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**ΑΙΡΕΣΙΣ AND ΑΙΡΕΤΙΚΟΣ
IN THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL
OF THE II AND III CENTURIES
(CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND ORIGEN)**

In order to think about the development of Christian doctrine in the Patristic era in relation with the heterodox views, it is worth to consider how the two main representatives of the Alexandrine School looked at them. The aim of this work is to analyze the different meanings of the terms *αἵρεσις* and *αἵρετικός* in Clement's *Stromata* and Origen's *Contra Celsum* with the intention of outlining how in the beginning of the history of Christian Church the main thinkers were establishing the ground so as to dialogue with their contemporary culture.

1. Clement of Alexandria. As we may see from Otto Stählin's *Register*¹, the central term *αἵρεσις* has many meanings in the whole of Clement's work. First of all, it is related to "the act of choice"², from which the word *προαἵρεσις*; then, it is also a synonym for a "school" or a "sect"³, for example, a particular philosophical Greek intellectual community⁴ or a barbarian one⁵. For this reason, the same term refers to a religious sect⁶ and, especially, it signifies Christian "heresy"⁷.

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¹ Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Werke*, IV: *Register*, ed. O. Stählin – U. Treu, GCS 39/1, Berlin 1980².

² Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* I 13, 1; I 17, 2; I 84, 1.5; I 89, 1; II 12, 1; III 67, 2; IV 91, 2; VI 72, 1; VI 156, 2; VII 12, 4; VII 48, 7; VIII 22, 3.

³ Cf. *ibidem* I 37, 6; I 57, 1; I 57, 4; II 117, 5; VI 5, 1; VI 35, 1; VI 55, 3; VI 67, 2; VI 83, 1; VI 89, 3; VIII 16, 1.

⁴ Cf. for Stoic school: *ibidem* I 64, 1; VII 92, 4; VII 95, 1; for Peripatetic: *ibidem* I 63, 5; II 127, 3.

⁵ Cf. *ibidem* I 57, 1; VII 90, 3-4.

⁶ Cf. *ibidem* I 69, 6; III 25, 7; VII 41, 1.

⁷ Cf. *ibidem* I 15, 2; I 44, 3; I 95, 6.7; I 96, 1; I 99, 4; II 34, 4; II 48, 1; II 52, 6; II 67, 4; II 74, 4;

It is worth to notice that the first meaning of ἀίρεσις concerns the choice. In the *Stromata* the freedom of choice is a very central question which Clement uses to distinguish the Christian thought from the fatalism implied by the Stoic philosophy and the deterministic naturalism of some Gnostics: in fact, man can attain salvation with his free will, and also faith and the real γνῶσις are freely acquired⁸. At the same time, man may be mistaken with his freedom and take a wrong way of thinking. When this happens, the term ἀίρεσις takes a highly negative connotation, as Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski notes in his work⁹. Indeed, it represents a wrong, even malicious choice, often of an intellectual nature; it suggests conscious deformation of a message. In addition, that sort of misinterpretation expresses itself in immoral acts and a misleading ethical code. It produces erroneous teaching of a religious nature and ultimately creates false concepts of God. Consequently those Christians who disfigured a religious message and then made immoral choices voluntarily, placed themselves at the opposite pole to orthodoxy, that of heterodoxy (ἑτερόδοξος), as Clement states in the *Stromata*¹⁰.

With respect to the other meaning of ἀίρεσις, i.e. “school” or “sect”, it is possible to note that it is related to the other two meanings. In fact, man can freely choose to follow truth or its contrary, so that he falls in erroneous heresies, but this decision is due to the different schools of thought which differently interpret reality¹¹. In the VII book of the *Stromata*, the Alexandrine Father, in order to defend faith from opposed arguments, claims that as “among the Greek philosophers and the schools in medicine very sects (αἰρέσεις) have

II 79, 3; III 11, 2; III 25, 1; III 40, 1.2; III 71, 1; III 98, 5; IV 2, 2; IV 170, 2; V 26, 4; VI 123, 3; VII 89, 4; VII 90, 5; VII 91, 2.3; VII 92, 3.7; VII 93, 4; VII 94, 4; VII 97, 1.3; VII 98, 4; VII 101, 1.3; VII 103, 6; VII 105, 5; VII 107, 3.5; VII 108, 1; VII 109, 1.

⁸ Cf. idem, *Gli Stromata*, transl. G. Pini, Milano 1985, footnote 16. 63-64. See also: F. Trisoglio, *La salvezza in Clemente Alessandrino*, in: *Pagani e Cristiani alla ricerca della salvezza (secoli I-III)*, XXXIV Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 5-7 maggio 2005, SEA 96, Rome 2006, 639-659.

⁹ See P. Ashwin-Siejkowski, *The notion of “heresy” in Stromateis VII and its use in Clement of Alexandria’s polemic*, in: *The Seventh Book of the “Stromateis” – Proceedings of the Colloquium on Clement of Alexandria (Olomouc, October 21-23, 2010)*, ed. M. Havrda – V. Hušek – J. Plátová, Boston – Leiden – Köln 2012, 277-290.

¹⁰ Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* VII 92, 7, ed. A. Le Boulluec, SCh 428, Paris 1997, 282. As Mark Edwards illustrates in his work, Clement is one of the five great theologians who flourished between 180 and 250 and who considered the “Scripture as the sole foundation for argument against heresy; at the same time it is the Church [...] that furnishes the norms of interpretation” (M. Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy in the Early Church*, Farnham Surrey 2009, 5).

¹¹ This connection between “school” and “Church” or “sect” made by Clement is due to his idea that Christ himself is a “Pedagogue” and “Teacher”. For this reason as Oleh Kindiy underlines in his study, “the distance between the School and the Church is almost non-existent in Clement’s theological view. Education and personal growth are deepened and realized in sacramental initiation and eternal liturgy” (O. Kindiy, *Approximating Church and School in Clement of Alexandria’s “Stromateis” VII*, in: *The Seventh Book of the “Stromateis”*, p. 291-298).

sprung up”, but none “hesitates to philosophize or to have recourse to a physician on account of the different schools in medicine”¹², so that it is possible to find different interpretations within the Christian thought, but it doesn’t compromise its truth. And he continues saying that

“by the exercise of the apprehension of contemplation, and by reasoning of the most decisive character, we must distinguish the true from the seeming. And as, while there is one royal highway, there are many others, some leading to a precipice, some to a rushing river or to a deep sea, no one will shrink from traveling by reason of the diversity, but will make use of the safe, and royal, and frequented way; so, though some say this, some that, concerning the truth, we must not abandon it; but must seek out the most accurate knowledge respecting it”¹³.

This is the responsibility of Christian: he has to use his reasoning and freely choose the right way. Hence, faith implies an intellectual and spiritual, i.e. moral, ascetic, adherence to the unique Church founded by Christ, while the heretics are divided into many mistaken doctrines and are dominated by passions, thus they can’t distinguish truth from error. Therefore, the true Gnostic is the man of faith who by studying the biblical texts and the Greek disciplines is enlightened by Christ and participates at God’s life, while the others are “Gnostic falsely so called”¹⁴.

Consequently, Clement states that the truth can be discerned with human reason and critically and rationally verified by the comparison with the Scriptures and the teachings of Church, while error, like delusion or false perception, comes from sense perception and self-deception.

However, it is worth to underline that Clement’s aim is showing that heresy as a phenomenon is not a new, or exclusively Christian, shameful characteristic as it can be found also in Greek philosophical tradition and schools in medicine¹⁵. Every sect requires a free adherence that man can give by his choice (αἴρεσις). That is true also for Christian faith which Clement conceives as

“a voluntary preconception, the assent of piety. [...] And since choice is the beginning of action, faith is discovered to be the beginning of action, being the foundation of rational choice in the case of any one who exhibits to himself the previous demonstration through faith”¹⁶.

¹² Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* VII 89, 3-4, SCh 428, 272-274; 90, 3-4, SCh 428, 274, transl. H. Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*, Philadelphia 1954.

¹³ Ibidem VII 91, 4-5, SCh 428, 276-278, transl. Chadwick.

¹⁴ Cf. ibidem VII 88, 3, SCh 428, 268, transl. Chadwick. See also: Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy*, p. 12-13. About the use of philosophy as a right way of thinking in order to fight the heresies, see: A. Le Boulluc, *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque, II^e-III^e siècles*, II: *Clément d’Alexandrie et Origène*, Paris 1985, 273-275.

¹⁵ Cf. Le Boulluc, *La notion d’hérésie*, p. 370-371.

¹⁶ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* II 9, 1-2, ed. C. Mondésert – P.Th. Camelot, SCh 38, Paris

Finally, there is another topic to consider: when the Alexandrine talks about the different schools (αἱρέσεις), he openly inserts also Christian Church among those, as he claims in a significant passage of the *Stromata*. In fact, he states that

“if there is a demonstration of proof, one should also agree to search and learn through the scriptures themselves by way of demonstration how the heresies (αἱρέσεις) went astray, and only in the truth and in the old Church does the most genuine «gnosis» and the truly best way of thinking (αἵρεσις) exist”¹⁷.

The use of αἵρεσις here twice in the same sentence is striking: Firstly to mean “heresy”, and then “way of thinking” or “school of thought”. It is the only occasion in which Clement equates αἵρεσις with his Church, and he clearly does so only as a play on words, in order to make a point, since elsewhere αἵρεσις is a word that Clement uses to characterize his opponents¹⁸. But, anyway, it is important because this passage resumes the different meanings of αἵρεσις and the importance of free choice in order to join the true Church¹⁹.

At this point, it is possible to say that in those first centuries of Christianity the great thinkers were building the bases of doctrine in dialogue with the main philosophical schools of that period and using their same vocabulary, so that αἵρεσις and γνῶσις refer both to Church and to the Heathens or the heresies.

2. Origen. As several scholars have already pointed out²⁰, Origen mainly uses the term αἵρεσις in order to define those who either refuse or disagree

1954, 38-39, transl. Chadwick. It is worth to notice how here Clement resumes the Aristotelic idea of choice: Clement states that “εἰ μὲν οὖν προαίρεσις ἐστίν, ὀρεκτικὴ τινοσ οὐσα, ἡ ὄρεξις νῦν διανοητικὴ, ἐπεὶ δὲ πράξεως ἀρχὴ ἢ προαίρεσις” (ibidem II 9, 2, Sch 38, 38-39), while the definition of freedom in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethic* is: “πράξεως μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ προαίρεσις – ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις ἀλλ’ οὐχ οὐ ἔνεκα – προαιρέσεως δὲ ὄρεξις καὶ λόγος ὁ ἔνεκά τινοσ” (Aristoteles, *Ethica nicomachea* VI 2, 4, 1139a 31-35, ed. F. Sussemihl – O. Apelt, Lipsiae 1912, 71). Anyway, it is also worth to notice that Clement contends that all philosophers are plagiarists, and that only the scriptures furnish us with the axioms of faith, on which true knowledge of God is founded. In this regard, see e.g. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* V 26, 1 and cf. also Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy*, p. 57.

¹⁷ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* VII 97, 3-4, Sch 428, 294, transl. H. Chadwick.

¹⁸ For a deeper analysis of this, see: A. van den Hoek, *The “Catechetical” School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage*, HTR 90 (1997) 59-87.

¹⁹ About the connection between human responsibility and heresy, see also: Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie*, p. 381-391.

²⁰ Cf. idem, *La place de la polémique antignostique dans le “Peri Archôn”*, in: *Origeniana. Premier Colloque International des études origéniennes (Montserrat, 18-21 Sept. 1973)*, ed. H. Crouzel – G. Lomiento – J. Rius-Camps, Bari 1975, 47-61; idem, *La réflexion d’Origène sur le discours hérésiologique*, RThPh 116 (1984) 297-308; idem, *Eresia*, in: *Origene. Dizionario*, ed. A. Monaci Castagno, Roma 2000, 133-138. With regard to *Contra Celsum*, see: Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie*, p. 443-460; É. Junod, *De la nécessité et de l’utilité des hérésies chrétiennes selon Origène (Contre Celse III, 12-13)*, in: *Orthodoxie et hérésie dans l’Église ancienne. Perspectives*

about the Church's rule of faith²¹, in other words the ἑτερόδοξοι²². Nevertheless, there are some cases in which the Alexandrine's strategy of argumentation leads him to use the term also with reference to the Christians, as it occurs in his treatise *Contra Celsum*. Given that in this writing the word αἰρετικός means someone who belongs to a school, as Origen very often implies²³, our aim is to list the most significant arguments upon which within his polemics against Celsus he bases the definition of Christians as αἰρετικοί. In fact, in *Contra Celsum* 3, 12 Celsus' criticism of Christians as divided into "heresies", namely as deprived of a unique doctrine²⁴, suggests to Origen a comparison with both medical and philosophical schools: as in the science of medicine many are the points of dispute with respect to the manner of curing bodies, and in philosophy great are the differences of opinion, so among Christians there are different ways of interpreting the Scripture²⁵. Thus, Celsus and Origen agree that Christians are divided into "heresies", like the schools of medicine and philosophy: however, the former claims that this denies the seriousness (σπουδαιότης) and usefulness (χρησιμότης) of their doctrine, whereas the latter responds that the different points of view occurring among Christians, as well as in medical and philosophical schools, do not contradict the unique doctrine, but they rather deepen it²⁶. On basis of this feature of Christianity, which is in accordance with medical and philosophical schools, Origen formulates at least three arguments against Celsus.

a) *Contra Celsum* 3, 66. The first argument is the Alexandrine's reply to Celsus' statement that no one could effect a complete change (παντελής

nouvelles, ed. H.-D. Altendorf et alii, Genève – Lausanne – Neuchâtel 1993, 101-124. For a view on the recently discovered homilies on the *Psalms*, see: A. Le Boulluec, *La polémique contre les hérésies dans les "Homélie sur le Psalme" d'Origène (Cod. Mon. Gr. 314), "Adamantius" 20* (2014) 256-274.

²¹ That is κανών; see: Origenes, *De principiis* IV 2, 2, ed. H. Crouzel – M. Simonetti, SCh 268, Paris 1980, 300; idem, *In Ieremiam hom.* V 14, 1, ed. P. Husson – P. Nautin, SCh 232, Paris 1976, 316. On this see: P.W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture. The Contours of the Exegetical Life*, Oxford 2012, 127, n. 78. See also: R. Somos, *Logic and Argumentation in Origen*, Münster 2015.

²² Cf. Origenes, *Commentarii in Iohannem* I 13, 82, ed. C. Blanc, SCh 120, Paris 1966, 100; idem, *Contra Celsum* 5, 63, ed. M. Borret, SCh 147, Paris 1969, 170; idem *De principiis* III 1, 16, SCh 268, 96. They are also termed: "οἱ τε ἀπὸ τῶν αἰρέσεων", as in: ibidem IV 2, 1, SCh 268, 298; idem, *In Ieremiam hom.* V 14, 1, SCh 232, 316; "οἱ ἐξ ἐναντίας", as in: idem, *De principiis* III 1, 16, SCh 268, 94; "οἱ γὰρ ἐπιλαμβανόμενοι", as in: ibidem III 1, 18, SCh 268, 111.

²³ Cf. Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 4, 45, ed. M. Borret, SCh 136, Paris 1968, 300; 8, 53, ed. M. Borret, SCh 150, Paris 1969, 292.

²⁴ Cf. ibidem 3, 12, SCh 136, 34: "Φησὶ δ' ὅτι καὶ ὑπὸ πλῆθους πάλιν διίστάμενοι σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐλέγχουσιν: ἐνὸς ὡς εἰπεῖν ἔτι κοινωνοῦντες, εἴ γε κοινωνοῦσι, τοῦ ὀνόματος. Καὶ τοῦτο μόνον ἐγκαταλιπεῖν ὅμως αἰσχύνονται: τὰ λοιπὰ δ' ἄλλοι ἀλλαγῆ τετάχεται".

²⁵ Cf. ibidem, SCh 136, 34-36.

²⁶ Cf. ibidem, SCh 136, 36: "Ἄλλ' οὐτ' ἰατρικὴν εὐλόγως ἂν τις φεύγοι διὰ τὰς ἐν αὐτῇ αἰρέσεις, οὔτε φιλοσοφίαν τοῦ πρέποντος στοχαζόμενός τις ἂν μισοῖ, πρόφασιν τοῦ μισεῖν αὐτὴν ποριζόμενος τὰς πολλὰς αἰρέσεις".

μεταβολή) in those who are sinners both by nature and custom²⁷. On the contrary, Origen responds that all men are inclined to sin by nature, but this does not prevent them from a complete change. This point – Origen argues – is well expressed not only by the Scripture, but also by the philosophical schools which regard Hercules, Ulysses, Socrates, and Musonius²⁸ as models of complete change for the entire mankind. Furthermore, if Celsus rejects the notion of complete change, he ends up being in contrast not only with the Christians, but also with the philosophical background which he seems to belong to²⁹. Origen's reply to Celsus thus implies the assumption that the Christians agree with the philosophers about the notion of change of life, namely conversion³⁰.

b) *Contra Celsum* 3, 80. The second argument consists in Origen's reply to Celsus' claim of Christian doctrines of the blessed life (μακαρία ζωή) and communion with God (πρὸς τὸν θεῖον κοινωνία) as vain hopes. The Alexandrine argues that these doctrines are supported not only by the Christians, but also by ancient philosophers, particularly Pythagoras and Plato, whom Celsus seems to follow³¹. Moreover, he expressly quotes three ideas of ancient philosophy, that is, the immortality of the soul (ἀθανασία τῆς ψυχῆς), which derives from Plato; her duration after death (ἐπιδιαμονή), which recalls the Stoics³²; finally, the immortality of the thinking principle (τοῦ νοῦ ἀθανασία), which reminds of Aristotle's *De generatione animalium* 736B, 5³³. Therefore, Celsus contradicts himself, since he refuses those doctrines which the Christians have

²⁷ Cf. *ibidem* 3, 65, SCh 136, 150: “Καὶ μὴν παντὶ που δῆλον ὅτι τοὺς μὲν ἀμαρτάνειν πεφυκότας τε καὶ εἰθισμένους οὐδεις ἂν οὐδὲ κολάζων πάντη μεταβάλοι, μήτι γε ἐλεῶν φύσιν γὰρ ἀμεῖψαι τελῆως παγγάλεπον· οἱ δ' ἀναμάρτητοι βελτίους κοινωνοὶ βίου”.

²⁸ About Origen's knowledge of Musonius see: G. Dorival, *L'apport d'Origène pour la connaissance de la philosophie grecque*, in: *Origeniana quinta. Papers of the 5th International Origen Congress (Boston College, 14-18 Aug. 1989)*, ed. R.J. Daly, Leuven 1992, 198.

²⁹ On Middle Platonism of Celsus see: H. Dörrie, *Platonica minora*, München 1976, 250-255, and more recently: A. Magris, *Platonismo e cristianesimo alla luce del “Contro Celso”*, in: *Discorsi di verità. Paganesimo, giudaismo e cristianesimo a confronto nel “Contro Celso” di Origene (Atti del II Convegno del Gruppo Italiano di Ricerca su Origene e la Tradizione Alessandrina)*, Rome 1998, 47-77. On Origen definition of Celsus as Epicurean (*Contra Celsum* 1, 8, , ed. M. Borret, SCh 132, Paris 1967, 96; 2, 60, SCh 132, 424; 3, 80, SCh 136, 180; 5, 3, SCh 147, 18) see: S.-P. Bergjan, *Celsus the Epicurean? The Interpretation of an Argument in Origen's “Contra Celsum”*, HTR 94 (2001) fasc. 2, 179-204; on this see: G. Dorival, *Celso*, in: *Origene. Dizionario*, p. 68.

³⁰ On this topic in *Contra Celsum* see: P. Aubin, *Le problème de la «conversion». Étude sur un terme commun à l'hellénisme et au christianisme des trois premiers siècles*, Paris 1962, 137-157, in particular 151-156.

³¹ As it results from: Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 2, 17, 132, 330-332; 6, 52, SCh 147, 308-310; 7, 62, SCh 150, 158-160.

³² Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* V 105, 1, ed. A. Le Boulluec – P. Voulet, SCh 278, Paris 1981, 198-200 = SVF II 590, 182, 6-20: “Παραπλήσια τούτω καὶ οἱ ἐλλογιμώτατοι τῶν Στωϊκῶν δογματίζουσι περὶ τε ἐκπυρώσεως διαλαμβάνοντες καὶ κόσμου διοικήσεως καὶ τοῦ ἰδίου ποιῶν κόσμου τε καὶ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τῆς τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν ἐπιδιαμονῆς”.

³³ Cf. Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 3, 80, SCh 136, 180.

in common (κοινά τινα)³⁴ with the philosophers. Once again, Origen implies a similarity among the Christians and the philosophical schools.

c) **Contra Celsum 1, 10.** A further argument occurs in Origen's comment on Celsus' criticism, that Christians assent to the doctrine of their religion without reason and a rational guide, whereas one should accept a doctrine only after hearing the arguments of all the other philosophers, condemning one system and supporting another³⁵. To him the Alexandrine responds that, as the choice to assent to a philosophical school rather another depends on a kind of irrational impulse (ἄλογος φορά), namely one becomes a Stoic, a Platonist, a Peripatetic, or an Epicurean on basis not of a careful examination of these philosophical schools' arguments, but of a sort of faith, so the same for the Christians³⁶. Furthermore, both the Christians and the members of a philosophical school assent to their doctrines on basis of an irrational impulse, which is followed by critical examination of the opposite doctrines.

3. The case of *Panegyric Oration on Origen*. The aforesaid data point out that, in accordance with Celsus' claim of Christians as "heresies" in *Contra Celsum* 3, 12, Origen also compares them with medical and philosophical schools, and he highlights at least three features that are common to both Christians and philosophers: the notion of conversion; the view of the soul; finally, the irrational impulse which is the base of attendance to a school. In addition to this, a comparison between these texts, in particular *Contra Celsum* 1, 10, and a passage at the end of the *Panegyric Oration on Origen*, delivered by a pupil of him in around 238³⁷, suggests a very interesting novelty about the Alexandrine's teaching in Caesarea³⁸. In fact, in *Panegyric Oration* 14, whilst describing the life-style of philosophical schools, he declares that one assents to a philosophical doctrine on basis of a kind of irrational impulse (ἄλογος

³⁴ Cf. *ibidem* 3, 81, SCh 136, 182.

³⁵ Cf. *ibidem* 1, 9, SCh 132, 96-98.

³⁶ Cf. *ibidem* 1, 10, SCh 132, 102-104: "Ὅδὲ γὰρ περιμείνας ἀκοῦσαι τοὺς πάντων φιλοσόφων λόγους καὶ τῶν διαφόρων αἰρέσεων καὶ τὴν ἀνατροπὴν μὲν τῶνδε κατασκευὴν δὲ ἑτέρων, οὕτως αἰρεῖται ἥτοι Στωϊκὸς ἢ Πλατωνικὸς ἢ Περιπατητικὸς ἢ Ἐπικουρείος εἶναι ἢ ὅποιασδήποτε φιλοσόφων αἰρέσεως· ἀλλ' ἀλόγῳ τινί, κἂν μὴ βούλωνται τοῦτο ὁμολογεῖν, φορᾶ ἔρχονται ἐπὶ τὸ ἀσκήσαι, φέρ' εἰπεῖν, τὸν στωϊκὸν λόγον, καταλιπόντες τοὺς λοιπούς, ἢ τὸν πλατωνικόν, ὑπερφρονήσαντες ὡς ταπεινοτέρων τῶν ἄλλων, ἢ τὸν περιπατητικὸν ὡς ἀνθρωπικώτατον καὶ μᾶλλον τῶν λοιπῶν αἰρέσεων εὐγνωμόνως ὁμολογοῦντα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἀγαθὰ".

³⁷ P. Nautin (*Origène. Sa vie et son oeuvre*, Paris 1977, 81-86) argues that the identification of Gregory Thaumaturgus with a pupil of Origen at Caesarea, named Theodore, derives from: Eusebius, HE 6, 30, ed. G. Bardy, SCh 41, Paris 1955, 132. On the contrary, see: H. Crouzel, *Faut-il voir trois personages en Grégoire le Thaumaturge? À propos du "Remerciement à Origène" et de la "Lettre à Grégoire"*, "Gregorianum" 60 (1979) 287-319; M. Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi su Gregorio il Taumaturgo*, RSLR 24 (1988) 17-41.

³⁸ On this cf. H. Crouzel, *L'école d'Origène à Césarée. Postscriptum à une édition de Grégoire le Thaumaturge*, BLE 71 (1970) 15-27.

ὀρμή)³⁹, rather than the critical examination of the arguments of the other schools, and he also compares the philosophical schools with the Christians: as the former assent to a doctrine by an irrational impulse and thus examine other doctrines, so the latter assent to Christian religion by an irrational impulse and thus examine the philosophical arguments⁴⁰. Furthermore, if the idea that both the philosophers and the Christians are moved by an irrational impulse, that is ἄλογος φορά or ὀρμή, is well expressed by the *Panegyric Oration*, which attests Origen's teaching in Caesarea by 232, and by the treatise *Contra Celsum*, which is dated at the end of his life in Caesarea⁴¹, then this idea must have been an argument which Origen taught his school-audience, mainly composed of higher-educated Heathens⁴².

The period which these two Fathers of Alexandria belong to was central for the cultural background and history. Both of them were in dialogue with the brilliant exponents of the contemporary philosophy so that they were called to explain the importance of faith on the intellectual side but with a distinction from the other schools. This difference of the Church is given in Clement by the true γνῶσις brought by Christ and taught by the Apostles which men have to join with their free choice (αἵρεσις).

With respect to Origen, the texts from *Contra Celsum* and the *Panegyric Oration* suggest that, though "heresy" mainly denotes those who are outside of the Church's rule of faith, as said before, the Alexandrine also regards it as philosophical school. In particular, in order to defend the Christian school against the philosopher Celsus's criticisms, as it results from *Contra Celsum*, and to persuade the Heathens to accept Christianity, as it results from the *Panegyric Oration*, Origen acknowledges some features of Christian school which typically belong to the philosophical schools. Moreover, the fact that this strategy of argumentation occurs both in a late writing, that is *Contra Celsum*, and in the witness of a pupil about his teaching in the first years at Caesarea, that is, the *Panegyric Oration*, implies that his audience in Caesarea may have been composed especially of well-educated in philosophy and lay hearers.

³⁹ Cf. Gregorius Thaumaturgus (?), *Panegyrica oratio in Origenem* 14, 159, ed. H. Crouzel, SCh 148, Paris 1969, 162; 14, 162, SCh 148, 162; 14, 163, SCh 148, 164.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibidem* 15, 173-180, SCh 148, 168-170.

⁴¹ In accordance with: Eusebius, HE VI 36, 2, SCh 41, 138.

⁴² About this see: A. Monaci Castagno, *Origene direttore di anime*, in: *Direzione spirituale tra ortodossia ed eresia. Dalle scuole filosofiche antiche al Novecento*, Brescia 2002, 77-84; L. Lugaresi, *Studenti cristiani e scuola pagana. Didaskaloi, logoi e philia dal "Discorso di ringraziamento a Origene" all'"Orazione funebre per Basilio" di Gregorio Nazianzeno*, CNS 25 (2004) 779-832.

(Summary)

The aim of this study is to outline the use of the terms αἵρεσις and αἵρετικός according to the two main representatives of the Alexandrine School, Clement and Origen.

In the *Stromateis* the word αἵρεσις has many meanings and, first of all, it is related to “the act of choice”, then, it is also a synonym for a “school” or a “sect”, hence it signifies Christian “heresy”. The connection between human freedom and schools, mainly philosophical ones, but also the schools of medicine, points out that Clement conceives “heresy” as an error, an incorrect way of thinking due to a wrong, even malicious choice, often of an intellectual nature; it suggests conscious deformation of a message. Hence, Clement contrasts the Gnostic αἵρετικός and the “true Gnostic”, the man of faith who by studying the biblical texts and the Greek disciplines is enlightened by Christ (*Stromata* VII 92, 7).

About the Origen’s usage of the term αἵρεσις in his *Contra Celsum* it is worth to note that, firstly, the word αἵρεσις always indicates the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity (cf. *Contra Celsum* 4, 45; 8, 53); secondly, that Origen aims at persuading his enemy, Celsus, that Christian religion is neither a refusal of philosophical schools nor something very different from them, but it may be regarded as an αἵρεσις too and, in order to argue this, he shows that not only Christian religion and philosophical schools share some moral and cosmological topics (*Contra Celsum* 3, 66; 3, 80), but also that both Christians and philosophers are moved by the same ἄλογος φοβία (*Contra Celsum* 1, 10). Therefore, in Origen’s *Contra Celsum* the αἵρεσις means not only the philosophical schools of the II and III centuries, but also the Christian religion as long as it is accepted by the Heathens.

In conclusion, this study shows, once again, that, as the two representatives of Alexandria were in dialogue with the brilliant exponents of the contemporary philosophy, they were called to explain the importance of faith on the intellectual side, using some terms and conceptions of the main schools, on the one side, and by distinguishing Christian faith from them, on the other.

ΑΙΠΕΣΙΣ I ΑΙΠΕΤΙΚΟΣ W SZKOLE ALEKSANDRYJSKIEJ II I III WIEKU
(KLEMENS ALEKSANDRYJSKI I ORYGENES)

(Streszczenie)

Celem niniejszego opracowania jest przedstawienie pojęć αἵρεσις i αἵρετικός w rozumieniu dwóch głównych przedstawicieli Szkoły Aleksandryjskiej – Klemensa i Orygenesesa.

W *Stromata* słowo αἵρεσις ma wiele znaczeń: po pierwsze odnosi się do „aktu wyboru”, następnie jest synonimem „szkoły” lub „sekty”, stąd też oznacza chrześcijańską „herezję”. Powiązanie między ludzką wolnością a szkołami, głównie filozoficznymi, lecz także medycznymi, wskazuje, że Klemens postrzega „herezję” jako błąd i mylny sposób myślenia z powodu złego, a nawet złośliwego

wyboru, często o charakterze intelektualnym; sugeruje świadomą deformację posłannictwa. Stąd Klemens przeciwstawia gnostyckiemu αἰρετικός „prawdziwego gnostyka”, człowieka wiary, który przez poznawanie tekstów biblijnych i wiedzy klasycznej jest oświecony przez Chrystusa (*Stromata* VII 92, 7).

Mówiąc zaś o stosowaniu przez Orygenesesa terminu *afresij* w jego *Contra Celsum*, trzeba po pierwsze zauważyć, że słowo αἰρεσις oznacza zawsze filozoficzne szkoły późnej starożytności (por. *Contra Celsum* 4, 45; 8, 53); po drugie zaś to, że Aleksandryczyk ma na celu przekonanie swojego wroga Celsusa, że religia chrześcijańska nie odrzuca szkół filozoficznych, ani nie jest też czymś bardzo różniącym się od nich, nawet można uznać, że jest to również αἰρεσις. Jako dowód ukazuje, że religia chrześcijańska i szkoły filozoficzne nie tylko mają pewne wspólne zagadnienia moralne i kosmologiczne (*Contra Celsum* 3, 66; 3, 80), ale także to, że chrześcijanie i filozofowie kierują się tymi samymi impulsami wiary (ἄλογος φόρος; *Contra Celsum* 1, 10). Dlatego też w *Contra Celsum* Orygenesesa αἰρεσις oznacza nie tylko szkoły filozoficzne II i III w., lecz także religię chrześcijańską.

Podsumowując, studium to jeszcze raz ukazuje, że dwaj Aleksandryczycy prowadząc dialog z błyskotliwymi przedstawicielami ówczesnej filozofii, wezwani do wyjaśnienia znaczenia wiary od strony intelektualnej, z jednej strony używali pewnych pojęć i koncepcji charakterystycznych dla głównych szkół, z drugiej zaś odróżniali wiarę chrześcijańską od nich.

Key words: heresy, heretic, Alexandrine school, Clement of Alexandria, Origen.

Słowa kluczowe: herezja, heretyk, szkoła aleksandryjska, Klemens Aleksandryjski, Orygenes.

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