this is meant to say that these categories are unimportant, but simply to propose that the evidence for the various interpretations and meanings has received too much attention with respect to Stromateis. We will comment more on this in a moment.

3. The Angelic Beings

Another aspect of the ascent theme which has been overemphasised in Stromateis is the role of angelic beings. Daniélou and Lilla both point to Clement's references to angelic beings in connection with the ascent theme.138

136 Strom. IV.17.109,1-2; VI.16.145,3.
137 Strom. IV.25.159-162; V.6.36-40; VI.14.108,1; VII.10.56,5-57,3.
138 See Daniélou (Gospel Message, pp.449-453 and pp.458-464); Daniélou (The Theology, pp.176-181); Lilla (Clement, pp.181-189).
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Clement does present a structure of angelic beings, but the textual evidence in Stromateis for interaction with angelic beings in an ascent is fairly limited.139 Daniélou points to four passages, only two of which can be considered as evidence.140 He points to VII.3.13,1 and VII.10.56-57 as evidence of levels of angels. Both of these texts refer to θεοί, which might mean “angels,” but could also apply to the gnostic souls which have already been purified.141 In his discussion, Lilla points to only five texts, two of which are dubious.142 He focuses on the angels which collect a toll from the gnostic soul, but there is only one clear text in the whole of Stromateis on this point (IV.18.116-117).

In their discussion of angelic beings in the gnostic ascent, both Daniélou and Lilla draw extensively on Excerpta Ex Theodoto and Eclogae Propheticae.143 Both comment on the role of the first-created angels (πρωτόκτιστοι).144 Their role is linked with the texts referring to the seventh and eighth levels. I do not dispute that Clement had such a structure, but in the over 20 occurrences of

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139 We will see in Chapter Five that Clement does have the gnostic interacting with angels in Book VII in a way which might help to explain these ascension passages; see §5.6.4 (pp.251-255).
140 Daniélou (Gospel Message, pp.449-453); the passages he cites are Strom. VI.16.138,1-5; VII.3.13,1; 10.56-57. His reference to Strom. VII.12.67,4 (p.451 n12) is faulty; I think he means VII.12.76,4 (a mere typo); his citation of Strom. VI.16.138,1-5 (p.451) has little (if anything) to do with the ascent theme. It does speak of the symbolic language of seven and eight.
141 Lilla makes this point, (Clement, pp.186-187).
142 Ibid., pp.181-186; the passages he cites are Strom. IV.18.116-117; 25.155,4; VII.3.13,1; 10.56-57; 13.83,1. He uses VI.14.108,1 as a text to link seven and eight with the ascent theme, but this text has more to do with observing the Christian Lord’s Day rather than the Sabbath. The section just prior (VI.13.106,3-107,3) is speaking about the offices of the Church, but also mentions “the middle wall which separated the Greek from the Jew is taken away...” (Eph.2:14), VI.13.106,4. Then, VI.14.108,1 says, “...in the church...are gathered the philosophers of God, ‘who are Israelites indeed, who are pure in heart’...who do not remain in the seventh seat...but are promoted...the eighth grade.” This is similar to Paul’s reference to the Gentiles who have been members of Israel — the very text Clement has just used, Eph.2:11-15. Both IV.25.155,4 and VII.13.83,1 are such casual references that the meaning is not completely clear.
143 A quick look at Stuhlin (Band 4, pp.200-201) reveals a large number, at least 40, references to angels in these two works. Also, ἰσάγγελος, p.484.
144 Daniélou (Gospel Message, pp.459-464); Lilla (Clement, pp.185-186).
πρωτόκτιστοι in his corpus, only four occur in Stromateis and only two of those refer to the angelic hierarchy.  

Using the textual data within Stromateis, we must conclude that though angelic beings did have a role in the ascent theme, it was not a critical one. This brings us to an observation which needs to be made, and which affects the way we view many of these related categories in Stromateis: cosmology and angelology were only secondary categories for Clement in this work.

4. Cosmology and Angelology are Secondary for Clement

When a thorough examination is made of all the passages in Stromateis which speak of the cosmos, angels, and the mystical numbers seven and eight, it becomes apparent that these categories are secondary for Clement. We begin by recalling Clement’s words about hiding the gnostic traditions with philosophical discussion:

And we profess not to explain secret things sufficiently — far from it — but only to recall them to memory... Some things my treatise will hint, on some it will linger, some it will merely mention. It will try to speak imperceptibly, to exhibit secretly, and to demonstrate silently... The Stromata will contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell.

Several times in his discussions on cosmology and angelology Clement mentions that he has digressed from his real objective, that he must move on, but that he will take up the discussion in another work:

As to the first principle or principles of the universe, or what opinion we ought to entertain about all these points, we are not now to speak, for no other cause than on account of its being difficult to explain our sentiments in accordance with the present form of discourse.

145 Stahlin (Band 4, pp.690-691). Twelve times in Ex. Theo.; seven times in Ec. Prop.; once in the fragments. The occurrences in Stromateis: V.6.35.1; V.14.89.4 (clearly refers to Wisdom as in Prov. 8:22-31); VI.16.143.1 (πρωτόγνωνος, but the text does seem to be speaking of angelic beings); and VII.16.98.3 which has nothing to do with angels.

146 Strom. I.1.14,2; 15,1 and 18,1.

147 Strom. V.14.89,7. Other places where Clement makes similar comments: Strom. IV.25.162,2; VI.3.32,1; VI.16.138,5; VI.18.162, 168,4; VII.2.10-11; VII.10.59,7; VII.13.83,3-14.84,3. It seems clear
There are numerous places where he either admits difficulty or uncertainty in the
subject matter (as in our passage just cited above) or his discussion becomes
diffuse.\footnote{Strom. IV.25.159,2; IV.25.162,1; V.6.36,3; V.11.71,4; V.12.81,4. In discussing these categories Daniélou (Gospel Message) uses various similar adjectives to describe not only Clement’s writing, but the categories themselves: “complex...speculations,” (p.242); “curious” “turn of phrase,” (p.245); “symbolism here is somewhat complex,” (p.452); “Matters are complicated,” (p.459).} Passages like the ones we have noted make it seem that Clement is not
skilled enough to compose a complex work in such a fluid manner as, for example,
Origen.\footnote{Lietzmann makes such comments (History I, pp.287-288) and implies the comparison with Origen when in his conclusion on Clement he states, “It was his lot to be only the forerunner of a greater man who completely overshadowed him...” p.294. I would find more agreement with the comment of Mondésert (SC 30, p.21) and Osborn’s treatment (Clement, pp.7-12).} As we noted above (p.127), in discussions on Clement’s cosmology or
angelology most scholars will turn to Excerpta Ex Theodoto, Hypotyposeis and
Eclogae Propheticae for a considerable amount of their textual support. In these
discussions it is common to use passages from these other documents to explain
passages in the Stromateis,\footnote{See Daniélou (Gospel Message, pp.455-458).} yet these other works are probably just notebooks,
“the result of thinking on paper,” and not meant for the public.\footnote{Casey (Excerpta, p.14). Pierre Nautin shows that both Ex.Theo. and Eclogae are probably parts of the Hypotyposeis and represent fragments from this work which a copyist extracted, “La fin des Les Stromates et les Hypotypose de Clément d’Alexandrie,” VC 30 (1976), pp.268-302. See §4.1.3 (pp.151-152).} While this is a
valid part of exegeting Stromateis, it also points to the fact that these topics are not
Clement’s primary concern in Stromateis. This is why he consistently tells the
reader that he will discuss these categories in a later work. What we have in
fragmentary form represents bits and pieces which were to be found in these later
works (or maybe were the works in question). The fact that he digresses to the
same categories over and again has two equally important explanations: it is part...
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of his method of hiding "the edible part of the nut," and secondly, these are categories which seem to be included in his ποράδοςις. They are topics of importance and he is keenly interested in them, but they represent tangential issues which are not the focus of Stromateis:

For it is our purpose at present to describe the life of the Gnostic, not to present the system of dogmas, which we shall afterwards explain at the fitting time, preserving the order of topics.

Wytzes possibly overstates the case, "...the Christian followers of Philo were not interested in philosophy, epistemology, and the explanation of the kosmos aisthétos. They longed for another, a heavenly world..."

Evidence for this reading of cosmology, angelology and related categories is seen when we look closely at Book VII (Chapter Five), Clement's clearest explanation of the gnostic. We have already noted that the majority of textual evidence for the ascent theme is in Book VII (p.122 n 119). We also noted that the terms ἐβδομάς and ὑγδόας only occur once in a Book VII ascent passage. Clement never clearly mentions angels (nor the πρωτόκτιστοι) in connection with the ascent theme in Book VII.

5. Contemplation in the ἐβδομάς and ὑγδόας

To conclude our discussion of ἐβδομάς and ὑγδόας we want to briefly look at how Clement links the two words with the focus of our study, theoríα. From the dozen passages we have isolated with a clear ascent theme, only three link the

152 Strom. I.1.7,3 and I.1.18,1.
154 Strom. VII.10.59.7.
155 Wytzes (VC 1960, p.133).
156 However, we will see the topic of angels is a critical one in Book VII (§5.6.4, pp.251-255).
mystral seven and eight with θεωρία. The first passage is in Strom.V.6 where Clement is giving his allegorical interpretation of the High Priest entering the Temple. Clement's use of seven and eight are not altogether clear; in fact, he himself speaks in terms which suggests that he is concealing tradition until a later work (V.6.36,3); Van den Hoek comments on this,

As he frequently does, he only touches on the various interpretations without developing his underlying idea fully. The technique may even be a rhetorical means of leaving the interpretation loose, open and yet opaque. However, if we extract fragments of V.6.36-40 the meaning does come out,

...the eighth region and the world of thought, or God, all-embracing, and without shape...signifies the repose which dwells with the adoring spirits...Now the high priest's robe is the symbol of the world of sense. The seven planets...So the high priest, putting off his consecrated robe (the universe, and the creation in the universe...)...distinguishing the objects of the intellect from the things of sense, rising above other priests, hasting to the entrance to the world of ideas...having become son and friend, he is now replenished with insatiable contemplation face to face.

It appears that the gnostic rises up through the seventh realm, into the eighth, where he is able to contemplate God face to face. This reading seems to be made clear by our second passage, VI.14.108,1:

Such, according to David, "rest in the holy hill of God," in the church far on high, in which are gathered the philosophers of God, "who are Israelites indeed, who are pure in heart, in whom there is no guile;" who do not remain in the seventh seat, the place of rest, but are promoted, through the active beneficence of the divine likeness, to the heritage of beneficence which is the eighth grade; devoting themselves to the pure vision of insatiable contemplation.

The last passage (VII.10.56-57) reflects the same understanding,

Then become pure in heart, and near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation (τῆς θεωρίας)...through the mystic...
stages of advancement; till it restores the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest; teaching to gaze (ἐποπτεύειν) on God, face to face, with knowledge and comprehension. For in this consists the perfection of the gnostic soul... after the highest excellence in the flesh, changing always duly to the better, he urges his flight to the ancestral hall, through the holy septenniad (διὰ τῆς ἄγιας ἐβδομάδος) [of heavenly abodes] to the Lord's own mansion; to be a light, steady, and continuing eternally, entirely and in every part immutable.160

Here we see the ascent theme with contemplation (both θεωρία and ἐποπτεία) and the soul rising up “through the holy septenniad.” All three texts indicate the soul ascending upwards to the place of contemplation, to the ὀγδοάς, the region of ideas — and of God. All three mention a place of rest as well; this will be the focus of our next section.

As we have already mentioned, the concept of heavenly levels can easily be associated with ἐβδομάς and ὀγδοάς; three such ascent passages (all in Book VII) contain the θεωρία aspect.161 This gives us a total of six passages linking θεωρία with the rising of the soul and levels in the heavenly realms. Exactly what this means will be more fully discussed in the conclusion of this chapter (§3.6, pp.137-139) and in Chapter Five (§5.5.5, pp.228-234).

3.5.4 The Rest for the Gnostic Soul

One feature of the ascent passages which seems to be of importance is the concept of ἀνάπαυσις — rest. This word occurs over 25 times162 in Stromateis and many are important for our study of the ascension of the soul. In the opening chapter of the work Clement describes finding his blessed teacher Pantaenus, after having travelled all around, by saying, “I found rest.”163 Later, he says that the

160 Strom. VII.10.56,5-57.5.
161 Strom. VII.2.10.2; VII.3.13.1; VII.11.68,1-5.
162 Stählin (Band 4, p.237).
163 Strom. 1.1.11,2.
study of philosophy leads to rest (I.5.32,4) and compares the everchanging "man of falsehood" to the gnostic who is characterised by "calmness, and rest, and peace." These three references to rest are really the only ones of importance until we come to Book IV where the frequency of the concept picks up significantly, being used some 15 times in Books VI and VII.

We will consider some of the sources which may have influenced Clement's concept of rest and look at two categories which seem to be linked with it. We will also look at how rest fits into Clement's use of θεωρία.

1. Clement's Sources

Tracing Clement's sources for this category of rest is not easy. Given the number of occurrences in Stromateis, it is curious that neither Daniélou nor Van den Hoek comment much about rest. Lilla points to the Gnostics, but with very little comment. Indeed, the concept of rest appears frequently in the Nag Hammadi texts with over 40 occurrences. Most of these have little more in common with Clement than the word itself. There are only around a dozen NH passages which have enough commonality to merit a mention, but most of them have only enough context to show that the concept of rest was commonplace in the religious literature of the day. The Gospel of Truth does merit mention; it contains six passages which point to some kind of common tradition. We will extract the basic thrust from the passage in I.41-42:

164 Strom. II.11.52,4.  
166 Siegert, p.211. This is not an exhaustive listing.  
167 Gos.Thom. II.(50); (90); Gos.Phil. II.71,3-15; Orig.World II.104,17-27; 117,28-118,2; Auth.Teach. VI.33,8.  
168 Gos.Truth I.22,12; 24,16-20; 33,36; 35,28; 36,39; and 41,13-43,2. The Gos. Truth is an important document being of an Alexandrian background and probably a Valentinian tract, (MacRae, NHLE, p.37).
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...his own resting-place is his pleroma. Therefore, all the emanations of the Father are pleromas... For the place to which they send their thought, that place, their root, is what takes them up in all the heights to the Father. They possess his head, which is rest for them... approaching him, as though to say that they have participated in his face by means of kisses... neither did they lack the glory of the Father... he is a being without evil, imperturbable... they rest in him who is at rest, not striving nor being twisted around the truth... in no way deficient in anything, but they are set at rest... This is the place of the blessed; this is their place.169

We have several categories which are common with Clement: rest, the ascension theme, the reference to the "face" of the Father, a locality (an abode or place), and lastly, ἀπόθεσις (the concept is present in the being of God). Even this passage, as possibly the best example from the NH texts, appears crude next to most of the Clementine passages concerning rest.170

Another curious aspect of Clement's use of the rest concept is his lack of NT usage. There are two NT passages which one would expect Clement to utilise in support of his presentation of rest: Matt 11:28-30 and Heb 4:3-11. It could be argued that all of his references which include ἐποίημα are allusions to the Hebrews passage (the ὑποθεσίς being the new "Sabbath rest"), but one might expect a direct quotation. Stählin points to the Matthew passage for Strom. VII.11.68,5, but this seems hardly necessary. Clement does quote the Matthew passage in full at Protrepticus 12.120,5, but the focus is not on rest, certainly not as we see it in Stromateis. Three times Clement does cite either of these biblical texts, but the

170 Lilla (Clement, p.188) includes Ex. Theo. 63,1 in his list of common passages from Gnostic writings. We purposely leave out the three ἀπόθεσις passages in Ex. Theo. due to the discussion over which texts would be considered Clementine as opposed to which would be of Valentinus or Pantaenus, see Casey's discussion of this, (Excerpta, pp.5-16). The Ex. Theo. passages are: 18,1-2; 49,2; and 63,1. One thing to notice is the difference between the rest passages in the Gos. Truth and that of Ex. Theo. If Valentinus wrote Gos. Truth as Attridge and MacRae say is a "distinct possibility" (NHLE p.37), then Ex. Theo. reveals how much Valentinian thought had developed, regardless of who wrote the passages in question.
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focus is rest from sin, not an ascension rest, nor a Sabbath rest.¹⁷¹

Even with the lack of evidence for clear literary dependence, it seems likely that the rest motif of the NT is part of the background for both the Gnostics and for Clement.¹⁷² The Epistle of Barnabas is likely to have influenced Clement, but he does not quote Barnabas on this topic either. Without direct quotations from the NT it appears that Clement has another source; we suspect this is another part of his apostolic ποράδοσις.

2. Rest and ἐβδομάδα/ὁγδοάς

We mentioned (pp.130-132) three key θεωρία passages which contain the categories of ἐβδομάδα/ὁγδοάς linked with rest. In addition to these, there are three more,

For on the seventh day the rest is celebrated; and on the eighth he brings a propitiation, as is written in Ezekiel, according to which propitiation the promise is to be received. Whether, then, the time be that which through the seven periods enumerated returns to the chiefest rest, or the seven heavens, which some reckon one above the other; or whether also the fixed sphere which borders on the intellectual world be called the eighth, the expression denotes that the Gnostic ought to rise out of the sphere of creation and of sin.

By the meadow is to be understood the fixed sphere, as being a mild and genial spot, and the locality of the pious; and by the seven days each motion of the seven planets, and the whole practical art which speeds to the end of rest. But after the wandering orbs the journey leads to heaven, that is, to the eighth motion and day.

The seventh day, therefore, is proclaimed a rest--abstraction from ills--preparing for the Primal Day, our true rest...¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Paid. I.10.91,2; Strom. II.5.22,5 (allusion to Matt. 11:29); II.22.134,5.
¹⁷² Gos.Thom. 90 is a version of the Matt 11 text; Orig World 104,27 and 117,36 link rest with the Sabbath. Add the Gos.Truth 41-43 cited above.
¹⁷⁴ Strom. IV.25.159,1-2; V.14.106,3; VI.16.138,1 (these sections are devoted to this discussion of the fourth commandment to rest on the seventh day; in particular, "By following Him, therefore, through our whole life, we become impassible; and this is to rest." 138,3).
These are not critical texts for our purposes — we simply note that for Clement the concept of rest is connected to (or at least begins with) the NT Sabbath rest, the eighth day. We have already noted (pp.130-132) that ἑβδομάξ/ὁγδοάξ do point to a system of heavenly spheres or levels of some kind. This, coupled with the number of passages where rest occurs with θεωρία, leads us to believe that Clement desires to place more emphasis on the rest which the soul experiences rather than on the heavenly levels.

3. Rest, ἀπάθεια and θεωρία

The concept of rest seems to develop as Stromateis progresses. In Book II it is basically used to describe the believer being freed from sin.\(^\text{175}\) The only occurrence in Book IV \(^\text{176}\) (25.158-159,2) continues with this concept, “...the Gnostic ought to rise out of the sphere of creation and of sin.” This passage, however, represents the first discussion in Stromateis of ἑβδομάξ/ὁγδοάξ and links it with rest. Book V includes the extensive discussion of the High Priest in V.6.32-40; here is the first time θεωρία is linked with rest. The Gnostic (High Priest), “purified already” enters into the rest of the ὁγδοάξ where he enjoys “insatiable contemplation face to face.” By the time we get to Book VII rest is an integral part of the gnostic’s θεωρία. But this state of rest and contemplation, Clement reminds the reader, is only for the “pure in heart” (VII.10.56,5).\(^\text{177}\)

\(^{175}\) Strom. II.5.22,5; II.20.109,1; II.22.134,5. This was the use in Paid. I.10.91,2 as well.

\(^{176}\) Ἀνάπαθεια does not occur in Book III.

\(^{177}\) This purity issue is also present in VII.11.68,5; VII.13.82,5 and VII.16.93,3. None of these passages listed include the word, ἀπάθεια, but the concept is certainly present.
3.6 Conclusions

Consistent with his philosophical surroundings, Clement’s God is utterly transcendent. Alexandrian Christianity seems to have given him a biblical lens through which to understand this transcendence. God is indeed ineffable, but can be known through the Logos.\textsuperscript{178} Clement’s use of θεορία includes various categories which point to an incorporeality; θεορία is the door to enter that realm. The exegesis in V.6 of the High Priest can be seen as the turning point, not only of Book V, but of Stromateis. The gnostic, as seen in the High Priest, sheds the sensible realm and moves into the noetic realm, the ὑοοα — the realm of God, where “he is replenished with insatiable contemplation face to face.” (V.6.40,1)

As we have traced these various words/concepts, we have confirmed Clement’s main sources to be Plato, Philo and Paul. However, it must be noted that only the mystery passages have any significant biblical quotations associated with them. The evidence shows that either Clement has skilfully brought together bits of various tradition to produce his own eclectic spiritual weave, or he is transmitting an already established παράδοσις as he promised in his introduction. I use “skilful” even though the various philosophical bits, especially the categories relating to cosmology and angelology, do not seem tidy. But if I am correct, he has done this purposefully.

Once again, I use the adjective “skilful” because the confusing nature of the philosophical discussions are meant to hide θεορία. Various topics are hinted at, belaboured, and suddenly discarded only to be picked up later as a way to

\textsuperscript{178} See Osborn (The Beginning, pp.45-50).
discourage the casual seeker. Osborn says it well, "Clement...begins as a difficult
writer; on acquaintance he becomes clearer."\textsuperscript{179} We have seen that Clement
delivers on his promise: "The \textit{Stromata} will contain the truth mixed up in the
dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the
nut in the shell."\textsuperscript{180}

Cosmology and angelology are important to Clement. \textit{Eclogae Propheticae}
seems to have been the work he promised for discussion of these topics.\textsuperscript{181} He
also gives more time to them in \textit{Excerpta Ex Theodoto}, this probably because the
Valentinians had given them more attention. The important thing we have seen in
this chapter with respect to these categories is that \textit{Stromateis} is not the work
dedicated to them. Clement has used these categories to hide another aspect of his
secret oral tradition, \textit{θεοφίλα}.

It appears that the angels and the heavenly levels are not as critical to him as
what happens to the \textit{gnostic} in that higher \textit{place}. From the fragmentary works we
know more thought and detail could have been added to what we read in 
\textit{Stromateis}. Yet Clement could have left these categories out completely. Why
does he include them? I see two reasons: first, they probably do represent another
aspect of the \textit{gnostic tradition} which he has been given. If he has received this
tradition from Pantaenus or some other esteemed teacher, he cannot ignore these
categories. Secondly, he is convinced of the incorporeal aspect of faith which is
essential for the \textit{gnostic} to "see" God. One piece of evidence for this is the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{179}] Ibid., p.50.
\item[\textsuperscript{180}] \textit{Strom.} 1.1.18,1.
\item[\textsuperscript{181}] Daniélou (\textit{Gospel Message}, p.457).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
presence of ἀπάθεια in almost every category covered in this chapter. No matter what aspect of θεωρία is analysed, the stripping of passions and the purity of heart is there as a prerequisite. The gnostic must escape the prison of the flesh in order to “see” God.

We will see in Chapter Five that there is both philosophical and ecclesiastical tension for Clement in the way he espouses this concept of θεωρία. But first we need to establish another important aspect of this θεωρία which we have alluded to by suggesting that the whole of Stromateis comes to a pivotal point in V.6. There is deliberate movement in this treatise; our next chapter will present evidence that Stromateis presents the reader with a spiritual pathway.
CHAPTER FOUR

Θεωρία, THE FINAL STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

We have determined, with some measure of probability, the influences on Clement's concept of θεωρία. We have also defined, to some degree, the immaterialist aspect of Clement's use of the term. Now we must attempt to gain a better understanding of how this concept of θεωρία fits into Clement's overall scheme. The title of this chapter and this statement of Clement's scheme assumes that he did have a scheme in mind when writing the three major works, Protrepticus, Paidagogus and Stromateis. We must address this issue before we can move forward.

Descriptions of Stromateis usually point to an obtuse style and the possibility that Clement never completed the great work which he intended;

...he is sometimes at once both obscure and diffuse, and adds analogy to analogy and epithet to epithet without adding to the thought or sharpening its definiteness.¹

The Stromateis do not accomplish the task of the promised "Master"...it proved beyond the time or power of the writer to accomplish...Is it not at least possible that the Stromateis are left unfinished...?²

Clement had not the gifts adequate to writing such a work as this...he was not a systematic theologian...he passed from one thing to another, and, after long digressions, returned to the highway along which he was actually journeying. He brought confusion to a reader who, pen in hand, was endeavouring to trace the logical connection of his discussions.³

The abrupt shifts from Clement's own thoughts to the alien material, which is often rather awkwardly integrated into the flow of the text, make continuous reading a difficult task. Transitions are not always clearly distinguished...⁴

¹ Patrick, p.17.
² Tollinton (I, pp.192-194).
³ Lietzmann (History II, pp.287-288).
⁴ Van den Hock (Clement-Philo, p.1).
Chapter Four: Θεωρία, The Highest Stage in the Spiritual Pathway

Others have suggested an alternative chronological order of Clement's writings which would dictate only a loose connection between the three works which are usually seen as connected. This theory suggests that Stromateis I-IV was written first, then Protrepticus and Paidagogus, followed by Stromateis V-VIII.5

In this chapter I intend to show that Clement does have a plan, one which presents a spiritual pathway for the gnostic to follow. I will also show that θεωρία represents the final stage of this pathway. The scope of this study will not allow for a lengthy review of the debate concerning the order and nature of Clement's works, yet this thesis seems to offer another angle on some of the issues. I will briefly summarize the basic argument and then make a few relevant comments.

4.1 The Literary Problems of Clement's Works

"What books Clement wrote, and where and in what order he wrote them, are questions almost as complicated as those which arise when we ask what books he read and how he used them."6 The confusion begins when Clement, in the opening chapter of Paidagogus says,

Eagerly desiring, then, to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benignant Word, who first exhorts (προτρέπων), then trains (παιδαγωγῶν), and finally teaches (ἐκδιδάσκων).7

It appears that he is linking the three works, each representing a different operation of the λόγος, but the use of διδάσκω presents a difficulty.8 Here and in other key

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5 There are several good discussions of the order of Clement's writings: Patrick, pp.301-308; Tollinton (II, pp.324-333); Mondébert (SC 30, pp.11-18); Hort/Mayor, pp.xv-xxi; Osborn (Clement, pp.3-12); Osborn, (JTS 1959, pp.335-343); and Méhat, pp.276-279.
6 Tollinton (II, p.324).
7 Paid. I.1.3,3
8 The noun, διδάσκω, had already been introduced into the discussion (I.1,2,1; 3,1 and 3,3) so that the verb form here is inconsequential.
CHAPTER FOUR: Θεωρία, THE HIGHEST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

passages Clement uses διδάσκαλος when he is clearly pointing ahead to another work.9 This has led to some speculation that Stromateis was not the work which Clement pointed towards. Paidagogus closes with this same sense of looking forward to the "Teacher,"

Innumerable commands such as these are written in the holy Bible appertaining to chosen persons, some to presbyters, some to bishops, some to deacons, others to widows, of whom we shall have another opportunity of speaking. Many things spoken in enigmas, many in parables, may benefit such as fall in with them. But it is not my province, says the Instructor, to teach these any longer. But we need a Teacher of the exposition of those sacred words, to whom we must direct our steps. And now, in truth, it is time for me to cease from my instruction, and for you to listen to the Teacher. And He...will teach you the oracles. 10

Another difficulty is presented by Clement in his opening chapter of Stromateis when he gives such a laboured explanation for putting his work into writing.11 Because he only does this in the beginning of Stromateis, and not in either Protrepticus or Paidagogus, it has been suggested that this may have been the first written work.12 The theory is that Stromateis I-IV was written first, then Protrepticus and Paidagogus, followed by the rest of Stromateis. Two main points (in addition to the two problems we have already encountered) for this theory are: first, there is no reference in Stromateis I-IV to either Protrepticus or Paidagogus; and secondly, a treatise on marriage (which seems to be found in Strom. III) is

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9 Other important texts which name the διδάσκαλος as the future work: Paid. III.12.87.1; III.12.97.3-98.1. See Hort/Mayor for a discussion of these texts, pp.xv-xvi.
10 Paid. III.12.97.3.
11 A few excerpts from this opening chapter are included in our discussion on παράδοσις, however the entire first chapter of Book I is a defense for Clement's forthcoming written account, see §2.2.1 (pp.39-46) where I discuss the significance of Stromateis I.1.
12 Patrick's argument against this theory is especially good, pp.301-308. The speculations as to the relationships of Clement's works has been immense; see Mondéert (SC 30, pp.15-17) for some complex ideas on not just one trilogy, but two different trilogies offered by J. Munck and G. Lazzati. Tollinton holds to the view that the works were composed in the traditional order, but that Stromateis was the first work published (II, pp.325-328). See Osborn (JTS 1959, pp.335-343) who sees the three works intact as a trilogy, p.341.
referred to more than once in *Paidagogus* as having already been written. They establish dismisses the first point as an argument from silence and advises that the discussion on marriage includes evidence which makes such a theory more difficult to accept than the original argument.14

The last difficulty which has been presented with respect to the order of Clement’s works is the apparent lack of finality in the *Stromateis*; this is another reason to question whether it was in fact the work intended as the successor to *Paidagogus*. There are many places where Clement promises further discussion on various issues which are never addressed. This has led to the opinion that “the *Stromateis* was never completed, and that some of the subjects named were intended to have been included in it.” This position is strengthened by the ending of Book VII (which appears abrupt and suggests a continued work) and the outline format of Book VIII. The seemingly disorderly style of *Stromateis* (highlighted in the opening paragraph of this section) only adds to this theory that Clement had something else in mind or just failed to produce the work which he originally intended. We will briefly consider these issues in the following sections.

4.1.1 *Didaskalos* (The Teacher) OR *Stromateis*?

Our two main texts17 for the theory that the work following *Paidagogus* was initially intended to be *Didaskalos* both point forward (as has already been

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13 See Tollinton (II, pp.328-329), where he discusses *Paid. II.* 10.94.1; II.6.52,2; III.8.41.3.
14 Ibid., p.328. We will discuss these points in section §4.1.3 (pp.148-152).
15 See Hort/Mayer, pp.xvi-xix. Some of the texts which point to another advanced work: *Strom.* II.20.113,1; III.3.13,1; IV.1.1-3 (entire chapter); IV.25.162,2; V.11.68,3; V.13.88,4; VII.10.59.7.
16 Ibid., p.xviii.
17 *Paid.* I.1.3.3; III.12.97.3.
See Tollinton (II, pp.189-190) for a brief review of De Faye’s position that *Stromateis* is not the intended *Didaskalos*; also Osborn (JTS 1959) for a presentation in favor of the *Stromateis* as the Teacher; see Méhat (pp.50-54) for an account of why *Stromateis* I follows *Paidagogus*. 143
mentioned), but do so in a way which seems to refer to a person, not a writing. Clement clearly shows that the *Paidagogus* is Jesus, the Son of God.\(^\text{18}\) He also identifies the *Didaskalos* with Jesus in the same way.\(^\text{19}\) This alone does not affect the theory, but numerous times in *Stromateis* Clement refers to the Son of God by the title "Teacher" when the reference is clearly not pointing to a writing.\(^\text{20}\) On the other hand, he clearly refers to the work as *Stromateis* in numerous places.\(^\text{21}\) We have already shown that part of Clement’s aim in *Stromateis* is to communicate oral tradition which he believes to have been handed down from Jesus; it is possible that when Clement references *Didaskalos* in *Paidagogus* III.12.98,1 (and in the *Stromateis* references) it could be a recognition that Jesus is teaching in *Stromateis* in His own words through oral traditions.

### 4.1.2 A review of the reconstruction theory

As was mentioned at the beginning of this section, there are some complex problems surrounding the order of the three main works, *Protrepticus*, *Paidagogus*, and *Stromateis*. We will briefly address the two points of evidence mentioned in the last section for the argument that *Strom.* I-IV were written first.

The first bit of evidence, that Clement fails to mention *Paidagogus* in *Stromateis* I-IV, is odd. One would expect him to make this connection early on in *Stromateis* if his plan was indeed for the latter to build upon the former. However, *Paidagogus* is not clearly mentioned until the beginning of *Strom.* VI,

\(^{18}\) Paid. I.2.1, 1.

\(^{19}\) Paid. III.12.98, 1-3.

\(^{20}\) Strom. II.2.9, 4; III.15.99, 2; IV.25.162, 5; V.1.1, 4; V.3.17, 1; V.11.73, 2; V.13.85, 2; VI.8.68, 1-3; VI.14.114, 6; VI.15.122, 4; VII.2.6, 1; VII.3.21, 4; VII.12.72, 3; VII.16.93, 5.

\(^{21}\) Strom. I.1.18, 1-4 (2); I.2.20, 4; I.28.182, 3; II.23.147, 5; III.18.110, 3; IV.1.1, 3; IV.2.4, 3; 6, 2; 7, 1; VI.1.1, 1; 4; 2, 1; VII.18.111, 1-4 (3).
CHAPTER FOUR: Θεοπία, THE HIGHEST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

which also includes a discussion similar to Book I on Clement's hesitancy to write such a work. From this evidence it would make more sense that Book VI was published first, except that Clement mentions earlier writings. In the end, this evidence does not help us to know the order of Clement's writings, but it does cast doubt on the theory that Strom. I-IV was the first published.

The second bit of evidence, that an existing treatise on marriage is mentioned in Paidagogus is the strongest evidence that Stromateis I-IV were written prior to Paidagogus. These references seems to point to Stromateis III (and II.23). This evidence, however, is obscured by some other facts: first, the topics of discussion mentioned in Paid. II.6.52,1-2 do not appear anywhere in Strom. III. Secondly, Paid. III.8.41,3 seems to be pointing to a future work. The arguments presented by Tollinton and Patrick against the deconstruction offered by De Faye and others seem to be good ones. However, with respect to Stromateis III it seems that we must consider the possibility that it was a separate work inserted by Clement during the composition of Stromateis. Although Hort/Mayor disagree with De Faye's theory, they admit that "the third book [which] has a long dissertation on

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22 There is only one clear reference to Paidagogus in the entire Stromateis, VI.1.1.3. There might be an allusion to Paidagogus in Strom. VII.16.102,1. We will look at the clear reference in the next section.
23 Strom. VI.1.1.1. This seems at least to refer to Book V, but could also be a reference to Books I-IV. Méhat offers evidence to suggest that Books VI-VII were written after Clement's departure from Alexandria (pp.42-54). This might explain some of the peculiarities we find in Book VI. Runia (Philo-Fathers, p.144 n42) comments on Méhat's theory suggesting that it supports some of van den Hoek's findings that Clement seems to have quoted Philo from memory in Books VI-VII where he seemed to have the actual works in front of him in Books I-V; see van den Hoek (VC 1996).
24 Paid. II.6.52,2; II.10.94,1; III.8.41,3.
25 Paid. II.6.52,1-2 speaks of a discussion concerning the terms used in the description of sex organs or the sex act. This discussion does not appear in Strom. II.23 or in Book III; see Tollinton (II, p.329) and Méhat, pp.50-52.
26 See Patrick, pp.304-305 on the use of a future tense in this text. Tollinton (II, p.329) points out the possibility that there could have been yet another work in which Clement discusses marriage.
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marriage...scarcely belongs to the context." 27 This study has already shown a peculiar absence in Book III of several key terms which occur throughout Stromateis. 28 This absence of categories (especially because most of them occur in every other book) is additional evidence that Strom. III could have been an existing treatise (possibly unpublished) which Clement simply inserted into his larger work. We will come back to this evidence after we consider the evidence in Strom. I.1.

Now to the issue of Clement's hesitancy in the opening chapter to write; this has been used to suggest that it must have been his first work (at least his first published one). Our study has shown that Stromateis is unique among Clement's extant writings in that it claims to be communicating an esoteric oral tradition. 29 It appears to me that his hesitation is motivated by the fear of displaying safeguarded oral traditions out in the open for all to hear, see, read and perhaps corrupt. This halting tendency in Clement surfaces throughout Stromateis. As Osborn concludes in his article on this subject, "If the Stromateis are not the Didaskalos, they have nothing to hide." 30

We have mentioned (note 28) the lack of several key terms in Strom. III which points to the possibility that it may have been written prior to the rest of the work

27 Hort and Mayor, p.xxi.
28 From Chapter Three we find no occurrences (or only one occurrence, shown in brackets) of the following terms in Book III: ἀνάπαυσις, μυστήριον (1), ἀπάθεια (it is remarkable that this term does not occur in Bk III, but it is also clear that the entire book is concerned with this concept), ἔβδομας, ὑγιός, παράδοσις, and θεωρία (see Appendix 1, p.296). In addition to these terms there are a few concepts which are absent in Bk III which appear in almost every other book: the ascent of the soul, "seeing" God, and references to angels.
29 Παράδοσις occurs only twice in Paidagogus, neither pointing to an oral tradition (Paid. I.9.78, 1 and II.10.87, 3). It is true that Eusebius cites On the Pascha (H.E. VI.13.9) and Hypotyposis (H.E. VI.14.1-7) in a way which references oral tradition as well. See Osborn (JTS 1959, pp.342-343).
30 Ibid., p.343.
and simply inserted. Our study shows that \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) is term/concept of central importance in \( \textit{Stromateis} \) from the opening chapter. This brings attention to the lack of our key term in \( \textit{Paidagogus} \).\(^{31}\) The frequency of \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) in \( \textit{Stromateis} \)\(^{32}\) makes it difficult to imagine \( \textit{Paidagogus} \) being written after any part of \( \textit{Stromateis} \), with the exception of Book III. The relatively consistent frequency of \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) throughout the work points to a common range in dating (and in purpose). For Clement to write \( \textit{Paidagogus} \) during the composition of \( \textit{Stromateis} \) without more hinting towards the concept of \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) is difficult to imagine.\(^{33}\) This would be another indicator for the traditional view; for \( \textit{Paidagogus} \) to be so removed from the general thrust of \( \textit{Stromateis} \) with respect to \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) is good evidence for an earlier dating. In the next section we will discuss one of the \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) texts in \( \textit{Paidagogus} \) which strengthens the traditional view.\(^{34}\)

In the end I must agree with the conclusions of those who hold to the traditional arrangement of \( \textit{Stromateis} \) against the reconstruction theory. The traditional view should not be abandoned until conclusive evidence can be produced. The basic design is given by Clement (\( \textit{Paid.} \ I.1.1,3 \)) and is generally produced in the three works. In the end I agree with Patrick,

...the hypothesis raises difficulties not less great than the traditional view which it seeks to supplant. It is not a purely literary or academic question, for in some cases the order has a direct bearing on the exposition of the teaching.\(^{35}\)

\(^{31}\) \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha/\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) occurs only four times in \( \textit{Paidagogus} \) (II.1.1,2; II.10.108.3; III.8.43,3 and III.11.70,2) and only two of them point to the concept of "contemplation."

\(^{32}\) See Appendix 1, p.296.

\(^{33}\) Lietzmann makes the observation, "The \( \textit{Paidagogos} \) gives no hint how Clement was, later, to construe the term \( \textit{gnosis} \)." (\textit{History II}, p.283). The lack of \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\alpha \) implies two things: the earlier dating of \( \textit{Paid.} \) and that \( \textit{Strom.} \) represents a separate work, an altogether separate stage in Clement's system.

\(^{34}\) We will look at \( \textit{Paid.} \ I.1.1,2 \) in §4.2.3 (pp.157-159).

\(^{35}\) Patrick, pp.10-11.
Although I would hold to the traditional view, I hasten to add that *Stromateis* might have been the result of numerous sets of notes finally compiled by Clement in a way which would seem safe to him, both *revealing* and *concealing* γνῶσις. Méhat's theory, coupled with van den Hoek's work (see note 23) indicates that Books VI-VII were written after Clement's departure from Alexandria. This would keep the traditional theory intact and explain some of the internal difficulties while taking Clement's testimony seriously. Our study seems to add evidence to this theory.

4.1.3 Is *Stromateis* a completed work?

To these previous two points of literary difficulty we must add another: the determination of whether *Stromateis*, as we have it, is a complete work. Our thesis is that *Stromateis* represents the third stage in a spiritual pathway, following *Protrepticus* and *Paidagogus*. We have already noted that *Stromateis* tends to be confused and obscure. Clement jumps from one point to the next, languishing in tangential discussions. He apologetically acknowledges his excess on several occasions, only to be attracted (or distracted) by another topic which interests him. Beyond this, Clement seems to be thinking of future works, for he consistently puts the reader off saying he will discuss a particular issue later, but then never returns to it (see note 15). There are several issues which force us to question whether Clement completed his great work: the references to future works, the abrupt ending of Book VII, the appearance of Book VIII as a compilation of notes, and the testimony we have from later Fathers, especially

36 *Strom*. II.23.147,5; III.5.40,1 (this one is humorous since he continues on for 12 more chapters, then apologizes again at the end in III.18.110,3); V.2.14,1; VII.14.84,2.
1. The projected works of Clement

We have already mentioned how Clement announces several topics for future discussion, yet *Stromateis* does not seem to contain these works. A few of these works are listed in IV.1.1,3-3.4: *Against the Greeks and the Jews, On First Principles, On Theology, On Prophecy, Against the Heretics, The Science of Nature*, and *On the Origin of the Cosmos*. This text is a long section in which Clement seems to have adjusted his plan, listing several works to be addressed. And there are more: *The Study of Theoria and The Creation of the World* (VI.18.168,4); *The Creation of Man* (III.14.95,2); *On the Devil* (IV.12.85,3); *On the Soul* (III.3.13,3; IV.13.88,4); *On the Angels* (VI.3.32,1); *On Prayer* (IV.26.171,2). A few points must be made here concerning these titles: first, it could be that certain "titles" are different references to the same work (such as *The Origin of the Cosmos* and *The Creation of the World*); and secondly, a "title" might simply be a reference to a "heading" (a κεφάλη, see Méhat, pp.276-279) within *Stromateis*. *On Prayer* most surely appears as VII.7 (see p.200 n26 below) and *On Angels* might be included in Book VII as well (Ibid., p.228 n105). But this points out one of the difficulties in the discussion of "future" works; Clement's references are not always clear. For example, *On First Principles* (περὶ ἀρχῶν) is

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promised more than once, but in QDS 26,8 the same work seems to be referenced as having been already written. Nonetheless, it does appear from the fragmentary testimonies of later fathers that there were several Clementine works which are no longer extant. These other “future” works are one piece of evidence that Stromateis might not have been completed.

2. The abrupt ending of Strom. VII

The abrupt ending in VII.18 points to the possibility that Clement had no intention of ending Stromateis. The chapter begins, “After showing a little peephole...let us bring the discourse to a close.” (109,1) But then he says,

> These points, then, having been formerly thoroughly treated, and the department of ethics having been sketched summarily in a fragmentary way, as we promised; and having here and there interspersed the dogmas which are the germs of true knowledge, so that the discovery of the sacred traditions may not be easy to any one of the uninitiated, let us proceed to what we promised.... (110,4)
> And now, after this seventh Miscellany of ours, we shall give the account of what follows in order from another commencement. (111,4)

It seems that Clement intends to continue with at least one more Stromateis. Why is this called an abrupt ending? Because it is generally acknowledged that Book VIII is no more than bits and pieces of other works, a notebook of sorts, thus what we have of Stromateis ends against Clement’s intention.

3. Strom. VIII: a compilation of notes

It is clear on an initial reading that Book VIII has a different character from the remainder of Stromateis, especially that of Book VII. In addition, there are several

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38 Strom. IV.1.2,1; V.14.140,2; VI.2.4,2.
39 Hort-Mayor, p.xviii n1. QDS is the standard abbreviation for Who is the Rich Man Being Saved?, Elogiae Propheticae (GCS III, pp.135-155); Hypotypseis (Ibid., pp.195-202); On the Pascha (Ibid., pp.216-218); On Providence (Ibid., pp.219-221); To the Newly Baptized (Ibid., pp.221-222). See listing of fragments, Ibid., pp.195-230.
40 Wilson (ANCL 4, p.13); Mondesert (SC 30, p.24); Casey (Exerpta, pp.3-5).
facts which point to Book VIII as a compilation of notes: first, Book VIII begins in mid sentence which makes it feel separated from the end of Book VII;\(^2\) secondly, the confusion of “titles,” or subscripts,

It is evident that whatever may be the explanation of this embarrassment of titles, it represents a confused attempt to add to Strom. i-vii materials which appeared to someone to belong with them.\(^3\)

We will take notice of a convincing study below which has demonstrated these very points concerning Strom. VIII.\(^4\)

4. The testimony of Eusebius and Photius

We have already noted the evidence of “lost” works in the fragments which come from various church fathers; now we need to take account of the testimony from Eusebius and Photius. Following our methodology, we must take this testimony at face value unless we find other clear contradictory evidence. Eusebius tells us Stromateis consisted of eight books, while Photius informs us that he knew of “an old copy” in which the title of Book VIII was “Who is the Rich Man that is saved?”\(^5\) This lends more evidence that Book VIII in the Laurentianus MSS is not an integral part of the work.\(^6\)

5. A conclusive study

A 1976 study by Pierre Nautin brings all the evidence to bear and conclusively shows that Book VIII is nothing more than the work of a copyist.\(^7\) Nautin reviews the key places (Strom. I.1.15,2; II.1.1,1-2,3; IV.1.1,1-3,3; VI.1.1,1;...
VII.15.89,1) where Clement gives his plan (pp.282-291), analyses these plans (pp.291-293), and concludes there is “no room for doubt: Clement has effectively completed his project” in *Stromateis*. (p.293)

Nautin then combines the Eusebian testimony (*H.E.* VI.13,2) and the evidence from Photius (Library 109), examines the *Hypotyposeis* in light of this data (pp.293-299) and concludes that Book VIII of the *Laurentianus* MSS is composed of “extracts of the last *Stromates* and of *Hypotyposeis*. He [the copyist] did not keep a complete outline, but only kept those passages which interested him.” (p.301) By comparing comments from Eusebius on certain works of Origen, Nautin shows that the library of Eusebius lacked the autograph editions of most of Origen’s works. (p.300 n83) From this he concludes, “It is unlikely that Eusebius had the autograph [of *Stromates*]....This means his testimony on the number of *Stromates* is not decisive.” (p.300)

To summarise, Nautin thinks there was at least one more book in *Stromateis* 48 (p.302), but that a copyist “who lacked papyrus, time or desire” copied extracts from the (or those) *extra* book(s) and from *Hypotyposeis* into what we now call Book VIII. (p.298) The works we know as *Excerpta Ex Theodotus* and *Eclogae Propheticae* were initially part of the eight books of *Hypotyposeis*, maybe each being a separate book. (p.302) Finally, the *Hypotyposeis* were the promised “physics” of IV.1.3,2. (Ibid.)

Having discussed the literary problems which plague Clementine studies, we want to continue our investigation of how *Θεορία* fit into Clement’s scheme.

48 We know from Eusebius that Origen had 10 books in his *Stromateis* (*H.E.* VI.24,3); maybe Nautin is correct and Clement’s *Strom.* also had 10 books.
4.2 *Protrepticus, Paidagogus, and Stromateis:* a spiritual pathway

The three main works of Clement (*Protrepticus, Paidagogus, and Stromateis*) are intended by him to mark the spiritual pathway for the true γνωστικός. We have already seen (§4.1, pp.143-148) that some hold to the view that these three works represent a trilogy. Osborn would be a scholar who holds to this view and I would agree with him. In this section we want to examine two pieces of evidence which point to a close literary relationship of the three works, and to Clement’s intention to use these works as a representation of a spiritual pathway. The two pieces of evidence we will consider are Clement’s own testimony of this spiritual pathway and the internal evidence (the content) of the three works.

4.2.1 The testimony of Clement

Again, here is the key text where Clement gives an indication of his plan:

As then, for those of us who are diseased in body a physician is required, so also those who diseased in soul require a paedagogue to cure our maladies; and then a teacher, to strain and guide the soul to all requisite knowledge... Eagerly desiring, then, to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benignant Word, who first exhorts, then trains, and finally teaches.

So we have the Word, “who first exhorts [Protrepticus], then trains [Paidagogus], and finally teaches [Stromateis].” We will pass over *Protrepticus* right now and simply say that it contained the evangelistic and apologetic thrust which was obviously meant to win the Greek mind to the Christian gospel. This would begin

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49 Osborn does not specifically make this stand in *Clement* (1957), but in *JTS* 1959 he does; see p.341. In *Beginnings* (1981) he does not specifically make this statement, but he does describe the three works conceptually as a unity, p.23. Lietzmann also uses the term “trilogy,” (*History II*, p.278ff).

50 Paid. I.1.3.3.

51 See Osborn's comments on this, (*The Philosophy*, pp.5-7).
the spiritual journey. Next, the spiritual disciplines of the *Paidagogus* would "train" the soul to perfect knowledge (*Paid.* I.1.3,3). Then at the end of *Paidagogus* (III.12.98,1), we see that this pathway to knowledge was to be facilitated, or illuminated, by "the oracles" (the *Stromateis*).

In discussing Clement's plan we must look more closely at the only text in *Stromateis* which clearly refers to *Paidagogus*. As we acknowledged in the previous section, the lack of reference to the former work is curious, but the reference we do find is significant. This reference is in the beginning of Book VI. Here Clement not only gives us the link we are arguing for, but he also explains it,

"Now the weak eateth herbs," according to the noble apostle. The *Instructor*, divided by us into three books, has already exhibited the training (κατηχησεως) and nurture up from the state of childhood, that is, the course of life which from elementary instruction grows by faith; and in the case of those enrolled in the number of men, prepares beforehand the soul, endued with virtue, for the reception (παραδοχήν) of gnostic knowledge. The Greeks, then, clearly learning, from what shall be said by us in these pages, that in profanely persecuting the Godloving man, they themselves act impiously; then, as the notes advance, in accordance with the style of the *Miscellanies*, we must solve the difficulties raised both by Greeks and Barbarians with respect to the coming of the Lord.

We see the *Paidagogus* named in its classical sense, as one who looks after children until they are "enrolled in the number of men" and ready for the higher teaching. The *Paidagogus* conducts the catechetical training (the "elementary instruction," note the use of κατηχεω), preparing the children for manhood, while the *Stromateis* presents the virtuous writings whereby the mature man receives the

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52 Lietzmann sums up *Protrepticus* well, showing it to be in a literary genre which also enhanced its value, "He took trouble to write Attic Greek...he interwove elegant acrostics, and other grammatical tit-bits. He constructed rhetorical sentences effectively, and his balanced clauses in twos and threes or longer series, frequently even with a rhythmic movement, made pleasant reading...the literary world was compelled to recognize [him] as a modern writer in the full sense of the term." Lietzmann (History II, p.279).

53 *Strom.* VI.1.1,3-4.
gnostic knowledge. Lastly, there is an allusion to the “milk...meat” analogy which Clement has already used to contrast spiritual babes from the mature. He urges the reader to gain the “meat” while the weak eat only vegetables. Not only does Clement name the two writings, but he gives us a good explanation of how they fit together. This text certainly reminds the reader of the two texts in *Paidagogus* which indicate Clement’s plan: 1.1.3,3 and III.12.97,3-98,1.

It is clear from Clement’s own testimony that he intends to produce a work which consists of three parts: one which exhorts, one which instructs, and one which teaches. This threefold plan would not surprise any Greek reader; the threefold pathway is a common theme in Middle Platonism, and we can be sure that Clement is using this common knowledge to make his plan more palatable to the Greek. If Clement has a plan in mind, a spiritual pathway, does he give us any indication of what that pathway might include? We now need to look at the internal evidence for this pathway which is our second line of evidence.

4.2.2 The content of Προτρητικός

*Protrepticus*, “an urging forward,” is Clement’s exhortation to the Greek to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. Clement believes Greek philosophy to have been the tutor (the *paidagogue*) to bring the Greeks to the gospel just as the OT was preparing the Jews for the gospel. *Protrepticus* is Clement’s version of the NT letter to the Hebrews: in Hebrews the writer shows how Christ is greater than
Moses, and in *Protrepticus* Clement is showing how the Truth, manifested through and in Christ, is greater than, and the fulfillment of, the truths revealed through Greek philosophy. He introduces this theme early on in the opening chapter,

> But let us bring from above out of heaven, Truth, with Wisdom in all its brightness, and the sacred prophetic choir, down to the holy mount of God; and let Truth, darting her light to the most distant points, cast her rays all around on those that are involved in darkness, and deliver men from delusion, stretching out her very strong right hand, which is wisdom, for their salvation. And raising their eyes, and looking above, let them abandon Helicon and Citharón, and take up their abode in Sion. “For out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,” — the celestial Word, the true athlete crowned in the theatre of the whole universe. 57

This theme fills the treatise as Clement recounts Greek legends and revelations, but in the end comes back to show the superior nature of the gospel—-that God is both transcendent, yet personal through Christ. 58 His aim is to convert and he makes his intention exceedingly clear towards the end of the treatise,

> Wherefore this exhortation of the truth alone, like the most faithful of our friends, abides with us till our last breath...What, then, is the exhortation I give you? I urge you to be saved. This Christ desires. In one word, He freely bestows life on you. And who is He? Briefly learn. The Word of truth, the Word of incorruption, that regenerates man by bringing him back to the truth—the goad that urges to salvation... 59

And then closes,

> Enough, methinks, of words, though, impelled by love to man, I might have gone on to pour out what I had from God, that I might exhort to what is the greatest of blessings — salvation...To you still remains this conclusion, to choose which will profit you most — judgment or grace. For I do not think there is even room for doubt which of these is the better; nor is it allowable to compare life with destruction. 60

There is little doubt about the message of *Protrepticus*; Clement is clearly presenting the gospel to the Greek, exhorting him to choose grace rather than judgment. *Protrepticus* is the beginning of the spiritual journey for the Greek.

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57 *Protrep.* 1.2,3.
58 *Protrep.* 1.6,1-2; 1.7,3; 10.110,1-3; 11.112,1; 12.120-122.
59 *Protrep.* 11.117,3-4.
60 *Protrep.* 12.123,2.
Once the soul has embraced the gospel there is need for the soul’s physician, the
Paidagogus.

4.2.3 The content of Παιδαγωγός

The role of the Paidagogus is described by Clement in his opening chapter as
the physician for the soul,

...the Pædagogue strengthening our souls, and by His benign commands, as by
gentle medicines, guiding the sick to the perfect knowledge of the truth...As
then, for those of us who are diseased in body a physician is required, so also
those who are diseased in soul require a pædagogue to cure our maladies... 61

Clement sees the curing of passions through the discipline of the Word as one of
man’s greatest needs. 62 This is one of the main functions of the Paidagogus. 63 In
a brief overview of Clement’s moral training we will look at two main issues: the
injunction against passions, and the practical disciplines which Clement sees as a
means to usher the believer to this end. We will also see how this moral
instruction is the basis for catechetical training. The catechetical nature of
Paidagogus points to the natural progression of the works in question.

1. Moral Instruction Against the Passions

“Everything that is contrary to right reason is sin.” 64 This is how Clement ends
Book I just before he introduces the various disciplines of lifestyle in Book II. All
passions go against reason and must be removed like a cancer. 65 Passions include
not just the more base ones such as anger and lust, but also those which seem

61 Paid. I.1.3,1 and 3.3.
62 These are only a few of the numerous passages which could be listed: Paid. I.2.5,2; I.2.6,1; I.8.64,3;
I.9.83,2; III.12.97,1.
63 Lilla’s discussion, though he is chiefly covering the ethical nature of Stromateis, is very helpful and
should be consulted, (Clement, pp.84-106). See also, Bradley (“The Transformation,” pp.43-68).
64 Paid. I.13.101,1. This phrase is taken from the Stoic handbook and Clement adopts it for his system.
See Lilla (Clement, pp.103-106), Osborn (The Beginning, pp.108-120), and Bradley (“The Transformation”).
65 Paid. I.8.64,3.
honourable like joy, desire, and pleasure. Clement speaks more fully on this topic in *Stromateis*, but does give the foundational exhortations in *Paidagogus*, urging the believer to shun even what might seem like innocent pleasures,

> "Pleasure has often produced in men harm and pain; and full feeding begets in the soul uneasiness, and forgetfulness, and foolishness."

For luxury, that has dashed on to surfeit, is prone to kick up its heels and toss its mane, and shake off the charioteer, the Instructor; who, pulling back the reins from far, leads and drives to salvation the human horse—that is, the irrational part of the soul—which is wildly bent on pleasures, and vicious appetites, and precious stones, and gold, and variety of dress, and other luxuries.

This stand against all passions represents the beginning of what will lead to *ἀπάθεια*, which only appears in *Stromateis*. The role of the *Paidagogus* however, is to bring the structure and discipline which will train the believer for greater things.

Book II opens with the pronouncement of what these disciplines are meant to accomplish,

> "Keeping, then, to our aim, and selecting the scriptures which bear on the usefulness of training for life, we must now compendiously describe what the man who is called a Christian ought to be during the whole of his life. We must accordingly begin with ourselves, and how we ought to regulate ourselves. We have therefore, preserving a due regard to the symmetry of this work, to say how each of us ought to conduct himself in respect to his body, or rather how to regulate the body itself. For whenever anyone, who has been brought away by the Word from external things, and from attention to the body itself to the mind, acquires a clear view (τὴν θεορίαν) of what happens according to nature in man, he will know that he is not to be earnestly occupied about external things, but about what is proper and peculiar to man—to purge the eye of the soul, and to sanctify also his flesh." 

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66 See Lilla (*Clement*, pp.84-87). Clement's most detailed discussion of this is in *Strom*. VI, chapter nine. See specifically VI.9.71,3.

67 *Paid.* II.1.17,3 and III.11.53,2. Other passages in *Paidagogus* where Clement urges against pleasure: II.1.1,4; II.1.5,1; II.8.61,1; II.8.68,4; III.2.14,1; III.7.37,1; III.9.46,1. 

68 There is one occurrence of *ἀπάθεια* in *Paidagogus* III.6.35,1, but it does not represent this concept of lack of passion.

69 *Paid.* II.1.1,1-2.
There are a few things to notice in this text: first, the training motif. With the leverage of the Scriptures, Clement intends to show what the Christian duty is and how this duty should be carried out. The implication, which becomes clear throughout Book II, is that the believer can achieve this level of control through self-discipline. Next, we notice Clement’s purpose for this shunning of passion: to be freed from the physical world of senses. This passage gives us a hint of the direction Clement will take in Stromateis. Lastly, we see one of the few occurrences of θεωρία in Paidagogus. It is an interesting passage because it not only uses θεωρία in the contemplative sense, but the context (as we have seen above) agrees with this as well. We have already seen (§3.2, pp.101-104) that in the concept of θεωρία the abstraction from the senses plays an important role.

2. Paidagogus as Catechetical Training

The moral training found in Paidagogus represents the basic instruction (catechetical training) for believers under Clement’s care. In the following sections we need to briefly consider the evidence which points to a structured catechetical “school” in Alexandria and to Paidagogus as Clement’s text for that school. We will consider three lines of evidence which point to some form of structured training: first, the evidence offered by Eusebius; secondly, the usage of κατηχεῖν/κατηχησίς in Paidagogus; and thirdly, Clement’s use of the “milk...meat” analogy (which indicates levels among his hearers). If it is possible for us to establish this argument it will contribute to the thesis that the three works in question form a progressive whole and represent a spiritual pathway. If

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70 The other θεωρία texts in Paid.: II.10.108,3; III.8.43,3 and III.11.70,2.
Paidagogus is a catechetical handbook, then it more easily follows that Stromateis represents the more advanced teachings.

3. The evidence of Eusebius

Our best historical data for a school in Alexandria comes from Eusebius,

Now at that time there was a man of great renown for learning named Pantaenus, who had charge of the school of the faithful at Alexandria, where it has been a primitive custom that a school for sacred studies should exist. 71

Eusebius would have us believe that some kind of catechetical school long existed in Alexandria, being from primitive roots. There are many who doubt the historical accuracy of the Eusebian testimony, among them R. van den Broek,

...he takes for granted that the school itself had been in existence long before that time [of Pantaenus]...he had no exact knowledge of the status of the school in his own days; it was only by hearsay that he knew that it was led by excellent scholars. The question arises whether he was better informed on the school’s earlier history...

...the whole idea of a Christian school with a διδακτική of teachers handing down a fixed tradition of learning to their pupil successors is completely false, at least until the second decade of the third century...Eusebius’ remark that Origen had been one of Clement’s pupils is sheer guesswork, as can be seen from the historian’s own choice of words. 72

Van den Broek argues for a loosely connected group of teachers in Alexandria who instruct pupils, probably in their homes. Robert Grant has the same opinion as that of van den Broek; Eusebius “is the creator of the history of the school at Alexandria.” 73 Grant continues by attempting to show that Eusebius really had no

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71 H.E. V.10.1. Other references in Eusebius to a school in Alexandria: H.E. V.10.3-4; 11.1; VI.3.3; VI.15.1.
73 Grant (Eusebius, p.72). The full quote: “Among Eusebius’ primary concerns in the Church History was the school of Christian learning maintained in relation to the church of Alexandria...Without these schools Eusebius could not have written the Church History. Yet he tells us almost nothing about the school at Caesarea and, as we shall see, is the creator of the history of the school at Alexandria. Unfortunately it is by no means clear where Eusebius found his materials for the early history of the Alexandrian church and school,” ibid.
sources for the school, but he does admit to Philo (De Vita Contemplativa), Clement of Alexandria, and other "various sources" (oral traditions).\textsuperscript{74}

Once again, being led by our methodology of taking seriously the witness of ancient writers, we will follow the lead of other current scholars who are not so quick to dismiss Eusebius.\textsuperscript{75} In her study on this topic, van den Hoek\textsuperscript{76} challenges van den Broek's assessment. Although Clement never uses the word διδασκάλιον,\textsuperscript{77} he consistently refers to training (κατήχησις) which certainly points to structured teaching of some kind. In my opinion, van den Hoek works more critically with the Eusebian testimony than does van den Broek by illustrating that Eusebius is not consistent in his references to this "school;"\textsuperscript{78} she takes this inconsistency as an indicator that the situation in Alexandria was probably much more fluid through the years, experiencing change along the way. For example, Eusebius only reports a school for biblical training under Pantaenus (\textit{H.E.} V.10.1-4); the catechetical aspect is not reported until the time of Clement (\textit{H.E.} VI.6.1).\textsuperscript{79} She also couples the testimony of Eusebius with that of both Clement and Origen, all three giving testimony to a tradition which included some

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.74. Grant seems to have softened in his critique from his 1971 article, "Early Alexandrian Christianity," CH 40 (1971), pp.133-144, where he says the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} has "a good deal of suppression of fact and occasional outright lies," p.133.

\textsuperscript{75} Van den Brock mentions W.H.C. Frend, \textit{Rise of Christianity} (Philadelphia 1984), pp.286-289; 369, as one who would take the "traditional view...[following] uncritically the presentation of the facts as given by Eusebius," p.197 n2. In addition to Frend I would like to add other scholars who certainly do read Eusebius critically, but do not discount him on this issue so quickly: Hoek, van den, Annewies, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and its Philonic Heritage," HTR 90:1 (1997), pp.59-87; Runia (\textit{Philoi-Literature}); Hanson (Origen's); Roberts (Manuscripts, pp.23-24, 54, 71-72); lastly, for a positive presentation on this topic see, Danielou, Jean, \textit{Origen} (London 1955), pp. 9-23.

\textsuperscript{76} Hoek, van den (HTR 1997).

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p.63.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p.75. Van den Broek simply takes the reference from Eusebius as one witness, failing to appreciate possible subtleties which van den Hoek brings out.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p.66.
kind of "school." Van den Broek claims the διδακτηρίι in Clement is more like a succession of teachers than of ecclesiastical leadership. Van den Hoek agrees with this point and sees the "school" more in line with home churches than an academic institution, but she maintains that this "school" was connected to the "church."  

There are a few more points to consider in Grant’s criticism of Eusebius. He concludes that Eusebius’ only outside sources were Alexandrian and that “the picture of Christians in general is unbalanced.” This is a valid observation, however, it could be that his Alexandrian sources make his report on Alexandrian Christianity more accurate! The best source for the early development of Christianity in Alexandria, and of the supposed “school” which existed there, ought to be Alexandrian. Grant also maintains that the Eusebian description of the ancient school was overly influenced by the NT Acts account of Apollos. Though many contemporary scholars would discount this evidence, it was documentary evidence for Eusebius. Because of Luke’s use of κατηχέω to describe Apollos, this reference continues to serve us today as documentary evidence for Eusebius.

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80 Ibid., pp.85-86.
82 Hoek, van den (HTR 1997, pp.71-72).
83 Grant concludes his discussion on the Alexandrian school, “To a significant extent Eusebius’ choice of materials about men and events depended on what he had heard in Palestine or found in the libraries, chiefly at Caesarea. Since the Caesarean library was Alexandrian in origin and the founder of the Jerusalem library had studied at Alexandria, the men and events tended to be Alexandrian too. In consequence the picture of Christians in general is unbalanced. It also lays undue emphasis on the life of Origen,” (Eusebius, p.83).
84 See Hoek, van den, “How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and his Alexandrian Background,” HeyJ 31 (1990), pp.179-194. In this study van den Hoek points out that Eusebius’ teacher, Pamphilus, had been a pupil of Pierius, the director of the school at the end of the third century. Pamphilus had taken refuge in the Egyptian desert during persecution where he may have learned some of this history, p.179.
84 Grant (Eusebius, p.75).
evidence in this discussion (see pp.66-68). Although Runia does refer to the “non-historical adoption of the Therapeutae as proto-Christians” by Eusebius, he sees a close connection between Philo’s sphere of influence and the early Alexandrian Church. Runia also maintains that the legend of a Christian Philo predates Eusebius. Roberts, although he discounts this evidence (of the Therapeutae and the school), points out that this confusion on the part of Eusebius “may be regarded as supporting evidence for the strongly Jewish colouring of early Christianity there.” In his conclusion Roberts refers to,

...a tradition of scholarship...[which] took root early and may well have had an unbroken existence up to the time of its flowering at the end of the second century...the Catechetical School of Alexandria as reformed under Pantaenus.

The documentary evidence is simply not clear enough to reject the Eusebian witness completely. In the end I must agree with van den Hoek’s assessment of the historical data,

Although it is important to read Eusebius critically, this does not mean that one should dismiss all of his claims. Exchanging Eusebius’s alleged reconstructions for equally hard to prove modern versions of them is risky. Both Clement and Origen speak of a continuous tradition, in which they place themselves.

This discussion only establishes the possibility of a “school” (whether formal or informal). For our purposes it does not matter if Clement taught in a formal “school” or as one Christian teacher among many, certain items remain plausible:

85 Runia (Philo-Literature, p.134 for citation); for sections which deal with this topic, see pp.3-7; 119-135; 216-222. Runia accepts the witness of a catechetical school in Alexandria beginning at least with Pantaenus (p.336) and speculates that Pantaenus might have been installed to combat Gnostics, p.133 n4.
86 Ibid., p.7. Runia believes Eusebius came to his information through a lost work of Clement.
87 Roberts (Manuscripts, p.56 n3).
88 Ibid., pp.71-72.
90 Another piece of the “school” discussion is whether or not there was an established library in Alexandria. The work of van den Hoek shows conclusively that Clement had access to a library of considerable size. See Hoek, van den (VC 1996, pp.223-243); (HeyJ 1990, pp.174-194); and (Clement-Philo, 1988). This is the traditionally accepted view as well, see §1.4.1 (pp.16-17).
he was taught by Pantaenus, he taught others and his works have characteristics consistent with catechetical materials. This is our concern presently, to show the evidence for Clement’s writings being used as part of catechetical training.

4. Κατηχητική in Paidagogus

In Paidagogus I.6 Clement takes up two themes which are common to catechetical instruction, baptism and the Eucharist. Kovacs rightly points out that this chapter represents Clement entering into a polemical discussion with the Valentinians. This is made clear by his opening discussion in the chapter of how the baptism of Jesus was not something which he needed for perfection. Though combating the Valentinian position, Clement is clearly giving catechetical instruction as is indicated both by the use of κατηχητικής and by the subject matter of baptism and the Eucharist.

After the opening discussion of the baptism of Jesus, Clement continues with more discussion on baptism (I.6.26-31) before he launches into what seems like a rather convoluted discussion on biblical passages which speak of “milk” (6.34-52, the remainder of the chapter). It is interesting that his fascination for allegorical interpretation is what forces him into this difficult discussion; he must explain why “milk” is referred to in seemingly positive and negative ways; “A very great

91 Though εὐχαριστία is only clearly used once (Paid. II.2.20,1) to refer to the Eucharist proper, it is obvious that Clement is referring to the Eucharist in other texts: Paid. I.5.15,3; II.1.12.1-3; Strom. I.1.5,1; I.10.46,1; I.19.95,7-96,1.
92 Kovacs (SP 1997, pp.418, 430).
94 In fact, Edward Engelbrecht, “God’s Milk: An Orthodox Confession of the Eucharist,” JECS 7:4 (1999), pp.509-526, shows that Clement’s thinking is consistent with the views of physiology in his day. Engelbrecht begins with Odes of Solomon 19, but also produces a passage in Aristotle’s On the Generation of Animals (777a) which confirms this, p.514f.
difficulty arises in reference to the comparison of these scriptures." 95 This leads to a strained reading of the Corinthians passage; 

...is not the expression to be read somewhat to the following effect: "I have fed you with milk in Christ;" and after a slight stop, let us add, "as children," that by separating the words in reading we may make out some such sense as this: I have instructed you in Christ with simple, true, and natural nourishment,—namely, that which is spiritual...Thus, then, the milk which is perfect is perfect nourishment... 96

He continues this line of thought; 

For those who are full-grown are said to drink, babes to suck. "For my blood," says the Lord, "is true drink." In saying, therefore, "I have given you milk to drink," has he not indicated the knowledge of the truth, the perfect gladness in the Word, who is the milk? 97

The remainder of this discussion on "milk," though somewhat difficult to follow, is one of the loving care exhibited by God through the Eucharist. 98 So we see basic catechetical instruction in this chapter concerning baptism and the Eucharist; the use of κατήχησις simply confirms this reading and the context.

Although Clement's use of κατηχέω/κατήχησις does not always represent catechetical instruction, 99 in Paidagógos I.6 that is exactly what is intended. While speaking of baptism and the Eucharist Clement uses κατηχέω/κατήχησις four times; this context, in addition to the way in which he uses the term, makes it abundantly clear (at least in this one chapter) that he is instructing catechumens on the rites of Christian faith: "For instruction (κατήχησις) leads to faith, and faith

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95 Paid. I.6.35,1. He has referred to 1 Cor. 3:2 ("I have fed you with milk, not with meat; for you were not able...") and Ex. 3:8 ("I will bring you into that good land which flows with milk and honey.").


99 Passages where κατηχέω/κατήχησις does not clearly represent catechetical instruction:
Proto. 10.104,2; II.112,1; Paid. I.6.35,3; II.12.129,3; III.11.76,1; Strom. I.1.1,3; II.18.96,2; III.15.98,4; V.2.15.3; V.6.37,4; V.14.134,1; VI.15.124,1; VII.9.52,3.

Passages where κατηχέω/κατήχησις clearly represents catechetical instruction: Paid. I.6.30,2; I.6.36,3-4; I.6.38,1; Strom. I.2.19,4; V.8.48,9; V.10.66,2; VI.1.1,3; VI.11.89,2; VI.15.119,1; VI.18.165,1.
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with baptism is trained by the Holy Spirit.” Just a little later in this extended discussion (Paid. I.6.38) Clement refers to John 6:55 (“eat my flesh and drink my blood”) as the means for the growth of the Church. Finally, continuing with references to John 6, Clement makes a clear reference to the Eucharist,

‘And the bread which I will give you,’ the Lord said, ‘is My flesh.’ But flesh is nourished by blood, and blood is spoken of under the figure of wine. Therefore, we must understand Him to mean that just as bread dipped in a mixture of water and wine absorbs the wine and leaves the water, so the flesh of the Lord, Bread of heaven, absorbs the blood.”

Although his discussion is somewhat vague and hard to follow in places, it certainly seems to revolve around the Eucharist; there is even a reference to the mixing of water and wine. Van den Hoek sees the entire work of Paidagogus as “a kind of handbook for catechumens and the recently baptized.” This distinction is important because it appears that the whole of Paidagogus is not pre-baptismal and (see note 99) κατηχεω/κατήχησις continues to be used in Stromateis. We can make a distinction between the way Clement uses κατηχεω/κατήχησις in the two works; it would appear that he is instructing catechumens in Paidagogus and then explaining the teaching process in Stromateis.

We have seen the evidence from Eusebius that a “school” existed in Alexandria and we have established that Clement does use κατηχεω/κατήχησις in a

100 Paid. I.6.30,2.
102 It is clear from Clement’s description of the Eucharist in Paid. II.2.20,1 that it was the norm in Alexandrian circles to mix the Eucharistic wine with water. This tradition is also referred to by Irenaeus (A.H. V.1.3) and Justin Martyr (I Apol. LXV,1-2).
104 We will speak of this more thoroughly in the next section.

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categorical sense. We will see in our last piece of evidence, the "milk...meat" teaching in Paidagogus, a theme which recurs in Stromateis and becomes highly significant in the overall understanding of Clement's spiritual pathway.

5. Clement's use of the "milk...meat" analogy

We have already considered this theme in Chapter Two\(^ {105}\) and have also seen in the previous section that Clement speaks of "milk" (Paid. I.6) in a symbolic way as representing the blood of Jesus, or the wine in the Eucharist. Now we must again consider this theme from a slightly different angle: the polemical use of the "milk...meat" theme and the contradictory use which occurs in Stromateis.

As we have already seen, Clement is arguing against the Valentinian position, maintaining that spiritual "milk" does not indicate an inferior position on the part of the "orthodox" Christians. The opening of Paid. I.6 gives us the background for Clement's discussion;

> We have ample means of encountering those who are given to carping. For we are not termed children and infants with reference to the childish and contemptible character of our education, as those who are inflated on account of knowledge have calumniuously alleged. Straightway, on our regeneration, we attained that perfection after which we aspired. For we were illuminated, which is to know God. He is not then imperfect who knows what is perfect.\(^ {106}\)

Although the discussion on "milk...meat" does not begin until I.6.34, we see the proper context from this introduction. We have already seen how Clement gets himself into a confused argument over how to interpret two seemingly contradictory "milk" passages.\(^ {107}\) What we want to point out here is how Clement

\(^{105}\) See §2.5 (pp.81-85).

\(^{106}\) Paid. I.6.25,1.

\(^{107}\) See pp.164-167 above, especially n94. See also, Paid. I.6.37,3 where Clement says that we can expect God to use these terms with consistency.
CHAPTER FOUR: Θεορία, THE HIGHEST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

defends the orthodox Christians and their understanding of πίστις and γνῶσις. Here he is clearly saying that there is no higher level of faith, against what the Valentinians claimed. In this discussion Clement maintains that perfection occurs at baptism. Effectively he is saying there is no higher πίστις or γνῶσις other than what is expressed in the orthodox κατήχησις. This is in keeping with the intended purpose of Paidagogus, to instruct new believers in the basics of faith. We will see in this next section how this same theme of “milk...meat” will be interpreted differently in Stromateis, which helps to illustrate that the latter work represents another step in the spiritual pathway.

4.2.4 The content of Στρωματεῖς

Protrepticus urged the Greek to repentance and acceptance of the gospel; Paidagogus instructed the new believer in the basics of faith; Stromateis is to take the believer to another level. We must recall the key text in the conclusion of Paidagogus; "He [the Teacher]...will teach you the oracles." Stromateis opens with a defense of putting these oracles into writing, which are represented by Clement as secret, or hidden, oral traditions “derived directly from the holy apostles...” We will consider how Clement constructs Stromateis to follow Paidagogus in the next section. What we want to notice right now is how it is not until Book II that we are given any real hint of what the purpose of these oracles might be,

109 The problem we will see is that Clement does not remain consistent in this position; he changes (or modifies) his stance in Stromateis. We will discuss this change in the next section.
110 Paid. III.12.98,1.
111 Strom. I.1.11,3.
CHAPTER FOUR: Θεωρία, THE HIGHEST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

These three things, therefore, our philosopher attaches himself to: first, speculation; second, the performance of the precepts; third, the forming of good men,—which, concurring, form the Gnostic. Whichever of these is wanting, the elements of knowledge limp.\textsuperscript{112}

This gives us, in summation, Clement’s goal in writing Stromateis: that those who rise to the next level of spiritual maturity would know, understand, and practice the three aspirations of the gnostic. This is certainly not to suggest that this is the entirety of what is contained in Stromateis; it is, as Clement described it, a work “purposely scattered...promiscuously variegated.”\textsuperscript{113} Stromateis is a complex work. In the beginning of Book VI (the only clear reference of Paidagogus within Stromateis) Clement reminds the reader of this natural progression, harking back to Paid. I.1.3,3:

“Now the weak eateth herbs,” according to the noble apostle. The Instructor, divided by us into three books, has already exhibited the training and nurture up from the state of childhood, that is, the course of life which from elementary instruction grows by faith; and in the case of those enrolled in the number of men, prepares beforehand the soul, endued with virtue, for the reception of gnostic knowledge.\textsuperscript{114}

This knowledge is what Clement has become known for; the term γνώσεις occurs throughout Stromateis\textsuperscript{115} and has a vast number of nuanced meanings.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{112} Strom. II.10.46,1. Here is another threefold plan. See §5.7 (pp.255-256) for the discussion of these three elements and the similarity with Albinus.

\textsuperscript{113} Strom. VI.1.2,1.

\textsuperscript{114} Strom. VI.1.1.3.

\textsuperscript{115} Just a quick survey in Stählin (Band 4) shows that the occurrences of γνώσεις covers 9 columns and γνωστικός covers 5 more columns. The following comparison of the number of columns given to other key terms illustrates the immense importance of γνώσεις in Clement’s system: ἀγάπη-1, ἀληθεία-4, ἀμαρτία-1, ἀμάθεια/ἀμάθης-7, ἀρετή-3, διδασκαλία-2, δικαιοσύνη-3, δύναμις-5, ἐκκλησία-3, ἐπιθυμία-2, ἐπιστήμη-4, θεωρία-2, πίστις-7, μυστήριον-2, ὁμοίωσις-25, σοφία-2, πάθος-3, παθογαγία (and derivatives)-3, παράδοσις-1, πνεύμα/πνευματικός-6, σάρξ-2, σοφία-4, σωτηρία-2, τέλειος-1,5, φιλοσοφία-7, ψυχή-9. Only three words occur more than γνώσεις: κύριος-14, λόγος-11, and θεός-29.

\textsuperscript{116} We acknowledge that γνώσεις is linked to many key ideas in Stromateis, which can make the word seem commonplace.
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To confirm our theory that Stromateis represents a higher stage in the spiritual pathway we will pick up where we left off in Paidagogus, with the “milk...meat” theme. We will see that Clement presents this theme in a radically different way from what we have seen in Paidagogus, and his presentation will confirm our theory. We will look at two important pieces of evidence which, tied together, make a strong case for a higher stage: first, “meat” is θεωρία, or contemplation; and secondly, Clement introduces the concept of two levels of spirituality.

1. The “meat” is θεωρία.

Where the focus in Paidagogus 1.6 was on the “milk” of the Word, the focus in Stromateis is on “the meat which endureth...the reception of gnostic knowledge.”117 Stromateis 1.1 picks up the discussion of the Eucharist where Paidagogus left it: the “milk...meat” analogy, and κατήχησις.118 Clement makes it clear that this “meat” is θεωρία. Although βρώμια/βρῶσις is only used three times in Stromateis referring to θεωρία,119 they are three crucial texts for understanding the purpose of the work;

If, then, “the milk” is said by the apostle to belong to the babes, and “meat” to be the food of the full-grown, milk will be understood to be catechetical instruction--the first food, as it were, of the soul. And meat is the mystic contemplation (ἡ ἐποπτευτηθη θεωρία); for this is the flesh and the blood of the Word, that is, the comprehension of the divine power and essence...For the knowledge of the divine essence is the meat and drink of the divine Word.120

We see here that “milk” is the κατήχησις (this seems to agree with what we saw

117 Strom. VI.1.1.2-3.
118 See §2.5 (pp.81-85).
119 Strom. V.4.26.2; VI.1.1.2 (θεωρία is not clearly mentioned in these first two texts, but the last text helps to make their meaning clear.); V.10.66.3.
120 Strom. V.10.66.2-3.
in *Paid. 1.6*) and “meat” is \(\theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\). Now, if we look at the other two “meat” texts we have mentioned in light of this one, we see that they both seem to be speaking of \(\theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\);

Now the apostle, in contradistinction to gnostic perfection, calls the common faith *the foundation*, and sometimes *milk*, writing...[he quotes 1 Cor. 3:1-3]. Which things [envy and strife] are the choice of those men who are sinners. But those who abstain from these things give their thoughts to divine things, and partake of gnostic food (\(\beta\rho\omega\iota\alpha\tau\omicron\omicron\)).

For the Lord enjoined “to labour for the meat which endureth to eternity.”...“Now the weak eateth herbs,” according to the noble apostle. *The Instructor*, divided by us into three books, has already exhibited the training and nurture up from the state of childhood, that is, the course of life which from elementary instruction (\(\kappa\alpha\tau\eta\chi\rho\epsilon\omicron\omega\zeta\)) grows by faith; and in the case of those enrolled in the number of men, prepares beforehand the soul, endued with virtue, for the reception of gnostic knowledge.

We find the clearest texts for this “meat” theme in Books V and VI. There are however, a few hints at this very idea in the opening chapter of Book I. Clement speaks of the teaching available to the reader; “the one unwritten, and the other written.” He then quotes from John 6, “Labour,” says the Lord, “not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.” The remainder of I.1.7 is an encouragement to be nourished with bread:

And nutriment is received both by bread and by words...For each soul has its own proper nutriment; some growing by knowledge and science, and others feeding on the Hellenic philosophy...

The use of the John 6 text is not exactly the same as that above (*Strom.* VI.1.1,2), nor are the words about eating “meat” and “bread” clearly pointing to \(\theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\), but

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121 *Strom.* V.4.26,1-2.
122 *Strom.* VI.1.1,2-3.
123 *Strom.* I.1.7,1.
124 *Strom.* I.1.7,2.
125 *Strom.* I.1.7,2-3. I believe the reference to “Hellenic philosophy” includes \(\theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\). See I.1.15,3 where Clement says he will not “shrink from making use of what is best in philosophy,” then I.1.18,1; “The *Stromata* will contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell,” and finally I.28.177,1. This is not to say that by Hellenic philosophy Clement only means contemplation, but that it includes contemplation.

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it is clear that Clement is using this language in a much different way from the Eucharistic language in Paid. I.6. This “food” language is pointing to a higher level of spirituality. Later in Stromateis I.1 there is a reference to θεωρία and βρώμα which is clear;

The nicety of speculation (θεωρίας), too, suits the sketch presented in my commentaries. In this respect the resources of learning are like a relish mixed with the food (βρώματι) of an athlete, who is not indulging in luxury...126

Finally, just before Book I closes, Clement gives another hint with this “milk...meat” theme. In Chapter 28 he is closing his history of Moses and discussing dialectics as “philosophy mixed with truth.”127 In this discussion he is describing dialectics in terms very closely related to θεωρία; in this context he uses the “milk...meat” theme to distinguish between those who can understand and those who cannot. As we have seen, (pp.81-85) this “milk...meat” theme does not appear again until Book V.I. This is what makes Clement difficult to read and understand, yet also points to his genius: he drops hints here and there of various topics only to leave them and pick them up again much later. Yet, it is clear that “meat” in Stromateis is θεωρία.

2. The two levels of spirituality

Another interesting aspect of this “milk...meat” theme is Clement’s use of the 1 Cor. 3:1-3 text. He uses it extensively in Paidagogus I.6 128 where he deals with κατήχησις, and now he uses it again here in Stromateis as he points to θεωρία. But, as we have just mentioned, his application of this “milk...meat” text is

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126 Strom. I.1.16,1. This text follows the thought just mentioned (note 128, I.1.15,4), here referring to “relish mixed with the food.”
127 Strom. I.28.177,1.
128 Paid. I.6.34,3; 35,2; 36,2-5; 37,3; 45,2; 49,2. Mortley (VC 1976, 114) fails to recognise the polemics in Clement’s presentation here. Cf. Kovacs (SP 1997).
radically different in *Stromateis*. It is with this theme that we clearly see Clement introducing, and supporting with the Scriptures, the concept of two levels in the spiritual life of the Christian; the *Strom.* V.10.66,2 text brings this out most clearly. As we have already seen (pp.164-167), in *Paidagogus* I.6 the discussion is framed in a polemical attack against the Valentinian position of two levels of believers. One particular text, because of its similarity with the *Strom.* V.10 text, is so contrasting that it would be good to see them side by side;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Paidagogus</em> I.6.39,1</th>
<th><em>Stromateis</em> V.10.66,2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If, then, some would oppose, saying that by milk is meant the first lessons—as it were, the first food—and that by meat is meant those spiritual cognitions to which they attain by raising themselves to knowledge, let them understand that, in saying that meat is solid food, and the flesh and blood of Jesus, they are brought by their own vainglorious wisdom to the true simplicity.</td>
<td>If, then, “the milk” is said by the apostle to belong to the babes, and “meat” to be the food of the full-grown, milk will be understood to be catechetical instruction—the first food, as it were, of the soul. And meat is the mystic contemplation; for this is the flesh and the blood of the Word, that is, the comprehension of the divine power and essence... For the knowledge of the divine essence is the meat and drink of the divine Word.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the *Paidagogus* text is a bit ambiguous, the opening discussion and the context of the chapter help to make it clear that Clement is denying the higher perfection of the Valentinians. Clement closes *Paid.* I.6 in much the same way as he opened the discussion (I.6.25,1; see pp.164-167), with a statement concerning perfection; “And it occurs to me to wonder how some dare call themselves perfect and gnostics...” Yet it is clear in the *Stromateis* text above,

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129 We cannot afford here to discuss this text from 1 Corinthians and whether or not Clement is interpreting it correctly (by 21st century standards of higher criticism); we can almost always assume that he is using the Alexandrian allegorical method. See the comments made concerning Clement’s use of Scripture, p.112 n84 above.

130 Just prior to this text in *Paid.* I.6.37,3, Clement says “...regarding the meat not as something different from the milk, but the same in substance.” Again in 6.44 and 45 Clement strains to show that milk and meat can be considered the same saying; “cheese is the solidification of milk...I am not concerned here to make a nice selection of an expression, only to say that one substance supplies both articles of food,” *Paid.* I.6.45,3.

131 See Kovacs (SP 1997).

that he is making a distinction which is similar to the Valentinian position. Kovacs says, “Clement has transformed the Valentinian idea of two ways of salvation into two stages of the one way of salvation and made it a central theme of his theology.” Kovacs points out this contradiction in Clement, but she describes it as “a concrete example of pedagogical concealment, or gradual revelation of the truth.” Although I cannot completely disagree with Kovacs on this point, neither do I completely agree. Perhaps, as we saw with Origen in his contradictory argumentation concerning oral traditions (pp.50-51), Clement is simply arguing his point in Paidagogus. I.6 with a different goal in mind. The text which opens Stromateis VI gives us these two levels as Clement contrasts “meat” with “herbs,” “childhood” with “men,” and “elementary instruction” with “the reception of gnostic knowledge.” Clement has clearly defined two levels of spirituality in Stromateis which were not present in Paidagogus.

4.3 θεοπία, the highest step of spirituality

The highest stage in Clement’s pathway of spirituality is θεοπία; there are several texts which illustrate this point. What we want to look at in this section is not just the incidents where Clement says this, but how he seems to be saying it.

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132 Kovacs (SP 1997, p.428). While Kovacs is speaking here of Clement’s views as represented in his exegesis of the High Priest in Strom. V, her observations include and apply to the “milk...meat” theme we are discussing.
133 Ibid., p.430.
134 Kovacs says this as well, p.431. It is interesting that in the same section (Paid. I.6.36,5-37,1) Clement argues that “but then face to face” in 1 Cor 13:12 refers to the next life; “How then, if that is truly the promise after our departure...” (37,1). Yet in Stromateis he clearly represents “face to face” as something which the Gnostic experiences in this life. Is this also a case where he purposes to conceal/reveal in his own time? It shares the polemical thrust of the “milk...meat” issue.
135 Strom. VI.1.1,2-3
136 Strom. II.10.47,4; IV.3.8,8; IV.5.21,1; IV.6.39,1-40,1; IV.22.136,1-4; V.6.40,1; V.12.78,1-3; VI.7.61,1-3; VI.9.75,2; VI.12.98,3; VII.3.13,1-3; VII.7.44,6-7; VII.7.46,4; VII.11.68,3-4; VII.13.83,3; VII.16.102,2.
CHAPTER FOUR: \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\), THE HIGHEST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

We will look at three examples of how Clement points to \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) as the highest stage: first, by how he compares \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) to other noble things; secondly, his use of Moses and the motif of the mountain summit; lastly, his use of the OT High Priest and the Temple.

4.3.1 All else pales in comparison to \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\)

Clement shows the importance of \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) in many texts by comparison to other things. The Gnostic refuses to be bothered by passions, even those normally considered to be good;

For it is impossible that he who has been once made perfect by love, and feasts eternally and insatiably on the boundless joy of contemplation (\(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\zeta\)), should delight in small and grovelling things. 137

The interesting word \(\acute{\alpha}k\omega\rho\epsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\zeta\) ("insatiable") is used by Clement in Stromateis only four times, each one modifying \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\): 138

...and having become son and friend, he is now replenished with insatiable contemplation face to face... V.6.40,1

...devoting themselves to the pure vision of insatiable contemplation. VI.14.108,1

...I affirm that gnostic souls, that surpass in the grandeur of contemplation...the transcendentally clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision which is the privilege of intensely loving souls... VII.3.13,1

Obviously Clement’s gnostic would not admit a lack of self-control, but \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) is presented in terms of what we would call addiction. Compared to \(\Theta\varepsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) having his prayers heard and answered is really not needed for the gnostic, except “the

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137 Strom. VI.9.75,1. This discussion begins with the opening of chapter 9; “The Gnostic is such, that he is subject only to the affections that exist for the maintenance of the body, such as hunger, thirst, and the like,” VI.9.71,1. The discussion takes up the entire chapter and is one of Clement’s most detailed discussions of \(\acute{\alpha}k\omega\rho\epsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\zeta\). “We must therefore rescue the gnostic and perfect man from all passion of the soul.” (VI.9.74,1)

138 These texts are added to VI.9.75,1 above. The use of this word is interesting because it implies a lack of self-control. Three times he uses the word in Paidagogus (II.1.12,3; II.8.64,5; II.10.100,2) to modify a sinful behaviour and to show a lack of self-control.
permanence of the things he possesses...And the gnostic, who has reached the summit, will pray that contemplation may grow and abide.\textsuperscript{139} We will not prolong the discussion on this point; suffice it to say that \(\Theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) is represented as having the utmost value.

4.3.2 Moses and the summit

The example of Moses is cited by Clement on several occasions to emphasise the importance of \(\Theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\).\textsuperscript{140} Moses, a central figure in the OT, played a significant role in Jewish-Hellenistic literature.\textsuperscript{141} The use of Moses in both Philo and Clement is apologetic in the first instance, but (especially for Clement) moves away from this to become a more philosophical/spiritual endeavor.\textsuperscript{142} Van den Hoek comments on this tendency,

Clement’s point of orientation is spiritual vision or contemplation, the \(\Theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\). This orientation appears once again at the end of this passage [\textit{Strom. I.25.165-29.182}] when Clement has Moses function as a teacher of Plato in dialectics. For Clement, the aim of true dialectic, which is connected with true philosophy, is to ascend to God: that is to the God of the cosmos and to the knowledge of divine and heavenly affairs. This knowledge leads to real wisdom which is a godly power.\textsuperscript{143}

In almost every book of \textit{Stromateis}, the account of Moses on the mountain in Exodus is used.\textsuperscript{144} Indeed, each of the texts listed (note 140, except I.28.176-177) includes a reference, or clear allusion, to the biblical account. Clement is focusing

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Strom. VII.7.44,3 and 46,4.}
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Strom. I.28.176-179} (the entire chapter); II.2.6.1; IV.3.8.8-9.2; V.1.7.4-5; V.10.71-74; V.12.78.1-2; VI.12.104,1-2; VI.15.132,5. As we will see, the word \(\Theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) might not appear immediately in the text, but the context makes it quite clear that Clement is indeed referring to the concept.
\textsuperscript{141} See, van den Hoek (\textit{Clement-Philo}, p.49).
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., pp.51, 65-67. Van den Hoek shows in her chapter, “The Story of Moses,” how dependent Clement was on Philo for his account of Moses in \textit{Strom. I.24-25}. However, where Philo’s focus is on the virtue of the Law and Moses as hero, Clement focuses on the spiritual qualities one sees in Moses as an example for the believer, pp.65-67.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p.67. I assume van den Hoek is referring to \textit{Strom. I.28.176,1-177,1}.
\textsuperscript{144} Book III is lacking in the use of Moses; we will see (§5.5.1, pp.218-220) the same lack in Book VII.
on the encounter which Moses had with God:

| II.2.6.1 | Whence Moses, persuaded that God is not known by human wisdom, said, “Show me Thy glory;” and into thick darkness where God’s voice was, pressed to enter—that is, into the inaccessible and invisible ideas respecting Existence. |
| IV.3.9.1-2 | For to live is common to the mortal nature, that is to man, with that to which has been vouchsafed immortality; as also the faculty of contemplation and of self-restraint, one of the two being more excellent...Accordingly it is said, “God talked with Moses as a friend with a friend.” |
| V.1.7.4-5 | ...But if one expect to apprehend all things by the senses, he has fallen far from the truth..."For now we see as through a glass, but then face to face.” For the vision of the truth is given but to few...To the same effect is what we find in Moses: “No man shall see my face, and live.” |
| V.11.71.5 | Wherefore also Moses says, “Show thyself to me,”—intimating most clearly that God is not capable of being taught by man, or expressed in speech... |
| V.12.78.2-3 | ...the all-wise Moses, ascending the mount for holy contemplation, to the summit of intellectual objects...And when the Scripture says, “Moses entered into the thick darkness where God was,” this shows to those capable of understanding, that God is invisible and beyond expression of words. And “the darkness”—which, is in truth, the unbelief and ignorance of the multitude—obstructs the gleam of the truth. |
| VI.12.104.1 | And as in the case of Moses, from his righteous conduct, and from his uninterrupted intercourse with God, who spoke to him, a kind of glorified hue settled on his face; so also a divine power of goodness clinging to the righteous soul in contemplation...impresses on it something, as it were, of intellectual radiance, like the solar ray, as a visible sign of righteousness... |
| VI.15.132.5 | That it is therefore not only to those who read simply that the acquisition of the truth is so difficult, but that not even to those whose prerogative the knowledge of the truth is, is the contemplation of it vouchsafed all at once, the history of Moses teaches, until, accustomed to gaze, as the Hebrews on the glory of Moses...so we also become able to look the splendours of truth in the face. |

The account of Moses on the mountain with God occupies an important place in spirituality; it is perhaps the most extraordinary biblical example of man drawing near to God. That Clement uses Moses as often as he does, and in the manner in which he does (as an example of θεωρία) points to the elevated status of θεωρία.

We need to notice Clement’s use of what is an important concept throughout Stromateis, and which he uses with Moses: the “face to face” text from the NT.

4.3.3 “Face to face”

It will be noticed in the texts above, the consistent reference to the face of Moses. This, of course, comes from the biblical texts surrounding the
CHAPTER FOUR: Ἐπορία, THE HIGHEST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

encounter. In addition to the references to Moses, Clement cites or alludes to 1 Cor 13:12 ("Now we see through a mirror...but then we will see face to face.") numerous times in discussion concerning Ἐπορία. Three of these "face to face" texts include Moses; it is quite possible that when Clement cited 1 Cor 13:12 he was also thinking of the Moses encounter in Exodus.

The "face" of God is a problematic concept for Clement since it goes against transcendence. Indeed, he wrestles with the question of how two biblical texts, which seem mutually exclusive, can coexist: Matt. 5:8 ("Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God") and Ex. 33:20 ("No man shall see my face, and live"). Because this "face to face" concept is so important (see this discussion of the gnostic, §5.5.5, pp.232-234) we must take a closer look at how he deals with this issue.

For Clement, the "face of God is the Word." This seems to be a his simple reconciliation of these two texts, but as we probe his thoughts we realise that Clement is not entirely content with this explanation. After establishing the Clementine authorship of Ex. Thea. 10-16 (which contains this same problem), Casey points out "the inconsistency between Clement's Platonic immaterialism

145 In our chart we have listed 2-3 examples from the Exodus account. We would add to this the NT reference 2 Cor 3:7-18.
146 Strom. I.19.94,4-6; V.6.40,1; VII.3.13,1; VII.10.57,1; VII.11.68,4 (ἐπορία is used here).
The following texts are instances where "face to face" is used, but without reference to Ἐπορία: IV.3.12,2; V.1.7,5-7; V.11.74,1; VI.12.102,2 (Moses comes into this last text in 103-104).
147 Strom. I.7,5-7; V.11.74,1; VI.12.102,2.
148 Strom. I.7,4-8. Also in Strom. IV.13.89 where he refers to Valentinus citing the Exodus text in a homily. As we will see, Clement also speaks of this in Ex. Theo. 10-16. The difficulties of reconciling these two biblical concepts also concerns Origen (On First Principles I.1 and II.4.3) and Gregory of Nyssa (Life of Moses II.162-169; II.219-255).
149 Paid. I.7,57,2; also, Ex. Theo. 10.6; 12.2; 23.5; Strom. V.6.34,1; VII.10.58,3.
150 See Mortley (VC 1976, pp.118-120) on this. Mortley's article will be cited in the main text, listing only the page number, for the rest of this section.
and the Stoic materialism." Mortley shows that in another text where Clement addresses this problem (*Strom. V.11.74,1*) he seems to be referring to "the contemplation of the supreme God." (VC 1976, p.119) Clement is using an Epicurean expression which enables him to speak in terms of an intellectual contact with God through the mind; this is how Clement was able to speak in terms of a corporeal contact while holding to transcendence. (Ibid., pp.118-120)

Another interesting point brought out by Mortley (Ibid., pp.115-116) is Clement's quotation of the 1 Cor. 13:12 text, "For now we see as through a glass." He omits ἐν οἴνιγματι, "thus diminishing the idea of obscurity." Mortley's analysis (Ibid., pp.116-117) is an astute one, but he fails to mention a few points which I think would help in understanding how Clement uses this biblical text. He quotes the complete verse five times and only once does he include the Pauline phrase. No doubt Mortley is correct when he says that Clement wants "to give a more positive content to the idea of contemplation in a mirror," and in his observation of seeing the divine when you look at your brother (Ibid., especially n32) which is also looking at Christ. However, he fails to mention that Clement uses the text in more than one way: twice he uses this text in an eschatological sense (seeing clearly in the next life), four times in the intellectual sense

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151 Casey (Excerpta, pp.9-14). Casey is referring to the differences between Clement’s comments in *Ex Theo.* 10-16 and that of *Strom.* V.11.71 and VII.7.36-37, but the difficulty is reflected in the text we mentioned above, *Strom.* V.1.7. Casey’s solution is not without merit: he suggests the differences of literary genre represented in the two works cause these discrepancies, Ibid.

152 Mortley (VC 1976, p.116). It is clear that Clement’s MS contained the missing phrase since he quotes it in full in *Ex Theo.* 15,2 (ibid.). Interestingly, E. Molland, "Clement of Alexandria on the Origin of Greek Philosophy," SO 15/16 (1936), pp.57-85, points out that Clement, in all but the *Ex Theo.* passage, adds ὁκτο γε which strengthens the idea of "the expression being an image" (p.69). This gives even a greater sense of corporeality in this contact.

153 Paid. I.6.36,6; *Strom.* I.19.94,4; V.1.7,5; V.11.74,1 and ἐν οἴνιγματι occurs in *Ex Theo.* 15,2.

154 Mortley (VC 1976, p.116). Mortley disagrees with Molland on this point; see Molland, pp.69-70.
(Mortley’s explanation), and finally, three times\textsuperscript{155} in what we can only refer to as a spiritual sense, reflective of our key term, θεόπις. We will briefly consider these various uses to conclude our comments in this section.

1. \textit{“Face to face” as a future event}

In \textit{Paid.} I.6.36,6 and in \textit{Strom.} I.19.94,4 Clement quotes 1 Cor. 13:12 to indicate that this “seeing” of God will happen in the next life. Although he mentions both of these texts, Mortley fails to point this out. The \textit{Paidagogus} text is very clear on this point: “the clear revelation in the future world” (36,5) and “the promise after our departure” (37,1) reveal this eschatological reading. It must also be remembered that this passage has a polemical purpose (pp.164-168 above); Clement is combating the Valentinian position of a higher perfection. While the text in \textit{Strom.} I.1 is a bit more difficult, it too seems to point to the afterlife. In \textit{Strom.} I.19.94,4 he quotes the first part of the 1 Cor. text and comments, “the Saviour God is declared to us.” Then he continues, “But after the laying aside of the flesh, ‘face to face,’ — then definitely and comprehensively, when the heart becomes pure.” (94,6-7) This could be speaking of ἄπαθεθεότατη (the abstraction from the senses), but “as we see things through pellucid and transparent bodies” (94,7) could also be pointing to the incorporeal body of the afterlife.\textsuperscript{156} A final pronouncement on this text is not possible, but it is clear that “face to face” in the \textit{Paidagogus} text points to the afterlife. This is the difficulty with Clement, as we

\textsuperscript{155} This is the count of all “face to face” passages, in some of which Clement only quotes part of the verse. The citations for these texts will be given in the following sections.

\textsuperscript{156} It appears that Mortley takes this passage to be concerned with “the future contemplation” (VC 1976, p.118); Osborn seems to think this passage points to the afterlife, but also holds out some possibility of it being in this life (\textit{The Beginning}, p.230). Molland seems to say “face to face” points to “eternal life,” p.69, but he clearly shows a precedent in Plato for seeing reflections in/through water pertaining to this life, pp.76-78.
CHAPTER FOUR: θεοπία, THE HIGHEST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY

will see in the next section — he is not always easy to pin down. Molland’s comment on this passage is appropriate,

Clement is a most non-scholastic thinker who does not work with clear distinctions and sharply elaborated alternatives. He will not make distinctions and separations where reality exhibits connection and inseparability. (p.75)

2. “Face to face” as intellectual contemplation

Four texts clearly speak of abstraction from the senses into the realm of νοῦς,

And we must possess the healthy mind which is fixed on the pursuit of the good; in order to which we have the greatest need of divine grace, and of right teaching, and of holy susceptibility, and of the drawing of the Father to Him. For, bound in this earthly body, we apprehend the objects of sense by means of the body, but we grasp intellectual objects by means of the logical faculty itself. But if one expect to apprehend all things by the senses, he has fallen far from the truth. Spiritually, therefore, the apostle writes respecting the knowledge of God, “For now we see as through a glass, but then face to face.” For the vision of the truth is given but to few.

So the high priest, putting off his consecrated robe (the universe, and the creation in the universe...). . . distinguishing the objects of the intellect from the things of sense, rising above other priests, to the entrance to the world of ideas. . . . But purified already by the gnostic Word in his whole heart.... and having become son and friend, he is now replenished with insatiable contemplation face to face. . . . But in one way, as I think, the Lord puts off and puts on by descending into the region of sense...

Therefore the Gnostic prays in thought during every hour, being by love allied to God.... becoming pure in heart through the knowledge, which is by the Son of God, he may be initiated into the beatific vision face to face, having heard the Scripture which says, “Fasting with prayer is a good thing.” Now fastings signify abstinence from all evils whatsoever, both in action and in word, and in thought itself. 157

Immediately we see the context of the νοῦς being held in contrast to the senses.

The last text has the gnostic engaging in thought prayer, again νοῦς is the focus.

The last text (Strom. V.11.73-74) is the clearest. Here Clement is giving an example of allegorical reading,

157 Strom. V.1.7.4; V.6.39,3-40,2; and VI.12.102,1-2. Italics have been added to show a partial quotation of 1 Cor. 13:12.
"Abraham, when he came to the place which God told him of on the third day, looking up, saw the place afar off." For the day is that which is constituted by the sight of good things; and the second is the soul's best desire; on the third, the mind perceives spiritual things, the eyes of the understanding being opened by the Teacher who rose on the third day. The three days may be the mystery of the seal, in which God is really believed.

As we saw in our discussion of Book V (pp.76-81), Clement is attempting to lead the reader away from the world of the senses. This discussion of Abraham continues this process of preparing the perceptive reader for a higher level of spirituality,\textsuperscript{158} "the mind perceives spiritual things." (73,1) The passage continues,

It is consequently afar off that he sees the place. For the region of God is hard to attain; which Plato called the region of ideas, having learned from Moses that it was a place which contained all things universally... Thence says the apostle: "Now we see as through a glass, but then face to face," by those sole pure and incorporeal applications of the intellect... if one attempt without any of the senses, by reason, to reach what is individual, and do not quit the sphere of existences, till, rising up to the things which transcend it, he apprehends by the intellect itself that which is good, moving in the very confines of the world of thought, according to Plato.

Clearly, "face to face" in these four texts represents an intellectual contemplation.

Mortley's comments on this aspect of "face to face" should be consulted: he shows how Clement introduces the incarnation into the Neoplatonic idea of γνώθι σαυτόν (VC 1976, pp.118-119). He also uses Epicurean concepts to present the reader with the idea of the mind encountering or touching God, not in a sensible way, but rather where mind meets mind somehow on a purely intellectual level (Ibid., pp.118-120). We see here what we have seen elsewhere: Clement is the eclectic philosopher-Christian. He apparently has a system (presumably includes the παράδοσις) and he has no hesistation in using whatever concept he must to communicate it. We have already established how Clement likes to use this "face

\textsuperscript{158} Kovacs, p.437.
CHAPTER FOUR: θεωρία, The Highest Stage in the Spiritual Pathway

to face” concept in his θεωρία system, and this particular characteristic (contemplation of the νοῦς) is one we have already established as well. Our last area in this “face to face” section is what we are referring to as spiritual contemplation.

3. “Face to face” as spiritual contemplation

Three “face to face” texts in Stromateis do not fit into either of the first two categories we have discussed and seem to indicate something different. All three of these texts are ascent ones and come from Book VII:

Now I pass over other things in silence, glorifying the Lord. But I affirm that gnostic souls, that surpass in the grandeur of contemplation the mode of life of each of the holy ranks, among whom the blessed abodes of the gods are allotted by distribution, reckoned holy among the holy, transferred entire from among the entire, reaching places better than the better places, embracing the divine vision not in mirrors or by means of mirrors, but in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision which is the privilege of intensely loving souls, holding festival through endless ages, remain honoured with the identity of all excellence. Such is the vision attainable by “the pure in heart.” This is the function of the Gnostic, who has been perfected, to have convene with God through the great High Priest...

Then become pure in heart, and near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation; and they are called by the appellation of gods, being destined to sit on thrones with the other gods that have been first put in their places by the Saviour....and by its own light conveys man through the mystic stages of advancement; till it restores the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest; teaching to gaze on God, face to face, with knowledge and comprehension. For in this consists the perfection of the gnostic soul, in its being with the Lord, where it is in immediate subjection to Him, after rising above all purification and service.

159 Clement uses the interesting phrase “the eye of the mind” in Ex.Theo. 10,6; see p.29 n16 above.
160 Strom. VII.3.13,1-4; VII.10.56,5-57,2; VII.11.68,1-5.
161 Strom. VII.3.13,1-2. This first text does not use “face to face,” but the “vision not in mirrors” can be seen to be an allusion to the 1 Cor. text.
162 Strom. VII.10.56,5-57,2 italics added to reflect the allusion to 1 Cor. 13:12.
The Gnostic, consequently, in virtue of being a lover of the one true God, is the really perfect man and friend of God, and is placed in the rank of son. For these are names of nobility and knowledge, and perfection in the contemplation of God; which crowning step of advancement the gnostic soul receives, when it has become quite pure, reckoned worthy to behold everlastingly God Almighty, "face," it is said, "to face." For having become wholly spiritual, and having in the spiritual Church gone to what is of kindred nature, it abides in the rest of God.163

The context for these three passages is clearly not the contemplation with the mind. All three texts use language which reflects a spiritual contemplation. Each use language which speaks of something different from incorporeality or the νοῦς, and all three use the concept of contemplation (either θεωρία or ἐπιστήμη). In addition to this, these passages have an immediacy with God which are not as clear in the above “face to face” passages representing intellectual contemplation. Lastly, these are ascent passages which, by definition, place them in another category.164 It appears that Clement moves from using “face to face” as intellectual contemplation to spiritual contemplation as he moves from Books IV-VI to Book VII. For now I will simply point out the different character of these three “face to face” texts; in our next chapter (§5.5.5, pp.232-234) we will look more closely at these passages to see how Book VII figures into Clement’s presentation and the overall context will become more clear.

4.3.4 The High Priest and the Temple

The major section of Strom. V.6, in which Clement speaks of the mystical meaning of the High Priest and the Temple, points to the importance of θεωρία in Clement’s system.165 The role of the High Priest has always been extremely

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163 Strom. VII.11,68,3-5.
164 See the discussion in §3.5 (pp.121-137) and §5.5.5 (pp.228-234).
165 There has been much discussion on this passage which is critical for the purpose of distinguishing Clement’s thought from that of the Valentinian system, but which is not as critical for our purposes. For
important: the High Priest was central to the OT Day of Atonement, is important in Philo’s system,\textsuperscript{166} retains a place in the NT through the Letter to the Hebrews,\textsuperscript{167} and represents a significant concept with Clement. The High Priest was the only person who could enter the Holy of Holies, and that only once each year.\textsuperscript{168} Thus, Clement uses this figure and the passage from Exodus as a type of the gnostic, the one who may enter God’s presence,

So the high priest, putting off his consecrated robe (the universe, and the creation in the universe, were consecrated by Him assenting that, what was made, was good), washes himself, and puts on the other tunic—a holy-of holies one, so to speak—which is to accompany him into the adytum.... But purified already by the gnostic Word in his whole heart, and thoroughly regulated, and having improved that mode of life received from the priest to the highest pitch, being quite sanctified both in word and life, and having put on the bright array of glory, and received the ineffable inheritance of that spiritual and perfect man, “which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and it hath not entered into the heart of man;” and having become son and friend, he is now replenished with insatiable contemplation face to face...\textsuperscript{169}

Our purpose here is only to show that \textit{G\öpik\ä} enters Clement’s discussion of the High Priest figure and, like Moses, points to the importance of \textit{G\öpik\ä} by association. Our discussion here must be brief, yet there are some concerns which have been raised in the scholarly debate which must be addressed.

The presence of a parallel passage in \textit{Ex.Theo.} 27 calls into question both the origin of Clement’s interpretation of the Gnostic soul and whether he speaks of

\textsuperscript{166} Philo gave Moses the title, but Clement reserves the title for Jesus; see van den Hock (\textit{Clement-Philo}, pp.62-64). Daniéelou points out that the interpretations which Clement basically follows in this section come from Hellenistic Judaism; he names \textit{Wisdom of Solomon} and Josephus in addition to Philo, (\textit{Gospel Message} p.250).
\textsuperscript{167} Heb 4:14-16; 5:1-4; 7:23-28; ch 9.
\textsuperscript{168} Heb 9:7, 25.
\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Strom.} V.6.39,3 and 40,1.
Geropía as an experience of this world, or of the next life. In his discussion of this
text, Lilla argues that the thinking is not Clementine, but is rather the thinking of a
Gnostic, perhaps Theodotus.\textsuperscript{170} In his analysis, Lilla focuses on small phrases
within the \textit{Ex. Theo. 27} text to show that it has more in common with Valentinian
thought than with Clement. Yet taking larger sections and comparing them with
the text in \textit{Stromateis} shows sufficient evidence of Clementine authorship;\textsuperscript{171}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textit{Ex. Theo. 27} & \textit{Strom. V.6.39,2-40,4} \\
\hline
The priest on entering within the second veil
removed the plate at the altar of incense...
indicating the laying aside of the body which
has become pure...bright through purification
...the putting away as it were of the soul’s
body...

Now the soul, stripped by the power of him
who has knowledge...passes into the spiritual
realm and becomes now truly rational and high
priestly...

But where is there a right judgment of Scripture
and doctrine for that soul which has become
pure, and where it is granted to see God “face
to face”? Thus, having transcended
...It is no longer a bride but has become a
Logos and rests with the bridegroom...friends
by love, sons by instruction...

...So that it belonged to the dispensation to
wear the plate and to continue the pursuit of
knowledge, but the work of power was that
man becomes the bearer of God...

...the robe prophesied the ministry in the
flesh...so the high priest, putting off his
consecrated robe...washes himself...
But purified already by the gnostic Word in his
whole heart...being sanctified both in word and
life, and having put on the bright array of
glory...

...and received the ineffable inheritance of that
spiritual and perfect man...

...and having become a son and friend, he is
now replenished with insatiable contemplation
face to face. For there is nothing like hearing
the Word Himself, who by means of the
Scripture inspires fuller intelligence...

...Thence, after the image of the Lord, the
worthiest were chosen from the sacred tribes to
be high priests, and those elected to the kingly
office and to prophecy were anointed.

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\textsuperscript{170} Lilla (\textit{Clement}, p.179). The importance of establishing Clementine authorship is to show his usage of
possible Gnostic themes to develop his own view of the heavenly ascent. Even if Lilla is correct, as he
admits, Clement absorbs this text for his own purpose (p.183 n4). Daniélou says that “Clement is inspired
by Theodotus...This is not Gnosticism but an orthodox Jewish Christian development,” (\textit{The Theology},
p.162). Kovacs also disagrees with Lilla and sees this text as Clementine, p.433.

\textsuperscript{171} Van den Hock points to this tendancy of Lilla to compare “detached sentences so frequently” as a
weakness in his study which makes Clement look like “a writer of aphorisms,” (\textit{Clement-Phil}, p.19).
She seems to be following Osborn (\textit{The Beginning}, pp.240-244) in her assessment of Lilla. Due to the
length of both texts I will only show their similarities.

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As Casey points out, *Ex. Theo.* was likely to have been a notebook for Clement which he used in writing other works (the comparison above shows this as likely). The nature of a notebook is that thoughts are not always completed or neatly constructed; speaking of sections dealing with angels Casey says, “It seems evident from the style and confused treatment that these sections were not designed for a public but were rather experiments in thought, the result of thinking on paper.” Van den Hoek shows Philo’s influence on Clement in these texts with respect to small details (like the representation of colors in the priestly vestments), yet also shows where Clement breaks away from Philo. In the end this is probably another example of Clement being influenced by all of the currents within which he worked and his own version finally coming through the mix. I must agree with Casey that *Ex. Theo.* 27 appears to be Clementine, but does that tell us anything useful for our purposes?

When we take the two texts together, both as Clementine, we see that in this concept of θεωρία Clement is speaking about an experience, not only of the soul at death, but also one which is of this life. Lilla sees θεωρία as the ascension of the gnostic soul upon death. Kovacs, coupling these two texts, says, “The Gnostic high priest, who has earlier exchanged the garment of faith for the bright

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172 Casey (Excerpta, p.4). Nautin’s study (pp.149-151) points to *Ex. Theo.* as the work of a copyist using the text of Hypotyposeis.
173 Casey (Excerpta, p.14).
174 Van den Hoek (Clement-Philo, pp.116-147). “Philo supplies part of the structure through which Clement moves, in which he lingers and from which he digresses.” (p.146) She also points out how the Apocalypse and the Letter to the Hebrews influence Clement, p.146.
175 In this section we are only concerned with the issue of the ascent of the soul during this lifetime. Van den Hoek seems to see both, (Clement-Philo, p.146); Daniélon certainly sees both, (Gospel Message, pp.448-453); Kovacs sees both, pp.433-437.
176 Lilla (Clement, pp.173, 177-178, 186-187).
array of \( \gamma ν\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma \) (\textit{Strom.} V.6.40,1), now removes the vestment of \( \gamma ν\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma \) and enters into direct contemplation of God.”\(^{177}\) She sees the \textit{Strom.} V.6 text as an example of Clement’s concealment (similar to her evaluation of \textit{Pald.} I.6; §4.2.3, pp.164-167). She points to the end of this text — “For there is nothing like hearing the Word Himself, who by means of the Scripture inspires fuller intelligence,” (V.6.40,1) — as an example of Clement bringing his reader to the summit of contemplation, then closing the veil, thus “calling his reader back to the text of Scripture.”\(^{178}\) In her final assessment of this text, in addition to seeing it as concealment, she believes Clement is trying to awaken the reader, and urge him on, in the search for \( \gamma ν\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma \) (and I would add, \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \)).\(^{179}\) I agree with Kovacs in her final analysis with only one exception: though Clement does seem to “abruptly close the veil” at the end of this text, it is not simply to bring the reader back to the text of Scripture as Le Boulluec seems to think.\(^{180}\) Clement does seem to close his discussion on \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \) by digressing into Egyptian and Greek symbolism (V.41-53), but then he returns to the \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \) theme with words of caution to the Gnostic teacher (I think speaking in the first instance of himself in this very context of writing) who would wrecklessly lead simple Christians into \( \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \) too quickly.\(^{181}\) Next he apologizes for his lengthy digression,\(^{182}\) but continues in it just a little longer (V.56-59). Then he comes back to the hidden nature of the Scriptures (his topic in V.6) in V.10.60-65, and finally swings full

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\(^{177}\) Kovacs, p.437.
\(^{178}\) Ibid., p.432.
\(^{179}\) Ibid., p.437.
\(^{180}\) Le Boulluec, \textit{Les Stromates} V (Notes), SC 279, p.158. Kovacs cites Le Boulluec for support.
\(^{181}\) \textit{Strom.} V.8.54,2-4.
\(^{182}\) \textit{Strom.} V.9.56,1.
circle, back to direct discussion of θεορία. In this section (V.66-81) we have fairly clear discussion of θεορία again. In the Strom. V.6 text Clement used the robe to represent the sensible world with the High Priest (the Gnostic) taking it off (laying aside the noetic realm). Now (V.66-81) he comes back to this concept.

Now the sacrifice which is acceptable to God is unswerving abstraction from the body and its passions. This is really true piety... For he who neither employs his eyes in the exercise of thought, nor draws aught from his other senses, but with pure mind itself applies to objects, practises the true philosophy. This is, then, the import of the silence of five years prescribed by Pythagoras, which he enjoined on his disciples; that, abstracting themselves from the objects of sense, they might with the mind alone contemplate the Deity. It was from Moses that the chief of the Greeks drew these philosophical tenets... For the gnostic soul must be... devoid of the frivolousness of the body and of all the passions... He makes it clear he is speaking of a spiritual contemplation during this life with two references: first, his affirming reference to the silence enjoined by Pythagoras. This, to Clement, is a Greek attempt to attain this spiritual contemplation. Secondly, he says that the Greeks draw on Moses for their concept of θεορία. He wants the reader to think back to V.12.78,2 where “the all-wise Moses” ascends “the mount for holy contemplation.” Both of these examples refer to this life. It is admitted that this section (V.66-81) speaks mainly of the abstraction from the senses; only twice does θεορία occur. But the overall context from Strom. V shows that for Clement this θεορία is something which the gnostic soul pursues and experiences during this mortal life. Of course to fully see Clement’s view of θεορία as an earthly experience one must read Book VII where

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183 This is re-introduced with the V.10.66,2 text which speaks of “milk” as “catechetical instruction” and “meat” as “mystic contemplation.”
184 Strom. V.6.37,1.
185 Strom. V.11.67,1-4.
186 Strom. V.12.78,2.
187 Strom. V.10.66,2 and V.12.78,2.
it is clearly given. We will do this in Chapter Five.

Our analysis has shown us that, in addition to clear statements, Clement uses the OT examples of Moses and the High Priest to illustrate that \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \varphi \iota \alpha \) is the highest stage in the spiritual pathway of the Gnostic.

### 4.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I have shown that \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \varphi \iota \alpha \) represents the final stage in the spiritual pathway presented by Clement. A discernible spiritual pathway implies a connection between Clement’s three main extant works: *Protrepticus*, *Paidagogus* and *Stromateis*. In a brief review of the literary problems within these works, we have seen that although there are difficulties, the three works do fulfill Clement’s stated plan in a sufficient way. In fact, we have shown that there is a clear literary connection between *Paidagogus* and *Stromateis*: Clement uses a “food” theme, in *Paidagogus* to illustrate the Eucharist and baptism, but then in *Stromateis* to refer to the two levels of believers. Working from this “food” theme, we have shown that both works were used in catechetical training, *Paidagogus* for the beginners, and *Stromateis* for the advanced ones. We have seen on a few occasions that the nature of *Stromateis*, being at once both concealing and seemingly disconnected, is exactly what Clement promised. He is either not up to the task or he is ingenious.

The purpose of *Stromateis* is to communicate the “meat” of the gnostic, the highest stage in the spiritual pathway: \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \varphi \iota \alpha \). This is made evident in three ways: first, the presentation of \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \varphi \iota \alpha \) in elevated terms — it is the “summit”\(^{188}\) of the

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\(^{188}\) Passages where \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \varphi \iota \alpha \) is referred to as “summit,” or “crowning” stage: *Strom.* V.12.78,2; VII.7.46,4; 10.57,1; 11.63,1; 11.68,4.
spiritual experience. The gnostic craves ἑωρία and is unable to be sated, devoting himself "to the pure vision of insatiable contemplation."\textsuperscript{189} Secondly, to experience ἑωρία is to follow the example of Moses, the prototypical gnostic, with whom "God talked...as a friend with a friend."\textsuperscript{190} The consistent and significant use of the "face to face" also confirms the importance of ἑωρία. It is interesting to note how there is an overall movement through the Stromateis using the "face to face" text: Clement uses it first eschatologically, next to point to intellectual contemplation, and finally to spiritual contemplation. When Strom. VII is taken into consideration, it appears that this movement from intellectual to spiritual contemplation is intentional. Lastly, the strategic role of Strom. V.6 and the High Priest in moving the reader beyond the world of the senses into ἑωρία. Clement wants to get his reader into Strom. VII where he can reveal the full impact of ἑωρία in the life of the gnostic. This is the focus of our next chapter--the practical aspects of ἑωρία.

\textsuperscript{189} Strom. VI.14.108,1.  
\textsuperscript{190} Strom. II.2.6,1.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF θεωρία

We have seen the historical background of θεωρία and the sources from which Clement inherits this concept (Chapter Two). Next, we traced more thoroughly how Clement used this term by examining other terms/categories which he seems to link with θεωρία (Chapter Three). From this we were able to place this concept of θεωρία within his system, a spiritual pathway, as the highest stage of the journey (Chapter Four). Now we want to show some of the practical aspects of Clement’s θεωρία. Our focus for this chapter will be Book VII, which Clement says is his clearest presentation of the gnostic¹ and which also has the highest concentration of our key term, θεωρία (see Appendix 1, p.296). We intend to show that the tone of the final Book of Stromateis² is markedly different from the rest of the work and is the clearest, and most practical, presentation of θεωρία.

The key to Book VII is to realise that it represents Clement’s unwillingness to be limited by the philosophical category of transcendence which we discussed in Chapter Three. He affirms the transcendence of God throughout Stromateis, but in Book VII Clement clearly presents the concept of immanence: mystery is minimised by the everyday nature of the gnostic’s relationship with God; opposed to the ascent into the heavenly realms, the gnostic enjoys θεωρία in this life, on this earth. In Chapter Three we looked at aspects which pointed to an

¹ Strom. VI.1.1-4; VII.1.1-2.
² See the discussion in §4.1.3 (pp.150-152) where it has been demonstrated that Bk VIII is a compilation of extracts and notes; see Nautin (VC 1976). I accept Nautin’s conclusion that there were more books in Stromateis; the discussion in this chapter will show that Bk VII is meant to be the pinnacle of the work, no matter how many books might have followed. Because Bk VII is the last book we have, I will work on the basis that it is the final book.
incorporeality in Clement’s θεωρία, here we will look at aspects which point to the physical reality of this θεωρία.

5.1 A Note About Nomenclature

In our discussion of the “Technical Aspects of θεωρία” (Chapter Three) we looked closely at various terms which pointed to the transcendent nature of Clement’s system. In that discussion phrases related to transcendence were consistently used: “apophatic,” “immateriality,” “ineffable,” “invisible,” and “incorporeal.” Clement shares the view of the transcendent God with later Middle Platonists,³ but his use of θεωρία, with these “immaterialistic” characteristics, is meant to be the door for the gnostic to apprehend God.

This chapter will focus on the aspects of Clement’s θεωρία which point to the immanent nature of the gnostic’s God. His “Good” is the God of the NT revealed through Christ the Logos; this is uniquely reflected in Book VII. In this chapter terms which reflect the interaction of the gnostic with this immanent God will consistently be used: “corporeal,” “practical,” “physical,” and “earthly.” It will be asked, “How else can a mortal interact with God if not physically?” The answer to that question with respect to Clement’s gnostic is threefold: first, we have already seen that Clement’s θεωρία does include an immaterialist aspect, so right away we must recognise that the gnostic’s interaction is not completely physical. Clement makes this quite clear,

³ See Dillon, Middle Platonists, in general (p.45f), for Philo (p.155f), for Plutarch (p.199f), and for Albinus (p.283f). See our discussion of transcendence in §3.1, pp.89-97.
For, bound in this earthly body, we apprehend the objects of sense by means of the body; but we grasp intellectual objects by means of the logical faculty itself. But if one expect to apprehend all things by the senses, he has fallen far from the truth.\(^4\)

Secondly, we will show that Clement’s gnostic truly interacts with God. This is not just vain effort; it is more than an intellectual belief that something has happened. The transcendence of Middle Platonism minimises real contact with the divine, Clement insists upon it. Lastly, aligning himself with Plato, Clement demands that the gnostic’s interaction with God includes, as an integral part of this spirituality, interaction with others. The gnostic must not hide himself away as the hermits; he must not be so consumed in his contact with God that he forgets his fellow man. *Stromateis* VII.7, with its consistent references to helping others, serves as a critique of the Christian anchorite and the heretical Gnostic. In VII.12 where we have a most radical affirmation of married life. (VII.12.70,6-8; 80,4).

The difficulty with nomenclature in this chapter is that the terms we have mentioned do not fully capture the concept presented by Clement in this part of his system. The fact is, he does not use any particular term which we could adopt; the statement he makes to describe what he is doing, although important to understanding *Stromateis* (especially Book VII), is far too general,

For it is our purpose at present to describe the life of the Gnostic, not to present the system of dogmas, which we shall afterwards explain at the fitting time, preserving the order of topics.\(^5\)

We obviously cannot use “life,” but in common terms it does mean what we plan to investigate here: “life” as it is experienced on this earth, by the senses, in agreement with the physical body. Against the general understanding of an “other-

\(^4\) *Strom.* V.1.7,4.
\(^5\) *Strom.* VII.10.59,7.
worldly;” mystical experience, I will argue that in Book VII Clement is not talking about the afterlife, nor is he focusing on the immateriality which is also important. Rather Book VII reveals the very tangible, ‘down to earth’ life which he expects of the gnostic. I will use adjectives which try to capture the experience of the gnostic in space and time.

As we work through Book VII we will also realise the difficulty of nomenclature is exacerbated by the subtle nuances in Clement. We will see that Clement uses our key term (θεωρία) in different ways even in Book VII. We will keep our focus on Clement’s plan in Book VII, which should help to clarify his meanings. I intend to show that, just as with Stromateis as a whole, Book VII has a structure; the meanings of key terms and the understanding of various texts become clear when viewed through this structure. We will also see that Clement continues to use his conceal/reveal strategy in Book VII.

5.2 Transcendence Bridged by the Divine Logos

Our discussion in §3.1.1 (pp.89-95) established Clement within the second century philosophical milieu which held to the idea of a transcendent God. We noted, however, that Clement separated himself as well by presenting an immanent God through Christ the Logos. Because this chapter will focus on God’s immanence and the practical nature of the gnostic’s response to this immanence, we should first clearly establish this concept in Stromateis.

The groundwork for immanence in Stromateis is laid in both Protrepticus and
in *Paidagogus.*

Our discussion of the spiritual pathway (pp.153-174) which these three works represent has already made the role of the Logos clear,

Eagerly desiring, then, to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benignant Word, who first exhorts, then trains, and finally teaches.

We mentioned at the beginning of our discussion in §3.1 (pp.89-95) that for Clement to claim such utter transcendence while holding onto immanence causes both theological and philosophical difficulties. Many scholars have commented on these difficulties, but few in my opinion have captured Clement’s thinking as well as Osborn. In his critique of studies such as that of Lilla he says,

...the account of divine transcendence in Clement has parallels and yet remains extreme; from which it is wrongly concluded [by Lilla, p.215]: ‘The transcendence of God necessarily implies his aloofness’. For no one can deny that Clement’s God is more intimate and immediate in his fellowship with man than is the God of almost any other theologian.

Osborn seems correct in his willingness to take Clement at face value; accepting seemingly contradictory positions which point to Clement’s willingness to be patient with such complexities and subtleties. This quality is what makes

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6 See Osborn (*The Beginning*, pp.213, 236) and Daniélou (*Gospel Message*, pp.364-375). This points to the importance of seeing the three works tied together, to keep Clement’s theology from being picked apart. He has a unique objective for each work.

7 *Paid*. 1.1.3,3.

8 Lilla is more intent on showing the possible sources of this immanence (*Clement*, pp.209-212) and Osborn attacks Lilla and Wolfson on this point (*Beginning*, pp.240-244), “Why has is (sic) been possible for some interpreters to miss what Clement is saying? Because the context of the key statements is so obscure that it is ignored....So the doxographer [Lilla apparently] isolates his phrases and propositions, avoids the difficulty of the context and misses the point; he cannot accept the warning when his method fails to deal with apparently contradictory statements...” (pp.243-244)

9 *The Beginning*, particularly Chapter 7, “The Short Word,” which deals with this issue; see especially his critique of Lilla and Wolfson, p.240f.

10 Ibid., p.241 (brackets inclusive). Osborn is most critical of Lilla because he “breaks a writer up into single propositions or phrases and looks for verbal coincidences....With this verbal atomism, it has even been argued that nothing new happens after Philo [taking aim at Wolfson]....Where there are so many verbal parallels it is probable that the idea was so widespread that the search for literary source is superfluous. (pp.241-242) Osborn’s humor is both insightful and biting, see p.242 n1.

11 Osborn’s first work has this quality; see *Clement*, especially Chapter 3, “The Logos.” Again, he comments on this very theme, “Clement was concerned to maintain a distinction between Father and Son, to emphasise the transcendence of the former and the immanence and condescension of the latter,” p.40.
Clement so special, all the more because he is an early writer,

You have, in brief, the professed aim of our philosophy, and the learning of these branches, when pursued with right course of conduct, leads through Wisdom, the artificer of all things, to the Ruler of all—a Being difficult to grasp and apprehend, ever receding and withdrawing from him who pursues. But He who is far off has—oh ineffable marvel!—come very near. “I am a God that draws near,” says the Lord. He is in essence remote; “for how is it that what is begotten can have approached the Unbegotten?” But He is very near in virtue of that power which holds all things in its embrace. “Shall one do aught in secret, and I see him not?” For the power of God is always present, in contact with us, in the exercise of inspection, of beneficence, of instruction.\(^\text{12}\)

5.2.1 *Stromateis* is sprinkled with texts about contact with this immanent God

We are proposing that Book VII stands out in this regard, but the whole of *Stromateis* is sprinkled with texts about this immanent God.\(^\text{13}\) It must be understood here that when we speak of immanence we are not referring to the orderliness of the universe which points to the Divine presence; both the Middle Platonists and the Stoics held this view. In *Stromateis* Clement is consistently referring to a contact which the *gnostic* has with God. Most of these texts, until we come to Book VII, simply make mention of the concept without any discussion: God is mentioned as a friend, or one who can be known. Several refer to “seeing” God “face to face.” We have already discussed Clement’s important use of this

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\(^12\) *Strom.* II.2.5,3-5. See Van den Hock’s comments on this text (*Clement-Philo*, pp.148-152); she shows how Clement uses Philo, but “downplays God’s remoteness and stresses his closeness,” p.151.

\(^13\) *Strom.* I.28.178,2; II.2.5,3-5; II.4.15,3; II.10.47,4; II.11.52,7; II.20.104,2; III.10.69,3-4; IV.3.9,1; IV.17.107,6-7; IV.23.152,1-3 (this text debatably has Christ as the object); V.1.5,4; V.4.25,3-26,2; VI.12.103,5-104,2 (it must be noted that this text is preceded by a strong statement of “the Son of God,” 102,2); VI.14.113,3. The texts listed in bold typeface indicate δ θεός while the remaining texts either explicitly or implicitly refer to Christ.
phrase (pp.177-184), but in this chapter the immanence, or immediate presence which it communicates will be our focus. Many of these texts have some reference to Christ as the means of this immanence, but several present ὁ θεός as the object of fellowship. I realise this distinction can be contested; indeed Clement makes clear statements to the contrary, „...the Son is the true teacher respecting the Father....in order that we may know the Father, we must believe in the Son, that it is the Son of God who teaches...‟, nevertheless we will see more evidence for this immanent ὁ θεός as we continue our study of Book VII.

When we come to Book VII the intensity of immanence increases, both in frequency and in character. While we count some 14 occurrences in Books I-VI, we have 16 in Book VII, 10 of which are in Chapter 7. It is admitted that these numbers could be misleading: for example, many of the texts listed in VII.7 follow one right after the other. It could be argued that rather than 10 separate texts in VII.7, there are really only three. This, of course, strengthens my claim that Chapter 7 is unique (§5.3.2, pp.201-204), containing the most lengthy discourse in Stromateis on the gnostic’s experience of the immanent ὁ θεός which covers almost the entire chapter.

14 See note 13 above and note 16.
15 Strom. V.1.1,3-4. Add other examples to this: Strom. 1.28.178,2; IV.25.156,1; V.12.81,3-82,4; VII.1.2,2-3. See Daniélou’s excellent discussion (Gospel Message, pp.364-375).
16 These texts are all from Book VII (citations list chapter and section number only): 3.13,2-4; 3.19,2; 7.35,4-6 (strong statement of Christ in 35,1); 7.39,6; 7.40,3; 7.41,3-6; 7.42,1; 7.43,3-5; 7.44,5; 7.48,1-2; 7.49,1; 7.49,7-8; 8.51,7; 11.68,3-4; 12.73,1; 14.88,3. Boldface text indicates reference to ὁ θεός.
5.3 The Framework of Book VII

In his opening comments of Book VII we see Clement's concern that he not lose his audience.\(^{17}\) He plans to show the Greeks a clear presentation of the gnostic and he also warns the more orthodox that, though he will not be using the Scriptures in this presentation, "it is from that source that they [the gnostic traditions] have breath and life..."\(^{18}\) Because we have seen that immanence appears throughout *Stromateis*, yet becomes intense in Book VII, it is clear that this concept is an integral part of the clear presentation. Clement knows that the philosophical reader is likely to balk at the concept of having any contact with an immanent God. He constructs Book VII in a way which, he hopes, will carry the philosophical reader further into his presentation. As we have seen (pp.39-46), Clement is writing for those who are earnestly seeking and though Book VII is the clearest presentation of the life of the gnostic, he continues to utilise his conceal/reveal methodology.

5.3.1 Chapters 1-6

A brief outline of Book VII will help us to see just what Clement is trying to do in this final book. He opens with the statement that he is about to give the reader the clear picture,

> It is now time to show the Greeks that the Gnostic alone is truly pious....And clearer arguments must be employed, I reckon, with the philosophers, so that they may be able...to understand.\(^{19}\)

From section 2,3-9,1 we are reminded of the immanence of the Son, who "came to

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17 See Ridings (SP 1997, pp.517-521).
18 *Strom*. VII.1.1,1-4. This could be a reference to the allegorical method, but I think it more likely that what we find in the revealing portions of Book VII is Clement's version of the gnostic παράδοσις.
19 *Strom*. VII.1.1,1-2.
show man what was possible through obedience..."  This is certainly not the first time Clement has presented the Son in this way, but it is the most lengthy passage of its kind. After giving the promise of clarity and then reminding the reader of the incarnation, Clement retrenches into his concealment mode as he covers redundant material which appears old and worn out for the seeker looking for this clear presentation of hidden teaching:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Numbers</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
<th>Prior Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>§10-12</td>
<td>free will</td>
<td>II.14 and II.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§13</td>
<td>overcoming the passions</td>
<td>III.7.57-59; IV.22; VI.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§15</td>
<td>transcendence</td>
<td>all through Book V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§19-20</td>
<td>free will and the passions</td>
<td>(above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§22-27</td>
<td>against the pagan gods</td>
<td>Protrep. Ch. 2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§28-29</td>
<td>God cannot be contained</td>
<td>(above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§30-34</td>
<td>more against gods, food laws, etc.</td>
<td>(above)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a few small hints of better things to come, but basically the opening six chapters are no different from what has preceded them. It seems that Clement is again trying to discourage the casual seeker; it surely must have worked!  

What are these hints I have just mentioned? He refers to the worship of God in "silence" which is an important theme in Book VII. He also refers to θεωρία which has a significant place in Chapter 7. Finally, prayer is mentioned, which is also a critical part of Chapter 7. We will show how these two concepts, θεωρία

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20 Strom. VII.2.8,6.
21 Protrepticus and Paidagogus contain numerous examples, but we will only point out some of the texts in Stromateis: I.1.3.1; IV.25.156.1; V.3.16.1-5; V.6.34.1; V.12.81-82; VI.1.2.4.
22 It is interesting that Book VI seems to have this same characteristic. Clement opens with a similar comment of showing "the Gnostic's form of religion" (1,1), what seems like a promise of the presentation "of gnostic knowledge" (1,3), a restatement of the nature of the work (1,4-3.3)...and then he says, "Before handling the point proposed, we must, by way of preface, add to the close of the fifth book what is wanting." (2.4.1) He then goes over the plagiarisms of the Greeks (chapters 2-5) again! This after he seems to apologise for going over the topic at length in the previous book (V.14.140,1).  
23 Strom. VII.1.2.3 and 3.13.1. See §5.6 (pp.237-255).
24 Strom. VII.6.17.7-8; 32.5; 34.2. Prayer is mentioned 5 times in this chapter, but these are the first references to prayer in Book VII.

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and prayer, are critical to the understanding of Book VII; a frequency comparison of these terms in the books of Stromateis will bear this out. In our brief outline of Book VII we now come to Chapter 7.

5.3.2 Chapter 7: the crown on the kingly gnostic

Stromateis VII.7 is Clement’s crown on his kingly gnostic, “He is, then, the truly kingly man.” (36,2) It is in Chapter 7 where Clement finally begins to speak clearly, setting forth in beautiful language the “life” of the gnostic. Gone is the cryptic language; the reader is no more encumbered by philosophical and redundant categories which hide the real message. This is the “meat” which Clement has been promising — and it is so clear and simple that many read through it without realising...this is the hidden treasure!

After the opening chapters of concealment we come to Chapter 7 which opens with a proclamation of Christ: “He is Word, Saviour, and Leader.” (35,1) In Chapters 4-6 there is only one direct reference to Christ. Chapter 7 brings the critical incarnational issue back into focus which opens the door for the apprehension of God. Only here Clement is not talking about “ideas” or “first principles;” Christ has made it possible for the gnostic to experience a tangible, physical relationship with θεός. Next we have the reference to the “life” of the gnostic (35,1) which we have seen (pp.193-195, Strom. VII.10.59,7) is a key term in one of the purpose-statements of the book. There have only been three references to this “life” so far in Book VII and none in the previous three

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25 Strom. VII.1.3,6; 3.13,1; 3.16,6.
chapters. There are seven references to this “life” in Chapter 7, four of which occur as either πᾶς ὁ βίος or ὅλος ὁ βίος:

...[honoring God] continually in our whole life, and in every way...(35,1)
...during his whole life, the Gnostic in every place...honours God...(35,3)
Holding festival, then, in our whole life...praising...(35,6)
...the Gnostic prays throughout his whole life...(40,3)

This illustrates the immediacy of the gnostic’s interaction with God. Even without the modifier “all” or “whole,” Clement is presenting the earthly “life” of the gnostic; the modifier gives the intensity which, I think, Clement wants to communicate in this chapter.

We also need to notice that prayer is of primary importance in Clement’s gnostic crown. There are over 150 references to prayer in Stromateis; some refer to pagan prayer, some occur in quotations from Greek authors, but most refer to the prayer of a biblical example or to the gnostic. It is highly significant that over 90 of these prayer references occur in Book VII and over 55 in Chapter 7.

There are only 15 sections in Chapter 7, so the density of occurrences is obvious. Prayer is mentioned every 6 lines of text in Chapter 7; this compares with once every 120 lines in the work as a whole. If Chapter 7 is the gnostic crown, then

References for pray/prayer can be found in Stählin (Band 4): αἰτέω (pp.213-214), αἰτήματα (p.214), αἰτήσεις (p.214), δέησις (p.323), εὐχή (p.438), εὐχαρία (p.439), παραεὐχάρια (p.623), προσεύχομαι (p.681), συνεὐχόμαι (p.731), ὄπερεὐχόμαι (p.771). Some instances may have been missed.

If we look at the frequency of prayer in Stromateis we find that there is a balance throughout, until Bk VII, which has around 60% of the occurrences:

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<tr>
<th>Bk 1</th>
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<th>Bk 4</th>
<th>Bk 5</th>
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<th>Bk 7</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>93</td>
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Then a chapter by chapter breakdown of Book VII reveals an interesting frequency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ch 1</th>
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<th>Ch 4</th>
<th>Ch 5</th>
<th>Ch 6</th>
<th>Ch 7</th>
<th>Ch 8</th>
<th>Ch 9</th>
<th>Ch 10</th>
<th>Ch 11</th>
<th>Ch 12</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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Clearly the topic of prayer is critical in this clear presentation of the gnostic. See Appendix 2 (p.297). Although it is tempting to see something special in the seventh seven here, Mondéret reminds us that these chapter divisions were added in the Lough/Potter edition of 1715 (SC 30, p.24). Méhat demonstrates a structure through the κεφάλαια, but his analysis shows that these “headings” are not represented by our chapters; see his summary of this argument, pp.276-279.
prayer must be a jewel in that crown. This is, in effect, the first full treatise on prayer in Christian literature\textsuperscript{27} and must be the \( \pi\epsilon\rho\iota \tau\nu \varepsilon\upsilon\times\varepsilon\zeta \) he promised (IV.26.171,2). We will make more observations about the prayer of the \textit{gnostic} throughout the remainder of our study.

One significant aspect of prayer in Chapter 7 is silent prayer\textsuperscript{28} which is accomplished through the thought processes. Section 43 presents this concept in the clearest terms,

\begin{quote}
...can God not hear the soul itself, and the mind, since assuredly soul hears soul, and mind, mind?...[He] knows absolutely the thoughts of all....Prayer, then, may be uttered without the voice, by concentrating the whole spiritual nature within on expression by the mind...\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

Here the mind is prominent in Clement’s understanding of prayer. This is an important concept which we will discuss later (§5.6, pp.237-255).

Finally, we must look at the use of \textit{\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha} in Chapter 7 before moving on in our outline of Book VII. Clement mentions \textit{\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha} four times in this ‘prayer’ chapter, all three texts referring somehow to an earthly experience:

\begin{quote}
But knowing the sovereign will, and possessing as soon as he prays, being brought into close contact with the almighty power, and earnestly desiring to be spiritual, through boundless love, he is united to the Spirit. Thus he, being magnanimous, possessing, through knowledge, what is the most precious of all, the best of all, being quick in applying himself to contemplation (\( \tau\nu \zeta \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\zeta \)), retains in his soul the permanent energy of the objects of his contemplation (\( \tau\zeta \nu \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\tau\zeta \zeta \)), that is the perspicacious keenness of knowledge. And this power he strives to his utmost to acquire, by obtaining command of all the influences which war against the mind, and by applying himself without intermission to speculation (\( \tau\zeta \theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha \)),...abstinence from pleasures...he has freedom of speech... (44,5-7)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{27} Tertullian’s treatise \textit{On Prayer} is the earliest exposition we have on the Lord’s Prayer, \textit{Tertullian’s Treatises Concerning Prayer, Concerning Baptism}, translated by Alexander Souter (London 1919), p.xiv. Souter dates \textit{On Prayer} between 200-206 A.D. (p.xii). Völker describes \textit{Strom. VII.7} as “the first attempt... if fragmentary, description of Christian prayer” (p.410). He also acknowledges that Clement is the first to attempt a description of inner (or constant) prayer, pp.417-419.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Strom. VII.7.36,5; 39,6; 41,3; 43,1-5; 49,7.}

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Strom. VII.7.43,3-5.}
And the Gnostic, who has reached the summit, will pray that contemplation
(\(\varphi\appa\tau\nu\ldots\)) may grow and abide, as the common man will for continual
good health.

And his whole life is a holy festival. His sacrifices are prayers, and praises,
and readings in the Scriptures before meals, and psalms and hymns during
meals and before bed, and prayers also again during night. By these he
unites himself to the divine choir, from continual recollection, engaged in
contemplation (\(\varphi\appa\tau\nu\ldots\)) which has everlasting remembrance.\(^{30}\)

We also need to notice how there is a lack of the immaterialist categories we
studied in Chapter Three: \(\mu\nu\sigma\tau\rho\iota\nu\vartheta\), \(\varepsilon\rho\sigma\tau\vartheta\), and those of the ascent theme are
not prevalent (see §5.5.5, pp.228-234). At the same time, the frequency of
Clement’s key word, γν\(\omega\sigma\varsigma\), is at an all-time high.\(^{31}\) This is another reason to see
VII.7 as the pinnacle of Stromateis.

Intellectual contemplation is present, but each of these texts are grounded in
the earthly experience of prayer. It is here we see what we are referring to as
spiritual contemplation; it is part of the unique way Clement uses \(\varphi\appa\tau\nu\ldots\) to
convey something different from the more classical use which we see in Plato and
Philo (pp.27-32). It is more of what we observed in his use of the “face to face”
text (pp.183-184). We will look more closely at \(\varphi\appa\tau\nu\ldots\) (and prayer) in Book VII
later, but now we want to continue our outline.

5.3.3 Chapters 8-11

We have mentioned that Clement reverted to his concealment strategy again in
Book VII, especially in Chapters 4-6. After speaking clearly in Chapter 7 he does
this again: Chapters 8 and 9 cover new material (the gnostic does not make oaths
and can be trusted to speak the truth), but it is very ethical in tone like what we see

\(^{30}\) Strom. VII.7.46,4; 49,4-5.

\(^{31}\) By a simple estimation, γν\(\omega\sigma\varsigma\) occurs more than twice as much in VII.7 than anywhere else in
Stromateis. See Appendix 3 (p.298).
in II.18 and V.14.99,1-2. After this he goes back to subject matter which has already been discussed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Numbers</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
<th>Prior Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>§56-57</td>
<td>heavenly realms</td>
<td>IV.18.116-117; IV.25.155; IV.25.159; V.6.40; VI.14.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§60-67</td>
<td>controlling the passions (with many comments about martyrdom)</td>
<td>Throughout Books IV and VI (especially VI.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Chapters 8-11 (sections 50-67) prayer is only mentioned twice, only one of those referring to the *gnostic*.\(^{32}\) If I am correct about prayer being a major part of Clement’s *revealing*, then *Strom.* VII.8-11 is another *concealing* section. Unfortunately, this is a section of *Strom.* VII which is not so easily deciphered. To continue our overview of this section, hoping to gain better understanding of VII.8-11, we need to note the use of Θεορία.

1. Θεορία in Chapters 8-11

Consistent with the view that these chapters represent another digression or *concealment*, Clement’s use of Θεορία changes in these chapters from his use in Chapter 7. First, there are no occurrences in Chapters 8 or 9 to Θεορία or to *gnostic* prayer. When Θεορία does reappear it is in a context different from what we have seen in Chapter 7: the *gnostic* soul, ascends to “the endless and perfect end,” is “destined to sit on thrones with the other gods,” and advances “through the mystic stages...to the crowning place of rest.”\(^{33}\) We have illustrated how these categories are used by Clement to *conceal* (pp.128-130). This is further confirmed by his comment at the end of this chapter,

\(^{32}\) *Strom.* VII.9.52,1 refers to the prayer of a pagan and VII.11.62,3 to the *gnostic*.

\(^{33}\) *Strom.* VII.10.56-57.
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For it is our purpose at present to describe the life of the Gnostic, not to present the system of dogmas, which we shall afterwards explain at the fitting time, preserving the order of topics. He indicates that he has been discussing material which has taken him off course and promises to discuss it elsewhere.

There are 3 occurrences of θεωρία in Chapter 11, none clearly referring to the concept of spiritual contemplation which we observed in Chapter 7. All three of these occurrences seem to refer to philosophical speculation, however there is not complete agreement on this. Wilson, translates θεωρία in these three texts as “speculation” and simply to “see.” It is the first occurrence which is the most problematic.

Through the power of impulse thence derived he devotes his energies in every way to learning, doing all those things by means of which he shall be able to acquire the knowledge of what he desires. And desire blended with inquiry arises as faith advances. And this is to become worthy of speculation, of such a character, and such importance. So shall the Gnostic taste of the will of God. For it is not his ears, but his soul, that he yields up to the things signified by what is spoken.

Beginning from 60,2 here is Hort’s translation,

Proceeding from this point he does his best to learn in every way, employing every means to obtain the knowledge of those things which he longs for (and longing joined with seeking arises as faith increases), that is, to be made worthy of such high and glorious contemplation. Thus the gnostic will taste of the will of God. For he lends, not his ears, but his soul, to the facts indicated by the spoken words.

There are at least two good reasons for translating θεωρία in the spiritual sense: first, Clement has indicated (VII.10.59,7) that he might get back to revealing after the concealment of Chapters 8-10; and secondly, the context following 60,2. He

34 Strom. VII.10.59,7.
35 Strom. VII.11.60,2-3; 61,1; 61,4.
36 ANCL 12, p.450.
37 Strom. VII.11.60,2-3.
begins to compare the senses with the receptivity of the soul — going beyond the senses. This is surely what we have seen in prior discussions about Clement’s use of \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) (pp.95-97; 100-104). In 61,2-4 he gives what surely must be an example of the Alexandrian allegorical exegesis which is part of \( \pi \varphi \delta \theta \sigma \varsigma \).\(^{39}\)

This evidence must be weighed against the following observations: first, the entire context of Chapter 11. We have just seen that Clement has re-introduced the \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) concept, but he has done so in a way which would tend to conceal. It certainly does not have the tone of \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) texts in Chapter 7. Secondly, the language about the gnostic is not plain and clear like in Chapter 7: we have already noted the lack of prayer references; we will also see how references to an intimate relationship with God are not as prevalent. There are references to the physical life of the gnostic in these chapters, but these references are mainly directed to the putting away of passions,

This is the really good man, who is without passions; having, through the habit or disposition of a soul endued with virtue, transcended the whole life of passion.\(^{40}\)

Here we have a good example of \( \dot{\varepsilon} \lambda \varsigma \dot{o} \beta \iota \varsigma \) used differently from what we see in Chapter 7, yet still speaking in corporeal terms. These two observations, the concealing language of \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) and the lack of clear language about prayer, stand as arguments for translating \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) as scientific speculation in VII.11.60,2.

There is another aspect of VII.8-11 which needs to be brought into the discussion: the role of \( \dot{\alpha} \pi \acute{\alpha} \theta \varepsilon \iota \alpha \).
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2. Ἀνάθεια in Chapters 8-11

We have discussed Ἀνάθεια throughout our study; now we need to establish the role of this important category in Book VII. We have seen in our outline thus far that the discipline of the passions has surfaced in Chapters 2-3. The concept also occurs in Chapter 7,

He, therefore, never surrenders himself to the...theatres, and gives no admittance even in a dream to the things which are spoken, done, and seen for the sake of alluring pleasures; neither, therefore, to the pleasures of sight, nor the various pleasures which are found in other enjoyments...costly incense...preparations of meats, and indulgences in different wines...or fragrant bouquets of many flowers, which through the senses effeminate the soul.

This reminds us of various texts in Paidagogus. The references (and there are several) in Chapter 7 clearly show the gnostic to be one who has mastery over these passions. If Chapter 7 is revealing, then mastery over the passions (Ἀνάθεια) is part of the clear language. This forces another look at Chapters 8-11.

Chapters 8-9, as we have mentioned, are ethical in tone and could be construed as mastering the passions. Chapters 10-11, however, contain lengthy discussion on this concept of Ἀνάθεια. This backdrop of Ἀνάθεια leads us to reconsider the Θεωρία discussion in these chapters.

3. Revealing or concealing?

We have seen throughout our study that the concept of Ἀνάθεια is an important one for Clement. It appears in almost every aspect of his system. Because of this, we must be careful not to overestimate the presence of Ἀνάθεια

41 Strom. VII.2.10,1; 3.13,1-4; 3.19-20.
42 Strom. VII.7.36,2-3.
43 Paid. II.1.4,3-4; II.8.64,4-65,2; III.11.76,3-78,1.
44 In addition to the text above (all texts from VII.7): 40,1; 44,7; 45,2-3; 49,1; 49,8.
45 Strom. VII.10.56,4-57,1; VII.11.61,2-3; 64,2-5; 65,4; 67,8.
in Chapters 8-11. Though ἀπάθεια is not a category Clement uses to conceal it is also not one which he particularly uses to reveal.

One other point to consider is the presence of the ascent passages in Chapters 10-11.\footnote{Strom. VII.10.56-57; 11.63,1; 65,4; 68,1-5.} We observed in our discussion of the ascent theme (p.122 n119) that the majority of occurrences were in Book VII; we will come back to this later, but here we mention this fact as another reason to consider the revealing nature of Chapters 10-11. Again, we are using Chapter 7 as our guide to understanding the whole of Book VII: Chapter 7 has one ascent passage and it contains important categories which recur throughout Book VII.\footnote{Strom. VII.7.40,1-4.} We must move along in our outline of Book VII without a clear final answer as to the nature of Chapters 8-11. We will see in our outline of Chapters 13-14 an example of gnostic biblical exegesis which both reveals and conceals at the same time; this is, I think, what is happening here with Chapters 8-11. The end of Chapter 11 (VII.11.68,1-5) is a passage which leads the reader back into firm ground and clear language.

5.3.4 Chapters 12-14: the reprise of the Gnostic

When we come to VII.12-14 we must face the difficulty of using the chapter divisions as we have them. It would seem best to join Chapters 12 and 13, using the statement found in VII.14.84,1 as the conclusion to Clement’s reprise on the gnostic and prayer,

Let these statements concerning the Gnostic, containing the germs of the matter in as brief terms as possible, be made to the Greeks. But let it be known that if the [mere] believer do rightly one or a second of these things, yet he will not do so in all nor with the highest knowledge, like the Gnostic.
Both critical editions I am using (GCS and SC) show this as the beginning of
Chapter 14, yet the Wilson translation (ANCL), based on Migne, gives this as the
conclusion of Chapter 13. In addition, VII.11.68 might serve better as an
introduction to Chapter 12. At various points in the following discussions we will
include texts which will not follow the standard chapter divisions.

The reprise of the *gnostic* actually begins with VII.11.68,

> The Gnostic, consequently, in virtue of being a lover of the one true God,
> is the really perfect man and friend of God, and is placed in the rank of son.
> For these are names of nobility and knowledge, and perfection in the
> contemplation (*τιν ἐπονοεῖν* of God; which crowning step of
> advancement the gnostic soul receives, when it has become quite pure,
> reckoned worthy to behold everlastingly God Almighty, "face," it is said,
> "to face."\(^{48}\)

We see several items which call us back to Chapter 7: first, the *gnostic* is the
“friend” of God;\(^{49}\) secondly, the concept of “contemplation” comes back in
clearer terms after the more intellectual sense in Chapters 10-11.\(^{50}\) But as we
continue in Chapters 12-14 we find the clear language of θεωρία fading away.

1. *θεωρία* in Chapters 12-14

Our key term occurs 7 times in these three chapters, but continuing in the
fashion of Chapters 10-11, only one is a clear references to the *spiritual
contemplation* we saw in Chapter 7.\(^{51}\) These occurrences of θεωρία are all the

\(^{48}\) *Strom.* VII.11.68,3-4. I included this text in the discussion of the ascent theme in Chapter 11, but I am
now using it here as an introduction back to the more clear language of Chapters 12-14. This reflects the
difficulty of using the chapter divisions as we have them. In all of our discussion of VII.12 we will include
VII.11.68-13.81.

\(^{49}\) This is actually used prior to this text in 11.62,7 and in 11.68,1. It is used twice more before *Stromateis*
ends: VII.12.79,1 and VII.16.93,5. The text in Chapter 7: 42,4.

\(^{50}\) See our discussion on ἐπονοεῖν and how Clement uses it synonymously with θεωρία (pp.120-121).

\(^{51}\) *Strom.* VII.12.72,5 (clear *spiritual* reference); 74,6-7 (a spectacle, the classical usage); 76,5-7
(intellectual "seeing" of the invisibles, more Platonic usage); 78,2; 13.83,3-4 (2x), the first occurrence
seems to be the *spiritual* sense, but the second could be a reference to heavenly realms. This text certainly
follows an ascent passage, VII.13.82,4-7.
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more interesting because they each represent a different aspect of Clement’s use of the term. Two observations can be made from this fact: first, one cannot count on Clement using terms consistently. This demands close consideration of each context. Secondly, in this context, it points to what we are arguing for in our outline of Book VII: Clement is continuing to use his reveal/conceal methodology. It appears that he has purposed to use this term in these various ways simply to throw the reader. Although this might be the case, I am not arguing for this; in fact, I would be surprised if that were the case.52 I do, however, think this data points to Clement’s overall strategy of reveal/conceal. One thing to notice about these θεωρία passages, however, is that the concept of ἀπάθεια is included in most of them. Indeed, the ἀπάθεια concept continues to be a main part of Clement’s discussion in these chapters. Book VII is the clearest presentation of the gnostic and the purification of passions is certainly part of that discussion.

2. Prayer in Chapters 12-14

The lack of a clear spiritual use of θεωρία is interesting because clear prayer discourse, like that in Chapter 7, returns. We have seen (p.202 n26) how the topic of prayer virtually disappears in Chapters 8-11, but then reappears in Chapters 12-14 (this is the kind of nuance which I do believe is intentional). More than the frequency of these prayer passages, the clarity (like in Chapter 7) is to be noticed,

The Gnostic, then, from his exceeding holiness, is better prepared to fail when he asks, than to get when he does not ask. His whole life is prayer and converse with God. And if he be pure from sins, he will by all means obtain what he wishes.

Such an one demands from the Lord, and does not merely ask.53

52 Such detailed nuances seem to be the result of researchers having access to exhaustive registers.
53 Strom. VII.12.73,1; 13.81,4. Prayer continues in 12.73,2-4. Also, see 12.78,6; 79,1-2; 80,3-5; 13.81,7.

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It should be mentioned that this clear language concerning prayer is mainly in Chapter 12. Prayer in Chapters 13-14 is mainly concerned with helping others, which we shall see (§5.7.3, pp.258-260) is vital for Clement’s gnostic, but is not the same as what we see in Chapter 7.

We need to note a few other items which point to a return of the revealing mode: first, the clear language about prayer is highlighted by the passage above (VII.12.73,1) which is the only occurrence of οὐλα (see the discussion of this term in §5.5.2, pp.220-224) in Book VII outside of Chapter 7. This passage also reverts back to the use of “life” we see in Chapter 7. Prior to this text the “life” of the gnostic has been referred to, but mainly in terms of the martyr. Prayer is consistently present in Chapter 12 and follows the same tone as in Chapter 7,

He, all day and night, speaking and doing the Lord’s commands, rejoices exceedingly, not only on rising in the morning and at noon, but also when walking about, when asleep, when dressing and undressing; and he teaches his son, if he has a son. He is inseparable from the commandment and from hope, and is ever giving thanks to God.

One last aspect of the prayer in Chapter 12 which demands mention is the “Scripture” citation by Clement, “Ask, and I will give thee; think, and I will do.” Boulluec lists this as Agraphon 14, being related to Matthew 7:7. Whatever the case, it refers to the concept of thought prayers.

54 Only VII.13.81 has this clarity, and none of the prayer passages in Chap.14 have it.
55 Strom. VII.8.50,2-3; 8.51,2; 10.55,1; 10.56,2-3; 10.59,6-7; 11.62,3; 11.63,1; 11.64,7 (this is the only “life” text which is similar); 11.65,4-6; 11.67,3-4.
56 Strom. VII.12.80,3-4. The other references to prayer in Chapter 12: 73,1-2; 78,6; 79,1-3; 80,1-4.
57 Strom. VII.12.73,1. Clement speaks of this citation as “Scripture” in VI.12.101,4; also see VI.9.78,1.
58 (SC 428, p.228). See our comments on this text in §5.6.4 (pp.246-248).
3. Chapters 13 and 14

We have already mentioned that these chapters do not have the clear language of prayer, but as our chart indicates (p.202 n26) prayer is still present. Our key term (θεωρία) only appears twice, being referred to as the τέλειος of the gnostic. We have already mentioned the continued presence of the concept of ἀπαθεία. It must be mentioned that Chapters 13-14 only contain 8 sections (81-88); collectively they are smaller than Chapter 12 (11 sections). Nevertheless, there is little critical data in these two chapters as far as our study is concerned. The most important texts for us are Clement’s statements of conclusion.

Chapter 14 opens: “Let these statements concerning the Gnostic, containing the germs of the matter in as brief terms as possible, be made to the Greeks.” He then proposes to discuss, “in the briefest terms,” a text from 1 Cor. 6, and again makes mention of the need for brevity. After some commentary on that text,

Such an one is wholly a son, an holy man, passionless, gnostic, perfect, formed by the teaching of the Lord; in order that in deed, in word, and in spirit itself, being brought close to the Lord, he may receive the mansion that is due to him who has reached manhood thus.

This is a summation statement of the gnostic. Then Chapter 14 closes,

Let the specimen suffice to those who have ears. For it is not required to unfold the mystery, but only to indicate what is sufficient for those who are partakers in knowledge to bring it to mind....

If, then, the statement being elliptical, we understand what is wanting, in order to complete the section for those who are incapable of understanding what is left out, we shall both know the will of God, and shall walk at once piously and magnanimously, as befits the dignity of the commandment.

59 Strom. VII.13.83,3-4.
60 Strom. VII.14.84,1.
61 Strom. VII.14.84,4.
62 Strom. VII.14.88,3.
63 Strom. VII.14.88,4 and 88,7.
After recognising how long this section has been, he now admits to excessive brevity! What we have here is an example of Clement's ἐκλογή, which is both revealing and concealing. This gnostic exegesis designed to reveal to the gnostic ("we understand what is wanting") and to conceal from the less informed ("for those who are incapable of understanding what is left out"). This is the same kind of exegesis we see in the Eclogae Propheticae and it is not Clement's primary purpose in Stromateis; his plan in Book VII is "to describe the life of the Gnostic, not to present the system of dogmas." He mentions this (84,2) just before he gives the exegesis. However, just as the primary purpose of Stromateis is not to discuss cosmology and angelology (pp.128-130), it is also not the presentation of gnostic exegesis. Thus, the discussion here of the 1 Corinthians text, as far as the primary purpose of Stromateis, is concealing.

To conclude this section of our outline, Chapter 12 is revealing and Chapters 13-14 concealing, or possibly the beginning of his conclusion. This brings us to the concluding section of our outline, Chapters 15-18.

5.3.5 Chapters 15-18: concluding comments against heresies

The last four chapters of Stromateis serve as one last salvo from Clement against the heretical groups. He follows Irenaeus at the end of Chapter 17 and in the beginning of Chapter 18. There are only two items in VII.15-18 which interest us.

First, in VII.16.104,1-4 there is a discourse on the "food" of the gnostic. It begins with a wonderful expression of the gnostic "having grown old in the

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64 Strom. VII.10.59.7.
65 See Boulluec (SC 428, pp.324-327 notes); also Stählin (Band 4.1, p.28).
Scriptures.” Some would point to this passage as evidence for the allegorical reading as the esoteric knowledge, but I would point to our discussion on the gnostic’s “meat” (pp.81-85 and pp.170-172). Stromateis opened with a call to “Labour...not for the meat which perisheth,” then referred to θεωρία as “the food (βρῶματι) of an athlete.” Now Clement is ending the work with this same allusion, “That is the Saviour’s teaching, which to us is spiritual food (βρῶμα), and drink that knows no thirst, the water of gnostic life.” We have referred to this recurring “food” theme throughout our study — it has been one of Clement’s hints. The gnostic “meat” is θεωρία and Clement’s last reference to it (VII.16.104,4) indicates that he has, in fact, completed his revealing.

The second item to notice also points back to Book I.1: the plan of Stromateis. Clement told his reader in the opening chapter that he would hide his wisdom,

The Stromata will contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell.

and now at the end of the work,

...having here and there interspersed the dogmas which are the germs of true knowledge, so that the discovery of the sacred traditions may not be easy to...the uninitiated...

We can be satisfied to call Chapters 15-18 a lengthy conclusion.

As we conclude our outline of Book VII, it is clear that Chapter 7 is the key to understanding the book. The extremely high frequency of prayer, coupled with the use Clement makes of θεωρία and other concepts such as silence, point to the critical place of this chapter in Book VII.

66 Strom. I.1.7,2 and I.1.16,1.
68 Strom. I.1.18,1.
69 Strom. VII.18.110,4.
5.4 The Source Background for Clement

We have seen from our outline of Book VII that the revealing really begins in Chapter 7. This is also where Clement’s language and concepts begin to present the gnostic’s relationship with God in terms of this present life. As we see the development of this spiritual θεωρία, expressed in terms of the earthly “life” of the gnostic in space and time, we need to recall the background sources for Clement.

The physical reality in Clement’s θεωρία is reflected in key texts from his three most quoted sources. From Plato we have the discussion of those who have been led out of the cave and into the contemplation of the divine. These philosophers, having seen the reality of the Good, will be unwilling to go back to “the petty miseries of men.” But Plato maintains true leaders must...

compel the best natures to attain the knowledge which we pronounced the greatest, and to win to the vision of the good...[then to] not allow what is now permitted...That they should linger there...and refuse to go down again among those bondsmen and share their labours... For Plato those who have seen the “Good” have a responsibility to help lesser souls and so the man who experiences this metaphysical reality must continue to be grounded in physical reality.

Then there is this text from Philo’s Vita Contemplativa,

...their eyes and hands lifted up to Heaven, eyes because they have been trained to fix their gaze on things worthy of contemplation, hands in token that they are clean from gain-taking and not defiled through any cause of the profit-making kind. So standing they pray to God that their feasting may be acceptable and proceed as He would have it.

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70 See the note on Clement’s citations of Plato, Philo and the Apostle Paul, (p.33 n35).
71 Rep. VII.514-517.
72 Ibid. VII.517D.
73 Ibid., VII.519D-E.
74 Vita Contemplativa 66,5-12. See also, Vit.Con. 84,2-4 where Philo further describes their prayers and singing with hands and feet in motion keeping the cadence.
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Here we see Philo, though he affirms transcendence, appreciates the immanent nature and nearness of the θεορία expressed by the Therapeutai. As we noted (pp.29-32), Philo does touch on this spiritual contemplation, but it is not the majority usage.

Finally, NT texts like Colossians 3:16-17,

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.75

We have seen (p.33) that the NT is not in the same etymological trajectory with respect to θεορία as is Clement, but we want to note how Clement (or the παράδοσις he draws from) seems to have been influenced by NT spirituality. In the Conclusion of this chapter (pp.260-266) we will investigate this influence of NT spirituality and find certain aspects which seem to be noticeably missing.

As we continue to examine Clement's clear presentation of the gnostic and θεορία, we will be reminded of these three texts and the earthly tone in them.

5.5 The Evidence for Spiritual θεορία

We now want to point to several pieces of data which come from the entirety of Stromateis, but which come to a particular focus in Book VII. This data will point to the thrust of this chapter: Book VII reveals Clement's very practical, down to earth θεορία — what we have been referring to as spiritual contemplation.

75 A parallel text would be Ephesians 5:19-20.
5.5.1 The gnostic is the new Moses

We have acknowledged the importance of Moses in Stromateis as a spiritual figure (pp.176-184); Clement uses Moses to illustrate the gnostic in at least ten passages which span almost every book. Not surprisingly, Clement most often cites the account in Exodus where Moses ascends Mt Sinai to receive the Law, speaks with God face to face as with a friend, and consequently has the glory of God reflected on his face. Most of these passages do occur within sections where Clement is presenting God as transcendent, but they are rather enigmatic because he uses Moses precisely to illustrate how man can somehow have contact with God — Moses is the prototypical gnostic!

When we look closely at Clement’s description of the gnostic in Chapter 7 we see that he uses the same language he has used of Moses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“…persuaded that God is altogether on every side present…”</th>
<th>Ch. 7</th>
<th>Cf. to Moses texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“He is, then, the kingly man…”</td>
<td>§35,6</td>
<td>II.2.5,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…the holiness of the Gnostic…the friend of God…”</td>
<td>§36,2</td>
<td>II.5.21,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And the Gnostic, who has reached the summit, will pray that contemplation may grow and abide…”</td>
<td>§42,1</td>
<td>II.5.20,3; IV.3.9,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gnostic has “converse with God,” or “fellowship with God.”</td>
<td>§46,4</td>
<td>II.2.6,1; V.12.78,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…being quick in applying himself to contemplation…”</td>
<td>§35,4; 39,6 (2x); 40,3; 42,1; 49,1</td>
<td>II.5.20,3; IV.3.9,1; VI.12.104,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>§44,6; 46,4; 49,4</td>
<td>IV.3.9,1; V.12.78,2; VI.15.132,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76 Strom. II.2.5,5-6,1; II.5.20,3; IV.3.9,1-2; IV.18.117,1; IV.19.118,1-3; V.1.7,3-7; V.11.71-74; V.12.78,1-4; VI.12.103,5-104,2; VI.15.132,5. We could count Clement’s version of the life of Moses in Book I. Although Clement borrows from Philo in his life of Moses, only two of the above passages have significant Philonian influence (Strom. II.2.5,5-6,1 and V.11.71-74). Van den Hoek shows this influence to be more philosophical, (Clement-Philo, pp.148-152 and 168-176). Clement does use Abraham as an example of the spiritual man, but most of the occurrences simply refer to him as “friend of God” (Strom. II.5.20,1-2; 20.103,1; IV.17.105,3; 106,1). Only twice does Clement use Abraham as more than a reference (Strom. I.5.30,1-31,2; V.11.73,1-4). As with Moses, Clement only mentions Abraham once in Book VII and in a nominal way (Strom. VII.13.82,4). David is listed only once in a spiritual way, as a man who shares God’s heart (Strom. IV.17.107,1).
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In addition to these examples we want to notice two more points where, in other sections of Book VII, the gnostic is described in terms similar to Moses. First, the gnostic is a practitioner of θεωρία. Throughout Book VII Clement shows the gnostic to be one who contemplates as did the “all-wise Moses.” We have already seen (pp.174-176) how Clement has used Moses throughout Stromateis to give θεωρία an elevated status. Secondly, Clement references the glowing face of Moses on several occasions as an example of the physical presence of God.

Most notably,

Then our dexterous man and Gnostic is revealed in righteousness already even here, as Moses, glorified in the face of the soul, as we have formerly said, the body bears the stamp of the righteous soul....And as in the case of Moses, from his righteous conduct, and from his uninterrupted intercourse with God, who spoke to him, a kind of glorified hue settled on his face; so also a divine power of goodness clinging to the righteous soul in contemplation and in prophecy, and in the exercise of the function of governing, impresses on it something, as it were, of intellectual radiance, like the solar ray, as a visible sign of righteousness, uniting the soul with light, through unbroken love, which is God-bearing and God-borne.

We will speak further about this text from Book VI in our next section, but for now we need to see its tangible, physical nature. In Book VII we have it said of the gnostic, “For he does not wish to be warm by participation in heat, or luminous by participation in flame, but to be wholly light.” Although this is not completely clear, it seems to be a reference to the face of Moses who had his “soul” united “with light.”

77 Strom. V.12.78.2. I will only list here the texts which are clearly referring to a spiritual contemplation:
Strom. VII.3.16,6; 7.44,6; 7.46,4; 7.49,4-5; 13.83,3-4; 16.102,2.
78 Strom. IV.18.117,1; VI.11.103,5-104,2; VI.15.132,5.
79 Strom. VI.12.103,5-104,2.
80 Strom. VII.12.79,5.
When we come to Book VII, in his “clearest” presentation of the gnostic, Moses never appears.\(^{81}\) Clement has dispensed with the archetypal Moses; the gnostic is “the truly kingly man” (VII.7.36,2),

The Gnostic, consequently, in virtue of being a lover of the one true God, is the really perfect man and friend of God, and is placed in the rank of son. For these are names of nobility and knowledge, and perfection in the contemplation of God; which crowning step of advancement the gnostic soul receives, when it has become quite pure, reckoned worthy to behold everlastingly God Almighty, “face,” it is said, “to face.”\(^{82}\)

There is no longer any need for the example of Moses. The gnostic embodies the type of contact which Moses enjoyed and is the kingly man on this earth.

5.5.2 Spirituality in space and time is expressed through ὅμιλιά

Another piece of evidence for this spiritual contemplation in Book VII is the term Clement uses to describe the fellowship of the gnostic with God:

The Gnostic, then, from his exceeding holiness, is better prepared to fail when he asks, than to get when he does not ask. His whole life is prayer and converse with God.\(^{83}\)

Six times in Book VII Clement refers to the gnostic having “converse” (ὅμιλιά) with God. There are three unique things about Clement’s usage which point to the spiritual contemplation we are arguing for in Book VII.

First, Clement uses this term 37 times in Paidagogus and Stromateis: 13 times it refers to social interaction between people, 8 times to sexual intercourse, 4 times to a treatise or an address, and finally, 12 times to this contact with God.\(^{84}\) Prior

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\(^{81}\) Clement only refers to Moses once in a nominal way in Bk VII: VII.3.16,4.

\(^{82}\) Strom. VII.11.68,3.

\(^{83}\) Strom. VII.12.73,1.

\(^{84}\) Social interaction: Paid. I.9.75,3; II.4.43,1; II.6.50,4; II.7.59,1; 7.60,5; III.11.68,1; 11.80,2; Strom. II.21.130,8; IV.15.97,5; V.9.59,1; VI.6.52,3; VI.17.154,2; VII.7.49,7.

Sexual intercourse: Paid. II.10.88,3; 10.94,2; Strom. II.18.88,4; II.20.118,2; III.12.82,6; III.13.91,2; III.17.104,1; IV.18.116,1. A Treatise or address: Paid. III.12.87,1; Strom. I.1.6,1; 16,2; IV.13.89,2.

Contact with God: Paid. II.9.82,3; Strom. IV.6.40,1; IV.25.155,4; V.5.29,3 (referring to philosophers); VI.12.104,1; VII.3.13,2-3 (2x); VII.7.39,6 (2x); 7.42,1; 7.49,1; VII.12.73,1.

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to the end of Book VI Clement mostly uses the term in a conventional way as social or sexual intercourse. The use of this term in clear language for relating to God only begins at the end of Book VI (VI.12.104,1). So the first thing to notice is the change in usage: ὀμιλία, a term for interaction between people is being used to describe the gnostic’s interaction with God.

Secondly, the text in Book VI confirms the movement from Moses to the gnostic which we discussed in our previous section. The first clear use of ὀμιλία as interaction with God is VI.12.104,1 — and Moses is the subject. From that point forward (Book VII) all uses of ὀμιλία refer to the gnostic as the subject. But notice the Book VI text again: “Then our dexterous man and Gnostic is revealed in righteousness already even here, as Moses...” Clement refers to Moses as the γνωστικός which foreshadows the transition in Book VII. Four of the ὀμιλία occurrences are in VII.7 which confirms that Chapter 7 is the crown of the entire work (pp.201-204).

Thirdly, Clement is the first Christian writer to use ὀμιλία in this way. Prior to Clement it is used to refer to social or sexual interaction. There is an interesting text in Plato’s Symposium which makes Clement’s “converse with God” all the more contrasting:

God with man does not mingle: but the spiritual is the means of all society and converse (ὁμιλίας) of men with gods and of gods with men, whether waking or asleep. Whosoever has skill in these affairs is a spiritual man...  

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85 Clement only does this twice: Strom. V.11.74,4 and this text.
87 Symposium 203a, 2-6.
Just prior to this statement Plato has explained that spirits (daemons or angels) convey and interpret messages (prayers) between the gods and men. Clement’s final comment in his chapter “On Sleep” is actually the first occurrence of ὀμιλία relating to God,

Wherefore always contemplating God, and by perpetual converse with Him inoculating the body with wakefulness, it raises man to equality with angelic grace, and from the practice of wakefulness it grasps the eternity of life.

This passage is interesting because in it several concepts intersect: the soul is “always thinking” about God (ἀεὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐννοοῦμεν), has this “converse” (προσομιλήσεως) with God, and by these is like the angels. We will come back to this concept in our discussion on silent prayer (§5.6.4, pp.251-255). The point, however, is clear: only a special type of being can have ὀμιλία with the divine.

Clement is not only breaking the transcendence barrier in Book VII, but he is using terms of human interaction, corporeal language, to illustrate it. This is the significance of Book VII: rather than the incorporeal/immaterialist language we have seen prior, Clement speaks of relating to the Divine as one would relate to another person. I am not suggesting the focus of ὀμιλία to be sexual, but rather as “...converse, dealings with another.” We have seen Clement’s views on passion in the gnostic (pp.98-104; 157-159); he prizes continence even between a married couple (VI.12.100,3). Add to this his hatred of anthropomorphisms (II.16.72-75) and we must be cautious not to read too much into the use of this word. However, “converse” or “conversation” do not seem to effectively capture the meaning.

88 Philo follows Plato in his view of daemons, or angels; see De Somn. I.134-135; 141-142; On the Giants 6-9; 12-16.
89 Paid. II.9 82,3.
90 Liddell-Scott, p.486.
Boulluec translates the occurrence in VII.7.39,6 a bit differently, "Car Dieu écoute sans relâche toute notre conversation intime."91 This addition of “intimacy” adds the dynamic to Clement’s use of ὁμιλία which I think better captures his meaning in these VII.7 texts. Prayer is like conversation with God, but it is something more. There is the aspect of hearing (VII.7.39,6), but it is the “hearing” of silent thoughts. By using this word Clement is attempting to show the intimacy the gnostic experiences with God.

Not only does Clement use this language of human interaction, but beginning with VII.7 it appears that the gnostic interacts with ὅ θεός rather than ὅ λόγος. We noted at the beginning of this chapter (p.197 n13) the immanent texts in Books I-VI which referred to ὅ θεός; note 16 indicates the overwhelming references to interaction with ὅ θεός in VII.7. This reflects the tone of Chapter 7. Beyond the language which reminds us of Moses and what we have seen with the usage of ὁμιλία, the gnostic is presented as one who has direct access and fellowship with ὅ θεός. Clement is giving emphasis to this whole idea of immanence, showing the philosopher that his gnostic has access through Christ, the divine Logos (VII.1.2,3-2.9,1), but interacts directly with the Divine One.

We have already mentioned that ὁμιλία is conversation with God; it is clearly linked to prayer,

Prayer is, then, to speak more boldly, converse (ὁμιλία) with God. (39,6)
But if any occasion of converse (ὁμιλίας) with God becomes prayer... (42,1)
His whole life is prayer and converse (ὁμιλίας) with God. (12.73,1)

As we will see in our next section, θεορία is also clearly linked with prayer. We

91 SC 428, p.141.
can therefore conclude that Clement's use of ὑπάρχον reflects another aspect of his θεωρία, this *spiritual contemplation*.

5.5.3 Prayer includes θεωρία

One aspect of θεωρία not immediately clear is that it can be a form of prayer. In fact, a cursory look at the θεωρία texts in Books I-VI would suggest otherwise (particularly those we have noted in Chapter Three); it is not until we come to Book VII that Clement reveals this very practical side of θεωρία. Even in Book VII the first several occurrences of the term are not clearly practical or corporeal in nature; it is not until Chapter 7 that the clearest description begins,

But, having his resources in himself and being independent of others, and having learnt to know the Omnipotent Will, so that he no sooner prays than he receives, he is brought close to the Almighty Power and, by his earnest striving after spirituality, is united to the Spirit through the love that knows no bounds. This is the man of lofty mind, who by the way of science has acquired the most precious and best of all possessions, being on the one hand quick to apply the faculty of contemplation (τὴν θεωρίαν), while on the other hand he retains permanently in his soul the power over the objects of contemplation (τῶν θεωρητῶν), *i.e.* the keen clearness of science. This power he strives to the utmost to acquire by gaining the mastery over *all that wars against the reason* and persisting in uninterrupted contemplation (τῇ θεωρίᾳ), while he exercises himself in the discipline which teaches the curbing of pleasures and the right direction of action. Besides this, from his wide experience, gathered both from study and from life, he has acquired freedom of speech...keeping back nothing that may be spoken in fitting time before a right audience...

There are several things we need to notice in this important text: first, the use of θεωρία here is speaking more in the intellectual sense, "seeing" with the νοῦς. Secondly, it clearly joins θεωρία with prayer. Thirdly, the concept of God's immanence is communicated as the gnostic knows the closeness of the "Almighty

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92 *Strom.* VII.7.44,5-8. I have used the Hort-Mayor translation (pp.76-79); the third instance of θεωρία in this text is translated "speculation" in the Wilson version, (ANCL 12, p.438).
Power." Lastly, the concept of \( \alpha \pi \acute{a} \theta e \iota \alpha \) is present;\(^{93}\) we have already seen how closely linked \( \alpha \pi \acute{a} \theta e \iota \alpha \) is to \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) (p.104). Although this text includes prayer, it is not as clear as the following texts:

...the man who turns from among the Gentiles will ask for faith, while he that ascends to knowledge will ask for the perfection of love. And the Gnostic, who has reached the summit, will pray that contemplation (\( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \nu \)) may grow and abide, as the common man will for continual health.

Accordingly the Gnostic will pray along with those who have more recently believed, for those things in respect of which it is their duty to act together. And his whole life is a holy festival. His sacrifices are prayers, and praises, and readings in the Scriptures before meals, and psalms and hymns during meals and before bed, and prayers also again during night. By these he unites himself to the divine choir, from continual recollection, engaged in contemplation (\( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \nu \)) which has everlasting remembrance.\(^{94}\)

Here we see prayer clearly linked to \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \). There are two other things to notice in these two texts: first, we have \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) referred to as "the summit" in the first text. This is likely to be an allusion to Moses ascending the mountain in Exodus, which Clement calls "the mount for holy contemplation."\(^{95}\) Secondly, \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) is linked in the second text with structured times of prayer, what could be seen as an early reference to the offices of prayer.

Book VII is the clearest discussion of the gnostic in the Stromateis, and VII.7 is the clearest discussion of prayer. If we have shown a clear link between prayer and \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \), then what Chapter 7 has to say concerning prayer is somehow linked to \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) as well. This is not to say that the two are synonymous; in fact the text above says the gnostic prays that \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) would grow — \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) is more than prayer. Nevertheless, some general observations about prayer do apply to \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \).

\(^{93}\) Although the actual term \( \alpha \pi \acute{a} \theta e \iota \alpha \) is not in this text, the concept is clearly present.

\(^{94}\) Strom. VII.7.46,3-4 and 49,3-4.

\(^{95}\) Strom. V.12.78,2. See §4.3.2 (pp.176-177) for our discussion on "the summit" and contemplation.
Clement’s description of prayer in Chapter 7 is practical and grounded in this life. Though we have just seen a text which advocates specific times for prayer, Clement opens Chapter 7 by proclaiming that the *gnostic’s* prayer is not confined to any particular place or time (35,1-5; 40,3-4; 43,1; 49,6-7).\(^{96}\) Throughout the chapter the concept of *ἀπάθεια* arises; the *gnostic* must remain pure and thus abstains from pleasure (35,5; 36,2-5; 44,7; 45,3; 47,1; 49,1; 49,8). Bodily motions are included such as raising the head and lifting the hands (40,1). Prayer should be made for the salvation of one’s neighbors (41,7). Prayer can also be practiced silently with the thoughts (36,5; 38,2; 39,6; 43,3-5; 49,6-7). Which of these characteristics might apply to *θεωρία*?

From the attributes of *θεωρία* we have already observed (Chapter Three), we can assume that it would not have to be confined to a specific time or place. This illustrates the difficulty in Clement: it appears that *θεωρία* can be practiced with the intellect, that is, in the mind, but it can also be grounded in the physical realm and expressed bodily (49,3-4). In our previous discussion (p.104) we also concluded that *ἀπάθεια* was closely related to *θεωρία*. What we see here is the practical side of Clement’s *θεωρία*; it includes prayer. Can *θεωρία* be practiced in silence? We will take up that discussion later (§5.6.4, pp.246-255).

5.5.4 God is tangibly experienced by the *gnostic* through prayer

In *Stromateis* VII.7 Clement clearly represents the *gnostic* as one who experiences a closeness to an immanent God through prayer.\(^{97}\) Most of Chapter 7

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\(^{96}\) Unless otherwise noted, all citations in this section will come from Book VII, Chapter 7 and only the critical section numbers will be given parenthetically as above.

\(^{97}\) *Strom.* VII.7.35,3-7; 39,6; 40,1-3; 42,1; 44,5; 49,1; 49,7.
describes this closeness in very practical terms, but there is one text which follows
the more immaterialistic sense we might expect from what we have seen in
Chapter Three of our study,

So also we raise the head and lift the hands to heaven, and set the feet in
motion at the closing utterance of the prayer, following the eagerness of
the spirit directed towards the intellectual essence; and endeavouring to
abstract the body from the earth, along with the discourse, raising the soul
aloft, winged with longing for better things, we compel it to advance to the
region of holiness, magnanimously despising the chain of the flesh. For we
know right well, that the Gnostic willingly passes over the whole world, as
the Jews certainly did over Egypt, showing clearly, above all, that he will
be as near as possible to God. 98

This text seems to follow the more intellectual sense which we discussed
in Plato and Philo,99 but the abstraction part strangely follows a positive description of
bodily motions in prayer. It seems that Clement is using ecstatic bodily responses
in prayer to illustrate how the soul longs to be freed from the body in order to
draw even nearer to God.100 We will discuss the possibility of ecstasy later
(§6.3.2, p.273). Here we want to note how the gnostic experiences God; Wytzes
insists that the gnostic has “a sense of eternity in this life...no doubt experienced
on earth.”101

This text we have just looked at reminds us of the Vita Contemplativa text we
highlighted in §5.4 (pp.216-217),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strom. VII.7.40,1-2</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vita Contemplativa 66,5-12</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So also we raise the head and lift the hands to heaven, and set the feet in motion at the closing utterance of the prayer, following the eagerness of the spirit directed towards the intellectual essence; and endeavouring</td>
<td>...their eyes and hands lifted up to Heaven, eyes because they have been trained to fix their gaze on things worthy of contemplation, hands in token that they are clean from gain-taking and not defiled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99 Other texts in *Strom*. VII.7 which reflect the immaterialist side of prayer: 43,5; 45,1.
100 See Völker’s comments, pp.424-431.
101 Wytzes (II, p.136). See also II, pp.134-137.
to abstract the body from the earth, along with the discourse, raising the soul aloft, winged with longing for better things, we compel it to advance to the region of holiness, magnanimously despising the chain of the flesh....above all, that he will be as near as possible to God.

Both texts speak of the need to be freed from the passions of the flesh while also representing prayer in physical terms. The soul, in both texts, is moving away from the sensible world, straining for the higher realm, but the body is cooperating. Significantly, this Stromateis text follows 7.39,6 where God hears the inner prayers of the gnostic. Thus we have three different modes of prayer bound into one example: silent prayer, prayer with bodily motions cooperating, and what seems like the ascent theme into the intellectual realm of the νοῦς. Clement uses all three to point to the nearness of God.

5.5.5 The lack of ascent theme in Chapters 7 and 12

We have seen (pp.218-220) that the absence of Moses in Book VII reveals something of Clement’s system: the gnostic is the new Moses in this life. Now we will see that the lack of ascent theme in Chapters 7 and 12 also reveals something about Clement’s system. We want to compare four ascent texts from Book VII with chapters 7 and 12. These four texts each contain several key categories which we looked at in Chapter Three of our study. The comparison will show that these ascent texts are different from the two main revealing chapters of Book VII. This will be more evidence for our argument that part of the “clear presentation” Clement intends to give includes a practical θέωρία, spiritual contemplation.
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The four texts we will compare are: VII.3.13,1-3; 10.56,1-57,2; 11.68,1-5 and 13.82,4-7. Because these are quite lengthy texts we will simply list the various categories in each section as we proceed. Lastly, there are a few categories found in Chapters 7 and 12 which are lacking in the ascent texts: ὃμιλια, the “face the face” concept, the reference to “friend” or “son,” and angels.

1. The ascent theme

The first thing to notice is the lack of ascent theme in Chapters 7 and 12. There is really only one such passage, VII.7.40,1-4. From what we have observed in our study, this passage is distinct and unusual within Chapter 7, which we have seen is devoted to prayer. Even as an ascent text, it only shares a few of the common features with our four comparison texts: it mentions “stages” and perfection, but only alludes to the issue of purity with an abstraction theme. There is no mention of a “summit” nor of a “rest.” Lastly, the text does mention closeness to God, but there is no use of contemplation (θεωρία or ἐποπτεῖα).

It should be noted that we are using as one of our ascent texts, VII.11.68 which we included in Chapter 12 in our outline (p.210 n48). We are using it this way because it does contain many of the ascent categories, but we need to also recognise that it has more in common with Chapters 7 and 12.

2. Perfection, purity and the role of angels

The theme of perfection occurs in all four ascension texts; perfection also runs throughout Chapters 7 and 12. The perfection in VII.7 and 12 is not, however, speaking of what might happen in the afterlife or even in some kind of mystical

102 See Appendix 5 (pp.299-300) for a chart indicating this data and a full printout of these texts.
103 Strom. VII.7.36,1; 40,3; 46,3; 46,7; 48,6; 49,1 and VII.12.70,1; 70,6.
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experience; it is grounded in this life. The best example of this is VII.12.70,6-7,

[The Gnostic] eats, and drinks, and marries, not as principal ends of existence, but as necessary. I name marriage even, if the Word prescribe, and as is suitable. For having become perfect, he has the apostles for examples...disciplined by marriage, procreation of children, and care for the house...has been inseparable from God’s love, and withstood all temptation arising through children, and wife, and domestics, and possessions. But he that has no family is in a great degree free of temptation.

Here we have an example of Clement’s critique of extreme Christian asceticism. The gnostic must be engaged with others in this life and remain pure. This passage accurately represents these two chapters.

The purity of the gnostic pertains to the eradication of passions. Both Chapters 7 and 12 have the concept of ἀπαθεία running throughout. One of the purity texts has a slight anomaly, the interaction with angels. This purity text, however, confirms the lack of a mystical or other-worldly reading,

So is he always pure for prayer. He also prays in the society of angels, as being already of angelic rank, and he is never out of their holy keeping; and though he pray alone, he has the choir of the saints standing with him.

The gnostic engages in prayer with angels and with the saints (the cloud of witnesses, Heb. 12:1), but (“though he pray alone”) his feet are firmly planted on this earth. This concept of praying with angels is important; we will look more closely at this point in §5.6.4 (pp.251-255). In our previous discussion we demonstrated the lack of angels in ascension texts. Only one of these ascent texts

104 Strom. VII.7.38,4; 49,1 and VII.12.73,1; 78,6; 80,2.
105 There are many references to angels in Book VII: 1.3,4; 2.5,2; 6.4; 9.1-3; 3.20,3-4; 7.37,2; 39,3-4; 46,6; 10.57,5; 11.63,1; 12.78,6; 13.81,3; 14.84,2; 85,4. The fact that angels enter into Clement’s discussion so many times in Book VII (and in Chapters 7 and 12) indicates the importance of this topic. In VI.3.32,1 he announces what appears to be a treatise, On Angels. See pp.251-255.

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(VII.10.56-57) has a clear reference to angels.\footnote{Strom. VII.3.13,1-3 is debatable.} This marks a significant difference between the ascent texts and VII.7 and 12.

3. *Stages in the spiritual ascent and the "summit"*

Two critical categories in the ascent theme are the various "stages," of progress and the "summit" of that progress. There are five significant texts where Clement uses the concept of "summit," four of which occur in Book VII.\footnote{Strom. V.12.78,2; VII.7.46,4; 10.57,1; 11.63,1; 68,4.} All of the ascent texts contain these categories. Chapter 7 has these categories; Chapter 12 is virtually devoid of them.\footnote{Stages: Strom. VII.7.35,4; 47,7; "summit": VII.7.46,4; 46,7.} We find with these categories what we are beginning to expect in Chapter 7 — the focus is on the earthly life of the gnostic. These categories appear to be ethereal in the ascent passages, but in Chapter 7 they are entirely of this world.

4. *The "rest" for the gnostic*

The last category which is typical (§3.5.4, pp.132-136) for ascent passages is the "rest" for the soul. All but one of our ascent texts have this category. We noted in our prior discussion (p.136) how the frequency of "rest" increases in Books VI and VII, yet the Book VII occurrences are after Chapter 7 and are in three of the ascent texts.\footnote{Strom. VII.10.57,1; 11.68,5; 13.82,5; 15.92,5; 16.93,3. These last two occurrences are only nominal.} The concept of "rest" does not occur in VII.7 or 12.

5. *The mystic "vision": ἐποπτεία and θεώρια*

We have seen (§3.4, pp.114-121) how Clement uses ἐποπτεία in a rather unique way; he sometimes uses it to modify and strengthen the key term of our study (ΘΕΩΡΙΑ), sometimes as a substitute for ΘΕΩΡΙΑ. His use of ἐποπτεία in
Book VII continues to be associated with the mystic “vision,” the “seeing” of ὄθεος with something other than the physical eye. The only two occurrences of the word in Book VII are in two of the ascent passages (10.56-57; 11.68). The term is not found in Chapters 7 or 12. We have already looked at most of the θεωρία texts in these later chapters and how they relate to prayer, but now we want to notice the tone and context of these θεωρία texts.

Clement makes it clear in Chapters 7 and 12 that θεωρία takes place in an earthly context. There are 10 occurrences of θεωρία in these two chapters, seven of which conform to what we are calling *spiritual contemplation.111* Every occurrence refers to the life of the gnostic in a earthly sense, not in an ascent context, nor surrounded by ethereal or intellectual concepts. All of these texts either include the concept of ἀποθέωσις or speak of the gnostic’s interaction with others.112 By this data we can see that θεωρία, at least within the context of Chapters 7 and 12, is presented in practical, earthly terms.

6. “Face to face,” ὁμιλία, and the use of “son” and “friend”

In the last part of this section we want to address important categories which are either missing in our ascension texts or are almost completely missing in our two key revealing chapters of Book VII. Our intention is to use this evidence to again show the disparity between the ascension passages and the revealing chapters; this evidence will again point to the practical tone of VII.7 and 12, and consequently, to the θεωρία system reflected within them.

111 *Strom*. VII.7.44,6-7 (3x); 46,4; 49,4; VII.12.72,5; 78,2. The texts which are not spiritual contemplation: *Strom*. VII.12.74,7; 76,5-7 (2x)

112 *Those concerning ἀποθέωσις: Strom*. VII.7.44,6-7; 46,4; VII.12.72,5; those concerning interaction with others: VII.7.44,6-7; 49,4; 78,2.
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We have seen the important place the phrase "face to face" has in *Stromateis*. We noticed in our discussion how Clement uses "face to face" in three distinct ways: as a reference to the afterlife (heaven), as the contemplation of the νοῦς, a very Platonic concept, and lastly, in a way which points to a spiritual contemplation. We also noted that θεωρία occurs in texts which indicate all three uses. What we want to observe here is how these "face to face" texts reflect a movement in *Stromateis* from a philosophical posture to a spiritual one.

Clement’s use of the 1 Cor. 13:12 text moves from the afterlife (Paid. and *Strom.* I) to intellectual contemplation (*Strom.* V and VI), to finally a distinct spirituality in *Strom.* VII. This is a subtle indicator of the spiritual pathway which I argue for in Clement’s works (Chapter Four). While I am not suggesting that Clement has purposed to do this, if he is presenting a spiritual pathway this kind of subtle indicator should not surprise us.

We want to notice how these texts fit into Clement’s θεωρία scheme. As we have pointed out (note 113), "face to face" only occurs three times in Book VII, yet this is a phrase which seems to speak of the direct contact the gnostic has with God. We are reminded of how Clement omits ἐν αἰνιγματὶ to enhance this idea of contact. It is most interesting, then, that this "face to face" concept only appears in the ascension texts we have been looking at, and not in the very chapters which we have isolated to be the key chapters for revealing — the

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113 See §4.3.3 (pp.177-184). The "face to face" texts are: *Strom.* I.19.94,4-6; IV.3.12.2; V.1.7,5-7; V.6.40,1; VI.11.74,1; VI.12.102,2; VII.3.13,1; VII.10.57,1; VII.11.68,4.
114 Paid. I.6.36,6; *Strom.* I.19.94,4; IV.3.12,2; V.1.7,5; V.6.40,1; VI.11.74,1; VI.12.102,2; VII.3.13,1-3; VII.10.56,5-57,2; VII.11.68,1-5.
115 See pp.178 n155; also Mortley (VC 1976).
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chapters we maintain are Clement’s clearest presentation of what the life of the gnostic looks like (especially Chapter 7). In fact, what we find in these ascension texts are shades of intimacy: ὀμαλία is used in VII.3.13, the gnostic is described as the “friend of God, and...son” in VII.11.68, and in three of these texts the gnostic sees God very clearly (all the more so without ἑν αἰνιγματι),

...the divine vision not in mirrors or by means of mirrors, but in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision...
...teaching to gaze on God, face to face, with knowledge and comprehension...
...to behold everlastingly God Almighty, “face,” it is said, “to face.”

Add to this data the fact that only once in each of our revealing chapters does Clement refer to the gnostic in intimate terms like “friend.” As we pointed out earlier, Clement refers to Moses and Abraham more than once as “friend” of God, yet in Book VII both are mentioned only once in a nominal way. One would expect to have such references in chapters which are meant to be clear descriptions. What can we conclude from these various bits of data? The next section will be our attempt to give an explanation with respect to VII.7 and 12. To end this part of the discussion I want to propose that these Book VII ascent passages, which do not seem to fit neatly into the “clear presentation” Clement has promised, are yet another example of the conceal/reveal technique we have learned to expect. As we have seen (pp.208-209; 213-214), Clement continues to use this technique throughout Book VII.

116 It should be pointed out that these “shades” of intimacy are only found in two of the texts.
117 Strom. VII.3.13,1; 10.57,1; 11.68,4.
118 Strom. VII.7.42,3 and 12.79,1.
119 See p.218 n76.
5.5.6 The *gnostic* embodies ἰεὐρόια

The practical nature of Clement’s ἰεὐρόια and the direct contact of the *gnostic* with the immanent God is the focus of Chapters 7 and 12. Mortley has convincingly shown how Clement intends to reveal this immanence as an intellectual contact of the mind, but we must go further. The *gnostic* is the new Moses; it is the *gnostic* who enjoys ὀμιλία with ὁ ὑιός. Prayer is obviously part of this direct contact, and prayer includes ἰεὐρόια. The way to God has been opened by the divine Logos and ἰεὐρόια is the vehicle for this contact. The transcendent One is accessible and is immanent, but only to “the Gnostic, who has reached the summit.”

This is why there are no “face to face” citations; there is no need. In these two chapters (especially Chapter 7) we have a lack of ascent passages because the *gnostic* is already beholding the face of God. I agree with Wytzes when he says, “the gnostic...is still on earth and yet dwells amidst the angels before the face of God in the life of eternity.” In VII.7 and 12, the *gnostic* is living in the ἐπωπτεία “vision;” Clement does not need to refer to him as “son,” or “friend;” it is assumed that he is “very closely allied to God.” There is no mention of “rest” because the *gnostic* is living in the Sabbath “rest” “his whole life is a holy festival.” This is confirmed in a foreshadowing text in Book VI where, speaking

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120 Mortley (VC 1976).
121 Strom. VII.7,46,4.
122 Wytzes (II, p.142).
123 Strom. VII.7,35,6.
124 Ferguson, “Was Barnabas A Chiliast?,” shows how Clement uses the number seven as a type for the eschatological rest, pp.165-167. See also Strom. VI.16,137,4-138,3. Clement's discussion on the number seven and rest continues through VI.16,145.
125 Strom. VII.7,49,3; also 7,35,6.
about the seventh day, he uses the same “festival” concept,

As David says, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice in it;” that is, in consequence of the knowledge imparted by Him, let us celebrate the divine festival...\footnote{Strom. VI.16.145,5. The same word (ἐκκομος) is used here as in VII.7.49,3 (above).}

This rest has already occurred for the \textit{gnostic} because he has mastered his passions and is pure, “By following Him, therefore, through our whole life, we become impassible (ἀπαθεῖς); and this is to rest.”\footnote{Strom. VI.16.138,3. We have already seen the many examples of the ἀπαθεῖς concept throughout Chapters 7 and 12.}

We use all of this to point to \textit{θεωρία} because Clement clearly shows that to be his focus. Even though prayer is referenced over 70 times in Chapters 7 and 12 (as opposed to only 10 for \textit{θεωρία}), his language makes it clear,

Thus he...possessing...what is most precious of all, the best of all, being quick in applying himself to contemplation...

And the Gnostic, who has reached the summit, will pray that contemplation may grow and abide...\footnote{Strom. VII.7.44,6 and 46,4.}

For Clement, \textit{θεωρία} is the most important thing, and in VII.7 and 12 \textit{θεωρία} is shown to be something which is experienced in this life, grounded in earthly experiences. The immaterialistic concept of \textit{θεωρία} has been overtaken by a \textit{θεωρία} which is expressed and experienced in space and time — this is \textit{spiritual contemplation}.

Lastly, we want to add one more piece of evidence to show that VII.7 (and 12) represent the pinnacle in Clement’s presentation: after using the image of “meat” and “food” throughout \textit{Stromateis} to point to \textit{θεωρία}, these terms are missing in VII.7 and 12.\footnote{He does mention these terms, but only in reference to physical food: Strom. VII.7.36,3-4; 12.71,5.}
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is no need to mention "meat" — the reader's plate is full! He has been hinting at the "meat" and the gnostic's "food," sometimes in subtle fashion, sometimes quite openly (V.10.66,2). These two chapters (especially VII.7) are the promised gnostic "meat." This is made clear by the fact that there is no more mention of this "food" until after the two revealing chapters. The final two references made to "food" confirm this,

...the end he has in view terminates in contemplation by gnostic activity in accordance with the commandments. Thence now, by knowledge collecting materials to be the food of contemplation, having embraced nobly the magnitude of knowledge, he advances to the holy recompense of translation hence.131

We note the use of ΘΕΩΡΙΑ, but also that this statement comes just before the final comment in VII.14.84,1 which represents the closing statement of his "clear" presentation to the Greeks.

5.6 Silence and Silent Prayer

One aspect of Clement's system which we have mentioned several times is that of silent prayer; it is important that we consider this topic and how it might relate to this spiritual contemplation. We will need to discuss a few points before we can look specifically at ΘΕΩΡΙΑ: we will very briefly look at an important study on the development of silence in Middle Platonism, the use of silence in the Gnostic circles, and how Clement's use does not fit into either of these categories.

130 See pp.81-85; 167-172.
131 Strom. VII.13.83,4. Here Clement uses κωπών, but the concept is the same. The last reference is VII.16.104,1-4; see §5.3.5 (pp.214-215).
5.6.1 Mortley’s study

A very important study on this topic is Raoul Mortley’s 1986 work, *From Word to Silence*.132 His thesis is that the philosophical schools of the second century BCE went through a period of tumultuous introspection in which human reason (νοῦς and the λόγος which flows from it) was elevated, only to be followed by a period of scepticism. The flowering of what we call Middle Platonism, with its strong view of transcendence, expressed this scepticism with a denial of the ability of νοῦς to reach Divinity. The *via negativa* and the emphasis on silence came from this scepticism. Denial and the use of the alpha privative described the new understanding of epistemology. Silence, the reaching out to the divine with pure thought, became the elevated way.

We have already covered Middle Platonism and Clement’s place in that movement as much as space can allow; we want to make only a few comments here on Mortley’s study as it relates to this thesis.133

First, what influence, if any, did Gnosticism have on Clement’s concept of silence? There are several instances of “silence” in the NH texts; we will look at only a few which should give us an indication of if/how Clement has been influenced by Gnosticism. Mortley cites the *Apocryphon of John* as an example of the *via negativa* from the Gnostic texts which has a characteristic “neither/nor” construction, “He is not corporeal [nor] incorporeal. He is not great [and not]...”

132 *From Word to Silence I: The rise and fall of the Logos, II: The way of negation, Christian and Greek*

133 The first four chapters of Mortley’s second volume (*Word II*) are the most critical for our study.
He then rightly shows that Clement stood apart from this kind of thinking in that he also held to immanence, “This is a perpetual tension in the history of Christian Platonism...The idea of mystery and the idea of revelation will never easily coexist.” Rather than “neither/nor,” Clement consistently holds to a position of “both/and.” There is the reference in *Ex. Theo.*, They say that Silence, who is the mother of all...kept silence about the inexpressible and with regard to what she did not understand she called it incomprehensible.

Although it is clear that Clement’s concept of silence is different from that of the Gnostics, he has either been affected by their use or shares some kind of common background. Lastly, Chadwick reminds us of the statement Ignatius makes in *Magnesians* 8.2, “...Logos which came forth from silence.” This reference from Ignatius reveals some kind of synthesis, but neither Ignatius nor Clement use silence as a reference for God. Clement only refers to silence as the proper response of the gnostic to God; he certainly does not refer positively to: 'H Στη...μητρ (Silence the mother).

Mortley speaks very clearly about his understanding of the contradiction in Clement with regards to transcendence/immanence. (p.37) It is, however, not easy to know if Mortley has changed his opinion in *Word II* from his 1976 study.

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135 Mortley (*Word II*, p.37). See §3.1 (pp.89-97) and §5.2 (pp.195-198) on this critical aspect of Clement’s system.


137 See the following texts from the NH library: *Gos.Egypt.* 41, 7-12; *A Val.Exp.* XI.24, 19-20; *Tri.Protennoia* XIII.37, 4-14. There are numerous other references to silence, but they are so different from Clement’s concept that they are irrelevant. See the index in NHLE.


139 In fact he argues against this view in *Ex Theor*. 33,2 (this Gnostic teaching having been referred to in *Ex Theor*. 29-32.)
"Mirror" study, he maintains Clement’s desire to illustrate how the *gnostic* experiences a real contact with God,\textsuperscript{140} yet in *Word II* he says, “Language would appear to be operative up to the level of the Son.” (p.37) In this discussion he never mentions his 1976 study nor any data from it, even failing to list it in his bibliography!\textsuperscript{141} I must agree with Mortley’s 1976 study and disagree with his more recent conclusions for three reasons: first, I see nothing in this later study which disallows completely the conclusions in his earlier one. Secondly, in his discussion on the silence in Clement (pp.36-44) he only cites *Strom.* VII texts which either refer to silence or are pointing to other issues; he fails to give a balanced presentation of *Strom.* VII. He admits that the *gnostic* is presented by Clement in the present tense (p.40), but he fails to discuss this angle. I would agree with Mortley’s conclusions here based only on the data which he has presented, but he has failed to present all of the data. This leads to my third reason for disagreement with the conclusions in this 1986 study: the evidence we have presented from *Strom.* VII conclusively shows that Clement presents the *gnostic* as one who has tangible contact with the immanent God. While I agree with Mortley when he says, “Clement advocates a sort of speechless mental contemplation”(p.36), we have seen something more in Clement’s θεωρία system.

Another area of disagreement we must address with Mortley’s study is his discussion on “Clement’s deconstructionist analysis.” (p.39) While I agree with Mortley on a few thoughts here, again I must disagree on a very technical point

\textsuperscript{140} VC 30 (1976), pp.176-182.

\textsuperscript{141} This underlines the criticism Louth has offered in his review concerning the lack of footnotes (JTS 1988, p.263); I must agree with Louth here. The absence of the 1976 study from his bibliography surely must have been an oversight.
where it concerns Clement: as we have seen in this study, *Stromateis* is an unusual work in that part of Clement's purpose is to reveal a secret oral tradition. Mortley joins a large group of scholars who acknowledge Clement's intention, but conclude that there is no such doctrine to be found. (pp.38-39) Whether there is a secret tradition in *Stromateis* or not makes no difference here; Clement has constructed the work to reflect such a doctrine in a hidden fashion. Mortley admits this. (p.39) The fact is, *Stromateis* differs from Clement's other works and Mortley's deconstructionist theory falls down with respect to the other works. For an example we will take *Protrepticus*; here Clement has every intention of revealing and does so clearly. Clement is not bound philosophically to a deconstructionist theory; *Stromateis* is his only work which fits this description to any significant degree. As part of his argument, Mortley cites *Protrepticus* IX.88,2-3 as Clement's interpretation of the Parmenidean alternatives. But this part of his argument fails on three points: first, though this might be a comment by Clement to the question in *Parmenides*, it is not the purpose of *Protrepticus*. Mortley seems to be straining with this text. Most of the passages he refers to in his discussion come from *Strom. V* and VI, where Clement's philosophical account of God is chiefly found. Secondly, Mortley fails to cite the end of the text,

\[\text{This, the true utterance of His children, God (ό θεός) accepts with gracious welcome — the firstfruits He receives from them.}\]  

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144 *Protrep.* IX.88,3. See Mortley (*Word II*, p.43).
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Rather than appearing as a text which supports the One beyond being which language cannot reach (remember from above, “Language would appear to be operative up to the level of the Son,” p.37), this text reveals δ θεός who hears and accepts the “Abba Father” of His children. The last reason I disagree with his Parmenidean presentation stands independently of Protrepticus: Mortley has failed to fully appreciate the level of tension which Clement is willing to embrace. Though he admits “the contradiction at the heart of this Christian Platonism,” (p.37) he fails to take the witness of Strom. VII.7 into account as we have presented it in this study. Clement is content with both a transcendent and an immanent God. As we mentioned above, Mortley gives only the evidence from Book VII which fits his argument.

Mortley’s study is valid, especially regarding the philosophical writers, and might be valid regarding the later fathers, but he is certainly not correct in his assessment of Clement.

5.6.2 The concept of silence

The first thing to realise is that silence, even apart from prayer, is an important concept for Clement. Indeed, he approvingly cites Simonides, “silence is better than speech.” In the opening chapter of Stromateis he lets the reader know the importance of silent communication,

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145 Silence and aspects of thought are numerous: Strom. I.1.15,2; 2.20,4; II.11.50,1-3; 15.68,3; IV.6.39,4; 19.119,3; 22.142,1-4; 26.171,1-2; V.6.36,3; 10.65,2; 11.67,3; 11.74,1; 14.111,1; VI.2.27,1; 9.78,1; 11.95,3; 12.101,3-102,2; VII.1.2,3; 3.13,1; 7.36,5-38,2; 7.39,6-40,1; 7.41,3-4; 7.42,8-43,5; 7.45,1; 7.49,6-7; 12.73,1; 12.77,1-6; 12.78,5; 12.80,2. See Mortley’s article, “The Theme of Silence in Clement of Alexandria,” JTS 24 (1973), pp.197-202.

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Some things my treatise will hint; on some it will linger; some it will merely mention. It will try to speak imperceptibly, to exhibit secretly, and to demonstrate silently (σιωπασκόα).\(^{147}\)

Throughout our study we have discussed the nature of concealment in *Stromateis* and how Clement plans to construct his work; the use of silence is part of that plan. In an interesting passage in Book I.2 Clement explains his purpose again, “For I do not mention (σιωπα) that the *Stromata*, forming a body of varied erudition, wish artfully to conceal the seeds of knowledge.”\(^{148}\) This passage is interesting because after saying that he will not speak of his purpose — he does! And this follows *Strom.* I.1.18,1-2 where he has just discussed this very topic. This use of σιωπα seems to be his coy way of coaxing the reader on. He uses this term (σιωπα) several times, apparently to alert the reader to concealed aspects along the way.\(^{149}\) This is part of the plan, “to demonstrate silently” (*Strom.* I.1.15,2); this enables the diligent seeker to “see” while it conceals from the uninitiated. Clement warns the reader, “We ought not to surrender our ears to all who speak and write rashly.”\(^{150}\) He has no intention of being rash in this way.

5.6.3 Silence is the symbol of pure thought \(^{151}\)

There is an overall direction in Clement’s scheme of moving from the senses to the realm of νοὸς. The gnostic attains ἀπάθεια, and this heart purity moves in the same direction,

The Gnostic, therefore, will abstain from errors in speech, and thought, and sensation, and action....And we must, in a word, ascending above all the others, stop at the mind...\(^{152}\)

\(^{147}\) *Strom.* I.1.15,1.

\(^{148}\) *Strom.* I.2.20,4.

\(^{149}\) *Strom.* IV.19.119,3; V.14.102,3; VI.2.27,1; 11.95,3; VII.3.13,1. This last text is one of the ascent texts which we investigated in §5.5.5 (pp.228-234).

\(^{150}\) *Strom.* V.1.12,3.

\(^{151}\) See Mortley (JTS 1973, p.197).
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The goal of the \textit{gnostic} is purity first, then to engage the ineffable God in the realm of pure thought and beyond. Silence is the \textit{expression} in our senses that God is beyond our senses, beyond our ability to comprehend; "As in the \textit{via negativa}, where abstraction aims at passing beyond the realm of the predicate, so the most appropriate response to the divine is silence."\textsuperscript{153} When the \textit{gnostic} operates in the realm of \textit{νοος}, thus in silence, it shows that his senses have been bypassed.

A point of confusion is found in Clement with regards to whether \textit{νοος} is the realm of God.\textsuperscript{154} There are a few texts where he seems to be saying this, only to have others which seem to contradict this position.\textsuperscript{155} We certainly cannot address this problem at length, but could this not be another case where Clement simply sees the conflict of two philosophical positions, neither of which he is willing to relinquish? Whittaker illustrates throughout his article (see note 155 above) that this was a common struggle for Middle Platonists; again we see Clement operating within his philosophical milieu.

It should be mentioned that in this brief discussion the majority of textual evidence comes from Book V. We noted in §3.5.3 (pp.124-130) that cosmology and angelology served as topics for \textit{concealment}; it is quite likely that this topic of first principles is also used for \textit{concealment}. There are three reasons which seem

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Strom. II.11.50,2 and 51,1. Other texts which speak of purity in thought: Strom. IV.6.39,4-40,1; 22.142,1 and 4; V.1.13,3.
\item Mortley (JTS 1973, p.200).
\item John Whittaker’s article, \textit{ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ ΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΣΙΑΣ}, VC 23 (1969), pp.91-104, should be consulted here. He concludes "that there existed in the minds of writers of the Middle Platonic period a confusion concerning the status of the ultimate principle with reference to \textit{οφθαλμος} and \textit{νοος}, and furthermore that the source of this confusion lies in the writings of Plato..." (p.104).
\item Texts which point to the realm of \textit{νοος} as the realm of God: Strom. V.6.36,3; 11.67,1-3; 11.73,3-74,2. Texts which point to God being beyond thought or even being: Strom. V.10.65,1-2; VII.1.2,1-3. See Whittaker’s comments on VII.1.2,1-3, (VC 1969, pp.93-94). Mortley agrees with Whittaker on this point, (JTS 1973, p.200 n1).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
to support this position: first, it is a philosophical category, which we have already shown is one of Clement’s concealment tools; secondly, he says that he will deal with this category at a later time. If nothing else, this indicates that the discussion of first principles is not his primary concern. Thirdly, he tells us that he plans to write a separate work, On First Principles.

It is clear that Clement intends the gnostic to engage God in the realm of the mind and that this represents something of a higher level. This is clearly seen in a text where Clement utilises Abraham,

Again: “Abraham, when he came to the place which God told him of on the third day, looking up, saw the place afar off.” For the day is that which is constituted by the sight of good things; and the second is the soul’s best desire; on the third, the mind perceives spiritual things, the eyes of the understanding being opened by the Teacher who rose on the third day. The three days may be the mystery of the seal, in which God is really believed. It is consequently afar off that he sees the place. For the region of God is hard to attain; which Plato called the region of ideas...

If we did not have Book VII, this section and the whole of Book V would point to Mortley’s conclusion that this intellectual contact is the ultimate contact of the gnostic with God. But what we have already seen in our discussion of Book VII shows that there is more to Clement’s θεοπία than the contact of the mind. We have seen a very practical spirituality which is called his clearest presentation. However, the role of the mind does enter into this clear and practical explanation in the discussion of silent prayer.

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156 Strom. IV.1.2,1; 4.16,3; 25.162,2; V.14.140,2; VI.2.4,2. Clement does discuss the topic in several places (Strom. IV.25.162,1-5; V.6.37,1-40,4; V.12-14, the entirety of these chapters; VI.7.58,1-2; VII.1.2,2-3; VII.2.8,5-9,3), but these are not full discussions.

157 Strom. IV.1.2,1 (this text seems to indicate this discussion to be forthcoming within Stromateis, possibly found in V.12-14); V.14.140,2 and VI.2.4,2 both point to a future work, coming after the lengthy discussion in V.12-14.

158 Mortley (VC 1976, pp.118-120).

159 Strom. V.11.73,1-3.
5.6.4 Using the mind in silent prayer

After making several references to silence in Book IV, Clement mentions silent prayer for the first time and announces that he will deal with the topic of prayer at a later time,

What is it, then, that the Pythagoreans mean when they bid us “pray with the voice?” As seems to me, not that they thought the Divinity could not hear those who speak silently, but because they wished prayers to be right, which no one would be ashamed to make in the knowledge of many. We shall, however, treat of prayer in due course by and by.\(^{160}\)

We have shown that prayer is most fully presented in Book VII.7 and VII.12 (p.202 n26), but Clement does give the reader some foreshadowing in Book VI.

1. The "Ask...think" text

In Book VI Clement introduces a saying which he cites as Scripture that brings the discussion of silent prayer directly into focus, “The Lord will not wait for the voice of this man in prayer. ‘Ask,’ He says, ‘and I will do; think, and I will give’.”\(^{161}\) This is the extent of his discussion here, a mere hint, and then he moves on. He picks up this same theme in VI.12,

...those who live sinlessly and gnostically, He gives, when they have but merely entertained the thought....“Ask,” says the Scripture, “and I will do. Think, and I will give.” For we have heard that God knows the heart....Therefore the Gnostic prays in thought during every hour, being by love allied to God.\(^{162}\)

There are several points which must be seen about this text which show the important foreshadowing aspect it contains. First, it is the only real discussion of silent prayer (or thought prayer) thus far in Stromateis. As we pointed out above,

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\(^{161}\) Strom. VI.9.78,1. This is listed by Boulluex as Agrapha 14, (SC 428, p.228 note a). Clement cites this Agrapha three times; the other two are VI.12.101,3 (cited as Scripture) and VII.12.73,1.

\(^{162}\) Strom. VI.12.101,3-102,1.
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Clement has deferred his prayer discussion; this is another foreshadowing of this promise, which will be fulfilled in Book VII.7. Secondly, this foreshadowing is evidenced in the passages which follow the text in question. We have one of the "face to face" citations following this text; we have seen the importance of this text. Also, we have one of the Moses texts (VI.103,5-104,2) in which the key term ὀμιλία occurs. Lastly, the text in question (VI.12.102,1) has the gnostic "allied to God" just as in VII.7.35,7. To conclude our comments on this second "Ask...think" citation, we want to notice that Clement does not discuss prayer again until we come to VII.7. Now we must move back to the "Ask...think" citations to see if we can discover the source for this saying.

The third and last "Ask...think" citation is found in VII.12,

His whole life is prayer and converse (ομιλία) with God. And if he be pure from sins, he will by all means obtain what he wishes. For God says to the righteous man, "Ask, and I will give thee; think, and I will do." J. Ruwet argues for this saying as Scripture, φησίν ἦ γραφή. J. Ruwet argues for this saying as a simple construction of Clement whereby he combines two NT texts (John 14:13-14 and Matt. 7:7) into one saying. Ruwet calls this a "catechetical formula" and his explanation of the saying could well be correct. In the end, we do not know where this saying comes from, but our discussion on Clement's παράδοσις (pp.38-62) recognises that his tradition had both oral and

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163 See §4.3.3 (pp.177-184).
164 See §5.5.2 (pp.220-224).
165 Strom. VII.12.73,1.
166 Cf. Strom. I.7.38,5. See Munck (HTR 1959, pp.223-243) where he discusses the use of φησίν as an indicator of a written source.
168 Ibid., pp.139-140. Ruwet uses verbal similarities to make his case and the evidence is certainly there, but the nature of agraphe is that they are usually very similar to what ends up in the standard text. Many of the "Q" sayings would have this feature. I must disagree with Ruwet, however, when he says that Clement alludes to this saying twice more in VII.7.41,3-4; 49,7, (p.140 n2).
written elements. This saying could just as easily come from one of the apocryphal works he cites, but which is no longer extant.

2. Chapter 7: a treatise on thought prayer

We need to come back to VII.7 and consider it again as the crown of Clement's *Stromateis*. There is no argument that this chapter contains the richest discussion of prayer in the entire work; this is certainly the treatment of prayer promised in *Strom.* IV.26.171,2 (p.202 n26). What needs to be noticed here is the amount of Clement’s presentation in Chapter 7 which concerns silent prayer, the prayer of the mind, or thought prayer. We will only mention the highlights: the gnostic understands that God both knows and “hears” his thoughts (36,5); thoughts are considered as prayer (38,2; 39,6; 41,3; 43,1,5; 49,7); and God, as mind, hears the mind of the gnostic (43,3).

There are also a few items missing in Chapter 7 which need to be pointed out: first, references to Scripture are noticeably missing. Although Stählin and Hort-Mayor both note numerous allusions, there are really only five citations. This should not be a surprise; Clement said this would be the case (VII.1.1,3).

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169 See *Strom.* VI.15.131,4-132,2. This is an example of Clement referring to apocryphal works as the legitimate transmission of oral traditions surviving from Jesus; the particular work being referred to is from the *Assumption of Moses*; see Daniélou (Gospel Message, p.489).

170 *Strom.* VII.7.36-38,2; 39,6-40,1; 41,3-4; 42,8-43,1; 43,3-5; 45,1; 49,6-7.


172 *Strom.* VII.7.35,2 (Ps.119:164); 36,1 (Ps. 119:66); 43,8 (Ps. 141:2); 44,7 (Rom.7:23); 49,7 (Rom. 8:26).

173 On average Clement cites a Scripture (in *Stromateis*) every 13 lines; in VII.7 the citations come every 63 lines; see Appendix 4 (p.298).
This lack of Scriptural citations begs the question of whether Clement’s presentation of thought prayer is consistent with the Scriptural text. Does God know the thoughts of a person? Immediately Psalm 139:23 comes to mind, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts,” yet Clement never cites this text. Are thoughts ever considered as prayer in Scripture? In VI.12.101,3 Clement cites the example of Samuel’s mother, yet in the biblical text she is uttering silent prayer, her lips moving (1 Sam. 1:11-13). In his discussion of silent prayer, van der Horst says this text exerted a big influence in Judaism even though it is the only biblical story which supports the idea of silent prayer. The first post-biblical Jewish writer to mention silent prayer is Philo, but his thinking on the topic is more Platonic than biblical. The same text (or the commentary) in pseudo-Philo might have influenced Clement; it explains that Hannah did not want to pray audibly for fear that if God did not answer her prayer she would be taunted by her rival, Peninnah. Another reason it seems unlikely that the sole influence on Clement is the biblical text is that he refers to Hannah as “merely conceiving the thought” (ἐννοησία τοῦ μόνου) while the LXX records that she “was saying in her heart” (αὐτῇ ἐλάλησεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς). There really is no good example in the

174 Two other OT texts on this topic are 1 Chron. 28:9 and Ps. 94:11 (he cites this text in Strom. I.3.23,3, but his emphasis is on the foolishness of men’s thoughts rather than the fact that God knows the thoughts). 175 Van der Horst, Pieter W., “Silent Prayer in Antiquity,” Numen 41 (1994), pp.1-25. 176 Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum 50:5, cited by van der Horst (pp.13-14). Jacobson, Howard, A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, AGJU 31 (Leiden 1996), holds to a date for this document between 70-150 CE, pp.199-210. 177 Septuaginta, ed. by Alfred Rahlfs (Stuttgart 1935). This could be evidence that Clement is writing Books VI and VII outwith Alexandria and has no text in front of him; see p.145 n23.
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Scriptures of thoughts being considered prayer, although there are several instances where this could be implied.178

One other item which relates to silence and is missing in Chapter 7 is the idea of purity in thoughts, or ἄπαθετικα of the mind. We see this concept in several passages prior to the introduction of thought prayer in Book VI.179 When we come to VII.7 the concept of purity is consistently present, but purity with respect to thoughts is only alluded to.180

Following our outline of Book VII, we must look at silent prayer in Chapter 12 which we designated The reprise of the Gnostic.

3. Chapter 12: the reprise of silent prayer

We are using the topic of prayer as a key indicator of Clement’s purpose in Book VII, thus Chapter 12 is critical for our discussion of silent prayer. The topic of prayer virtually disappears in chapters 8-11.181 There are three items we want to notice in VII.12: first, the concept of thought purity is reintroduced into the discussion; whereas in VII.7 this concept was only alluded to, it is clearly presented in VII.12 (76,1; 77,1 and 78,5). Two other concepts concerning prayer are clearly presented in this chapter which have only been alluded to in VII.7: the gnostic receives from God without having to make petition, and is free to demand of God rather than to merely ask:

178 Prayer could be implied in any reference to meditation.
179 See p.244 n153. We have already mentioned that Clement’s first reference to silent prayer is IV.26.171, but he waits until Book VI for any discussion.
180 Strom. VII.7.36,3 says that the gnostic is pure even in his dreams (Cf. IV.22.142,4); another possible allusion is in 36,5 when he speaks of God knowing the thoughts after he has reviewed purity in other forms.
He will give to those who are worthy. Nor is petition superfluous, though good things are given without claim. [Quoting the Greek athlete who had trained hard]...“O Zeus, if all the requisite preparations for the contest have been made by me, come, give me the victory, as is right.”

The last item we want to notice in VII.12 is Clement’s citation of Matt. 6:21, “For where anyone’s mind is, there also is his treasure.” The important thing to note is that although Clement does speak more clearly about these three items in VII.12, he has already introduced them in prior discussion. Thus, there is nothing new in Clement’s discussion on prayer which has not been at least alluded to in VII.7, what we are calling the crown of Stromateis.

We have one last item to point out in this discussion on silence and silent prayer; it is a crucial one.

4. The gnostic prays with the “voice” of the angels

We have already seen (p.230 n105) that the topic of angelic beings appears quite often in Book VII. As with other items in this discussion, we see what seems like a foreshadowing of the role of angels in silent prayer in Book VI,

Nor yet any of the angels: for in the way that angels, in virtue of being angels, speak, men do not hear; nor, as we have ears, have they a tongue to correspond; nor would any one attribute to the angels organs of speech, lips I mean, and the parts contiguous, throat, and windpipe, and chest, breath and air to vibrate. And God is far from calling aloud in the unapproachable sanctity, separated as He is from even the archangels. Thus, then, the benefit that comes from God to men becomes known—angels at the same time lending encouragement. For by angels, whether seen or not, the divine power bestows good things. Such was the mode adopted in the advent of the Lord. And sometimes also the power

182 Note that I have included this section in the discussion of VII.12; see p.210 n48.
184 Strom. VI.7.57,4-5.
“breathes” in men’s thoughts and reasonings, and “puts in” their hearts “strength” and a keener perception... 185

Neither of these passages are crystal clear, but both seem to be referring to a mode of angelic communication. The first text speaks of how angels communicate in a way which “men do not hear.” Clement insists that angels do not have the anatomy for vocalisation, though there are many biblical texts which seem to contradict this. What Clement means is that angels speak in a way which is inaudible, or silent. The second text is speaking about the help which men sometimes receive from God through the ministrations of angels (Cf. Heb. 1:14); Clement is saying that these angels somehow communicate with men’s thoughts. This could be a reference to the role of angels as messengers; those which might carry the prayers of the saints to God and carry messages from God to the saints. 186 We have already seen this at work in Plato and Philo (see pp.221-222 n87,88). These two passages together help make sense of several short statements made in VII. 7 and 12; we will move from the obvious to the less obvious texts.

The gnostic, using the silent prayer mode like the angels, prays together with the angels. This is most clearly illustrated by a passage we have already noted above from VII.12,

Wherefore also, in eating, and drinking, and marrying (if the Word enjoin), and even in seeing dreams, he does and thinks what is holy. So is he always pure for prayer. He also prays in the society of angels, as being already of angelic rank, and he is never out of their holy keeping... 187

185 Strom. VI.17.161,2-3. See Casey’s comments, “...the ideas of virtuous men are conveyed to them from the divine mind by ministering angels...” (Excerpta, p.32). Casey points to Strom. VI.17.157,4. Cf. also, Paid. II.9.82,3 and Strom. IV.25.155,4.

186 My thanks to fellow research student, Chris Craun, who reminded me of this important aspect of angelology, see Gen. 19; 28:10-12; Is. 6; Dan. 10. These OT examples indicate audible communication between man and angelic beings; Clement probably interprets these allegorically. Origen refers to angels as messengers in De Oratione XI.1-4.

187 Strom. VII.12.78,5-6.
This text makes the most sense when we realise that the *gnostic* “being already of angelic rank,” knows how to pray like the angels — silently. He “is ever giving thanks to God, like the living creatures figuratively spoken of by Esaias” (80,4). In a passage which is similar to VI.7.57,4-5 he describes the hearing of God,

> For he is convinced that God knows and perceives all things—not the words only, but also the thought; since even our sense of hearing, which acts through the passages of the body, has the apprehension [belonging to it] not through corporeal power, but through a psychical perception, and the intelligence which distinguishes significant sounds. God is not, then, possessed of human form, so as to hear; nor needs He senses...But the susceptibility of the air, and the intensely keen perception of the angels, and the power which reaches the soul's consciousness, by ineffable power and without sensible hearing, know all things at the moment of thought. And should any one say that the voice does not reach God, but is rolled downwards in the air, yet the thoughts of the saints cleave not the air only, but the whole world.\(^\text{188}\)

Again, Clement is showing how the *gnostic* is able to be “heard” by God, who has no need of senses, because “the thoughts of the saints cleave not the air only, but the whole world.” The thoughts of the *gnostic*, his silent prayer, seem to be aided somehow by the angels who *speak the same language*. The *gnostic*,

> employs language which urges the magnitude of virtue in accordance with its worth; and shows its results with an inspired elevation of prayer, being associated gnostically, as far as possible, with intellectual and spiritual objects.\(^\text{189}\)

These VII.7 and 12 texts concerning angels seem anomalous when we consider the focus on the earthly life of the *gnostic*, yet within the scheme of silent prayer, based on the VI.7.57 passage, it all makes sense. The *gnostic* lives in space and time; prayer is an important part of his earthly spirituality, but silent prayer (the mode of the angels) enables his soul to soar above the uninitiated. Having this

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\(^{188}\) Strom. VII.7.36,5-37,3.

\(^{189}\) Strom. VII.7.45,1.
concept of angelic language enables Clement to hold to a “both/and” position with respect to living in this earthly dwelling and inhabiting the eternal realm.

But where does he get this concept of angelic language? There really are no biblical texts we can isolate which clearly give this concept. There is at least one Gnostic text, *The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* (NH VI,6)\(^{190}\) which gives an account very similar to that of Clement,

> ‘I have seen! Language is not able to reveal this. For the entire eighth, O my son, and the souls that are in it, and the angels, sing a hymn in silence. And I, Mind, understand.’

> ‘I am silent, O my father, I want to sing a hymn to you while I am silent.’

> ‘Then sing it, for I am Mind.’\(^{191}\)

This Hermetic document records a dialogue between an initiate and his mystagogue who is leading him into the contemplation of the eighth and ninth levels.\(^ {192}\) The concept of silence occurs several times, but becomes most clear in the portion above. However, we should observe one last part of this text,

> ‘O Trismegistus, let not my soul be deprived of the great divine vision (τηρεία). For everything is possible for you as master of the universe.’

> ‘Return to <praising>, O my son, and sing while you are silent. Ask (αἰτεῖν) what you want in silence.’\(^ {193}\)

Again we see the initiate being instructed to sing in silence. The connection of this singing to prayer becomes obvious with the next instruction, “Ask what you want...” We also see αἰτεῖν used like in Clement’s agrapha text (“Ask...think”) we discussed above. We are not suggesting a literary connection here, but this

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\(^{190}\) NHLE, pp.292-297.

\(^{191}\) *Discourse* 58, 16-27. See Segelberg, Eric, “Prayer Among the Gnostics? The Evidence of some Nag Hammadi Documents,” in *Gnosis and Gnosticism*, ed. by Martin Krause, NHS 8 (Leiden 1977), pp.55-69. All of the data from this tractate comes from Segelberg’s commentary which should be consulted, pp.64-68. This Hermetic document contains several categories which relate to Clement.

\(^{192}\) See the introduction to this tractate in NHLE, p.292.

\(^{193}\) *Discourse* 59, 16-22.
similarity does point to prayer in *Discourse*. The use of *θεωρία* in connection with silent prayer reinforces our theory that silent prayer has an important role in Clement’s *θεωρία* system. Segelberg notes other data in this tractate which point to a third century date: the ritual/liturgical forms, the “Greek loanwords [which indicate] the original language of the text” (which would include the use of *αἰτεω*), and particular “Jewish elements...handed down via Christian tradition.” While this evidence from the NH texts is similar, it does not mean that Clement borrowed this tradition from the Gnostics. It does indicate, however, that these concepts were not uncommon during Clement’s day; I would agree with Segelberg that the Gnostics probably inherited this tradition from the Church. With so little evidence as to his source, we must postulate that this is yet another aspect of Clement’s *παράδοσις*.

To conclude our analysis of Book VII, we want to briefly look at the concept which provides the backdrop for the practical *θεωρία* we find in *Stromateis*: the three objectives of the *gnostic*.

5.7 The Three Objectives of the *gnostic*

At least twice Clement lists three essential aspects of the *gnostic*: contemplation, heart purity by living in obedience to God, and ministry to others,

These three things, therefore, our philosopher attaches himself to: first, speculation (*θεωρίας*); second, the performance of the precepts; third, the forming of good men;--which, concurring, form the Gnostic.  

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194 Segelberg, pp.66-68.
195 *Strom.* II.10.46,1. There are three other texts: *Strom.* VII.1.4.2; VII.3.19.2 and VII.7.44.6-8. Although *θεωρία* does not occur in two of these texts (VII.1.4.2 and VII.3.19.2) it appears from the other two texts to be a similar listing. I realise here that I run the risk of doing that which I criticised in Hanson’s study (p.57 n120), but I would point out that while these uses of *γνωσις* seem to be allusions to *θεωρία*, I would not see all instances of these two terms as synonymous.
It is not surprising that we have four such texts in Book VII; we would expect Clement to point out these objectives in Book VII and he does not disappoint us. All three of these objectives pertain to the earthly life in space and time. We will examine each category in the context of Book VII which will strengthen our theory that this clearest presentation of the gnostic places an emphasis on his earthly life and experience, what we are calling *spiritual contemplation*.

Before we continue we should mention that these three objectives of the philosopher seems to be (like many other items in Clement) common stock among Middle Platonists. Albinus gives a similar listing,

> The concern of the philosopher, according to Plato, would seem to be channelled in three directions: (1) the contemplation and understanding of what exists, (2) the performance of what is noble, and (3) the actual study of reason. 196

It is quickly noticed that Albinus has not included the concept of forming good men, or helping others. In fact, he says almost the opposite in *Didaskalikos* 28.4, “We can attain likeness to God...if we use reason...in such a way as to distance ourselves from the great majority of human concerns.” Dillon points out that Albinus held to the basic threefold Middle Platonic doctrine, the third of which was “teaching.”197 but what we have here is very different from what we see in Clement. It is obvious here again that Clement has not only been influenced directly by Plato’s *Republic*, but also by Paul. We will discuss this further below.

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196 *Didaskalikos* 3.1. Lilla points out that this section “derives most probably from a school-book containing Peripatetic doctrines,” (*Clement*, p.135).

197 Dillon (*Alcinous*, pp.xxiii-xxiv).
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Because so much of this chapter has already discussed ΘΕΩΡΙΑ and ἀπαθεία, we will keep our discussion on these points brief, giving more discussion to this last point — the formation of good men.

5.7.1 ΘΕΩΡΙΑ: an extension of prayer

The life of the gnostic is marked by direct access and contact with God. While the concept of ΘΕΩΡΙΑ contains many elements, in Book VII Clement shows it to be intricately connected with prayer. We have seen that while ΘΕΩΡΙΑ includes some incorporeal elements, it is also closely connected to the prayers of daily life which revolve around the offices (VII.7.40,3-4 and 7.49,4). We will say more about ΘΕΩΡΙΑ in our concluding comments of this chapter.

5.7.2 Ἀπαθεία points to the earthly experience

It is clear from the overall context that the second element of Clement’s three objectives is referring to the concept of Ἀπαθεία. It is most clear in VII.7.44,

Thus he...possessing, through knowledge, what is the most precious of all, the best of all, being quick in applying himself to contemplation, retains in his soul the permanent energy of the objects of his contemplation, that is the perspicacious keenness of knowledge...by exercising himself in the training of abstinence from pleasures, and of right conduct in what he does; and besides, furnished with great experience both in study and in life, he has freedom of speech...which neither for favour nor fear conceals aught of the things which may be worthily said at the fitting time, in which it is highly necessary to say them.

Clement’s use of the term is consistent throughout Stromateis. Our purpose here is to see the physical nature reflected in Ἀπαθεία. We have stated that the three objectives of the gnostic are presented in Book VII as being earthly in nature. We have seen that Ἀπαθεία is basically the stripping of passions from the

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198 Strom. VII.7.44,4-6. I have added the emphasis and used ellipses to keep the rather clumsy text concise.
199 See §3.2 (pp.98-104); §4.2.3 (pp.157-159); §5.3.3 (p.208) and §5.5.5 (pp.229-231).
soul, the pursuit of virtue. Clement sums up our argument as to the earthly nature of \( \dot{\alpha} \pi \dot{\alpha} \theta \varepsilon \iota \alpha \) when he says, "works follow knowledge, as the shadow the body." \(^{200}\)

### 5.7.3 The forming of good men

It is perhaps fitting that this be the final section of this chapter. This idea, that the *gnostic* must concern himself with the formation of others is a critical one for Clement. We must remember the passage from Plato's *Republic* which we acknowledged in to be of importance to Clement: those who have ascended "to the vision of the good" must be compelled to help others. \(^{201}\) This concept is consistently present throughout Book VII. \(^{202}\) The *gnostic* is not allowed to withdraw himself from life (VI.9.75,3). Perhaps this is yet another way Clement goes against the Middle Platonism of his day (as we have just seen in Albinus, *Didask.* 28,4). This is also a critique against the hermits of his day who would pull away from society, but also from the Church to pursue their goal.

We cannot pass by this discussion without giving mention to the special place of *The Rich Man’s Salvation*. \(^{203}\) In this unique treatise, a commentary on the story of the rich young ruler, Clement is giving his interpretation of how the wealthy can be saved through using their wealth properly. He directs the rich to help the "soldiers" (*QDS* 35,1) of God by providing for their material needs; by "soldier" of course, he means the *gnostic*. This is clear from the rest of his exhortation,

> ...you should personally seek out men whom you may benefit, men who are worthy disciples... (31,7) Beg him to take it (money). Hasten, strive earnestly, fear lest he reject you. For he has not been commanded to take,

\(^{200}\) *Strom.* VII.13.82,7.

\(^{201}\) *Republic* 519D-E. See p.216 above.

\(^{202}\) *Strom.* VII.1.4,2; 3.16,1; 19,2; 7.35,4; 41,6; 44,8; 48,2; 49,2-3; 8.51,2; 9.52,1-53,6; 12.69,1-2; 76,2; 77,4; 77,6-78,1; 80,1-8; 13.81,4-5; 82,1.

\(^{203}\) I am using Butterworth’s translation of *Rich Man*, LCL (London 1919). My citations will follow the popular Latin abbreviation, *QDS*. I will continue to use the critical marks from Stählin (Band 3).
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but you to provide. (32,4-5)
The "worthy disciple" must be the gnostic. This is confirmed when Clement speaks more clearly as to the benefit the rich man will gain,

One is able to beg your life from God, another to hearten you when sick, another to weep and lament in sympathy on your behalf...another to teach some part of what is useful for salvation....what sweet services of loving friends! (35,1-2)

Our focus throughout this study has been on the gnostic; here we see the other side of Clement’s intention: the common believer who has need of help and encouragement in his simple faith. The gnostic “mediates contact and fellowship with the Divinity”\(^\text{204}\) and “gives himself for the Church.”\(^\text{205}\) He “relieves the afflicted, helping him with consolations, [and] encouragements...”\(^\text{206}\) Two needs are served at once: the simple believer receives pastoral care, and at the same time, provides the financial base for the gnostic so that he will not have to “desist from necessary things, I mean contemplation and from pure sinlessness.”\(^\text{207}\) Clement does not want the gnostic “to occupy himself about provisions.” (Ibid.)

This third element of Clement’s gnostic keeps this spirituality grounded in space and time, yet it also brings the system full circle — the gnostic must teach others for this spiritual pathway to continue. This brings us back to Stromateis I.1 where Clement urges his reader to hide the teaching they are about to receive.\(^\text{208}\)

But this does not mean to hide it completely; he also cites 2 Timothy 2:2, “...what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who

\(^{204}\) VII.9.52,1. This last phrase of VII.9.52,1 (“mediates contact and fellowship with the Divinity”) reminds us of the passage concerning δμιλαζε in the Symposium, see p.221 n87. Clement does not use δμιλαζε here, but the context and meaning are similar.
\(^{205}\) Strom. VII.9.53,5.
\(^{206}\) Strom. VII.12.69,2.
\(^{207}\) Strom. IV.5.21,1.
\(^{208}\) Strom. I.4.1.3.
will be able to teach others as well."^{209} Clement, having committed *gnostic* tradition to writing, knows that the continuation of that tradition depends on the professional teaching others,

...and besides, furnished with great experience both in study and in life, he has freedom of speech, not the power of a babbling tongue, but a power which employs plain language, and which neither for favour nor fear conceals aught of the things which may be worthily said at the fitting time, in which it is highly necessary to say them.^{210}

This ends our discussion of the practical aspects of Clement's *θεωρία*. Now we must attempt to draw some conclusions from this data.

### 5.8 Conclusions

Clement not only opens Book VII with the promise of a clear presentation of the life of the *gnostic*, but he also tells the reader why he is doing so: “to show the Greeks that the Gnostic alone is truly pious.”^{211} He then ends his clear discussion with two similar statements (VII.7.47,2 and 14.84,1). His intention is to present the *gnostic* as a Christian who understands and practices the Platonic concept of *θεωρία*. He has hinted at this all through *Stromateis* by using Moses to illustrate that the *gnostic* moves beyond the senses into the realm of *νοῦς*. But Clement goes further by showing that the *gnostic* contemplates, not the “Good,” but the immanent *δ θεός*.

Interestingly, his *conceal/reveal* methodology continues to be employed in Book VII. The frequency and discussion of prayer make it clear that Chapters 7 and 12 are critical in Clement's clearest presentation. It becomes clear that the

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209 *Strom.* I.1.3,3.
210 *Strom.* VII.7.44,8 and
211 *Strom.* VII.1.1,1.
Platonic concept of \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) is part of Christian prayer; could this be Clement’s strategy? to show the Greek that \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) is perfected by the Christian through prayer? Or could it be that Clement wanted to show the “simple” Christians that prayer was only perfected by the gnostic who practiced \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \)? Maybe it was both.

Even as we have investigated the practical, earthly characteristics of Clement’s \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) one might ask, ‘What exactly is the nature of this corporeal spiritual contemplation?’ Also, ‘What aspects of NT spirituality are included in this spiritual contemplation?’ Using our data from this chapter we can piece together a system which presents \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) and prayer closely linked. Völker and Wytzes both maintain that \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) comes through mystical prayer,\(^{212}\) but our study shows something more dynamic. Yes, prayer does lead to \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \), but \( \theta \varepsilon \omega \rho \iota \alpha \) is also a form of prayer. This system, on the one hand, contains a very practical element where the gnostic engages in normal life which is saturated with elements of spirituality: whether sailing or plowing the fields, he senses his intimacy with God; even if married with children he is keenly aware of God’s presence in his life; and he is always concerned for the good of his brethren. On the other hand, this system contains some rather mystical elements: the gnostic enjoys such a closeness to God that his thoughts are received as prayer; he has such intimacy with God that he will sometimes demand rather than ask; and he engages in silent prayer, which he shares with the angels.

\(^{212}\) Völker, p.419; Wytzes (II, p.138).
CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF θεορία

This unique angelic prayer is an important part of Clement’s θεορία. By it the gnostic rises up into the heavenly realms to have fellowship with God along with the angels, with saints of old, and with other living saints who understand this gnostic tradition. It is this aspect of Clement’s system which helps the ascension texts in Stromateis (especially those in VII.7 and 12) make sense.

As I attempt to answer the two important questions above, it must be remembered that Clement is not altogether clear. It will be difficult to give clear answers where Clement has failed to do so. One way to approach this difficulty is through negation: it is, perhaps, easiest to establish what Clement has NOT indicated.

_Spiritual contemplation_ is NOT dependent on the sacraments.

We have acknowledged at various points of this study that Clement does refer to both baptism and the Eucharist; he cannot be referred to as a non-sacramentalist. Yet when we come to the crucial treatment of prayer and spirituality in Strom. VII.7 and 12 — both are devoid of the sacraments. As was mentioned earlier (p.257) the gnostic does participate in the offices of prayer, but the context of Strom. VII.7 shows this to play only a small role in spiritual contemplation.

_Spiritual contemplation_ is NOT something sexual or erotic.

Although Clement uses the term δυσλία to emphasise the intimacy of the gnostic with God, this spiritual contemplation is NOT meant to be experienced in a sexual or erotic way. The _Song of Songs_ becomes an important tool in later spirituality writing for communicating this intimacy — yet Clement never cites
from the Song. We have already mentioned (p.222) the clear reasons which would prohibit Clement from an erotic rendering of this term.

**Spiritual contemplation is NOT wholly consistent with the NT witness.**

*Spiritual contemplation* lacks some critical NT aspects. It has already been noted that there is a lack of NT citations in VII.7, the most important section of *Stromateis* for understanding spiritual contemplation. Clement warns the reader that his presentation will not contain many citations from the Scriptures, but he gives the assurance that it will come from that source. This is apparent in only a few places,

Holding festival, then, in our whole life, persuaded that God is altogether on every side present, we cultivate our fields, praising; we sail the sea, hymning; in all the rest of our conversation we conduct ourselves according to rule. The Gnostic, then, is very closely allied to God...

35,6

Though...not opening the lips, we speak in silence, yet we cry inwardly. 39,6

If he but form the thought in the secret chamber of his soul, and call on the Father "with unspoken groanings"...

49,7

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col. 3:16-17

...for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. Rom. 8:26

It was mentioned earlier (p.217) that Clement seems to have been influenced by NT spirituality, specifically the text above from Colossians. While there is this "feel," Clement does not cite such texts. In fact, perhaps the most "spiritual" chapter in the NT (Romans 8) is mostly cited in *Stromateis* III and IV. Clement's citations of Romans 8 generally occur in his ethics, rather than in the

213 See pp.248-250; also Appendix 4, p.298.
214 *Strom.* VII.1.1,4.
215 *Strom.* III.11.77-78; IV.7.42-55. *Paidagogus* also has several citations from Romans 8.
gnostic spirituality. The more critical aspects of Clement’s spiritual contemplation have no NT witness: θεωρία, διαλύσα and ἑποτεῖα are not used in the Clementine fashion. The “Ask...think” text and the whole category of thought prayer is not expressly supported in the NT except the Romans 8:26 verse. Silent prayer as the “voice” of angels is certainly not found in the NT, nor is the ascent theme with the seventh and eighth regions.

Beyond these particulars, there is a general lack of an incarnational pneumatology — that the believer can only know God and have this contact because of the grace of God and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Clement clearly presents Christ the Logos as the means by which the gnostic has access to the immanent God. This is reiterated at the beginning of VII.7 (35,1), but the tone of the chapter gives the impression that the gnostic experiences this intimacy by his own efforts. Clement’s story at the end of VII.7 (48,4-6) with the Greek athlete demanding “...give me the victory, as is right,” agrees with this tone. This is very different from the injunction given by Jesus to the disciples, “So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’.” (Luke 17:10) The NT demands the kind of righteous living which Clement expects, but it carries this demand with an undercurrent that says, “Christ came to save sinners — of whom I am the foremost.”216 Although Clement will make comments along the way which imply the grace of God ("Him God helps, by honouring him with closer oversight." VII.7.48,1) the overall tone does seem to be

216 1 Tim. 1:15.
rather Stoic. It is not that he totally neglects the role of the Holy Spirit, rather it is a matter of emphasis. Clement does not hold out the infilling of the Holy Spirit as the means for holiness; rather the focus is on the reasoned volition and efforts which leads to \( \alpha \pi \alpha \theta \epsilon \iota \alpha \),

And this power he strives to his utmost to acquire, by obtaining command of all the influences which war against the mind; and by applying himself without intermission to speculation, by exercising himself in the training of abstinence from pleasures, and of right conduct in what he does...

It must be noted that Clement is operating in an era when pneumatology had not yet been worked out. That said, the presentation of discipline in *Paidagogus* and of \( \alpha \pi \alpha \theta \epsilon \iota \alpha \) in *Stromateis* does make Clement sound more Stoic than Christian.

Are we any closer to understanding the nature of this *spiritual contemplation*?

One thing seems certain: it is a synthesis of Clement's philosophical and Christian training. The Platonic influence of \( \theta \epsilon \omega \rho i \alpha \) is there, but so also is a Stoic influence, probably from Pantaenus. At the same time there is the Christian influence/training/tradition which he has received. There is no question that Clement knows the NT text; he has simply chosen not to cite it in his discussion of spirituality in VII.7. The influence of the NT text, very much like that of Plato, is subtle, but never far away in *Strom.* VII.7. Add to these literary sources Clement's \( \pi \alpha \rho \alpha \delta \omega \sigma i \varsigma \), which we have seen includes this *spiritual contemplation*, and it becomes clear that we are dealing with a unique spirituality. The NT influence of prayer is linked with the Platonic emphasis on \( \theta \epsilon \omega \rho i \alpha \) — the synthesis produces something rather unique. Although there is a lack of clear pneumatology, it

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217 He never cites Eph. 5:18 ("be filled with the Spirit") or any similar text for this purpose.

218 *Strom.* VII.7.44,7. See also, *Paid.* I.13.101,1 and the discussion in §4.2.3 (pp.157-159).
appears that the *gnostic* “is united to the Spirit” through *contemplation*.²¹⁹

Then Clement’s personal faith experience must be considered. I believe Clement is attempting to describe the intangible aspect of what he has experienced which goes beyond his structured system of dogma. How can he fully describe the interaction of his spirit with the Holy Spirit? Is this something which only happens in the mind? Or, is there some kind of metaphysical reality which takes place beyond the mind? When the soul ‘feels’ the presence of God, is this a physical phenomenon or is this simply the body interpreting that which the mind has convinced the body to believe? These are difficult questions for the modern scholar to answer; it is especially understandable for Clement to be somewhat vague if his tradition had not yet fully expounded the person and role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the *gnostic*.

Questions remain. How did Clement’s *spiritual contemplation* affect his spiritual progeny? Does Origen follow Clement in this practical presentation of θεωρία? These and other questions will be addressed in our last chapter as I present the conclusions to this study.

²¹⁹ Strom. VII.7.44,5.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

Because I have ended each chapter with a concluding section, I will attempt here to bring these various conclusions together and then to draw out their significance for the development of early Christian spirituality.

6.1 Early Egyptian Christianity and the Evidence of Clement

Imagine finding an old cardboard box in your grandmother's attic and upon opening it you discover pieces of a very old jigsaw puzzle, long forgotten, not in the original box, with no accompanying photo — that would be similar to what historians find with Christianity in Egypt in the first two centuries. Of course, one would be amazed if such a box included all the pieces!

We spent a good deal of time in Chapter Two looking at bits of evidence which resemble pieces of a puzzle. Each piece sits separately, yet when viewed together they begin to give us something of an outline for how early Egyptian Christianity might have been established. We noted several scholars who have tried, with varying degrees of success, to put these pieces together, yet few have added the distinct evidence from Clement of Alexandria: his testimony for the beginnings of the Church and his unique claim to an early oral tradition. If we take the evidence of Apollos given by Luke in Acts and the NT letter to the Hebrews as first century evidence, then we add the Epistle of Barnabas from the early second century, and finally add the evidence we have seen throughout this study from Clement, we have something of an outline. It is admitted that complete continuity is missing between all of these pieces, yet there are points of contact.
What we have is a form of Christianity which began closely connected to Judaism, as in the Palestinian Church. It also had points of contact with Platonic thought through the influence of Philo. Then we must factor in the Gnostic influence of Valentinus and Basilides, which seems to have coexisted with the more orthodox faith of the early second century. We end up with a mixture of Platonism, Gnosticism, and NT tradition. By the time we come to Clement we must factor in Philonic spirituality, and a much stronger Pauline influence. Clement is often referred to as an eclectic thinker and we have seen that he does seem to draw upon all the currents around him. His claim to be the recipient of an oral tradition which Jesus taught His disciples and was then handed down to the leadership of the Church should be given some consideration. This study shows that parts of Clement’s system cannot be adequately explained by the various elements we have mentioned above.

From what we see in Clement, we have no real reason to think his παράδοσις actually originated with Jesus. Our study opened with Stroumsa’s review of esotericism in the Early Church and the pronouncement that to try to identify any of these secret doctrines would be speculative.\(^1\) However, in the course of our study we have encountered numerous traditions which others have suggested were a part of Clement’s παράδοσις.\(^2\) We would add ἑωρία, a contemplative spirituality which includes an emphasis on the rising of the mind above and apart from the senses, and silent prayer which somehow lifts the gnostic into the

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1 Stroumsa, p.29.
2 Daniélou — angels and apocalyptic elements (Gospel Message, pp.453-458,460-461); Hanson — allegorical method (Origen’s, pp.57-58), and Mondésert (p.110); Trigg — negative theology (SP 31, 1997).
heavenly realms to join with the angels and the already departed saints in something like an ecstatic state of bliss. As we pointed out in our comments to conclude Chapter Two, Clement has designed *Stromateis* in a *reveal/conceal* fashion specifically to communicate this tradition of θεωρία.

In the end, there are too many pieces of the puzzle missing for exact answers, but there are also too many points of contact to dismiss Clement’s claim to an oral tradition which has some kind of apostolic foundation.

6.2 The Christian Platonist

Throughout our study we have acknowledged the influence of Platonic thought in Clement; there is no doubting his Platonism. Beyond his outward references and allusions, it consistently comes through. Yet, we have shown that his use of θεωρία is a decisive philosophical step which separates him from the Middle Platonism of his day. Of course, he would insist that Plato agrees with him! However, Clement is not simply a Platonist.

Clement is foremost a Christian — the biblical text is his most important one. There are distinct aspects of Clement’s use of θεωρία which reflect NT spirituality: the role of Christ the Logos; God is presented as immanent and the *gnostic* has direct access to Him; angels are beings who help the *gnostic* in this life and in the final ascent; and, the *gnostic* must remain actively involved with fellow believers.

Clement’s use of θεωρία presents something new in the literary witness of early Christian spirituality. The θεωρία we see in *Stromateis* is a unique synthesis
of a Platonic category with NT spirituality. He says to the Platonists, "the Gnostic alone is really...pious" and even if the philosopher did the same virtuous things he would fall short because he is not motivated by love. Only Clement’s spiritual man enjoys this ὀμιλία, this intimate conversation with God. Yet he is also saying to the searching Christian that there is a hidden teaching, the "meat" which Paul spoke of — it is θεωρία, the contemplation of God. Plato spoke of this, but he learned it from Moses! It would be incorrect to say that Clement is presenting an alternative faith; for him this is the authentic Christian faith. We might call it Christian Platonism, but Clement refers to it as the faith “descended by transmission...unwritten by the apostles.” That it represents a philosophical faith, thus an aberrant one to the orthodox, he justifies with his claim to an oral tradition.

6.3 What are the Characteristics of Clement’s θεωρία?

This is really the question which has directed the present study. Are we any closer to an answer? As I mentioned in §5.8 (pp.260-266), the nature of Stromateis does make it difficult to determine with great precision exactly what Clement means with reference to any number of issues. If I am correct that θεωρία represents a significant part of Clement’s secret παράδοσις and that he has constructed Stromateis to reveal/conceal this tradition, it makes perfect sense that

3 Strom. VI.1.1,1; VII.1.1,1; VII.9.54,2.
4 Strom. VII.10.59,2-4. This discussion begins at Strom. VII.9.53,5. Clement has already discussed this topic of being motivated by love rather than fear of punishment or hope for reward: Strom. II.9.41,1-45,3 and IV.22.135,1-23.148,2.
5 Strom. VI.7.61,3.
6 I want to add just one more piece of evidence to this theory. When you consider that θεωρία occurs over 90 times in Stromateis, but only once in Protrepticus, only four times in Paidagogus, only twice in Excerpta Ex Theodotes, only once in Elogiae Propheticae, not a single time in Quis Dives Salvetur, nor in Hypotyposeis, it becomes obvious that this concept is only really dealt with by Clement here and the frequency shows that it is an important one.
we have this difficulty. One thing is also clear which makes the understanding of 

θεώρια more difficult: Clement uses the term in more than one way. In Chapter Two (pp.35-38) it was noted that θεώρια is used to indicate both an intellectual and a spiritual contemplation. Then in Chapter Four (pp.177-184) I demonstrated how the “face to face” texts were used in much the same fashion. This dual usage has surfaced throughout our study, but now we need to clearly make this distinction.

6.3.1 θεώρια as intellectual contemplation

Finding textual support for intellectual contemplation is not difficult and will find no detractors — that Clement uses θεώρια in the same fashion as Plato is not disputed. Because there is no debate on this point, and the various texts are listed in Appendix 1 (p.296), I will give just three obvious examples:

Rightly, then, Plato says, “that the man who devotes himself to the contemplation (τὸν θεωρητικὸν) of ideas will live as a god among men; now the mind is the place of ideas, and God is mind.” He says that he who contemplates (τὸν θεωρητικὸν) the unseen God lives as a god among men...."For when the soul, rising above the sphere of generation, is by itself apart, and dwells amidst ideas"...now become as an angel, it will be with Christ, being rapt in contemplation (θεωρητικὸς), ever keeping in view the will of God...

For he who hopes, as he who believes, sees intellectual objects and future things with the mind....If, then...we also say that truth is something, yet we have never seen any of such objects with our eyes, but with our mind alone. Now the Word of God says, “I am the truth.” The Word is then to be contemplated (θεωρητικὸς) by the mind.

Prosecuting, then, the proportion of harmonies in music; and in arithmetic noting the increasing and decreasing of numbers, and their relations to one another; and how the most of things fall under some proportion of numbers; studying (θεωρῶν) geometry, which is abstract essence....And by astronomy, again, raised from the earth in his mind, he is elevated along with heaven, and will revolve with its revolution; studying ever divine things, and their harmony with each other...⁷

⁷ Strom. IV.25.155,2-4; V.3.16,1-2; VI.10.80,1-2.
In this usage νοῦς is in the forefront. The mind is to ponder abstract things like ideas and the relationships between numbers — this is *intellectual contemplation*.

6.3.2 Θεωρία as *spiritual contemplation*

The clearest examples of Θεωρία which indicate something more than *intellectual contemplation* are the ascension texts. In these texts we find concepts and categories which are not found in the *intellectual contemplation* texts. The contemplation we find in these texts speak of the gnostic in immaterialist terms, but also with an immediacy which suggests something more than just the νοῦς. As we have seen, this comes out most clearly in Strom. VII.7. One such text (which does not occur in Strom. VII) is a good one to illustrate *spiritual contemplation*,

Such, according to David, “rest in the holy hill of God,” in the Church far on high, in which are gathered the philosophers of God, “who are Israelites indeed, who are pure in heart, in whom there is no guile;” who do not remain in the seventh seat, the place of rest, but are promoted, through the active beneficence of the divine likeness, to the heritage of beneficence which is the eighth grade; devoting themselves to the pure vision of insatiable contemplation (ἀκοέστου θεωρίας εἰλικρίνει ἐποπτεία). When these texts are compared to those of *intellectual contemplation*, the difference is quite apparent. I will now offer a listing of attributes, consistently found in the *spiritual contemplation* texts, which bring out this difference.10

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8 See p.122 n119. The ascension texts which most clearly point out this *spiritual contemplation* are printed in Appendix 5, pp.299-300.
10 Because these concepts have already been presented there is little need to discuss them here; I will give the section/page numbers where these prior discussions can be found.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

1. The “vision” (§3.4, pp.120-121; §4.3.3, pp.183-184; §5.5.6, pp.235-237)

Clement presents the gnostic as having a tangible contact with God, “seeing” God “face to face,” the ἐποπτεῖα. This vision is more than “seeing” with the mind; it is a spiritual experience — not simply a mental exercise. As was shown earlier (pp.232-234), in these texts the gnostic sees God very clearly,

...the divine vision not in mirrors or by means of mirrors, but in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision...
...teaching to gaze on God, face to face, with knowledge and comprehension...
...to behold everlastingly God Almighty, “face,” it is said, “to face.”

These three examples come from ascent passages, but the presence of the other categories help to clarify this difference between intellectual and spiritual contemplation.

2. The ascent of the soul and rest (§3.5.4, pp.132-136; §5.5.5, pp.228-234)

The gnostic is somehow elevated into the heavenly realms for this experience of “seeing” God. This is not just a mental state — the use of ὑπάρξις calls for something more (see §5.5.2, pp.220-224); the intellectual contemplation texts do not have this immediacy.12 This is not a physical state, but it is tangible nonetheless. The soul is elevated and fully aware — this is not an ecstatic state; on this point I agree with Völker.13 The gnostic enjoys the spiritual “rest” of the Ogdoad. Although it could be argued that Clement is simply referring to worship on Sunday, I have already shown that the thrust of this rest is θεωρία (see pp.130-132). This spiritual rest indicates something other than a physical phenomenon.

11 Strom. VII.3.13,1; 10.57,1; 11.68,4.
12 There is only one exception to this: Strom. IV.25.155,4.
13 See our discussion in the next section, §6.3.4, pp.276-278.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

3. Joining the angels (§5.5.5, pp.229-231; §5.6.4, pp.251-255)

Silence and the role of silent prayer is a critical part of Clement's \( \vartheta \varepsilon \omega \varphi \iota \alpha \). It helps to explain the texts which present the concepts of "vision," "face to face," and the ascent of the soul. I believe Clement has synthesized his own Platonic thought with the \( \pi \vartheta \rho \delta \omicron \sigma \varsigma \) and other Jewish apocalyptic understandings to explain this mystical experience of \( \vartheta \varepsilon \omega \varphi \iota \alpha \): through silent prayer (the angelic voice) the gnostic soul engages in pure worship side by side with the heavenly choir of angels and the already departed saints. It is vital to see how the topic of angels does not really come into Clement's treatise until Strom. VII. (p.230 n105) The intellectual contemplation texts do not have this category.\(^{14}\) We will see in the next section how this points to a movement from intellectual to spiritual contemplation.

4. Perfection, terms of intimacy and Strom. VII.7

In addition to the attributes listed above which are not found in the intellectual contemplation texts, I need to add a few other items. References to "perfection," usually related somehow to \( \dot{\alpha} \pi \dot{\alpha} \theta \epsilon \iota \alpha \), consistently appear in textual evidence related to spiritual contemplation; this concept is not common in the intellectual texts (see pp.100-104; pp.229-231). Secondly, in key spiritual texts Clement uses terms of intimacy such as "friend" and "son:"

For by the service of what is best and most exalted, which is characterized by unity, it renders the Gnostic at once friend and son....The Gnostic, consequently, in virtue of being a lover of the one true God, is the really perfect man and friend of God, and is placed in the rank of son.

\(^{14}\) Again, Strom. IV.25.155 is the exception.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

For the holiness of the Gnostic, and the reciprocal benevolence of the friend of God... ¹⁵

This second text is not directly connected to θεωρία, but it appears in Strom. VII.7 which we have demonstrated is crucial to the understanding of Clement’s spirituality scheme (pp.201-204; §5.5, pp.217-237). There is only one text outside the clearly spiritual ones which has this element.¹⁶ This attribute of intimacy again takes us back to the discussion on the nature and purpose of Strom. VII.7 which I have demonstrated in §5.5 has a distinctly immanent and personal tone.

6.3.3 There is a movement from intellectual to spiritual contemplation

I have made this claim throughout this study. Now I want to point to the most critical texts where Clement seems to indicate this movement:

The dogmas taught by remarkable sects will be adduced; and to these will be opposed all that ought to be premised in accordance with the profoundest contemplation of the knowledge (τὴν ἐποπτικὴν θεωρίαν γνώσεως), which, as we proceed to the renowned and venerable canon of tradition, from the creation of the world, will advance to our view; setting before us what according to natural contemplation (τῆς φυσικῆς θεωρίας) necessarily has to be treated of beforehand, and clearing off what stands in the way of this arrangement. So that we may have our ears ready for the reception of the tradition of true knowledge; the soil being previously cleared of the thorns and of every weed by the husbandman, in order to the planting of the vine. For there is a contest, and the prelude to the contest; and them are some mysteries before other mysteries. ¹⁷

We have already demonstrated (pp.42-44 and pp.118-119) how this text shows the use Clement will make of philosophical argumentation. Here we note his use of these terms to indicate his intention of this movement from intellectual to spiritual contemplation. Dealing first with the “natural contemplation,” is easy enough —

¹⁵ Strom. VII.11.68,1-3; 7.42,3.
¹⁶ Strom. V.6.40,1. It can be seen in Appendix 1 (p.296) that this contemplation text is not clearly one or the other.
¹⁷ Strom. I.1.15,2-3.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

τῆς φυσικῆς θεωρίας is translated elsewhere as "science." But the goal is to come to "the profoundest contemplation of the knowledge" (τὴν ἐποπτικὴν θεωρίαν γνώσεως). This combined use of ἐποπτεία and θεωρία points to spiritual contemplation (pp.118-119). This same movement is mentioned at the close of Book I,

The Mosaic philosophy is accordingly divided into four parts,—into the historic, and that which is specially called the legislative, which two properly belong to an ethical treatise; and the third, that which, relates to sacrifice, which belongs to physical science (τῆς φυσικῆς θεωρίας); and the fourth, above all, the department of theology, "vision," (ἡ ἐποπτεία) which Plato predicates of the truly great mysteries.

This movement within the whole treatise must be seen: this becomes clear through the ascension texts (which occur mostly in Book VII), but comes to a climax in Strom. VII.7.

6.3.4 θεωρία happens in space and time (Chapter Five)

Clement’s θεωρία is grounded in space and time. The gnostic is fully engaged in this life, even his θεωρία is not altogether separate from this world. This θεωρία is not an ecstatic experience which the gnostic moves into and out of without awareness. Völker says Clement was not describing ecstatic experience, but he does go on to say he experienced “infused” contemplation. Wytzes says Clement’s gnostic “lives in the world of the future, in eternity,” but although he has this knowledge he has not yet been made perfect. This equivocation by Wytzes can be frustrating, but I agree with him almost completely. If this fails to

18 Strom. I.9.43,1; 15.73,4; 28.176,2; II.2.5,1.
20 See pp.73-81; 184-190; and pp.201-204 above.
21 Völker, pp.425-426 and 431. He admits this term is not used until later.
22 Wytzes II, p.137.
help us in defining just how Clement’s gnostic experiences this θεωρία in space and time, it is because Clement is not completely clear in his presentation. There is equivocation in him as well.

What does seem clear however, is that the gnostic is fully aware of this experience, seems to be able to enter into it at will, and somehow the reality of the experience never leaves. Because the gnostic seems to have some kind of control of this θεωρία, Völker argues that it cannot include ecstasy.\(^\text{23}\) I would have to disagree with him when he takes Clement’s use of words like “unceasingly” at face value; Völker does this to show that Clement cannot be describing an ecstatic state, since it is never-ending. I agree that this is not ecstasy. It would seem to me that Clement is speaking more about the hope, desire and intention of the gnostic rather than a state which has already been completely attained: “...does not he who always holds uninterrupted converse with God...grow at every step...?”\(^\text{24}\) If there is growth in this contact with God, the “uninterrupted” cannot be taken so literally. In another place θεωρία is referred to as “the summit, [where the gnostic] will pray that contemplation may grow and abide.” (VII.7.46,4) This is brought out more clearly in Book VI:

And of things that are good we know that some are desirable for themselves, as knowledge; for we hunt for nothing from it when we have it, but only [seek] that it be with us, and that we be in uninterrupted contemplation, and strive to reach it for its own sake.\(^\text{25}\)

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\(^{23}\) He cites VII.7.44,7, p.425 n4. Here ecstasy is seen as an experience one cannot control which comes and goes randomly. The most common view would be “the annexation of the mind by the divine πνεύμα and the expulsion of the νοοσ Ἰδιὸς,” Daniélou (Origen, p.302).

\(^{24}\) Strom. VII.7.35,4.

\(^{25}\) Strom. VI.12.98,3.
These texts indicate that θεωρία is something the gnostic is fully aware of, desires to experience constantly, and is an experience which grows. What we see here is a precursor to the ἐπέκτασις of Gregory of Nyssa.²⁶

6.3.5 Clement holds a position of “both/and”

What we find in Clement’s use of θεωρία is a synthesis of two separate systems: Platonism (or Middle Platonism) and Christianity.²⁷ This makes it difficult at times to pin him down, and this is what we find with θεωρία. Clement’s θεωρία has both immaterialist and practical characteristics. This is why I think his use of silent prayer, the angelic “voice,” is so important. It is an attempt to explain what happens to the gnostic when he rises up into the heavenly realms to commune with God. The gnostic pulls himself away from the senses, yet is fully aware; must keep himself pure and remain passionless, yet is perfect, having already been counted worthy to see God “face to face;” must pray for θεωρία to grow, yet experiences it unceasingly. Clement’s θεωρία system is full of this kind of tension.

I do believe that Clement’s presentation is more than theory. Völker clearly presents Clement as one who has experienced this mystical encounter and Wytzes goes further, “Clement must have been transposed into the other world,”²⁸ an allusion to Paul’s description of “a person...caught up to the third heaven.”²⁹

²⁶ Clement only uses this term (ἐπέκτασις, “press forward”) once in reference to moving forward in virtue (Strom. VII.2.10,1-2), but the concept is certainly in his writing. For this concept in Gregory of Nyssa, see Daniélou, J., Platonisme et Théologie Mystique (Paris 1944), pp.197, 291-307. We will discuss this further in §6.4.2, pp.286-287.

²⁷ As we have seen throughout this study, Clement is influenced by Philo (which was also a synthesis), Jewish apocalypticism and Gnosticism, but I believe the main two currents of thought are Plato and Paul.

²⁸ Völker, p.412; Wytzes II, p.142.

²⁹ 2 Cor. 12:1-4. Clement refers to this text only once in Stromateis: V.12.79,1.

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Although Clement only refers to Paul’s mystical experience once, it surely must have figured into his system. I cannot fully agree with Wytzes here, but I do believe we are reading about personal experience. When we read about the gnostic in VII.7 it is quite difficult to imagine that Clement is speaking only in theory; his language and description seem to show that this flows from personal experience,

Prayer is, then, to speak more boldly, converse with God. Though whispering, consequently, and not opening the lips, we speak in silence, yet we cry inwardly. For God hears continually all the inward converse. So also we raise the head and lift the hands to heaven, and set the feet in motion at the closing utterance of the prayer, following the eagerness of the spirit directed towards the intellectual essence; and endeavouring to abstract the body from the earth, along with the discourse, raising the soul aloft, winged with longing for better things, we compel it to advance to the region of holiness, magnanimously despising the chain of the flesh. For we know right well, that the Gnostic willingly passes over the whole world, as the Jews certainly did over Egypt, showing clearly, above all, that he will be as near as possible to God.30

It appears Clement has allowed his enthusiasm to slip; he has given the reader a glimpse into his secret garden — the one Bigg says he failed to enter! As was mentioned earlier (pp.265-266), I believe Clement is attempting to write about the experience of his NT faith and encounter with God — and there are loose ends.

6.4 Clement’s Influence on Christian Spirituality

Clement’s influence on the developing Church was overshadowed by Origen, yet because of the latter’s greatness, the former is not forgotten. Indeed, Clement influences later Christianity through the writings of Origen; and Origen’s influence extends into the fourth century with the Cappadocians.

30 Strom. VII.7.39,6-40,2.
The focus of our attention here will be Clement’s influence on Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. These two spiritual writers have had a huge impact on Christian spirituality through the centuries. The scope of this work demands that we only offer general comments with respect to the topic of contemplation and prayer. I will briefly discuss where these three writers share points of contact, show a few places of contrast, and point to the basic lines on which Christian spirituality developed through them.

6.4.1 Christianity and Platonism

Like Clement, both Origen and Gregory are influenced by Platonism, yet both have a greater commitment to the biblical text; this is somewhat due to the continuing development of orthodoxy. Where Clement sometimes views Scripture through a Platonic lens, Origen and Gregory clearly view the world through the lens of the biblical text. Their method is dominated by the allegorical method, but Scripture is never absent. The Platonic underpinnings are always there, but are more like the eyeglass frames which hold the lens; thus Platonism is always there, it is just more subtle than with Clement. Like Clement, Origen would deny any conflict between the truth revealed through Plato and that of the biblical text. However, Origen always starts with the biblical text which he then Platonises; Clement feels entirely free to begin with Plato and then add the biblical text.

With Gregory, working in the wake of the Nicean Council, the emphasis towards

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31 There are several studies to be consulted on this topic (spirituality in these writers), a few of which would be: Louth (Origins, 1981); Williams (1990); Völker (1952); see also, Daniélou, Jean, Origen, ET by Walter Mitchell (London 1955), especially the last chapter, “Origen’s Theology of the Spiritual Life,” pp.293-309.
33 Greer, pp.6, 30-33; Louth (Origins, pp.53-54).
an orthodoxy with a firm Scripture canon made this shift even greater; yet there can be no doubt of the Platonic influence.\(^{34}\)

**6.4.2 Spirituality and \(\phi\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha: \) points of contact**


Both Origen and Gregory follow Clement in the presentation of a spiritual pathway. In Chapter Four I demonstrated that Clement presents a threefold spiritual pathway; both Origen and Gregory have this in common with Clement who, probably inherited it by being in the stream of Middle Platonism.\(^{35}\) This pathway is illustrated in Origen by using the three books of Wisdom in the OT: he designates Proverbs as the first stage - morals, Ecclesiastes as the second - physics, and Song of Songs as the third - contemplation.\(^{36}\) Gregory follows this system, but is “less clear...that these three ways are strictly *successive*, as in Origen.”\(^{37}\) We have shown that \(\phi\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha\) represents the highest stage in Clement’s system (§4.3, pp.174-190); Origen follows Clement in this (although we will see points of difference), but in Gregory’s pathway the final stage cannot include contemplation because God is beyond all knowledge.\(^{38}\) This takes us to our next point of contact — the transcendence of God.

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\(^{34}\) Malherbe, Abraham and Ferguson, Everett, *Gregory of Nyssa: Life of Moses*, CWS (New York 1978), pp.3-5. This is the translation used for *Life of Moses*.

\(^{35}\) See Dillon (*Middle Platonists*, pp.43-51); Louth (*Origins*, pp.57-58, 82-83); Greer, pp.23-25; Daniélou (*Origen*, pp.304-305) says that Origen “took the idea from Philo,” but we have clearly shown in this study that Clement has such a threefold pathway as well.

\(^{36}\) Prologue of the *Comm. on the Song*, (CWS, p.231); Daniélou (*Platonisme*, p.18); Louth (*Origins*, p.57). I have used the terms given in Daniélou (*Origen*, p.305).

\(^{37}\) Louth (*Origins*, p.82). See Daniélou on this point as well (*Platonisme*, p.22).

\(^{38}\) Louth (*Origins*, p.82). Louth does admit ambiguity in his discussion on this last stage in Gregory, “God is unknown in his essence, yet makes himself known in his energies (Gregory uses the terms *ousia* and *energeiai*...)...This provides a straightforward resolution of the paradox that God seems to be both unknowable and yet can be known. But Gregory is not satisfied...” (p.91).
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2. The transcendence of God

We have shown that Clement shares the view of an utterly transcendent God with Middle Platonism (§3.1, pp.89-95), but also maintains that the soul of the Christian can make contact with God (§5.2, pp.197-198; §5.5, pp.217-237). Origen’s views on transcendence seem to be similar to Clement’s, though there has been much debate on this point.\(^{39}\)

Gregory, on the other hand, holds to utter transcendence — the soul, being created, can have nothing in common with God, the uncreated One. This is the result of the Nicean affirmation of *creatio ex nihilo*.\(^{40}\) In *Homily VII on Ecclesiastes* Gregory expounds this concept and describes man as standing on “a sheer precipitous rockface” which “plunges down to an immense depth.” The sense of vertigo one feels looking over such a precipice “is the experience of the soul when it goes beyond what is accessible to time-bound thoughts in search of what is before time...”\(^{41}\) But how does this affect the development of spirituality in the soul?

3. Interaction with God

As was discussed fully in §5.5 (pp.217-237), Clement presents God as transcendent, but also shows how the *gnostic* has direct access and contact with this God. Louth clearly shows that Origen follows in this pattern,

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\(^{39}\) Origen discusses the nature of God most fully in *On First Principles* which is the locus for the debate. In a philosophical argument (*On First Princ.* II.9.1) he presents rationale for a limitation on God’s power. A basic presentation can be found in Daniélou, *Origen*, pp.203-208; also, see Butterworth, G.W., *Origen on First Principles* (London 1936), pp. ix-xix.

\(^{40}\) See Louth’s discussion on this point (*Origins*, pp.80-97).

\(^{41}\) *Hom. Ecc.* VII.413.5. I have used the translation by Stuart George Hall and Rachel Moriarty, *Gregory of Nyssa Homilies on Ecclesiastes* (New York 1993).
Origen quite readily talks about ‘knowing God’ or ‘seeing God’... And contemplation is the means of this, for contemplation is, for Origen, a transforming vision.  

This comes out most clearly in his *Commentary and Homilies on the Song of Songs*. Origen is the first Christian writer to use the Song of Songs predominately as a description of Christ, the Bridegroom, wooing the soul of the individual believer. Speaking of how the Bridegroom often appears to the delight of the Bride, then leaves again, Origen says:

*God is my witness that I have often perceived the Bridegroom drawing near me and being most intensely present with me; then suddenly he has withdrawn and I could not find him, though I sought to do so.*

Here we have Origen not only commenting on the encounter of the soul with Christ, but also speaking of personal experience. It seems very clear that Origen believed the soul could come into contact with God through spiritual senses.

When we come to Gregory on this point we find a definite shift. Origen’s *Commentary on the Song of Songs* greatly influenced Gregory; like Origen, he sees this close contact with God in the Song of Songs which represents the third stage. Another key work in understanding the spiritual journey of Gregory is his *Life of Moses*. In both of these works Gregory presents the soul in a movement into light, cloud, and darkness. We cannot go into depth on these three movements, so what needs to be seen is the progression from light into greater and

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42 Louth (*Origins*, p.73).

43 Hipppolytus of Rome had written a commentary, but the main focus was the union of Christ with the Church; only sparingly did he move to the individualistic level. See Louth (*Origins*, p.55) and Daniélou (*Origen*, p.304). It is quite interesting that Clement never cites from the Song of Songs.


45 Williams shares this view (pp.40-42) as does Louth (*Origins*, pp.68-74), although Louth tends to see it more centred in νοήσις. See especially, Daniélou (*Origen*, pp.304-309).

46 Daniélou (*Origen*, p.304); Louth (*Origins*, pp.81-83).
greater darkness. The light comes at the burning bush encounter where Moses responds by taking off his sandals. Gregory describes this step by saying "the dead and earthly covering of skins...must be removed from the feet of the soul."47 In other words, the initial light is to bring us to a place of purification. The cloud and darkness come when God is present on the mountain which is covered with dark cloud, and then when Moses enters into that darkness.48 Anticipating a query from his reader about moving from light to darkness, Gregory comments on this movement,

What does it mean that Moses entered the darkness and then saw God in it? What is now recounted seems somehow to be contradictory to the first theophany, for then the Divine was beheld in light but now he is seen in darkness....Scripture teaches by this that religious knowledge comes at first...as light. Therefore what is perceived to be contrary to religion is darkness....But as the mind progresses and, through an ever greater and more perfect diligence, comes to apprehend reality, as it approaches more nearly to contemplation, it sees more clearly what of the divine nature is uncontemplated. For leaving behind everything that is observed, not only what sense comprehends but also what the intelligence thinks it sees, it keeps on penetrating deeper until...it gains access to the invisible and the incomprehensible, and there it sees God.49

Here we have the pinnacle of Gregory's mystical spirituality in a summary: the soul moves from light to darkness as it moves from knowledge of God to the understanding that God is beyond all knowledge. But we must ask here, 'Is Gregory saying that the soul cannot have contact with God?'

47 Life of Moses II.22; see II.19-22.
48 Life of Moses II.162-169. It is acknowledged by most scholars that Gregory's three stages are not clearly defined. Louth includes the cloud in his observations of darkness (Origins, pp.82-88), while Daniélou uses the light, cloud, darkness outline in his discussion (Platonisme, pp.22-23). Daniélou comments on Gregory's threefold outline: "...if these major summits are separated, the passages from one to the other are badly defined, being encumbered by parasitic developments which force us to consider points of minutiae." p.23.
49 Life of Moses II.162-163.
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Though Gregory affirms that God is beyond the knowledge of man, he still indicates that there is an experience in some other reality, a mystical experience which he expresses in paradoxical language. In the account where Moses sees God in the darkness (Life II.162-163), and again where he sees the back parts of God (Life II.219-255), we are confronted with a seeming contradiction in Gregory. Does he mean that one can see and know God, or not? What does he mean when he says, “this is the seeing that consists in not seeing?” (Life II.163) Is this experience totally contained in the mind, or is there anything to be said for a contact which is beyond the intelligence? Vladimir Lossky gives this reply:

[This vision of God is based on] two series of scriptural texts which seem contradictory and mutually exclusive. Indeed, alongside passages from the Holy Scripture in which there can be found a formal negation of any vision of God, who is invisible, unknowable, inaccessible to created beings, there are others which encourage us to seek the face of God and promise the vision of God as He is, evidently representing this vision as the ultimate felicity of man.50

Although Gregory seems to explain this (Life II.219-255) as something different from experience, Daniélou points to his Commentary on the Song of Songs (XLIV, 1001B-C) as evidence that he does not exclude some kind of real experience,

We have here the very depth of mystical experience...this feeling of presence...infinitely real, and at the same time always veiled....that is to say in an order other than that of ordinary experience, in a supernatural, ineffable order, or reserve.51

51 Daniélou (Platonisme, p.196). Louth follows this view as well (Origins, pp.89-96), but mentions the study of MacLeod, JTS 21 (1970) as one which might suggest “that Gregory’s fundamental position makes any real mysticism impossible.” (p.81) Williams (pp.56-58) doubts the common reference to the participation in God’s ‘energies’ saying, “it is fraught with serious logical problems,” (p.57) Logically, the “like is apprehended by like” (MacLeod’s topic) concept does preclude any kind of contact with the divine, but Gregory seems to keep the door open with and through the use of paradox.
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It is not at all easy to figure out what Gregory means. His explanation of “for man cannot see me and live” (Ex. 33:20) is strained; it seems that he just cannot accept this statement at face value and gives another paradoxical answer, “Thus, what Moses yearned for is satisfied by the very things which leave desire unsatisfied.”

Gregory is full of paradox which seems to point to something more than intellectual understanding of God’s utter transcendence.

4. Ἐπέκτασις: eternal progress in the spiritual life

We have seen in Clement that the gnostic is to continue to grow in this θεωπία (§6.3.5, pp.278-279). We see this same concept in Origen, but it is more defined. Daniélou points to the Homilies on Numbers where Origen comments on the use of tents as temporary shelters for travellers:

Those who devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom have no end to their labours. How could there be an end, a limit, where the wisdom of God is concerned? Travellers, then, on the road to God’s wisdom...[are on] perpetual journeys...never-ending travels...the road before them...stretches to infinity....Thus she [the soul] finds fresh spiritual experiences....So it is that pressing forward the whole time, she seems to be always on the road...

Here Origen uses the word to describe the soul’s advance which St Paul used of himself in Philippians 3:13, ἐπέκτασις, “to press forward.” He does not specifically cite the Philippians text in this fashion, but as Daniélou points out, the above passage contains a clear use of the concept. The idea that where God

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52 Life of Moses II.235.
53 Hom. Num. 17.5. This citation comes from Daniélou (Origen, pp.303-304).
54 On First Principles IV.3.14; On Prayer XXV.2; XXXIV; there is an interesting text in his Preface to the Epistle to the Romans where he discusses the growth in St Paul’s spiritual life, judging that he had grown from the time he wrote the Philippian letter to when he wrote the Romans. It is interesting that Clement only cites the Philippians text once (Paid. 1.6.52,2) pointing to Paul’s example against those who “call themselves perfect,” but the concept, as we have shown, is certainly there.
has no limit the soul’s advance to perfection can have no limit is developed more fully by Gregory.

The unending progress in the life of virtue is the driving force for Gregory’s Life of Moses. He opens the treatise with an allusion to Philippians 3:13 and it could be argued that Life of Moses is an exegesis of this text:

...in the case of virtue we have learned from the Apostle that its one limit of perfection is the fact that it has no limit. For that divine Apostle, great and lofty in understanding, ever running the course of virtue, never ceased straining toward those things that are still to come...Since, then, it has not been demonstrated that there is any limit to virtue except evil, and since the Divine does not admit of an opposite, we hold the divine nature to be unlimited and infinite...It is therefore undoubtedly impossible to attain perfection, since, as I have said, perfection is not marked off by limits... 55

Here Gregory is expressing his doctrine of ἐπέκτασις: since God has no limit, the pursuit of virtue must be limitless. In another passage (Life II.236-238) where Gregory is discussing Moses seeing the back parts of God, he uses the same argument for unending spiritual growth. We want to focus on just two statements made in this rather long section on eternal progress which give the sum of Gregory’s ἐπέκτασις:

This truly is the vision of God: never to be satisfied in the desire to see him. But one must always, by looking at what he can see, rekindle his desire to see more.

So Moses, who eagerly seeks to behold God, is now taught how he can behold Him: to follow God wherever he might lead is to behold God. 56

Rather than being the performance of particular acts, perfection for Gregory is making continual progress.

55 Life of Moses, Prologue 5 and 7-8.
56 Life of Moses II.239 and 252.
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5. The role of prayer in spirituality and θεωρία

In Chapter Five I demonstrated how prayer was an integral part of Clement’s θεωρία. With Origen prayer moves away from the spontaneity we found in 
Strom. VII.7 and adopts the structured saying of prayers, specifically the “Our Father.”57 This is the case with Gregory as well; his work dedicated to prayer is, in fact, On the Lord’s Prayer.58 When we look at these two works on prayer the dissimilarity with Clement stands out immediately. The simple fact that Origen and Gregory are working through the Lord’s Prayer implies that the focus be on structure and discipline. The concept of δύτιλια is not readily present.59 The focus of this prayer is not communion or conversation (in which two parties speak to one another), but on the believer: the words spoken, the attitude of the heart, and the virtue in the life.60 There are very few references to silent prayer.61

There are numerous points where it does appear that Origen works under Clement’s influence: references to the angels praying with the believer (On Prayer 11.1-4; 27.11; 31.5); contemplation is mentioned (Ibid., 9.2; 17.2; 25.2; 27.2). Possibly the most significant point of contact is Origen’s use of the “milk...meat”

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57 I am using Greer’s translation of On Prayer, CWS (London 1979). Origen probably knows the On Prayer of Tertullian. Tertullian’s treatise is the earliest exposition we have on the Lord’s Prayer, Tertullian’s Treatises Concerning Prayer, Concerning Baptism, translated by Alexander Souter (London 1919), p.xiv. Souter dates On Prayer between 200-206 A.D. (p.xii), making it difficult to know whether his or what we have in Strom. VII.7 was written first.

58 See Hilda C. Graef’s translation, St Gregory a Nyssa: The Lord’s Prayer, the Beatitudes, ACW 18 (London 1954).

59 Origen does mention δύτιλια (On Prayer 9.2) in a manner after Clement, but only once.

60 This is made clear in Origen’s On Prayer 2.2.

61 In this I must strongly disagree with Mortley’s comment, “...there is a very great emphasis on the role of the Spirit in fostering unspeaking communication....This particular theme is strong in the On Prayer...” (Word II, p.70). Origen does say this about the Spirit groaning through the “sighs” of the believer (On Prayer 2.3), but there are far more references to spoken prayer than to silent prayer.
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analogy.\textsuperscript{62} Section 27 is a rather lengthy section which might say something of its relative importance. Other than the two digressions we have noted, the message of this section is that there are two levels of teaching from the Word. It is as if he is walking around the edges of what Clement said through this analogy, but he does not clearly connect the bread to $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$.\textsuperscript{63}

Gregory’s \textit{On the Lord’s Prayer} is more focused on the development of virtue than even Origen’s \textit{On Prayer}. Gregory sees language as an inadequate vehicle for approaching God;\textsuperscript{64} prayer is another spiritual discipline. The mystical side of faith, the $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$, is something which is divorced from both speech and the senses altogether. Prayer becomes something the believer must do on the way to $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$; it is also an essential discipline to keep free from sin and close to God:

> Whatever anyone may set out to do, if it is done with prayer the undertaking will prosper and he will be kept from sin, because there is nothing to oppose him and drag the soul into passion...For a person who does not unite himself to God through prayer is separated from God...For the effect of prayer is union with God, and if someone is with God, he is separated from the enemy.\textsuperscript{65}

\textit{On the Lord’s Prayer} reads more like some of Gregory’s ascetical works. Here are a few examples of prayer from the “Ascetical Works”:\textsuperscript{66}

> [The wise man] will properly keep separate his purity of soul by devotion to prayer, fearing lest, through preoccupation with passion, he become wholly flesh and blood, in which the spirit of God does not reside.\textsuperscript{67}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{62} On \textit{Prayer} 27, on “give us this day our daily bread” is given to the idea of a deeper spiritual teaching. He cites John 6:27 as does Clement, “Do not labor for the food that perishes,” in 27.2 (see our discussion of the “milk...meat” analogy: pp 40-46; 83-85; 162-172; and 212-214). There are two parts of section 27 which seem like lengthy digressions: 27.7-8, which is Platonist thought on $\Theta\Xi\Omega\Sigma\Omega$, and 27.13-17, which seems to be discussion on eschatology.

\textsuperscript{63} One comment comes close, “...the angels are nourished by the Wisdom of God and empowered to fulfill their special tasks by their contemplation of the truth with Wisdom...” (\textit{On Prayer} 27.10)

\textsuperscript{64} Mortley (\textit{Word II}, pp.175-191). It should be noted that Mortley is not saying Gregory felt language to be useless; thus, “...even those writers who are normally considered to be the most prone to the emphasis on mystery and on the negative way, the Cappadocians, have been seen to give a thoroughgoing endorsement to language,” p.254.

\textsuperscript{65} On \textit{the Lord’s Prayer} I, (Graef, p.24).


\textsuperscript{67} On \textit{Virginity} 8, (Callahan, p.34).
\end{footnotesize}
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So wicked and hard to cure and strong are those things possessed in the depths of our souls that it is not possible to rub them out and to remove them through human efforts and virtue alone unless through prayer we take the power of the Spirit as an ally... 

Contrast this with the fact that prayer is rarely mentioned in the spirituality texts. It could be argued that prayer is implied, but that would still represent a big difference between Gregory and Clement. There are too many occasions in the Commentary and Homilies on the Song of Songs where Gregory (this applies equally for Origen) could have easily given an interpretation which included prayer. The easiest place would have been in the commentary where he speaks of the spikenard sent out by the Bride (Song of Songs 1:12).

It is clear that prayer for both Origen and Gregory is not as closely connected with ὑποθήκη as in Clement. I will give further comment on this topic in this next section as we try to make some general observations as to the direction spirituality takes from Clement to Origen and Gregory.

6.4.3 The trajectory of ὑποθήκη from Clement to Origen and Gregory

One thing is certain: spirituality from Clement to Gregory became better defined. The spiritual pathway was clearly laid out, necessitated somewhat by the currents of opposition. As Louth so aptly demonstrates, the Nicean Council and

68 On the Christian Mode of Life, (Callahan, p.137).
69 Comm. on the Song III.824A-C as cited in Louth (Origins, p.93).
70 Life of Moses II.182 and 185. Yet these do not come during the intimate encounters of Moses with God.
71 Louth (Origins).
creatio ex nihilo pushed for a better defined doctrine of the nature of God — this brought changes to spirituality.

The Church moved away from the spontaneous spirituality represented by Clement’s gnostic. Daniélou, commenting on ecstasy, suggests that Origen represents a reaction against the Montanists.\footnote{Danielou (Origen, p.302). He cites several scholars who, against Völker, do not think Origen experienced ecstasy, Ibid.} As the Church developed there was a general move away from the senses, away from emotional excesses, and towards a more intellectual faith. Clement was the beginning of this move; but Origen made it more complete.\footnote{See Daniélou’s comments, Ibid., pp.302-303.} This is certainly not to suggest that Origen and Gregory did not have deeply felt devotion — one cannot come to such a conclusion after reading their works; but the Church as a whole was slowly growing into the two-tiered structure of the lay people and the athletes of God, the monks.

Clement’s gnostic, whose whole life is prayer and converse with God in space and time — “we sail the seas hymning” — becomes the mystical Bride who somehow has some kind of contact with God. Prayer has become another spiritual discipline, like fasting or giving to the poor; it is for beginners. Prayer, at least for the beginners, is structured, as in reciting “Our Father.”\footnote{Clement possibly refers to “Our Father” in Strom. VII.7.49,6 and certainly does in Strom. VII.13.81,1, but it is missing from his discussion on prayer other than this. Beyond this, the Fathers began to place more stress on posture and form; see Gaston, Robert W., “Attention and Decorum in Early Christian Prayer,” PSEC 1 (Brisbane 1998), pp.81-96.} Silent prayer continues, but the rationale for it changes: aspects of Clement’s angelic associations remain, especially in Origen. But silence for Gregory is driven by his affirmation of utter transcendence.\footnote{Mortley’s work (From Word to Silence II) is important for understanding silence in Gregory.} It appears that discursive prayer is meant for those who have not
yet "come to know that what is divine is beyond all knowledge."76 Once this stage is reached, and the soul begins to move into the realm of the invisible, silence becomes the more appropriate response.

What happens with θεορία in Origen and Gregory? It appears to me that while prayer became more grounded in the senses that θεορία moved more into the area of the mind. The contemplation of Origen and Gregory are more Platonic than that of Clement, driven I think, by transcendence. Louth presents the contemplation in Origen as "the union of the mind with the Logos, and only indirectly as contemplation of God."77 It is clear when reading his works on the Song of Songs that Origen is speaking about a real experience in contemplation, but as Louth pointed out, it certainly does not have the kind of immediacy we see in Clement. There is intimacy in Origen’s contemplation, but it is somehow less tangible.

Once we come to Gregory transcendence has taken over; here is how Louth sums up the situation,

"There is no final vision...for there is no possibility of sight in this darkness....This denial of the ultimacy of theoría, or contemplation, is what marks Gregory off most sharply from Origen..."78

Although I cannot fully agree with Louth here, Gregory certainly departs from the example of Clement. Daniélou refers to Gregory’s “feeling of presence” as “the

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76 Life of Moses II.164.  
77 Louth (Origins, p.72).  
78 Ibid., p.97. As I mentioned (pp.282-287), I find more room for contact in Gregory than does Louth. It seems to me that Gregory may have been trapped in his written expression by the philosophical/theological polemics with Eunomius.
very depth of mystical experience."\textsuperscript{79} It is certain as we read him that θεορία, like his portrayal of Moses, is shrouded in mystery.

On the positive side, Origen seems to have eliminated some of the less Christian elements of Clement’s spirituality. The ascent of the soul is no longer tainted with heavenly levels; holiness is no longer a permanence of ἅπαξθεωρία as much as a struggle against temptation.\textsuperscript{80} Gregory then takes the concept of perfection one step further with his use of ἐπέκτασις, as we have already seen.

6.5 Final Comments

Ultimately the historian is on a quest for knowledge — and answers. I have presented the data, made observations, and offered my opinions, but I am certain I have not fully explained Clement’s θεορία system. In his analysis of \textit{Timaeus}, Dillon says that Plato intended to be vague,

\begin{quote}
What is disturbingly plain, arising out of all this frantic activity, is that the Master himself managed to avoid giving any definitive account of what he meant to his immediate followers.\textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}

If Plato purposed to be vague and Jesus spoke in parables, should we be surprised when Clement is not exceedingly clear? We cannot give definitive answers about Clement’s system because he had no intention of presenting it clearly.

What we see in Clement is a testimony to early Christian spirituality. My intention in this thesis has been to show that Clement is the first literary witness we have of the adaptation into the Church of the Platonic category θεορία and the

\textsuperscript{79} Daniélou (\textit{Platonisme}, p.196).
\textsuperscript{80} See Völker’s comments on this, p.421.
\textsuperscript{81} Dillon, “Tampering with the \textit{Timaeus},” (1990), p.72. See also, Dillon, “The Riddle of the \textit{Timaeus},” (1997), p.42.
spirituality which accompanies it. We have just seen how Origen, and then Gregory, build on Clement’s foundation, but they have changed it as well. Neither of these great thinkers move away from Clement because he has been too vague, or his ideas too poorly presented, but because he has been too radical.

Origen moves away from many of Clement’s ideas because he disagrees with them; he never mentions Clement and it appears in many instances that he is trying to distance himself from his predecessor. Although he does mention the oral tradition, he seems embarrassed with Clement’s boldness about it. Origen’s *On Prayer* certainly presents prayer differently from Clement: silent prayer and the role of angels are mentioned, but not discussed; basing the treatise on the “Our Father,” references to baptism and the Eucharist all show that he is much more concerned with the sacraments than is Clement. This must surely be a major point of difference between Clement and the two later writers; although he does not speak against the sacraments, neither is Clement an aggressive advocate. Ultimately I think Origen is embarrassed by Clement’s view of the accessibility and immanence of God to the believer. Origen resorts to the mystical imagery to illustrate the contact one can have with God.

Gregory follows Origen, and certainly disagrees with Clement on the availability of God’s contact with the believer. Clement’s *gnostic enjoying ὑμνάνθης* with God is replaced with the sense of presence the soul has with the energies of

---

82 I will limit myself to comment only on the differences Origen seems to have with Clement with respect to prayer, spirituality, and ἔναρξη. It could be said that Origen has written both *On First Principles* and *Stromateis* as a rebuttal of Clement. He could be in disagreement with Clement on his departure from the city to avoid arrest. He does not seem to share the same positive evaluation of Greek philosophy (although his thoughts are thoroughly impregnated with it). I also think Origen was unhappy with Clement’s radical affirmation of married life, see *Strom*. VII.12.70,6-8; 80,4.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

God. A radical shift indeed.

We have seen how spiritual writers following Clement, whether they acknowledged it or not, built on the foundation laid in *Stromateis*. The spirituality he makes reference to, with all the gaps and tensions, was recognisable to his spiritual progeny. Yet something was lost: the spontaneity, the simple, bold assertion that the believer has close fellowship with God — all the time. The Church developed: the spiritual pathway became more complicated; where the asceticism of *Paidagogus* was a basic outline, elaborate ascetical schemes were developed which further enhanced the two-tiered structure of ordinary believer and consecrated monk. Theological battles spilt over into spirituality and something was lost:

> Holding festival, then, in our whole life, persuaded that God is altogether on every side present, we cultivate our fields, praising; we sail the sea, hymning; in all the rest of our conversation we conduct ourselves according to rule. The Gnostic, then, is very closely allied to God...  

We need to give Clement his rightful place as the first significant, post-apostolic spiritual writer. It is with Clement that a distinct spiritual pathway is introduced into Christian spirituality. He needs more accurate representation when studies are done on Christian spirituality. When Clement’s spirituality writing is isolated, without being encumbered by the surrounding *conceal/reveal* texts, the vibrant spontaneity of his spiritual man can be clearly seen. It is hoped that this study has brought Clement’s vibrant spirituality more into the open.

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83 See Louth’s comment on Gregory’s presentation of the “energies” of God as the agent with which God interacts with mankind, footnotes 26 and 39 above (*Origins*, p.91).

84 *Strom.* VII.7.35,6.
APPENDIX 1

Occurrences of θεωρέω/θεωρία in Stromateis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book I</th>
<th>Book II</th>
<th>Book III</th>
<th>Book IV</th>
<th>Book V</th>
<th>Book VI</th>
<th>Book VII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.10,4-5</td>
<td>2.5,1-2</td>
<td>(1.3,2)</td>
<td>1.1,5</td>
<td>2.4,2-3</td>
<td>1.3,4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.15,2</td>
<td>θ (2.5,5)</td>
<td>3.9,1</td>
<td>1.13,2</td>
<td>7.61,1-2</td>
<td>θ 2.10,2-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (1.15,2)</td>
<td>2.8,2-3</td>
<td>5.21,1</td>
<td>θ 3.16,1</td>
<td>9.75,1-2</td>
<td>θ 2.11,1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (1.15,2)</td>
<td>10.46,1</td>
<td>6.40,1</td>
<td>6.36,4</td>
<td>θ 10.80,2</td>
<td>θ 3.13,1-2 (3x)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (1.15,2)</td>
<td>10.47,4</td>
<td>16.99,2-3</td>
<td>6.40,1</td>
<td>θ 11.91,4-5</td>
<td>θ 3.16,6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 6.33,1</td>
<td>(10.47,4)</td>
<td>I 17.108,2</td>
<td>8.54,4</td>
<td>θ 12.98,3</td>
<td>θ 7.44,6-7 (3x)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 9.43,1</td>
<td>17.77,4</td>
<td>22.136,2</td>
<td>9.58,5</td>
<td>θ 14.108,1</td>
<td>θ 7.46,4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (11.51,4-5)</td>
<td>S 20.125,2</td>
<td>θ 22.136,4</td>
<td>θ 10.66,2</td>
<td>θ (14.108,1)</td>
<td>θ 7.49,4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 15.73,4-5</td>
<td>I 21.129,4</td>
<td>23.152,3 (2x)</td>
<td>θ (10.66,2)</td>
<td>θ 15.121,1-2</td>
<td>θ 10.56,5-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (19.94,6)</td>
<td>21.130,2</td>
<td>(23.152,3)</td>
<td>θ (11.67,3)</td>
<td>θ 15.132,5</td>
<td>θ (10.57,1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S 21.143,3</td>
<td>θ (25.155,2) (3x)</td>
<td>θ (11.71,1)</td>
<td>S 15.138,1</td>
<td>θ (10.57,1)</td>
<td>θ 10.59,7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (25.155,2)</td>
<td>25.155,2 (3x)</td>
<td>θ 12.78,2</td>
<td>I 17.150,4</td>
<td>I 11.60,2-3</td>
<td>θ (11.68,4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (25.166,2)</td>
<td>S (14.138,3)</td>
<td>θ (12.78,2)</td>
<td>I 17.150,4</td>
<td>I 11.61,1</td>
<td>θ (11.68,4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ (28.176,2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I 18.168,4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References with a small “x” represent multiple occurrences.
References in parentheses are the occurrences of ἔνοπτεια which we show in §3.4 (pp.120-121) is closely related to, and sometimes used synonymously with θεωρία.
Book VIII, being a redacted compilation of notes, is not included in this chart. See the discussion in §4.1.3 (pp.148-152).

Symbols in the chart:
S = a physical ‘sight’ phenomenon; a visual spectacle
I = intellectual ‘seeing,’ or contemplation
θ = θεωρία, spiritual contemplation
• = the meaning is not clearly distinctive enough to classify
APPENDIX 2

Occurrences of Prayer in Stromateis

![](chart1.png)

Occurrences of Prayer in Strom. VII

![](chart2.png)
APPENDIX 3

Frequency of γνῶσις
(A Sampling of 8 Chapters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bk.Ch.</th>
<th>I.1</th>
<th>II.18</th>
<th>III.12</th>
<th>IV.6</th>
<th>V.1</th>
<th>VI.16</th>
<th>VII.7</th>
<th>VII.12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lines of text</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occurrences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines per Occurrence</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumulative result for all 8 chapters: Average lines of text/occurrence = 25.0

A sample of eight chapters (one from each book of *Stromateis* in addition to VII.7 and 12) shows the frequency difference of VII.7 from the rest of the work. The target for the sample chapter size was 300 lines of text, based on VII.7. The largest chapter from each book which was also the closest in size was selected. The lines of text are based on the Stählin edition. The number of occurrences of γνῶσις are given as estimates; variations such as γνώσεως, and γνωστική have been taken into consideration, but some variations may have been missed.

APPENDIX 4

Frequency of Scriptural Citations
(A Sampling of 8 Chapters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bk.Ch.</th>
<th>I.1</th>
<th>II.18</th>
<th>III.12</th>
<th>IV.6</th>
<th>V.1</th>
<th>VI.16</th>
<th>VII.7</th>
<th>VII.12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lines of text Citations</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines per Citation</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumulative result for all 8 chapters: Average lines of text/citation = 13.1

The same method used in Appendix 3 was used here. The Scriptural citations are based on the Wilson translation, ANCL, as he has chosen a fairly strict guide for citations (not using 1-2 word allusions).
APPENDIX 5

Categories in *Stromateis* VII Ascension Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3.13.1-3</th>
<th>10.56-57,2</th>
<th>11.68.1-5</th>
<th>13.82.4-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>perfection</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angels</td>
<td>no?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;stages,&quot; or &quot;steps&quot;</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;summit&quot;</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;rest&quot;</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐποπτεῖα</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἑκάρια</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;face to face&quot;</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ὁμιλία</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“son,” or “friend” of God</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII.3.13.1-3

Now I pass over other things in silence, glorifying the Lord. But I affirm that gnostic souls, that surpass in the grandeur of contemplation the mode of life of each of the holy ranks, among whom the blessed abodes of the gods are allotted by distribution, reckoned holy among the holy, transferred entire from among the entire, reaching places better than the better places, embracing the divine vision not in mirrors or by means of mirrors, but in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision which is the privilege of intensely loving souls, holding festival through endless ages, remain honoured with the identity of all excellence. Such is the vision attainable by “the pure in heart.”

This is the function of the Gnostic, who has been perfected, to have convene with God through the great High Priest, being made like the Lord, up to the measure of his capacity, in the whole service of God, which tends to the salvation of men, through care of the beneficence which has us for its object; and on the other side through worship, through teaching and through beneficence in deeds.

The Gnostic even forms and creates himself; and besides also, he, like to God, adorns those who hear him; assimilating as far as possible the moderation which, arising from practice, tends to impassibility, to Him who by nature possesses impassibility; and especially having uninterrupted converse and fellowship with the Lord.

VII.10.56,3-57,2

It leads us to the endless and perfect end, teaching us beforehand the future life that we shall lead, according to God, and with gods; after we are freed from all punishment and penalty which we undergo, in consequence of our sins, for salutary discipline. After which redemption the reward and the honours are assigned to those who have become perfect; when they have got done with purification, and ceased from all service, though it be holy service, and among
saints. Then become pure in heart, and near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation; and they are called by the appellation of gods, being destined to sit on thrones with the other gods that have been first put in their places by the Saviour. Knowledge is therefore quick in purifying, and fit for that acceptable transformation to the better. Whence also with ease it removes [the soul] to what is akin to the soul, divine and holy, and by its own light conveys man through the mystic stages of advancement; till it restores the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest; teaching to gaze on God, face to face, with knowledge and comprehension. For in this consists the perfection of the gnostic soul, in its being with the Lord, where it is in immediate subjection to Him, after rising above all purification and service.

VII.11.68,1-5
For by the service of what is best and most exalted, which is characterized by unity, it renders the Gnostic at once friend and son, having in truth grown “a perfect man, up to the measure of full stature.” Further, agreement in the same thing is consent. But what is the same is one. And friendship is consummated in likeness; the community lying in oneness. The Gnostic, consequently, in virtue of being a lover of the one true God, is the really perfect man and friend of God, and is placed in the rank of son. For these are names of nobility and knowledge, and perfection in the contemplation of God; which crowning step of advancement the gnostic soul receives, when it has become quite pure, reckoned worthy to behold everlastingly God Almighty, “face,” it is said, “to face.” For having become wholly spiritual, and having in the spiritual Church gone to what is of kindred nature, it abides in the rest of God.

VII.13.82,4-7
Now the temple is great, as the Church, and it is small, as the man who preserves the seed of Abraham. He, therefore, who has God resting in him will not desire aught else. At once leaving all hindrances, and despising all matter which distracts him, he cleaves the heaven by knowledge. And passing through the spiritual Essences, and all rule and authority, he touches the highest thrones, hasting to that alone for the sake of which alone he knew. Mixing, then, “the serpent with the dove,” he lives at once perfectly and with a good conscience, mingling faith with hope, in order to the expectation of the future. For he is conscious of the boon he has received, having become worthy of obtaining it; and is translated from slavery to adoption, as the consequence of knowledge; knowing God, or rather known of Him, for the end, he puts forth energies corresponding to the worth of grace. For works follow knowledge, as the shadow the body.
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