ABOUT SOME LEXICAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SAINT CLEMENT OF OHRID[1]

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Abstract

The work of Clement of Ohrid can be observed from several aspects. This paper gives a brief overview of some lexical peculiarities in the philosophical dimension of this work. It is underlined that a strong influence on the philosophical views of Clement of Ohrid carried the thought of Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher.

Keywords: Clement of Ohrid, philosophy, terminology, Slavic culture

Introduction

At the beginning of its existence, Christianity was more *a way of living* rather than a *way of thinking*. On the opposite of the human wisdom and the wisdom of this world, Christians constituted their thought on the basis of Scripture and divine revelation, wherewith was established the basic principle of his philosophical orientation.[2] In other words, despite the philosophical heritage of the antique culture, Christians built own philosophy that is still called the *true*

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[1] original scientific paper
[2] 1 Cor. 2: 4-5

philosophy (ἡ ἀληϑινή φιλοσοφία), *philosophy according to Christ* (ἡ φιλοσοφία κατὰ Χριστόν) or *our philosophy* (ἡ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς φιλοσοφία).[3]

With self-movement on that path, Christian philosophy in the IX century already had a clearly formed picture for a Christian philosopher. He was admirer of divine wisdom (Sophia), whose personification was the Logos of God (Christ). Hence, the epithet "philosopher", who usually was used for a learned man with high intellectual abilities, i.e. for a man who loved the wisdom, began to become a synonymous of the epithet "theologian".[4] Practical realization of this ideal of a Christian philosopher-theologian can be seen in the person of Constantine-Cyril from Salonika, the teacher of Clement of Ohrid.

Philosophical problems that began to attract the attention of Constantine-Cyril were result from the turmoil that has been happening in his personal life and from the actual historical, political and cultural situation in his time. In general, although religious missions and activities of Constantine-Cyril were under the auspices of the Byzantine court, however, his philosophy represented his personal conception of the Christian philosopher's role in the Byzantine society and in the world at all.[5]

Saint Clement as Disciple of Saint Cyril the Philosopher

The interpretations that Constantine-Cyril made for certain contents of Christian thought were reflected in the attitudes and beliefs of its disciples. This is clearly evident in the opus of saint Clement of Ohrid. He was enthused by his teacher. In his Eulogy dedicated to the teacher Cyril saint Clement says: "His tongue overflowed sweet and life giving words, his clear mouth flourished with grand wisdom, his honest fingers established the spiritual organon (i.e. the alphabet) and decorated it with a glowing letters."[6]

To prove that belief in "three sacred languages" with whom could preaching the doctrine of Christ is only a human fabrication, Constantine-Cyril leaned on the hermeneutic method in study of Scripture, which was probably his narrow specialty.[7] In those times - that is, then, when Cyril, the teacher of the

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[3] PG 8: 709 C; PG 9: 284 C; PG 35: 552 A

[4] Ilievski 1999, 122

[5] Ivanov 2008, 314; 320

[6] Kliment Ohridski 1970, 427

[7] PG 126: 1196 C; Kliment Ohridski 1973, 107

Slavs, who had lived in darkness and away from the doctrine of Christ, for them created an alphabet and established liturgy in native language - were fulfilled the words: "O praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise him, all ye people!"[8], and "Blind will see, the deaf will hear the word of the Scripture and all will speak in different languages for God's majesty".[9]

Cyril's idea that every nation is entitled to its alphabet and to liturgy in their mother tongue, in the middle Ages had been extremely bold and revolutionary.[10] In the spirit of this philosophy, his students believed that the temple should be a place where people can say the Lord's Prayer *Our Father* in their mother tongue and where the word of God should be preached by modest priests, coming from the people. Personal communication with Christ in the prayer couldn't happen so directly in any other language, much as it was a "holy", as could in the mother language.

Inheriting the rich treasury of the philosophical thought of his teachers Cyril and Methodius, saint Clement had succeeded to continue this tradition in the famous Ohrid Literary School and to establish its own philosophical platform for action. Linking of the theory with the practice, was giving to his work an extremely profound philosophical dimension.

Saint Clement' s Philosophical Platform

Moving with its ship through the time, the Church of Christ, according to saint Clement, has a role and a task to gather all the nations in the underarm of *Grandfather* Adam, who, through Christ, moved back the primal honor and dignity. To accomplish this goal, each human being should made a personal effort and with his actions to attest the faith.

It is an indisputable fact that in patristic literature, the ethical issues have always been closely intertwined with the ascetic issues. In his sermons saint Clement constantly emphasized such philosophical correlation: 'Therefore, brethren, we ought to honor the birth of the Lord our God, offering him faith, justice and pure life, as wise men offered up his gold, frankincense and myrrh'.[11] According to saint Clement, living in purity is not a difficult task for the

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[8] Kliment Ohridski 1970, 472
[9] Ibid., 468
[10] Ilievski 1999, 49
[11] Kliment Ohridski 1970, 353

humans. An example for such life was given by Christ. He also says: 'What else remains to us, unless to keep his commandments, loving each other'.[12] Moreover he suggested concrete steps for ethical and ascetic actions for the Christians: 'Let's find assistants as passengers, thirsty, poor, naked, blind and crippled, because with the grace we will receive a grace. With this, we will inherit the kingdom of heaven, and will become *friends* of God'.[13]

Logically, the construction of such philosophical platform should to start with a certain cosmogony. The views regarding of the cosmogony at Clement's sermons commonly were supported by the the Christian doctrine of the world's creation expressed in the sublimation *creatio ex nihilo.* In his philosophy is stressed the role of the Word (*Logos*) in the creation of the universe, but he emphasized also that in the act of creation involved are all three hypostases of the Holy Trinity. Material and spiritual world were designed by the Father and created by the Word (*Logos*), with interaction of the Holy Spirit: 'Father has established the visible world and, as the Prophet said, with the Word of God and by the Spirit of his mouth were created heaven and all its strength'.[14]

Researching of the material world as one of the sources of knowledge of God has attracted Christian thinkers since apostolic times. The material world was perceived like a reflection of divine beauty. In the Greek language it wasn't accidentally called *cosmos* (κόσμος) because this word signifies an *ornament* and *order.* In Slavic languages the word *world* (св'тъ) among other things, signifies *light*, *radiance* and *glow.* Admiration in front of the wonderful organization of the universe and in front of the wisdom of its Creator is characteristic of the saint Clement's sermons. He believed that the world as God's creation speaks for its creator: 'If you want to have wonderful and beautiful castles, see the sky adorned with stars after sunset, because for you is created such. You will say that this is not your home. How isn't yours? - says the Lord. Well, for you I founded the earth. For you I poured the rivers from of the abyss... Thirsts for that habitat, brethren, let look to the source of the life'.[15] According to Clement's gnoseology, a man may have knowledge of the Creator through the viewing of harmony in the creation. Also, he can acquire knowledge about God through the knowledge of himself. However, overwhelmed by

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[12] Ibid., 353
[13] Ibid., 303
[14] Ibid., 656
[15] Ibid., 184

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impermanent pleasures of this world, the man hasn't turned his attention to truth, but encumbered self with unnecessary care for earthly life. According to saint Clement, people gradually gave up their reasonableness, and because of that God decided to renew the creation: 'Lord, our God did not want to see the being, created in his image, so much worn-out and plunged into evil. With his mercy, he had compassion on us *and heavens leaning, come down* [to earth]…, he covered his divinity with a flesh, and became God and man, with two natures'.[16] Saint Clement claims that God's existence is not attested only through the creation of heaven and earth, water and air, but much more through the God's incarnation and his condescension towards the humiliated and helpless humanity. As man, Christ was obliged to live on earth with human life and subjugate self of the laws of his corporal nature. He was obliged to starve and to eat, to thirst and to drink, to feel pain and to cry. However, he still remained unchangeable God who always exist with God Father.

Some Lexical Characteristics in the Philosophy of Saint Clement of Ohrid

The cultural entity of the Slavic man in the IX century, in many ways was different from the cultural entity of people educated in the spirit of the Hellenistic civilization and Judaism. In this regard, saint Clement could not talk to the recently christened people in the church about complex problems of the Christian philosophy using the language and terminology of Byzantine theologians and philosophers. He knew that the awakening of love for Christ in the human soul could be encouraged only with simple, understandable and accessible language to all. In this sense, the words that he carefully was choosing in his speeches, were close especially to the spirit of the Slavic colloquial language of the people from Ohrid's locality and more broadly. With such simple terminology, he tried to expose the key questions in his philosophy.

To clarify the role of the first man Adam in the divine plane, instead of the usual term *father* (father Adam), rooted in the patristic Greek thought long before, saint Clement was using the popular term *praded* (great-grandfather, for ex. great-grandfather Adam). In the Old Slavic language, the semantics of this term covered the field of the close tribal relationships, i.e. it first concerned the father of the grandfather, and then signifies the distant ancestor. Apart from the grammatical form for masculine gender *praded* (great-grandfather), in the work

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[16] Ibid., 766

of Clement is known and a grammatical form for feminine gender *prababa* (great-grandmother), a term that pointed to a mother grandmother. In his oeuvre, for example, can be found the phrase *great-grandma curse*, which was addressed to Eve.[17] It is interesting, among other things, to note that the term *ancestor* in the Slavic languages does not have a feminine form.

In the patristic Greek thought, the most frequently, Adam was named as πατήρ πάντων τ'ν 'νθρώπων[18] or προπάτωρ.[19] Along with Eve, they were named as οἱ πρῶτοι προπάτορες.[20] The term προπάτωρ has been used with a meaning of a father, an ancestor, a patriarch, and a founder.[21] Adam is nearest by genus great-grandfather of each person and signifies the genus of the whole humanity. Actually, in the philosophy of saint Clement, who is under strongly influence of the thinking of Constantine-Cyril, Adam didn't perceived only as a distant ancestor of those arising from his physical flesh in historical time, but he was also and a meta-historical symbol for the closest link between the created and uncreated being, i.e. a symbol of the relationship between God and man.[22]

In that philosophical direction continued to move the whole liturgical, interpretative, literary and pastoral commitment to saint Clement. For example, the Christological semantics of the Greek term *kenosis* (κένωσις), he translated it by description, with the phrase *preklon nebesa, snide* (*heavens leaning, come down*), wherewith he successfully surpassed the cultural distinction between various peoples and emphasized the universality of God's revelation.[23]

Patristic background of the term *kenosis* (κένωσις) implied that Christ decreased himself for the salvation of people, embodying himself in the mortal

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[17] Ibid., 545

[18] Lampe 1961, 1162

[19] Ibid., 1162

[20] Ibid., 1162

[21] Ibid., 1162

[22] In *Life of Constantine-Cyril*, the author of the the oeuvre gives the following expression of Cyril: "I had a grandfather great and very famous, who stood near the king, but after he dismissed the great honor that him was given, he was expelled and went in a foreign country. Becoming poor, there birthed me. I, however, looking for the old grandfather's honor, failed to attain, because I am grandson of Adam". *Life of Constantine-Cyril*, in: Kliment Ohridski 1973, 96-97

[23] Kliment Ohridski 1970, 234; 658

body, he took the form of a servant and suffered voluntarily.[24] Saint Clements's translation of the term κένωσις designs a beautiful picture of a kind of descending, bending, leaning, inclining the heavens to the earth, as a sign of leniency. Through this picture, created with understandable words, the mind of the newly christened man could imagine the magnificent event of God's incarnation and to feel that he himself is a part of God's great plan.

Interesting for analysis is the use of the phrase *friend of God*. It in the philosophy of saint Clement has a specific semantic content. The Greek term *filos* (φίλος) was mostly translated by saint Clement with the term *drong*, *droug*, *drug* (др'гъ, дроугъ, др'гъ), etc. In the eulogy dedicated to his teachers Cyril and Methodius, saint Clement compared the brothers with the Patriarch Abraham. Namely, as Abraham for his faith was called God's friend and was blessed to become a father of many nations, thus, and the holy brethren, for their wisdom and feat were glorified by the people as followers of the great-grandfathers, and their name continued to live from generation to generation.[25] Also, in *Life of Constantine-Cyril* saint Cyril say: 'If Abraham hasn't been circumcised, but has been kept the Noah's covenant, he would not has been called God's friend.[26] Hence, it is possible to conclude that somebody can be friend of God only by merit i.e. it was necessary for man through deeds and feats to raise his spirit and to stand in front of God freely as his friend.[27] According to saint Clement, God's friends were people like us, but they have been dedicated entirely to God, not pitying for their homes, neither for their bodies, nor for anything their. Therefore God respects even their bones, whereon gave strength to heal diseases and to remove suffering. Similarly, in the *Sermon for hospitality*, saint Clement said that man should be a supporter of good deeds, between who a special place takes hospitality.

Abraham was again taken as a model of polite host, and the pay for his hospitality was great: he was called *God's friend*. [28] God's friend was also Lazarus of Bethany, not only due to the story from the evangelical text of Apostle John, but in purport of the above mentioned context. The eulogy for

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[24] "῍Ω Χριστοῦ κένωσις, καὶ δούλου μορφή, καὶ παθήματα!" in: PG 35: 805 C; "evacuaverat se, formam servi accipiens", in: PG 13: 1853 B

[25] Kliment Ohridski 1973, 470

[26] Ibid., 98

[27] Kliment Ohridski 1970, 303

[28] Kliment Ohridski 1977, 495

resurrection of Lazarus, belongs among the most popular sermons of Clement.[29] Of this sermon are known about hundred transcripts. The title of the sermon appears in two variants, as eulogy for the resurrection of Lazarus of the Fourth Day (*četverodnevni Lazar*) and as eulogy for the resurrection of the *friend of Christ*, Lazarus. The second variant, where the expression *Fourth Day* is replaced by the phrase *droug Hristov* (friend of Christ), appears in thirty sermons.[30]

The syntagma *friend of God* was used also by saint brothers Cyril and Methodius when they have made the first translations of the Gospel's texts. For example, in Chapter XV of the Gospel of John is saying: 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you'.[31] So, in our opinion, according to saint Clement and his teachers, God's friend may be just someone who is particularly dear to him, i.e. who is sincerely beloved by him. Plural form *friends* in the philosophy of saint Clement can be considered as a synonym for *brothers in Christ*, i.e. it has meaning to *ours*, *Christians*. Also, in the Clement's philosophy evident is the use of the noun *droužina* (friendship), which is derived from the same root as *drougar* (friend), but with meaning of a *community of Christians*.[32]

Conclusion

There is no doubt that for the spread and maintenance of Christian culture among the Slavs a huge role played the Divine Liturgy. Liturgy was a means of uniquely musical, poetic and visual aesthetic experience. Its extraordinary wealth in all respects, equal in the valuable and in the appearing abundance, has made it to become, somehow, the instrument of Christianization of the people whose mother tongue was not Greek or Latin. [33] It is an undeniable fact, e.g. that the first translations from Greek into Slavic language

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[29] Kliment Ohridski 1970, 548

[30] Ibid., 548-568

[31] John 15: 12-15

[32] Kulakovskii 1902, 1

[33] Gulevski 1999, 53

were made for the needs of the Divine Liturgy (Aprakos, Apostle, Psalter ...). Observed from this angle, liturgical texts translated from Greek into Slavic language from the brothers Cyril and Methodius, became a means of introducing of the Slavs in the family of peoples who served the liturgy in their own native language. Thus, Slavs has not only achieved a sense of belonging to a wider universal tradition of the Church, but at the same time, they received his literacy.

Main contractors of the liturgical life among the Slavs in Macedonia became saint Clement and saint Naum, who brought in Ohrid the first Glagolitic translations of the liturgical texts, made from the saint brothers. In the spirit of the work started in Moravia, they continued with the translation of liturgical literature in Ohrid. Thus, the Ohrid Literary School, created by these two disciples of the saint brothers, will become not only a center of Slavonic literacy, but also the active hub of a deep liturgical communion. Translated liturgical texts will be carefully rewritten by students of saint Clement and by their followers with a care about preservation of the established lexical characteristics of teacher's philosophical terminology.

The rewritten activity, in terms of liturgical texts, was not limited to Ohrid, but will continue to live in several monastic centers in the southern Balkans for seven centuries, until the emergence of the first printed priest's service books.[34] In such liturgical literature also can be seen the influence of stylistic features that are found in the oeuvre of saint Clement. Thus, for example, in the book *Octoih,* on the Slavic language, the translation of the resurrection's troparion on the fourth voice, follows the specific terminology of Clements's philosophical approach. There we can find the phrase *pradednee osuždenie* (condemnation of the great-grandfather) as translation of the Greek equivalent ἡ προγονική ἀπόφασις.[35]

All this indicated the strong determination of the saint Clement to continue the work of its teachers and actually to living its philosophy, i.e. to preach word of God on the colloquial language, understandable to people who lived under his pastoral auspices.

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[34] Đorđić 1990, 188-194
[35] Teodorov 1914, 70 ; Panagiotopoulou 1957, 176

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