



# Clement of Alexandria's Song of the Logos as an Interpretation of Cultural Change

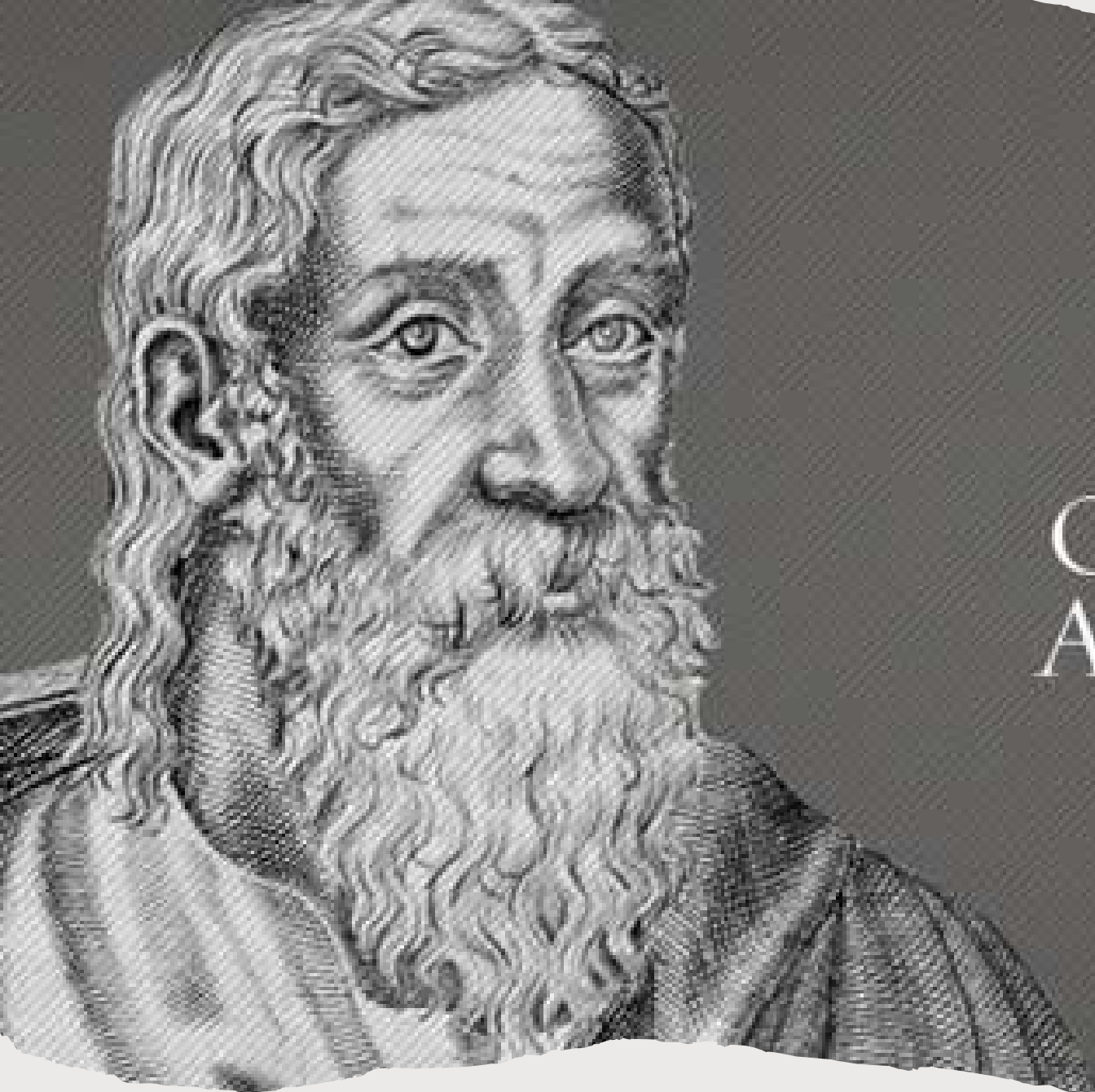
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Metaphors



Context



# CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

150-215

# Clement's works

Protrepticus

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graph TD; A[Protrepticus] --> B[Paedagogus]; B --> C[Stromata];
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Paedagogus

Stromata


# Song metaphor – background

- “Sing to the Lord a new song” Psalm 149
- “They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders” Apocalypse 14:3
- Orphic mysteries


# Creation song

- “It is this [the new song] which composed the entire creation into melodious order, and tuned into concert the discord of the elements, that the whole universe might be in harmony with it.” *Protrepticus*, I, 5, 1.



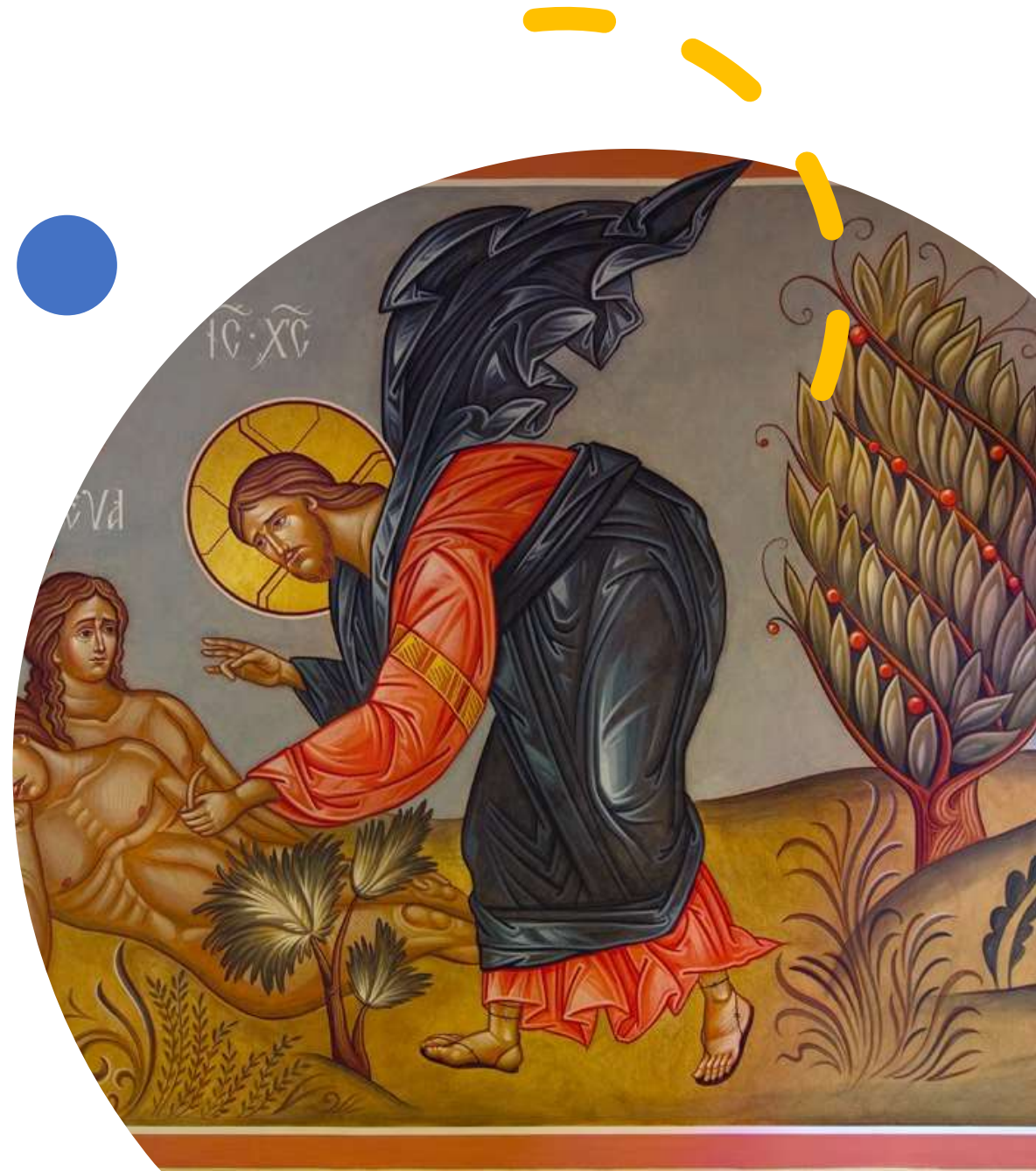


“What is more, this pure song [i.e. Christ], the stay of the universe and the harmony of all things, stretching from the centre to the circumference and from the extremities to the centre, tuned this whole into harmony, [...] in accordance with the fatherly purpose of God, which David earnestly sought. He who sprang from David and yet was before him, the Word of God, scorned those lifeless instruments of lyre and harp. By the power of the Holy Spirit He arranged in harmonious order this great world, yes, and the little world [i.e. microcosmos] of man too, body and soul together; and **on this many-voiced instrument of the universe He makes music to God, and accompanies with the instrument that is man.**” (I, 5, 2-3.)





Clement finishes this passage on the creation by stating that God “sent his breath on man, the beautiful instrument, and thus made him after His own image; and assuredly He Himself [the divine Logos] is an all-harmonious instrument of God, melodious and holy, the wisdom that is above this world, the heavenly Word.”  
*Protrepticus, I, 5, 4.*



# Prophetic song

In the course of the history of salvation, the new song is expressed “through all-wise Moses and truth-loving Isaiah and the whole *prophetic choir*” by which God “converts to the Word [Logos] by more rational [literally: logical] means those who have ears to hear.” *Protrepiticus*, I, 8, 2.

The prophets of the Old Testament are “the song of salvation,” “the salvific song,” and again “the prophetic choir.”





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- Through the prophets, the song of the Logos adapts itself to the circumstances of different men: “In some places He rebukes; in others He even threatens; some men He laments; for others He sings [...]” *Protrepicus*, I, 8, 2.
  - Similarly, John the Baptist is another “voice of the Word” *Protrepicus*, I, 9, 4.
  - “And this was the hidden meaning of the dumbness of Zacharias [...] that the light of truth, the Word, should break the mystic silence of the enigmatic prophecies, by becoming the Gospel.” *Protrepicus*, I, 10, 2.



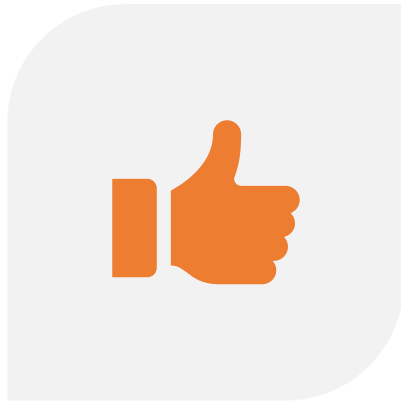
# The New Song

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- After the coming of Christ, all men are called to unite themselves to the new song of the Logos, so that all creation becomes a *cosmic symphony*: “And the union of many into one, bringing a divine harmony out of many scattered sounds, becomes one symphony, following one leader and teacher, the Word, and never ceasing till it reaches the truth itself, with the cry, *Abba, Father.*” (IX, 88, 3)
- Clement also states that “an immortal man” is a “beautiful hymn to God.” (X, 107, 1)

# Interpretation of cultural change

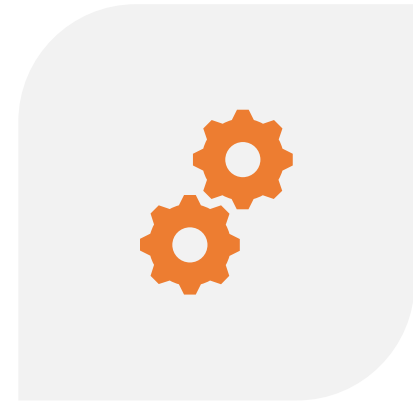
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POSITIVE VIEW



DIVINE MERCY –  
*PAEDAGOGUS*



TRANSFORMATION



# Metaphor of the song

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- **Unity in diversity** – symphony, polyphony
  - Harmony: uniting element (Christ)
- Problem of **evil** – music good vs bad (Plato)
- Moral **conversion** – “the eternal *nomos* of the new harmony”
- **Performative** character of the Word
  - Law of charity
  - Divine filiation – fraternity
  - New heart