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Article

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Clement of Alexandria in the Wake of the Greek Grammatical Tradition

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Abstract

This study delves into Clement of Alexandria's relationship with the ancient Greek grammatical tradition. By providing an overview of the occurrences of the terms γραμματικός and γραμματική in Clement's oeuvre, it aims to offer a more precise understanding of the author's perspective on the discipline of grammar, its main representatives, as well as its specific applications and purposes. Based on the examined passages, the research contributes to studies on early Christian hermeneutics by highlighting the relevant role of grammar in Scriptural exegesis.

Keywords: Clement of Alexandria; γραμματική; ancient grammarians; τὰ ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα

1. Introduction

From a cultural and literary perspective, when it comes to second-century Christianity, it is inevitable to make comparisons with the Greco-Roman world, in which it was born and developed, and with the Jewish component within it. These two interlocutors were crucial in the construction of a Christian identity, and their traditions constituted the starting point and constant term of intellectual comparison for the early Christian communities.

In light of this fruitful, albeit problematic, dialogue, our research focuses on a complex body of knowledge and skills acquired by Christian authors, which proved fundamental in enabling them to articulate their own religious discourse and produce their own methodology for interpreting texts based on traditional categories: grammar.

While the application of grammatical theories and tools is evident in the works of some Christian authors¹, especially in environments with a well-established tradition of philological studies, such as Alexandria in Egypt², it may be more challenging to ascertain the extent to which these authors mastered the discipline, its role in their education, and which grammarians they referenced directly. Starting from these questions, this investigation aims to contribute to an already rich field of study by examining the oeuvre of Clement of Alexandria. A leading intellectual in the Christian world between the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, his works reveal the combination of elements and themes that characterises this phase of Christian literary history.

The research offers a review of the passages in which the terms γραμματική and γραμματικός³ occur, with the aim of laying the foundations for further study and expansion⁴. Clement expressly recognises grammar as a discipline and the grammarian as a profession⁵. From the analysis of some passages, it is possible to identify the grammarians mentioned⁶, as well as the status and purpose grammar assumes in relation to other



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disciplines, and its technical applications, explicitly referred to as grammatical operations, which support the reading and interpretation of the Scripture.

2. Looking for the Grammarians

The first step is therefore to identify the instances in which Clement uses the title γραμματικός to refer to, and perhaps distinguish, certain figures whose authority in this professional field he clearly recognises. Texts falling into this category are taken from the first and fifth books of the *Stromateis*, as well as the *Protrepticus*.

In the first book of *Stromateis* three passages are useful. In the first one, while dealing with the relationship between the culture and language of the βάρβαροι and those of the Ἕλληνες⁷, Clement states that «above all at a later time the teaching of speeches and also the writing passed on to the Greeks» from the «barbarians»⁸. Then he lists a series of λόγοι and literary genres, associating them with their initiators. Among these we find the first grammarians:

Apollodorus of Cyme was the first person to introduce the name “grammarian” in place of “critic,” and was addressed as grammarian. Some say that this applied to Eratosthenes of Cyrene when he had published two volumes with the title *On Grammar*. In our sense of the word, the first to be called grammarian was Praxiphanes of Mitylene, son of Dionysophanes⁹.

Clement raises the question of who can be identified as the first grammarian. First of all, there is a division between those who recognise Apollodorus of Cyme¹⁰ and those who recognise Eratosthenes of Cyrene [BNJ]² 241, fr. T 8 Pownall = *FGrHist* 241, fr. T 8 Jacoby], author of works on the subject¹¹. Interestingly, the term γραμματικός appears to have replaced κριτικός, which could refer to a specific aspect of grammar: namely, κρίσις ποιημάτων, the «judgement of literary works»¹². In this dispute, Clement introduces a third figure: Praxiphanes of Mytilene [fr. 10 Wehrli]¹³, who is said to be the first person described as a ‘grammarian’ as per use of the term in Clement’s time¹⁴. This statement is not explained further, probably because its meaning was clear to readers. However, it suggests an evolution in the status of the discipline, which had also led to a change in how the professional role of the grammarian was perceived¹⁵.

In another passage of the same book, Clement refers to Apion [BNJ] 616, fr. F 2b Keyser = *FGrHist* 616, Αἰγυπτιακά fr. F 2b Jacoby], another «grammarian»¹⁶, whose testimony is useful for supporting his claim that Moses predates the Greeks:

The grammarian Apion, nicknamed Pleistoneices, in the fourth book of the *Egyptian Histories*, yet being ill-disposed to the Hebrews, being Egyptian by birth, having written even a book called *Against the Jews*, is writing of king Amosis of Egypt and the achievements of his reign, citing Ptolemy of Mendes as evidence. Here is the exact passage: «Amosis, a contemporary of Inachus of Argos, utterly destroyed Avaris, as Ptolemy of Mendes says in his *Chronology*». This Ptolemy was a priest. He set out the achievements of the kings of Egypt in three complete volumes. He says that in the reign of Amosis in Egypt took place the journey of the Jews from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. This is how he arrives at the conclusion that Moses was in his prime in the time of Inachus¹⁷.

It is interesting to note here that the scope of the grammarian’s expertise also extends to writing historiographical and polemical texts, and he becomes an expression of his environment’s cultural and literary profile. Clement uses Apion as an intermediary for Ptolemy of Mendes’s evidence [BNJ] 611, fr. T 1b, F 1b Gambetti = *FGrHist* 611, fr. T 1b, F 1b Jacoby], which establishes the contemporaneity between king Amosis and Moses.

Consequently, this also ascertains the contemporaneity between Moses and Inachus, from whose era the oldest Greek narratives are dated¹⁸.

Accordingly, this example shows that historical notions and events are also passed on through the mediation of grammarians, whose testimony is explicitly quoted and regarded as valid and authoritative in Christian argumentation. The third passage, also from the first book of *Stromateis*, is along the same lines. In this case, the grammarian mentioned is Crates [fr. 73 Broggiato]¹⁹, followed by the already known Eratosthenes [*FGrHist* 241, fr. F 9a Jacoby]:

If anyone wants to follow the grammarian Crates and date Homer's birth to the period of the return of Heracles' sons, eighty years after the capture of Troy, he will still be found to be after Solomon, seeing that Menelaus reached Phoenicia in his reign, as I have already said. Eratosthenes places Homer's life a century after the fall of Troy²⁰.

The debate concerns the dating of Homer in relation to Solomon, and thus the chronological placement of the Greek and Jewish traditions. Historical landmarks include the Trojan War and Menelaus's expedition to Phoenicia. Grammarians may once again be seen as a source of historical information, giving rise to distinct schools of thought whose interpretations can be endorsed or rejected. In both cases, Jews are older, which is Clement's interest²¹.

Moving to the fifth book, we find two explicit quotations from two major grammarians, namely Dionysius Thrax [fr. 52 Linke]²² and Didymus [*Συμποσιακά*. *Σύμμικτα* fr. *9 Schmidt]²³:

Also Dionysius Thrax, the grammarian, in his book *On Explanation* regarding the symbol of circles says expressly, "Some signified actions not by words only, but also by symbols: by words, as is the case of what are called the Delphic maxims, 'Nothing in excess,' 'Know yourself,' and the like; and by symbols, as the wheel that is turned in the temples of the gods, derived from the Egyptians, and that of the branches that are given to the worshippers". [...] Very useful, then, is the genre of symbolic interpretation for many purposes; and it is helpful to the right theology, and to piety, and to the display of intelligence, and the practice of brevity, and the exhibition of wisdom. "For the skilful use of symbolic speech is characteristic of the wise man," remarks the grammarian Didymus, "and the knowledge of what is revealed by it"²⁴.

Clement is dealing with symbolism (τὸ συμβολικὸν εἶδος)²⁵ and how this style of representation (τὸ τῆς συμβολικῆς ἐρμηνείας εἶδος) can be applied to the theological discourse²⁶ and as a sign of reverence and veneration, such as the images of the wheel and the branches for worship. In fact, the need to exercise intuition in order to both attribute a specific value to a symbol and understand its correct meaning, coupled with the fact that images are perceived more quickly and immediately, makes symbolic expression, whether through words or objects, an extremely effective means of communication for Christians.

In this framework, Dionysius Thrax is cited as the author of a treatise dealing also with religious symbols²⁷, thus attesting to the general validity and acceptability of Clement's discussion with regard to symbolism in the relationship with the divine. On the other hand, Didymus's quotation supports the assertion that mastery of symbolic language is a demonstration of σοφία, both in its correct application and interpretation.

Didymus [*Ἐννῆ ἱστορία* fr. 6 Schmidt] is also quoted in the *Protrepticus*, where Clement reflects on the absurdities arising from the divine names of the Greek gods, which are often synonymous and can even be used as human names. This is also the case with Apollo:

Further, with regard to Apollo, Aristotle enumerates, first, the son of Hephaestus and Athena (which puts an end to Athena's virginity); secondly, the son of Cyrbas

in Crete; thirdly, the son of Zeus; and fourthly, the Arcadian, the son of Silenus, called among the Arcadians Nomius. In addition to these he reckons the Libyan, the son of Ammon; and Didymus the grammarian adds a sixth, the son of Magnes. And how many Apollos are there at the present time? A countless host, all mortal and perishable men, who have been called by similar names to the deities we have just mentioned²⁸.

Didymus's testimony attesting to an Apollo son of Magnes is mentioned alongside that of Aristotle. This highlights the authority attributed to the source, which complements that of the renowned philosopher and consolidates Clement's argument.

The last passage in which Clement explicitly names one of these authors with the title γραμματικός is still in the *Protrepticus*. Continuing his discourse on idolatry, Clement strongly criticises those mortals who attribute divine names and properties to themselves. Among those who do this, he mentions kings but also ordinary people:

And not kings only, but private persons dignified themselves with the names of deities, as Menecrates the physician, who took the name of Zeus. What need is there for me to instance Alexarchus? He, having been by profession a grammarian, assumed the character of the sun-god, as Aristus of Salamis relates²⁹.

Although there is little information about Alexarchus³⁰, it is important to note the expression used by Clement, who quotes Aristus of Salamis [BNJ 143, fr. F 4 Sheridan = *FGrHist* 143, fr. F 4 Jacoby]³¹, as describing him as a «grammarian by profession» (γραμματικός τὴν ἐπιστήμην).

The term ἐπιστήμη refers to a specialisation recognised within a precise field, involving the development of specific knowledge and skills, and the scientific systematisation of the discipline. To clarify this point further, it may be helpful to refer to Jean Lallot's explanation regarding Dionysius Thrax's definition of grammar first as ἐμπερία and then as τέχνη:

La question du statut épistémologique de la grammaire a été vivement, et durablement, débattue. Le cadre théorique du débat [...] est constitué par la distinction platonicienne [...], puis aristotélicienne [...] entre *empeiría* « connaissance empirique », *tékhnē* « art » et *epistēmē* « science ». Il s'agit là, dans un ordre de rationalité croissante, de trois degrés de la connaissance : la connaissance empirique est un savoir additif, fondé sur le souvenir des expériences qu'on a pu avoir d'une chose ; l'art suppose en plus une certaine conceptualisation inductive de ce savoir [...], et par là une connaissance des causes qui permettent de produire (*poieîn*) la chose [...]; à l'art ainsi limité au domaine de ce que l'homme peut produire et a donc de ce fait un caractère contingent, la science s'oppose comme la connaissance du nécessaire : c'est un 'habitus démonstratif' [...] qui procède déductivement à partir de principes universels³².

In light of this analysis, Clement's statement about Alexarchus becomes interesting. Alexarchus's aspirations for greatness, which led him to identify himself with Helios, may have stemmed from his reputation as a renowned grammar expert and from being sought after because of his professionalism. Alternatively, Alexarchus's attitude may have been ridiculous precisely because of the disproportion between the qualifications required for the role of grammarian and his actual abilities. The classification of grammar as ἐπιστήμη is corroborated by its association with medicine, as can be inferred from the mention of the physician Menecrates, who also identified himself with a deity, immediately before Alexarchus.

This final text and the overall review—that did not consider all instances in which Clement mentions a grammarian, but only those places where he expressly uses the title to define individuals—therefore lay the foundations for proceeding with the analysis of the

passages in which Clement refers to grammar as a discipline, relating it to other sciences and identifying its characteristics and purposes.

3. Speaking of Grammar

3.1. The Status and Purpose of Grammar

Clement addresses this issue mainly in the first book of *Stromateis*. A few lines before the passage we have already analysed (*Strom.* I 16,79), when discussing the chronological placement of the inventors of the various artistic genres in the Greek tradition, Clement states that «the grammarians present us with the dates of these people»³³. The expression used by Clement for «grammarians» is *παῖδες γραμματικῶν*³⁴, with an image that alludes to the disciples of grammar schools, those who study a discipline, learn its skills and tasks, and become part of a line of transmission of knowledge. Accordingly, the verb *παράδιδωμι* conveys the idea of a chain of testimonies that have preserved knowledge over time—in this case, historical and literary information—and passed it on, guaranteeing the reliability of the data transmitted. The use of the verb in the present indicative implies the continuity of this action and its validity even in Clement's time. It is thus clear that grammar goes beyond the analysis of language and represents a cross-disciplinary subject that underpins all others.

Regarding its purpose and the relationship with other disciplines, Clement states in the same book:

When it says, “Do not keep going steady with a foreign woman,”³⁵ it is advising us to make use of secular education but not to settle there permanently. Each generation received beneficial gifts at the appropriate points, but they were in preparation for the word of the Lord. “There are some people who, charmed by potions produced by attendant women, have grown old in neglect of the lady of the house, philosophy:”³⁶ some in music, some in geometry, some in grammar, most of all in rhetoric. Just as the general learnings “converge towards philosophy”, their lady, “so philosophy herself to the acquisition of wisdom”³⁷ contributes³⁸.

A more extensive analysis of this passage would be required with regard to education in antiquity and the classification of different disciplines, which is beyond the scope of this article. For our purposes, we will highlight a few aspects here, referring to the wealth of studies on the subject for further research³⁹. Grammar, like music, geometry and rhetoric, is an acquisition of the «secular» world (ἡ κοσμικὴ παιδεία). These disciplines should contribute to philosophy, which in turn serves wisdom (σοφία), that is the ultimate goal of knowledge and the key to understanding the Scripture⁴⁰.

Therefore, grammar is «propaedeutic» to philosophy, as Clement states later in the same passage⁴¹, and undoubtedly a tool of faith. This role is also evident in *Strom.* I 20,99⁴²: starting from the Greek tradition, Clement reflects on the aim of philosophy and auxiliary disciplines, identifying a progression of knowledge up to *gnosis*, just as in the school curriculum the *γραμματιστής* lays the foundations for those who will study philosophy (ὁ φιλοσοφῆσων). The last milestone is the attainment of truth (ἡ ἀληθὴς κατάληψις), as professed by the Christian faith⁴³.

All disciplines are a combination of tools and skills that, through adequate study and practice, brings forth the fruit of the vine, symbol of Christ, which would otherwise remain barren⁴⁴. Clement presents the reader with the examples of the farmer and the doctor, who practise their crafts and benefit from a wide range of learnings to improve and refine their techniques. Similarly, Christians can achieve their full potential by ascending to truth, and knowledge in various fields, including grammar, provides them with the tools to defend their faith and bring it to fruition:

As in farming and so in medicine the expert is the person who has grasped a wide variety of lessons to enable him to become a better farmer or doctor, so here I affirm that the expert is the one who brings everything to bear on the truth. He culls whatever is useful from geometry, the fine arts, grammar, and, of course, philosophy, and protects the faith from all attacks⁴⁵.

Clement continues his reasoning by applying this logic: just as athletes, steersmen and doctors gain credibility in their roles thanks to the continuous practice and the experience they have gained in the field, so the acquisition of all knowledge should be oriented towards the attainment of Christian truth⁴⁶. And the effectiveness of this approach has been demonstrated by Jesus himself:

How is it not necessary for someone who yearns to touch the fringes of God's power to think distinctly about intellectual objects becoming a philosopher? How is it not useful to distinguish the ambiguous expressions and those homonymous throughout the Testaments? It is in fact by an ambiguity that the Lord outwits the devil at the time of the temptation, and I no longer understand how the inventor of philosophy and dialectic, as some people suppose, can be deceived by the method of ambiguity and led astray⁴⁷.

Jesus's mastery of language and tropes, proof of his expertise in grammar⁴⁸, was crucial in enabling him to beat the devil at his own game and expose the deception behind his words: as observed by Pouderon, "Le verset de Mt 4, 4 (« l'homme ne vit pas seulement de pain. . . ») joue en effet sur le double sens prêté au verbe « vivre »"⁴⁹. The usefulness of grammar, which is normally taken for granted as it constitutes the basic set of notions of the language, becomes particularly evident when the discourse presents more complex and ambiguous constructions. In the case of amphibology and homonymy, the correct reading of the text and its implicit subtext is fundamental for interpretation⁵⁰. This is all the more important when the context is that of a dialectical confrontation and the adversary is Satan.

These linguistic figures can be combined in the construction of a text that, for different purposes, intentionally uses symbols (σύμβολοι), riddles (αἰνίγματα) and allegories (ἀλληγορίαι), which make it more difficult to understand and open up different possibilities for interpretation⁵¹. Clement is well aware of this circumstance and, as anticipated⁵², deals extensively with the symbolic genre in the fifth book of *Stromateis*. In one passage in particular, where grammarians are mentioned directly, he states:

Myriads on myriads of enigmatical utterances by both philosophers and poets are to be found; and there are also whole books which present the intention of the writer veiled [. . .]. For Euphorion the poet, and the *Causes* of Callimachus, and the *Alexandra* of Lycophron, and the like, are proposed as an exercise in exegesis to the grammarians⁵³.

In this extract too, as in *Strom.* I 16,79,2, the expression employed to refer to grammarians is παῖδες γραμματικῶν⁵⁴, though in this case it could take on a more specific meaning and actually indicate the disciples of grammarians, who have not yet completed their studies⁵⁵. They use the texts of the classical tradition as a «training field» (γυμνάσιον) to practise and become familiar with this type of language, a skill which will then be useful for interpreting the Scripture.

According to Clement, the role of grammarians is thus to engage in exegesis⁵⁶. This raises a further question: what areas does he recognise as applications of grammatical skills, and with which operations on the text of the Scripture does he explicitly associate grammar?

3.2. Clement's Grammatical Knowledge: Skills and Fields of Application

As attested in the first book of *Stromateis*, the term γραμματική can refer to the written form and the ability to write and compose a text. According to Eupolemus [BNJ 723, fr. F 1b Kaizer = FGrHist 723, fr. F 1b Jacoby]⁵⁷, this was taught by Moses to the Jews and, through the Phoenicians, was adopted by the Greeks⁵⁸:

Eupolemus in his work *On the Kings of Judaea* says that Moses was the first sage and the first person to transmit to the Jews the science of writing (γραμματικήν), which passed from the Jews to the Phoenicians, and from the Phoenicians to the Greeks⁵⁹.

This set of skills, consisting primarily of learning the letters (γράμματα) as minimal components of language and the logical-syntactic connections that form the basic structure of a meaningful text, falls within the realm of grammatical knowledge.

Clement reiterates this in a passage from the so-called eighth book of *Stromateis*⁶⁰. When discussing parts of speech, he identifies «names» (τὰ ὀνόματα), «concepts» (τὰ νοήματα), and «the underlying things» (τὰ ὑποκείμενα πράγματα)⁶¹. With regard to nouns, he then states that «grammar reduces names to twenty-four universal elements»⁶². These twenty-four elements (στοιχεῖα) are the Greek letters, the essential units that constitute the foundations of the language, according to grammar⁶³.

If this represents the basis of grammatical knowledge, then a higher level of proficiency concerns the identification and interpretation of symbolic language, as already discussed⁶⁴. In two passages of the fifth book of *Stromateis* analysed above, specifically 8,45,4 and 8,46,1–2⁶⁵ where Clement mentions the renowned grammarians Dionysius Thrax and Didymus, «symbolic interpretation» (τὸ τῆς συμβολικῆς ἐρμηνείας εἶδος) is a manifestation of σοφία which is the greatest achievement for the Christian gnostic.

Hence, language analysis, which begins with the study of letters, evolves into language interpretation, which applies to figures of speech and their symbolism. A grammatical operation that combines these two aspects and becomes essential for the understanding of the Scripture is etymology⁶⁶. In fact, in-depth knowledge of the basic elements of a language and the parts that compose a word, as well as their semantic interpretation, is required for research into etymology.

An example can be found in the first book of *Paedagogus*, in which Clement opens a discussion about the etymology of νήπιος («child»)⁶⁷. According to grammatical rules, the prefix νη- would have a privative value, but this does not correspond to the meaning that Clement attributes to the term:

We should not understand the word *nēpios* in a deprivative sense, even though the grammarians have determined that the *nē-* is a privative⁶⁸.

Clement calls on the grammarians (γραμματικῶν παῖδες)⁶⁹ as νομοθέται in the linguistic domain. The author acknowledges their position on the matter although their rule does not apply to this particular case. In fact, according to Clement⁷⁰, νε-ήπιος, i.e., «newly gentle», is the correct etymology of νήπιος⁷¹: Christians are νήπιοι as far as they are renewed and made better by baptism.

The case of νήπιος prompts further reflections. Firstly, Clement must account for the acquisitions of grammar and its precepts; as such, any linguistic explanation that does not align with tradition should be adequately justified. Moreover, in order to be considered credible, the proposed new etymology must comply with the standard procedure for deriving the root of a word.

So, within the Christian tradition, etymological explanations can also assume a theological significance⁷². By attesting to the origin of the meaning of a term, they provide the key to its interpretation. Accordingly, the textual form can be considered as the external

expression of the truth conveyed by the name. Etymological research therefore qualifies as a field of expertise within grammar with the purpose of contributing to the final achievement of the Christian truth by revealing the authentic meaning of the words⁷³.

It should be noted that not all instances of Clement's use of grammatical tools for interpreting texts have been considered here. Nevertheless, the intention was to provide concrete proof and examples, within the research framework⁷⁴, of his references and methodology for working with texts, incorporating grammatical principles.

4. Conclusions

The research conducted thus far has accordingly presented a systematic overview, albeit only preliminary, of the presence of grammatical tradition in Clement of Alexandria's references and methodology. It aims to confirm the validity of this type of comparative approach for the purpose of a more nuanced understanding of the thought and language of an author whose work is steeped in references to the Greco-Roman cultural world.

A thorough examination of the passages in which Clement explicitly refers to figures with the title of γραμματικός has enabled the discernment of certain grammatical traditions that support his arguments and some assessments regarding the cultural, as well as linguistic, role of these professionals. The identification of grammar as ἐπιστήμη then shifted the research focus to its position in relation to other disciplines, particularly philosophy, and to its aims, which are directed towards the exegesis of the Scripture with a view to progressing along the Christian path of faith in order to attain the truth. Finally, the analysis of some of the areas of competence of grammar highlighted the importance of the discipline for Clement, from the perspectives of both language analysis and interpretation. Examples of the hermeneutic application of grammatical skills include allegorical exegesis and etymological research.

The passages examined reveal a conceptualisation of grammar that employs syntactic and semantic knowledge as a tool for the theological interpretation of the Scripture, as well as a weapon for defending the integrity of the Christian faith⁷⁵. In this perspective, Clement appears to conflate the arts of grammar and rhetoric, thereby strengthening their effectiveness by profitably bringing their fields of action closer together⁷⁶.

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Notes

¹ For Clement of Alexandria, see for instance Irvine (1994), pp. 164–69: *Clement of Alexandria and Origen: The Making of Christian Grammatike*. Among recent studies, see: Deodati (2005), esp. Chapter 3: *La dottrina linguistica*, pp. 18–88 and pp. 95–96; with reference to Irvine's concept of "grammatical archive", Ward (2023), esp. pp. 138–47: *The Craft of Archival Thinking in Clement of Alexandria*, more extensively developed in Ward (2022), esp. pp. 57–100.

² See Rizzi (2017), esp. pp. 111–13. Among other studies, see also Le Boulluec (2012a), esp. the contributions in the first part: *L'« école » chrétienne d'Alexandrie*, pp. 11–57; and the two volumes *Alexandrie la divine* (Méla and Möri 2014), esp. the essays collected in vol. 2, IV.1. *L'école chrétienne d'Alexandrie* (dir. Alain Le Boulluec), pp. 749–816.

- 3 Seventeen occurrences were identified via the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* online database (Available online: <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/> accessed on 29 August 2025) (research string *grammatik**), which correspond to the entries s.v. γραμματικός in the *Thesaurus Clementis Alexandrini* (Deodati and CENTAL 2009): *Strom.* I 16,79,3 (γραμματικά); *Strom.* I 5,29,10. VIII 8,23,2 (γραμματική); *Strom.* I 23,153,4 (γραμματικήν); *Strom.* I 9,43,4 (γραμματικής); *Protr.* 2,28,3. 4,54,3, *Strom.* I 16,79,3 (2). I 21,101,3. V 8,45,4. V 8,46,2 (γραμματικός); *Strom.* I 16,79,3 (γραμματικοῦ); *Strom.* I 21,117,6 (γραμματικῶ); *Paed.* I 5,20,1, *Strom.* I 16,79,2. V 8,50,3 (γραμματικῶν).
- 4 As also observed by the Referees, this study could be enriched both by comparing the use of γραμματικός with that of φιλόλογος and κριτικός, which is only mentioned *infra*, and by researching the occurrences of other lemmata related to the field of γράμματα in Clement's oeuvre. In this phase, the focus is on assessing the attestation of a first group of occurrences, primarily based on two critical terms. The initial results are presented here.
- 5 See Irvine (1994), p. 165: "Clement was fully aware of the grammatical tradition, even pointing out the history of the discipline and its meaning for famous *grammatikoi* like Dionysius of Thrax, and he assumes his readers will interpret his work as a continuation or culmination of that tradition".
- 6 A partial list is also in Irvine (1994), p. 499 n. 10: "Clement points out that the origins of literary forms were handed down by the *grammatikoi* [...], and he discusses the meaning of *grammatike* and *grammatikos*, citing the earlier exemplars of the discipline – Apollodorus of Cuma, Eratosthenes of Cyrene, Praxiphanes of Mitylene [...], Crates of Mallos, Apion [...], and Dionysius Thrax [...]".
- 7 See Le Boulluec (2012d), p. 78: "Il convient d'emblée de rappeler que la distinction entre Grecs et « Barbares » doit selon Clément s'effacer dans le « genre unique » qu'ils sont invités à former, celui des chrétiens, et que les « Barbares », en l'occurrence, sont les Hébreux. Mais il faut préciser, d'une part, que pour le théologien Clément, le plan divin accorde aux Hébreux la prépondérance dans la relation entre les deux peuples, puisque Dieu leur a fait don de la Loi [...]. Et d'autre part, l'exemple des autres « Barbares », tels que les voient les Grecs, quand ils cèdent à la fascination des sagesse étrangères, est invoqué pour fortifier les privilèges des Hébreux". Cf. also Deodati (2005), pp. 25–27 (with a comment on Clem. *Strom.* I 16,79,3 and I 23,153,4) and p. 91, and Deodati (2007), esp. pp. 92–98.
- 8 Clem. *Strom.* I 16,78,2 ed. Pouderon: Ναὶ μὴν ὁπότε εἰς Ἑλληνας ἢ τῶν λόγων παρῆλθε διδασκαλίᾳ τε καὶ γραφῇ. The quoted sources include a reference to the editor of the text. The edition is only specified in full in the bibliography when the editor or translator provides a broader comment on the text that is also relevant to our research.
- 9 Clem. *Strom.* I 16,79,3 ed. Pouderon: [...] Ἀπολλόδωρος δὲ ὁ Κυμαῖος πρῶτος <τοῦ γραμματικοῦ ἀντί> τοῦ κριτικοῦ εἰσηγήσατο τοῦνομα καὶ γραμματικὸς προσηγορεύθη, ἐνιοὶ δὲ Ἐρατοσθένη τὸν Κυρηναῖον φασιν, ἐπειδὴ ἐξέδωκεν οὗτος βιβλία δύο γραμματικὰ ἐπιγράψας ὠνομάσθη δὲ γραμματικός, ὡς νῦν ὀνομάζομεν, πρῶτος Πραξιφάνης Διονυσοφάνους Μιτυληναῖος. The addition indicated in the text is a conjecture by Meier: cf. Pouderon (2023), p. 256 *ad loc.* The English translation is by John Ferguson, with some modifications: cf. Ferguson (1991), p. 83.
- 10 Pouderon suggests a correspondence with a quotation by Tatian, though this cannot be confirmed due to a possible error in the author's name (in Pouderon 2023, p. 257 n. 3). Ferguson refers to a quotation by Pliny (in Ferguson 1991, p. 83 n. 384). Pini hypothesises an association with Apollodorus of Pergamon, a renowned rhetorician (in Pini and Rizzi 2006, p. 91 n. 32). Otto Stählin, based on the scholia to Dionysius Thrax, suggests reading Ἀπολλόδωρος as Ἀντίδωρος/Ἀντόδωρος: cf. Stählin and Früchtel (1985), p. 51 *ad loc.* Minna Seppänen, commenting on this whole passage, identifies Apollodorus with Antidorus of Cyme (in Seppänen 2014, pp. 20–22). On the same line, already B. A. Müller in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (hereinafter *RE*, Wissowa et al. 1894–1997), Supplementband III, coll. 121–23, s.v. Antidoros; Pfeiffer (1968), pp. 157–58: "The date of this otherwise unknown Antidorus of Kyme, whose name is disfigured in some of the manuscripts, may be the beginning of the third century B.C. But this answer was not undisputed, as we learn from the excerpt of a catalogue of 'first inventors' in Clement of Alexandria [...]" ; Franco Montanari in *Brill's New Pauly Online*, s.v. Antidorus (Available online: <https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/db/npoe> accessed on 7 December 2025); and Giuseppe Ucciardello in *Lexicon of Greek Grammarians of Antiquity* (hereinafter *LGGA*), s.v. Antidorus (Available online: <https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/db/lgga> accessed on 7 December 2025), with a discussion on Clement's passage.
- 11 Pouderon presents him as "l'un des plus fameux bibliothécaires d'Alexandrie" (Pouderon 2023, p. 257 n. 3) and Ferguson adds that he "was one of the greatest of all polymaths" (Ferguson 1991, pp. 83–84 n. 385). See, among recent publications, Montana (2020, pp. 132–259, in partic. 185–91). On Eratosthenes of Cyrene, see also Knaack in *RE*, coll. 358–88; Pfeiffer (1968), esp. pp. 152–70 (*Science and Scholarship: Eratosthenes*) and in particular p. 162 on his grammatical works mentioned here; Frieder Zaminer and Renzo Tosi in *Brill's New Pauly Online*, s.v. Eratosthenes (last consultation 7 December 2025): "[...] according to Clement of Alexandria, who quotes him along with Antidorus of Cyme and Praxiphanes (*Strom.* 1,16,79,3), he also wrote *Γραμματικά* (*Grammatiká*; but according to Suet. *Gramm.* 10 he called himself not *grammatikós* but *philólogos*)"; and Emanuele Dettori in *LGGA*, s.v. Eratosthenes (last consultation 7 December 2025).
- 12 Dion. Thr. *Ars gram.* ed. Uhlig §1: Γραμματική ἐστὶν ἐμπειρία τῶν παρὰ ποιηταῖς τε καὶ συγγραφεῦσιν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ λεγομένων. Μέρη δὲ αὐτῆς ἐστὶν ἑξ· [...] ἕκτον κρίσις ποιημάτων, ὃ δὴ κάλλιστόν ἐστι πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ. According

to M. Caster, “« Grammaire » fut d’abord le nom des critiques littéraires, puis le sens du mot se restreignit comme, de nos jours, à l’étude de la langue”: cf. [Mondésert and Caster \(1951\)](#), p. 107 n. 1. See also [Pfeiffer \(1968\)](#), pp. 242–43: “Whether Crates was concerned in ἐγκρίνειν himself, we do not know; but we do know that he who proudly claimed to be a κριτικός, not a simple γραμματικός, practised the κρίσις ποιημάτων”.

- 13 He is described by Pouderon ([Pouderon 2023](#), p. 257 n. 3) and Ferguson ([Ferguson 1991](#), p. 84 n. 385) as a representative of the Peripatetic school; similarly, Pini recognises him as one of Aristotle’s renowned disciples ([Pini and Rizzi 2006](#), p. 91 n. 32). See, among recent publications, [Montana \(2020\)](#), pp. 144–45. Cf. also: W. Aly in *RE*, coll. 1769–84, s.v. Praxiphanes; [Pfeiffer \(1968\)](#), pp. 135–36 and 158: “The literary work of Praxiphanes is here regarded as foreshadowing the work of the Alexandrian γραμματικοί; his name appears also in the Scholia to Dionysius Thrax in a remarkable historical construction which draws a line from Theagenes in the sixth century B.C. as the beginning of γραμματική to its τέλος, its culmination, in the literary work of the Peripatetics Praxiphanes and Aristotle”; Hans Gottschalk in *Brill’s New Pauly Online*, s.v. Praxiphanes (last consultation 7 December 2025); and Michele Corradi in *LGGA*, s.v. Praxiphanes (last consultation 7 December 2025).
- 14 On this see W. Aly in *RE*, col. 1778: “Der dort gewählte Ausdruck γραμματικός, ως νῦν ὀνομάζομεν, wobei es unentschieden bleibt, ob νῦν die Zeit des Clemens oder die des Gewährsmannes bezeichnet, bezieht sich darauf, daß die elementare Grammatik später γραμματιστική hieß [. . .]”. On this application of the term γραμματικός, compared with φιλόλογος and κριτικός, and the reference to Clement’s passage, see [Pfeiffer \(1968\)](#), pp. 156–59.
- 15 According to Seppänen, “For Clement, it was the Peripatetic Praxiphanes of Mitylene who was truly a grammarian in the ‘modern’ sense: a scholar and a teacher of language and literature” ([Seppänen 2014](#), p. 21).
- 16 Pouderon outlines the historical coordinates of Apion, as well as Clement’s sources: “Il s’agit du contemporain de Claude que Flavius Josèphe prend à partie dans l’ouvrage éponyme, que Clément a sans aucun doute utilisé lui aussi. Le fragment d’Apion cité par Clément est sans doute extrait du *Aux Grecs* de Tatien, 38, 2” ([Pouderon 2023](#), p. 305 n. 3). Regarding this character, Pini also refers to the testimonies of Tertullian, Pliny and Aulus Gellius ([Pini and Rizzi 2006](#), pp. 112–13 n. 5). See also Cohn in *RE*, coll. 2803–06, s.v. Apion; [Pfeiffer \(1968\)](#), p. 275: “[Didymus] worked in the second half of the first century B.C. and at the beginning of the first century A.D. The younger Heraclides Ponticus and Apion, the grammarian, were his pupils and assistants [. . .]”; Franco Montanari in *Brill’s New Pauly Online*, s.v. Apion (last consultation 7 December 2025); and Valeria Bacigalupo in *LGGA*, s.v. Apion (last consultation 7 December 2025).
- 17 Clem. *Strom.* I 21,101,3–5 ed. Pouderon: Ἀπίων τοίνυν ὁ γραμματικός, ὁ Πλειστονίκης ἐπικληθείς, ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ τῶν Αἰγυπτιακῶν ιστοριῶν, καίτοι φιλαπεχθημόνως πρὸς Ἑβραίους διακείμενος, ἅτε Αἰγύπτιος τὸ γένος, ὡς καὶ κατὰ Ἰουδαίων συντάξασθαι βιβλίον, Ἀμώσιος τοῦ Αἰγυπτίων βασιλέως μεμνημένος καὶ τῶν κατ’ αὐτὸν πράξεων, μάρτυρα παρατίθεται Πτολεμαῖον τὸν Μενδήσιον. Καὶ τὰ τῆς λέξεως αὐτοῦ ὧδε ἔχει. «Κατέσκαψε δὲ τὴν Αουαρίαν Ἄμωσις κατὰ τὸν Ἀργεῖον γενόμενος Ἰναχον, ὡς ἐν τοῖς Χρόνοις ἀνέγραψεν ὁ Μενδήσιος Πτολεμαῖος.» Ὁ δὲ Πτολεμαῖος οὗτος ἱερεὺς μὲν ἦν, τὰς δὲ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων βασιλέων πράξεις ἐν τρισὶν ὁλαῖς ἐκθέμενος βίβλοις κατὰ Ἄμωσιν φησιν Αἰγύπτου βασιλέα Μωϋσέως ἡγουμένου γεγονέναι Ἰουδαίους τὴν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου πορείαν, ἐξ ὧν συνῶπται κατὰ Ἰναχον ἡκμακέναι τὸν Μωσέα. The English translation is by J. Ferguson, with some modifications: cf. [Ferguson \(1991\)](#), p. 100.
- 18 Clem. *Strom.* I 21,102,1 ed. Pouderon: Παλαιάτατα δὲ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν τὰ Ἀργολικά, τὰ ἀπὸ Ἰνάχου λέγω, ὡς Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀλικαρνασσεὺς ἐν τοῖς Χρόνοις διδάσκει. The English translation is by J. Ferguson: «The history of Argos (from the time of Inachus, I mean) is the oldest portion of Greek history, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus teaches us in his *Chronology*» ([Ferguson 1991](#), p. 100).
- 19 Pouderon refers to Tatian and associates this figure with the grammarian Crates of Mallus ([Pouderon 2023](#), p. 334 n. 1). Pini shares the same opinion and adds: “Fondatore della biblioteca di Pergamo e insegnante quivi di filologia, diffuse i criteri interpretativi allegorici nella critica letteraria, tanto accettati poi ai Cristiani stessi” ([Pini and Rizzi 2006](#), p. 123 n. 70). Among recent publications, [Montana \(2020\)](#), pp. 222–27. See also W. Kroll in *RE*, coll. 1634–41, s.v. Krates; [Pfeiffer \(1968\)](#), pp. 235–46; Maria Broggiato in *Brill’s New Pauly Online*, s.v. Crates (last consultation 7 December 2025); and Lara Pagani in *LGGA*, s.v. Crates (last consultation 7 December 2025).
- 20 Clem. *Strom.* I 21,117,6–7 ed. Pouderon: Κὰν ἐπεσθαί τις βουληθῇ τῷ γραμματικῷ Κράτῃ καὶ λέγῃ περὶ τὴν Ἡρακλειδῶν κάθοδον Ὅμηρον γεγονέναι μετὰ ἔτη ὀγδοήκοντα τῆς Ἰλίου ἀλώσεως, εὐρεθήσεται πάλιν Σολομώνος μεταγενέστερος, ἐφ’ οὗ ἡ Μενελάου εἰς Φοινίκην ἀφίξις, ὡς προείρηται. Ἐρατοσθένης δὲ μετὰ τὸ ἑκατοστὸν ἔτος τῆς Ἰλίου ἀλώσεως τὴν Ὅμηρου ἡλικίαν φέρει. The English translation is by J. Ferguson: cf. [Ferguson \(1991\)](#), p. 111.
- 21 See [Le Boulluec \(2012e\)](#), pp. 91–110, esp. pp. 104–10.
- 22 Dated to the second century BCE: see, among recent publications, [Montana \(2020\)](#), pp. 234–36. Cf. also Cohn in *RE*, coll. 977–83, s.v. Dionysios; [Pfeiffer \(1968\)](#), pp. 245 and 266–72; Franco Montanari in *Brill’s New Pauly Online*, s.v. Dionysius (last consultation 7 December 2025); and Lara Pagani in *LGGA*, s.v. Dionysius (last consultation 7 December 2025).
- 23 Pini identifies him with Didymus Chalcenterus ([Pini and Rizzi 2006](#), p. 530 n. 10). On this grammarian see: [Montana \(2020\)](#), pp. 246–53; Cohn in *RE*, coll. 445–72, s.v. Didymos; [Pfeiffer \(1968\)](#), pp. 274–79; Franco Montanari in *Brill’s New Pauly Online*, s.v. Didymus (last consultation 7 December 2025); Fausto Montana in *LGGA*, s.v. Didymus (last consultation 7 December 2025). See

- also Le Boulluec (1981b), p. 180 *ad loc.* for the debate on this attribution; and, more recently, Montana (2024), esp. Fausto Montana, *Didimo fra Alessandria e Roma*, pp. 3–14, and Livia Capponi, *Maestro di monarchia: Didimo Calcentero o Ario Didimo?*, pp. 15–31.
- 24 Clem. *Strom.* V 8,45,4–46,2 ed. Le Boulluec: Ἀλλὰ καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Θραῦξ ὁ γραμματικὸς ἐν τῷ Περὶ τῆς ἐμφάσεως περὶ τοῦ τῶν τροχίσκων συμβόλου φησὶ κατὰ λέξιν· «Ἐσήμαινον γοῦν οὐ διὰ λέξεως μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ συμβόλων ἔνιοι τὰς πράξεις, διὰ λέξεως μὲν ὥς ἔχει τὰ λεγόμενα Δελφικὰ παραγγέλματα, τὸ 'μηδὲν ἄγαν' καὶ τὸ 'γνώθι σαυτὸν' καὶ τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια, διὰ δὲ συμβόλων ὥς ὁ τε τροχὸς ὁ στρεφόμενος ἐν τοῖς τῶν θεῶν τεμένεσιν εἰλκυσμένος παρὰ Αἰγυπτίων καὶ τὸ τῶν θαλλῶν τῶν διδομένων τοῖς προσκυνοῦσι.» [...] Χρησιμώτατον ἄρα τὸ τῆς συμβολικῆς ἐρμηνείας εἶδος εἰς πολλά, καὶ πρὸς τὴν ὀρθὴν θεολογίαν συνεργοῦν καὶ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν καὶ πρὸς ἐπίδειξιν συνέσεως καὶ πρὸς βραχυλογίας ἄσκησιν καὶ σοφίας ἔνδειξιν· «σοφοῦ γὰρ τὸ χρηθῆσθαι τῇ συμβολικῇ φράσει δεξιῶς, φησὶν ὁ γραμματικὸς Δίδυμος, καὶ τὸ γνωρίσαι τὸ διὰ ταύτης δηλούμενον». The English translation is by William Wilson and revised by Kevin Knight, with some modifications: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02105.htm> (last consultation 29 August 2025).
- 25 On “le « genre symbolique »” in this passage see Le Boulluec (1981a), pp. 18–20, and Rizzi (2017), pp. 124–26, 125: “Christian revelation, as contained within the Bible, does not constitute a world apart, nor is it concluded in itself. On the contrary, along with Greek philosophical tradition at a lower level, it represents a sort of map of reality, which can help reconnect the threads of human knowledge and experience through a continuous process of symbolic research”. For an overview of the theme in Clement, cf. Le Boulluec (2017), pp. 55–79, who refers the expression τὸ συμβολικὸν εἶδος to the rhetorical tradition. Cf. also Deodati (2005), pp. 69–71, esp. 69 on Clem. *Strom.* V 8,45,4–46,2.
- 26 On this passage and Clement’s use of symbolic language, see the extensive study by Ward (2017); also, Le Boulluec (2012b), pp. 27–57, esp. 53–57.
- 27 On this work Pini states: “L’opera qui ricordata era forse una sezione di un trattato filologico più vasto [...]” (Pini and Rizzi 2006, p. 530 n. 9). See also Le Boulluec (1981b), pp. 177–79 *ad loc.*
- 28 Clem. *Protr.* 2,28,3–4 ed. Mondésert: Ναὶ μὴν Απόλλωνα ὁ μὲν Ἀριστοτέλης πρῶτον Ἡφαίστου καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς (ἐνταῦθα δὴ οὐκέτι παρθένος ἢ Ἀθηνᾶ), δευτέρον ἐν Κρήτῃ τὸν Κύρβαντος, τρίτον τὸν Διὸς καὶ τέταρτον τὸν Ἀρκάδα τὸν Σιληνοῦ· Νόμιος οὗτος κέκληται παρὰ Ἀρκάσιν· ἐπὶ τούτοις τὸν Λίβυν καταλέγει τὸν Ἀμμωνος· ὁ δὲ Δίδυμος ὁ γραμματικὸς τούτοις ἕκτον ἐπιφέρει τὸν Μάγνητος. Πόσοι δὲ καὶ νῦν Απόλλωνες, ἀναρίθμητοι θνητοὶ καὶ ἐπὶ κηροὶ τινες ἄνθρωποι, εἰσὶν, οἱ παραπλησίως τοῖς προειρημένοις ἐκείνοις κεκλημένοι; The English translation is by Butterworth (1919), p. 59.
- 29 Clem. *Protr.* 4,54,3 ed. Mondésert: Καὶ οὐτι γέ βασιλεῖς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἰδιῶται θείαις προσηγορίαις σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐσέμνυνον, ὥς Μενεκράτης ὁ ἰατρός, Ζεὺς οὗτος ἐπικεκλημένος. Τί με δεῖ καταλέγειν Ἀλέαρχον (γραμματικὸς οὗτος τὴν ἐπιστήμην γεγωνώς, ὥς ἰστορεῖ Ἀριστος ὁ Σαλαμίνιος, αὐτὸν κατεσχημάτιζεν εἰς Ἥλιον); The English translation is by W. Wilson, revised by K. Knight: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/020804.htm> (last consultation 29 August 2025).
- 30 Butterworth refers to a fragment on Aristus edited by Müller (Butterworth 1919, p. 123 n. c). In his work, Müller quotes Clement’s passage and adds: “Alexarchi epistolam citat Aristus ὁ τὴν Ἀθηναίων ἀποικίαν γεγραφώς ap. Plutarch. De Is. et Osir. c. 37. Num forte ille Aristus noster est Aristus? Alexarchus quidam historicus, Ἰταλικῶν auctor, memoratur ap. Servium ad Virgil. *Æn.* III, 334 et Plutarch. Par. min. c. 7” (Müller 1979, p. 154 fragm. 2). On this historian see also Schwartz in *RE*, col. 1463, s.v. Alexarchos.
- 31 On this figure see Ernst Badian in *Brill’s New Pauly Online*, s.v. Aristus (last consultation 7 December 2025).
- 32 Cf. Lallot (1998), pp. 70–71.
- 33 Clem. *Strom.* I 16,79,2 ed. Pouderon: Τοὺς χρόνους τούτων παῖδες παραδιδόασιν γραμματικῶν [...]. The English translation is by J. Ferguson: cf. Ferguson (1991), p. 83.
- 34 See Pouderon’s observation on this wording: “Mot à mot « les enfants des grammairiens ». Cette étrange expression figure aussi dans le *Pédagogue* I, 5, 20, 1 ; elle peut trouver son origine, ou bien son équivalent, chez Hérodote, I, 27 : Λυδῶν παῖδας, mis dans la bouche de Crésus, pour désigner les soldats lydiens” (Pouderon 2023, p. 255 n. 5). In a footnote to the passage from *Paedagogus*, Marrou qualifies it as an “[...] expression oratoire (cf. Hérodote, I, 27), dont l’emphase est ici ironique [...]” (Marrou and Harl 1960, p. 146 n. 2). Pini translates it as «scuole di grammatici» (Pini and Rizzi 2006, p. 90). In addition to the aforementioned passage from *Paedagogus*, Clement uses the expression παῖδες γραμματικῶν also in *Strom.* V 8,50,3: γραμματικῶν [...] παισὶν - In a note to the text, Le Boulluec observes: “La correction παισὶν de Stählin, pour ἄπασιν de L, est sûre. Elle est confirmée par les tours parallèles [...] et par les expressions comportant παῖδες et un complément au génitif pluriel, courantes en grec pour désigner par exemple l’ensemble des « peintres » (Platon, *Lois* 769 b), des « orateurs », des « médecins », etc.” (Le Boulluec 1981b, p. 192 *ad loc.*). Both passages (*Paed.* I,5,20,1 and *Strom.* V 8,50,3) will be discussed *infra*. The phrase is also common to two Clement’s contemporaries, namely Athenaeus of Naucratis (*Deipn.* II 32, 49b ed. Desrousseaux - Astruc; VIII 59, 359d) and Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* I 113). It is comparable to Origen’s expression φιλοσόφων παῖδες, which is attested in *Ep. Greg.* 1.
- 35 Prov 5:20.
- 36 Philo *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 77.
- 37 Philo *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 79.

- ³⁸ Clem. *Strom.* I 5,29,9–30,1 ed. Pouderon: ὁπνὴν καὶ δ' ἂν φῆ· «Μὴ πολὺς ἴσθι πρὸς ἀλλοτρίαν», χρῆσθαι μὲν, οὐκ ἐνδιατρίβειν δὲ καὶ ἐναπομένειν τῇ κοσμικῇ παιδείᾳ παραινέει· προπαιδεύει γὰρ τῷ κυριακῷ λόγῳ τὰ κατὰ τοὺς προσήκοντας καιροὺς ἐκάστη γενεᾶ συμφερόντως δεδομένα. «Ἦδη γάρ τινες τοῖς φίλτροις τῶν θεραπεινίδων δελεασθέντες ὠλιγόωρησαν τῆς δεσποίνης, φιλοσοφίας, καὶ κατεγῆρασσαν», οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν ἐν μουσικῇ, οἱ δὲ ἐν γεωμετρίᾳ, ἄλλοι δὲ ἐν γραμματικῇ, οἱ πλεῖστοι δὲ ἐν ῥητορικῇ. Ἀλλ' ὥς τὰ ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα «συμβάλλεται πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν» τὴν δέσποιναν αὐτῶν, «οὕτω καὶ φιλοσοφία αὐτῇ πρὸς σοφίας κτήσιν» συνεργεῖ. The English translation is by J. Ferguson, with some modifications: cf. [Ferguson \(1991\)](#), p. 43.
- ³⁹ Cf. Pini's detailed note on this in [Pini and Rizzi \(2006\)](#), pp. 41–42 n. 12. See also [van den Hoek \(1988\)](#), pp. 23–47, esp. 24–33.
- ⁴⁰ For an interesting parallel cf. Or. *Ep. Greg.* 1, especially this passage: [...] ποιητικῶς δὲ διὰ τοῦτ' ἂν ἠυξάμην παραλαβεῖν σε καὶ φιλοσοφίας Ἑλλήνων τὰ οἰονεῖ εἰς χριστιανισμόν δυνάμενα γενέσθαι ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα ἢ προπαιδεύματα, καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ γεωμετρίας καὶ ἀστρονομίας χρήσιμα ἐσόμενα εἰς τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν γραφῶν διήγησιν· ἴν', ὅπερ φασι φιλοσόφων παῖδες περὶ γεωμετρίας καὶ μουσικῆς γραμματικῆς τε καὶ ῥητορικῆς καὶ ἀστρονομίας, ὡς συνερίθων φιλοσοφία, τοῦθ' ἡμεῖς εἴπωμεν καὶ περὶ αὐτῆς φιλοσοφίας πρὸς χριστιανισμόν (ed. Crouzel). On this see [Rizzi \(2017\)](#), p. 119: "Thus, the intellectual education provided by Greek culture and philosophy is no longer a goal or value in itself, only insofar as it can be useful for explaining the Scriptures".
- ⁴¹ Clem. *Strom.* I 5,30,1 ed. Pouderon: Κυρία τοίνυν ἡ σοφία τῆς φιλοσοφίας ὡς ἐκείνη τῆς προπαιδείας.
- ⁴² Clem. *Strom.* I 20,99 ed. Pouderon: Εἰ δὲ καὶ διαστέλλεσθαι ἡμᾶς διὰ τοὺς φιλεγκλήμονας δεήσει, συναίτιον <τῇ> φιλοσοφίαν καὶ συνεργὸν λέγοντες τῆς ἀληθοῦς καταλήψεως, ζητήσιν οὖσαν ἀληθείας, προπαιδεύειν αὐτὴν ὁμολογήσομεν τοῦ γνωστικοῦ, οὐκ αἴτιον τιθέμενοι τὸ συναίτιον οὐδὲ μὴν τὸ συνεργὸν συνεκτικὸν οὐδ' ὡς οὐ οὐκ ἄνευ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν [...]. Καίτοι καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐδικαίου ποτὲ καὶ ἡ φιλοσοφία τοὺς Ἑλληνας, οὐκ εἰς τὴν καθόλου δὲ δικαιοσύνην εἰς τὴν εὐρίσκεται συνεργός, καθάπερ καὶ ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ δεύτερος βαθμὸς τῷ εἰς τὸ ὑπερῶν ἀνιόντι καὶ ὁ γραμματιστῇ τῷ φιλοσοφῇσιν. [...] Ἀλλὰ τῶν συνεργῶν τὰ μὲν πλείονα, τὰ δ' ἐλάσσονα προσφέρεται δύναμιν. Ἡ γοῦν σαφήνεια συνεργεῖ πρὸς τὴν παράδοσιν τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ἡ διαλεκτικὴ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὑποπίπτειν ταῖς κατατρεχούσαις αἰρέσεσιν. The English translation is by J. Ferguson, with some modifications: «Captiousness may require us to go on making distinctions. In saying that philosophy is a joint and contributory cause to the grasp of truth, because it is a search for truth, we shall be accepting it as a kind of preparatory education for the Christian Gnostic. We do not regard a joint cause as a simple cause or a contributory cause as having a comprehensive grasp of its object. We do not regard philosophy as a sine qua non. [...] And yet philosophy on its own did bring the Greeks to righteousness, though not to perfect righteousness, to which we have seen it as a contributor, rather as the first and second steps contribute to a prospective ascent to the loft or the elementary teacher to the prospective philosopher. [...] The contributory causes vary in their efficacy. Clarity contributes to the transmission of truth, dialectic to escaping from the attacks of the heresies» (in [Ferguson 1991](#), pp. 97–98).
- ⁴³ See [Rizzi \(2017\)](#), pp. 120–23, 123: "Faith is necessary to comprehend the Bible, but philosophical reasoning supports and confirms the faith of the Church; in Clement's vision there is an intrinsic relationship", and also [Le Boulluec \(2012b\)](#), pp. 50–57.
- ⁴⁴ Clem. *Strom.* I 9,43,1–2 ed. Pouderon: Ἐνιοὶ δὲ εὐφυεῖς οἰόμενοι εἶναι ἀξιούσι μῆτε φιλοσοφίας ἄπτεσθαι μῆτε διαλεκτικῆς, ἀλλὰ μὴδὲ τὴν φυσικὴν θεωρίαν ἐκμανθάνειν, μόνην δὲ καὶ ψιλὴν τὴν πίστιν ἀπαιτοῦσιν, ὥσπερ εἰ μηδεμίαν ἡξίου ἐπιμέλειαν ποιησάμενοι τῆς ἀμπέλου εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοὺς βότρυν λαμβάνειν. Ἀμπελος δὲ ὁ κύριος ἀλληγορεῖται [...]. The English translation is by J. Ferguson, with some modifications: «There are some people who imagine they are fully equipped by nature, and do not deem worthy to have anything to do with philosophy or dialectic, not even to learn about the natural world at all. All they ask for is simply and solely faith. It is as if they expected to gather grapes from the very first without taking any care of the vine. The vine is allegorically the Lord [...]» (in [Ferguson 1991](#), p. 54).
- ⁴⁵ Clem. *Strom.* I 9,43,3–4 ed. Pouderon: Καθάπερ δὲ ἐν γεωργίᾳ [οὕτω] καὶ ἐν ἱατρικῇ χρηστομαθῆς ἐκεῖνος ὁ ποικιλωτέρων μαθημάτων ἀψάμενος, ὡς βέλτιον γεωργεῖν τε καὶ ὑγιαίνειν δύνασθαι, οὕτω κἀνταῦθα χρηστομαθῇ φημι τὸν πάντα ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀναφέροντα, ὥστε καὶ ἀπὸ γεωμετρίας καὶ μουσικῆς καὶ ἀπὸ γραμματικῆς καὶ φιλοσοφίας αὐτῆς δρεπόμενον τὸ χρήσιμον ἀνεπιβούλευτον φυλάσσειν τὴν πίστιν. The English translation is by J. Ferguson, with some modifications (in [Ferguson 1991](#), p. 54).
- ⁴⁶ Clem. *Strom.* I 9,44,1–2 ed. Pouderon: Αὐτίκα καὶ κυβερνήτην τὸν πολὺπειρον ἐπαινοῦμεν, ὃς «πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων» εἶδεν «ἄστεα», καὶ ἱατρὸν τὸν ἐν πείρᾳ πολλῶν γεγεννημένον· ἢ τινες καὶ τὸν ἐμπειρικὸν ἀναπλάττουσιν. Ὁ δὲ πρὸς τὸν βίον ἀναφέρων ἕκαστα τὸν ὀρθὸν ἐκ τε τῶν ἑλληνικῶν καὶ τῶν βαρβαρικῶν ὑποδείγματα κομίζων πολὺπειρος οὗτος τῆς ἀληθείας ἰχενυτῆς καὶ τῷ ὄντι πολὺμητις, δίκην τῆς βασάνου λίθου· ἢ δ' ἐστὶ Λυδὴ διακρίνειν πεπιστευμένη τὸ νόθον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰθαγενοῦς χρυσοῦ· [καὶ] ἱκανὸς ὢν χωρίζειν, ὁ πολὺδρις ἡμῶν καὶ γνωστικός, σοφιστικὴν μὲν φιλοσοφίας, κομωτικὴν δὲ γυμναστικῆς καὶ ὀψοποιικῆς ἱατρικῆς καὶ ῥητορικῆς διαλεκτικῆς καὶ μετὰ τὰς ἄλλας τὰς κατὰ τὴν βάρβαρον φιλοσοφίαν αἰρέσεις αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας. The English translation is by J. Ferguson, slightly modified: «We approve of the sea-captain who has had plenty of experience and has visited "the cities of many peoples," and the doctor who has treated many patients. This is how some people form the idea of the empirical doctor. Anyone who brings every experience to bear on right action, taking models from Greeks and barbarians alike, is a highly skilled hunter of truth. He really is many-wiled.

Like the testing stone, a stone from Lydia that was believed to distinguish genuine from false gold, our man of many skills, and gnostic, is also competent to distinguish sophistry from philosophy, superficial adornment from athletics, cookery from pharmacy, rhetoric from dialectic, and among others the heresies according to barbarian philosophy from the actual truth» (in Ferguson 1991, pp. 54–55).

- 47 Clem. *Strom.* I 9,44,3–4 ed. Pouderon: Πῶς δὲ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον περὶ νοητῶν φιλοσοφοῦντα διαλαβεῖν τὸν ἐπιποθοῦντα τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεως ἐπήβολον γενέσθαι; πῶς δὲ οὐχὶ καὶ διαιρεῖσθαι χρήσιμον τὰς τε ἀμφιβόλους φωνὰς τὰς τε ὁμωνύμως ἐκφερομένας κατὰ τὰς διαθήκας; Παρ’ ἀμφιβολίαν γὰρ ὁ κύριος τὸν διάβολον κατὰ τὸν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ σοφίζεται χρόνον, καὶ οὐκέτι ἔγωγε ἐνταῦθα συνορῶ, ὅπως ποτὲ ὁ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ τῆς διαλεκτικῆς εὐρετής, ὥς τινες ὑπολαμβάνουσιν, παράγεται τῷ κατ’ ἀμφιβολίαν ἀπατῶμενος τρόπῳ. The English translation is by J. Ferguson, with some modifications: cf. Ferguson (1991), p. 55.
- 48 The «explanation according to the tropes» constitutes the second part of grammar (Dion. Thr. *Ars gram.* ed. Uhlig §1: Μέρη δὲ αὐτῆς ἔστιν ἔξι· [...] δεῦτερον ἐξηγήσις κατὰ τοὺς ἐνυπάρχοντας ποιητικοὺς τρόπους [...]).
- 49 Cf. Pouderon (2023), p. 184 n. 1.
- 50 Cf. also Or. *Phil.* 14,2, especially this passage: Ἔστι δὲ ὅπου παρὰ τὴν ἀγνοίαν τῶν λογικῶν μεγάλως περιπίπτομεν, μὴ καθαίροντες τὰς ὁμωνυμίας καὶ ἀμφιβολίας καὶ καταχρήσεις καὶ κυριολεξίας καὶ διαστολάς. (ed. Harl).
- 51 On the use of these figures by Clement, especially in the fifth book of *Stromateis*, see Ward (2017), pp. 534–44, 543: “For Clement, the text of scripture, and particularly that of the Old Testament, is composed of enigmas—obscure, hidden sayings. Inasmuch as these words and figures are αἰνίγματα, they point towards a referent hidden beneath the immediate context. Simultaneously, the words and figures are symbols in need of interpretation. When one properly interprets the text *qua* symbol, that is, when he assigns the symbol with its proper referent, he lifts the enigmatic veil covering the text”. See also Dinan (2010), pp. 175–80.
- 52 Cf. *supra* n. 24.
- 53 Clem. *Strom.* V 8,50,2–3 ed. Le Boulluec: Καὶ μυρία ἐπὶ μυρίοις εὗρομεν ἂν ὑπὸ τε φιλοσόφων ὑπὸ τε ποιητῶν αἰνιγματωδῶς εἰρημένα, ὅπου γε καὶ ὅλα βιβλία ἐπικεκρυμμένην τὴν τοῦ συγγραφέως βούλησιν ἐπιδείκνυνται [...]. Εὐφορίων γὰρ ὁ ποιητῆς καὶ τὰ Καλλιμάχου Αἴτια καὶ ἡ Λυκόφρονος Ἀλεξάνδρα καὶ τὰ τούτοις παραπλήσια γυμνάσιον εἰς ἐξηγήσιν γραμματικῶν ἐκκεῖται παισί. The English translation is by W. Wilson, revised by K. Knight, with some modifications: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02105.htm> (last consultation 30 August 2025).
- 54 For which see *supra* n. 34.
- 55 For a different interpretation of the passage see Ward (2017), p. 551 n. 77: “[...] in *Str.* 5.50.2–3 (GCS 15:360–61), Clement claims that “obscure” texts are indeed “proposed as an exercise in the exegesis of letters to children” (γυμνάσιον εἰς ἐξηγήσιν γραμματικῶν ἐκκεῖται παισί).”
- 56 See Le Boulluec (1981b), p. 192 *ad loc.*: “Le terme γραμματικός avait pris un sens nouveau, avec la science hellénistique ; il ne désignait plus seulement le maître d’école, mais le critique qui se livrait à l’« explication » (ἐξηγήσις) des textes littéraires [...]”. As observed by Martin Irvine, commenting on *Strom.* VI 15,131,4–132,1: “Clement’s interpretation reveals an explicit understanding of the function of exegetical discourse: exegesis produces a new text from the old, exhibiting in the exegetical text the hidden sub-text revealed only in a new text. [...] Clement’s writings, therefore, show an awareness of the essential function of commentary examined at the level of textuality: commentary renews a text through the codes and cultural encyclopedia of the community, reinstituting its value for an interpretive community within any given historical moment. Furthermore, Clement shows how all interpretation is allegorical, since interpretation does not seek to repeat or duplicate a text on the level of expression, but posits a latent, unexpressed, sub-text concealed but interpretable in the text” (in Irvine 1994, pp. 250–52, 252). See also Ward (2022), p. 200: “[...] Clement of Alexandria is always simultaneously a theologian and a grammarian. For Clement the commentator, the exegesis of Scripture is the foundational practice of Christian theology”.
- 57 On this historian, dated to the second century BCE, see Anna Maria Schwemer in *Brill’s New Pauly Online*, s.v. Eupolemus (last consultation 30 August 2025).
- 58 Cf. *supra* n. 8 (*Strom.* I 16,78,2: Ναὶ μὴν ὁψέ ποτε εἰς Ἑλλήνας ἢ τῶν λόγων παρήλθε διδασκαλία τε καὶ γραφή). On this process see Ferguson’s note: “the Phoenicians reduced a syllabary to the initial consonants, simplifying at the cost of ambiguity; the Jews and Greeks took over from there: the Greeks by adding signs for vowels produced the first full alphabet” (in Ferguson 1991, p. 137 n. 701). Commenting on other passages from Clement’s *Stromateis*, Le Boulluec observes: “Tirant parti des sources hellénistiques qui font des philosophes grecs des disciples de sages « barbares », notamment égyptiens, Clément conclut que les Hébreux, les plus anciens de ces sages, et au premier chef Moïse, sont les maîtres des Grecs, selon une représentation propre à l’historiographie hellénistique, qui suppose influence là où il y a antériorité” (in Le Boulluec 2012d, p. 87).
- 59 Clem. *Strom.* I 23,153,4 ed. Pouderon: Εὐπόλεμος δὲ ἐν τῷ Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ βασιλέων τὸν Μωϋσῆ φησι πρῶτον σοφὸν γενέσθαι καὶ γραμματικὴν πρῶτον τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις παραδοῦναι καὶ παρὰ Ἰουδαίων Φοίνικας παραλαβεῖν, Ἑλλήνας δὲ παρὰ Φοινίκων. The English translation is by J. Ferguson (in Ferguson 1991, p. 137).
- 60 On the questions regarding this book and its relationship with *Stromateis*, see Matyáš Havrda’s comprehensive introduction in Havrda (2016), pp. 1–77, as well as Chiapparini (2016), pp. 205–38.

- ⁶¹ Clem. *Strom.* VIII 8,23,1 ed. and transl. Havrda: Τρία ἐστὶ περὶ τὴν φωνήν· τὰ τε ὀνόματα σύμβολα ὄντα τῶν νοημάτων κατὰ τὸ προηγούμενον, κατ' ἐπακολουθήμα δὲ καὶ τῶν ὑποκειμένων, δεύτερον δὲ τὰ νοήματα ὁμοιώματα καὶ ἐκτυπώματα τῶν ὑποκειμένων ὄντα [. . .]· τρίτον δὲ τὰ ὑποκείμενα πράγματα, ἀφ' ὧν ἡμῖν τὰ νοήματα ἐντυπούνται. «Speech involves three items: names, which are primarily symbols of concepts, but consequently also of the underlying things; second, concepts, which are copies and imprints of the underlying things [. . .]; third, the underlying things, from which concepts are imprinted in us».
- ⁶² Clem. *Strom.* VIII 8,23,2 ed. and transl. Havrda: τὰ μὲν οὖν ὀνόματα τῇ γραμματικῇ εἰς τὰ καθολικὰ στοιχεῖα κδ' ἀνάγεται.
- ⁶³ See Havrda (2016), p. 248 *ad loc.* Cf. also Deodati (2005), pp. 49–50 and 93.
- ⁶⁴ See Le Boulluec (2012c), pp. 61–76, esp. 63–71; and Ward (2023), pp. 150–53.
- ⁶⁵ Cf. *supra* n. 24 (Clem. *Strom.* V 8,45,4–46,2 ed. Le Boulluec: Ἀλλὰ καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Θραξ ὁ γραμματικὸς ἐν τῷ Περὶ τῆς ἐμφάσεως περὶ τοῦ τῶν τροχίσκων συμβόλου φησὶ κατὰ λέξιν· «Ἐσήμενον γοῦν οὐ διὰ λέξεως μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ συμβόλων ἐνιοὶ τὰς πράξεις, διὰ λέξεως μὲν ὡς ἔχει τὰ λεγόμενα Δελφικὰ παραγγέλματα, τὸ 'μηδὲν ἄγαν' καὶ τὸ 'γνώθι σαυτὸν' καὶ τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια, διὰ δὲ συμβόλων ὡς ὁ τε τροχὸς ὁ στρεφόμενος ἐν τοῖς τῶν θεῶν τεμένεσιν εἰλκυσμένος παρὰ Αἰγυπτίων καὶ τὸ τῶν θαλλῶν τῶν διδομένων τοῖς προσκυνοῦσι.» [. . .] Χρησιμώτατον ἄρα τὸ τῆς συμβολικῆς ἑρμηνείας εἶδος εἰς πολλά, καὶ πρὸς τὴν ὀρθὴν θεολογίαν συνεργοῦν καὶ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν καὶ πρὸς ἐπίδειξιν συνέσεως καὶ πρὸς βραχυλογίας ἄσκησιν καὶ σοφίας ἐνδειξιν· «σοφοῦ γὰρ τὸ χρηθῆσθαι τῇ συμβολικῇ φράσει δεξιῶς, φησὶν ὁ γραμματικὸς Δίδυμος, καὶ τὸ γνωρίσαι τὸ διὰ ταύτης δηλούμενον»).
- ⁶⁶ The «discovery of etymology» constitutes the fourth part of grammar (Dion. Thr. *Ars gram.* ed. Uhlig §1: Μέρη δὲ αὐτῆς ἐστὶν ἕξ· [. . .] τέταρτον ἐτυμολογίας εὗρεσις [. . .]). For Clement's use of etymologies see van den Hoek (2004), pp. 122–68, and n. 6 for the reference bibliography. Cf. also Deodati (2005), pp. 47 and esp. 74–88.
- ⁶⁷ See van den Hoek (2004), pp. 161–62.
- ⁶⁸ Clem. *Paed.* I 5,20,1 ed. Marrou: Καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ ἔστιν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ νηπίου κατὰ στέρησιν ἡμῖν νοούμενον, ἐπεὶ τὸ νη στερητικὸν γραμματικῶν νομοθετοῦσιν παῖδες. The English translation is by Simon P. Wood, with some modifications (in Wood 1953, p. 20).
- ⁶⁹ Cf. *supra* n. 34.
- ⁷⁰ Clem. *Paed.* I 5,19,1 ed. Marrou: Ἐνταῦθα ἐπιστῆσαι δίκαιον τῇ προσηγορίᾳ τοῦ νηπίου, ὅτι οὐκ ἐπὶ ἀφρόνων τάττεται τὸ νήπιον· νηπύτιος μὲν γὰρ οὗτος, νήπιος δὲ ὁ νεήπιος, ὡς ἦπιος ὁ ἀπαλόφρων, οἷον ἦπιος νεωστὶ καὶ πρᾶος τῷ τρόπῳ γενόμενος. The English translation is by S. P. Wood: «We ought now to be in a position to understand that the name 'little one' is not used in the sense of lacking intelligence. Childishness means that, but 'little one' really means 'one newly become gentle,' just as the word 'gentle' means being mild-mannered. So, a 'little one' means one just recently become gentle and meek of disposition» (in Wood 1953, p. 19).
- ⁷¹ On this see Tessore's note: "[. . .] Clemente esamina l'etimologia (dal punto di vista scientifico-filologico non corretta) della parola *nepios*, "bambino", che egli collega a *neos* (che può significare sia "giovane" che "nuovo" [. . .]) e *epios* ("dolce")" (in Tessore 2005, p. 51 n. 10). Cf. also Deodati (2005), p. 67.
- ⁷² See Opelt (1962), pp. 532–40, 532: "Linguistics and theology did not converge only in a theology of language restricted to exegetical problems, but also in the field of ancient linguistics and above all in the field of one of its minor branches, etymology".
- ⁷³ Cf. also Deodati (2005), pp. 74–75: "Nei Padri della Chiesa è ricorrente un concetto logico-ontologico, quello della οἰκονομία divina [. . .]. Anche il linguaggio fa parte di questa οἰκονομία, e un'indagine sulla sua origine diventa una via per conoscere la Verità: l'etimologia non è quindi una scienza solo gnoseologica, ma diventa etica, come mezzo per conoscere Dio dietro il principio, anche stoico-platonico, della non arbitrarietà dei nomi e della loro giustezza (ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων)".
- ⁷⁴ Cf. *supra* n. 3.
- ⁷⁵ See Irvine (1994), p. 163.
- ⁷⁶ On the same line, with a focus on Clement's exegetical work, see Ward (2023), pp. 122–29, 124: "I emphasize the *commentarial assumptions* and *strategies* that ground textual interpretation - perhaps such that we could even call this 'grammatical' interpretation - and I will suggest that this may be helpfully subsumed under the category of 'commentary,' since the lines between grammar and rhetoric at the hermeneutical nexus of commentarial activity are blurred".

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