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Asceticism and Early Christian Lifestyle

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Faculty of Theology at
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Acknowledgements

Seriously, doing full-time academic research is a luxury. The ancient Greeks referred to this kind of luxury by the term *scholē*, from which the words ‘school’ and ‘scholarship’ derive. Although learning a required dialectic, utilizing complicated sources, and developing convincing argumentation take any candidate to her or his intellectual limits, a *scholastēs* is a person who ‘lives at ease’ compared to many other hard workers. Yet, completing a doctoral dissertation is an exercise that takes hard work and discipline, too. Perfecting one’s writing is always a challenge, it is asceticism par excellence. As the fruits of the scholarship are gathered line by line, the research assumes a literal form. Thus every author knows that every written work is much more than just a mass of text with a limited perspective on an intriguing topic. Every academic effort is an exponent of the community from which it sprouts. In this sense, although writing a dissertation includes some *anachorēsis*, withdrawal, or at least a break from the burden of what the Greeks labelled as *ascholia*, academic work grows out of feedback, communality and collegiality.

Many people have helped and encouraged me during this project. I am especially grateful to my brilliant supervisors. Professor Risto Saarinen has supported my studies both in intellectual and material terms, first in the EcuDoc Seminar and for the past three years in the Centre of

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I also wish to thank all my publishers, editors and reviewers for their effort and generosity during my project. Erik Eliasson and Patrik Hagman in particular provided me with valuable insights regarding early Christian asceticism and ancient philosophy. I thank especially Maijastina Kahlos, Juliette Day and all my anonymous referees for their comments, and Grant White for improving my English. I also wish to thank professor Ismo Dunderberg who, despite becoming dean of the faculty, kept reading and commenting on my work. In addition to theological reflection, *pansofos* Juha Leinonen offered me valuable technical help with my manuscript several times.

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Helsinki

1st Sunday of Lent, *Invocavit*

March 5, 2017

Joona Salminen

List of Original Publications

Articles of this collection have been published, or are intended to be published, in the following peer-reviewed publications and journals listed below; one of the following remains unpublished but has been presented in two academic conferences. Licenced translator Antti Pajunen prepared a rough translation of articles 1 and 2 from the Finnish originals and I have then completed the translation and revised these articles myself; in these articles, the argument and documentation remains untouched but some stylistic modifications are made in order to make the text more available for Anglophone readers. I take full responsibility of the errors remaining. The order of the articles follows the order of their publication.

1. **From City to Desert, and back again: the Social Function of Early Christian Asceticism**
Trans. from Finnish original 'Kilvoittelua kaupungissa ja erämaassa: Askeesin sosiaalinen merkitys varhaiskristillisyydessä' published in *Teologinen Aikakauskirja (Finnish Journal of Theology)* 3/2014, 221-233.
2. **From Symposium to Gymnasium: Physical and Spiritual Exercises in Early Christianity**
Trans. from Finnish original 'Symposiumista gymnasiumiin: Ruumiillisia ja henkisiä harjoituksia varhaisessa kristinuskossa'

published in *Ruumiillisuus varbaiskristillisessä teologiassa (Bodyliness in Early Christian Theology)*, ed. Jussi Junni in series *Societas Patristica Fennica* vol. 1, 2014, 143-168.

3. **The City of God and the Place of Demons: City Life and Demonology in Early Christianity**
Published in volume *Spaces in Late Antiquity: Cultural, Theological and Archaeological Perspectives*, eds. Juliette Day, Raimo Hakola, Majastina Kahlos and Ulla Tervahauta. Routledge: Taylor & Francis, 2016, 106-117.
4. **Clement of Alexandria on laughter: A Study on an Ascetic Performance in Context**
Accepted to *Studia Patristica* (published probably in 2017); based on academic presentation in XVII Conference on Patristic Studies (Oxford 10-14 August, 2015), and slightly revised afterwards for this study.
5. **Clement and Alexandria: A Moral Map**
Unpublished manuscript based on two academic presentations, one given at symposium Concord, Conflict and Co-existence: Religion and Society in the Middle East and North Africa organized by The Finnish Institute in the Middle East (Turku, 5-7 June, 2014); and another in NAPS's Annual Meeting (Chicago, 26-28 May, 2016. Intended to be published either as an independent article or as a chapter in my forthcoming studies.

All the articles of this volume spring from my project 'Deification and Daily Life' I started in October 2012. The idea of the project is to explore the philosophical roots of Christian asceticism and relate its early stages to the slowly but all the time more explicitly emerging doctrine of deification; all the articles in this work were produced during my preparation of the monograph and, as the work goes on, keep contributing to this endeavour. Though the theme of deification is present in most parts of this work, my intention is to elaborate more on it in the monograph dedicated to the topic. I wish to relate the concept more closely to Clement's thinking and

explore more profoundly how the theme emerges also in Western theology.

Abstract

This dissertation explores early Christian asceticism. The study consists of introduction and five articles examining ascetic ideals and practices in early Christianity and analysing the question of early Christian lifestyle within the context of city life in Late Antiquity, with particular emphasis on Clement of Alexandria. The dissertation also clarifies the role of Clement and his work *Paedagogus*' practical instructions in the development of Christian asceticism. The introductory article of this study is entitled 'Polis, Philosophy, and Perfection.' The introduction sketches Clement's view on Christian lifestyle, after which the philosophy of city life in the Greco-Roman world is discussed. The article then turns to methodological questions and issues regarding identity. The article approaches asceticism as a contextual phenomenon, and the main aim of the article is to highlight the importance of city life in order to clarify what Christian asceticism was in its very early stages.

The first article of the collection, 'From City to Desert, and back again: the Social Function of Early Christian Asceticism,' discusses early Christian city life with respect to the later ascetic tradition. By comparing two works, the *Paedagogus* of Clement of Alexandria and the *Vita Antonii* of Athanasius of Alexandria, the article illustrates that early Christian

asceticism before the desert movement of the fourth century originated in the ordinary city life of educated people who were part of the urban social elite. This article also discusses the history of ascetic practices and their place in ancient philosophy, especially in Platonism and Stoic thought. The major contribution of the article is to suggest demons and demonology as the link between city and desert asceticism and to discuss the social function of ascetic lifestyle and practices.

The second article, 'From Symposium to Gymnasium: Physical and Spiritual Exercises in Early Christianity,' discusses the relationship between sport and asceticism. In historical terms, the link between the two is essential, because the Greek verb *askein* was an athletic term before it was transformed into a monastic concept. The article focuses on specific virtues and pays attention to how physical ascetic performances take place in different contexts. The article also highlights the continuity between ancient popular philosophy and Christian thought in Late Antiquity. In addition to such sports as walking, ball games and wrestling, the article pays attention also to gender roles within the context of sport. Traditions of spiritual exercises in ancient philosophy are of fundamental significance for Christian asceticism.

Third, the article 'The City of God and the Place of Demons: City Life and Demonology in Early Christianity' discusses demonology, an important aspect of asceticism, and links it to the concept of spatiality. The article presents demonology as a point in which the city becomes an essentially important environment, even in monastic asceticism. Even though many fourth-century ascetics decided to withdraw from city life, the city, with all its temptations, followed them into the desert. Demonology plays a major role in this dynamic: because of demons the former life of the ascetic was constantly present in his new life, providing

material for ascetic formation. This formation of identity took place in specific concrete surroundings.

The fourth article of the study, 'Clement of Alexandria on Laughter: A Study on an Ascetic Performance in Context,' discusses one specific aspect of Christian lifestyle. Although laughter became an emergent theme in Christian asceticism, one of the earliest systematic treatises on the topic was not written in a monastic context but for city life in an Egyptian metropolis. The immediate context for Clement's instruction were the symposia of the upper class, whose social and historical aspects have been carefully analysed in previous scholarship. Clement's view becomes understandable in the context of his theory of emotions and deification, themes on which he elaborates extensively in his writings. Excessive laughter should be avoided, whereas Clement considers moderate laughing to be a sign of self-control.

The fifth article of this work, 'Clement and Alexandria: A Moral Map', brings together different aspects of city life through the cohesive framework of a 'moral map.' Ancient Alexandria was a centre not only of early Christian thought but also was a cradle of asceticism. It provided Christians and other city dwellers not merely with an impressive metropolitan milieu, but enriched their lives with its intellectual traditions and social activities. In this regard, Clement, who taught in Alexandria in the late second century, gives an intriguing account of the morality of his surroundings. What does Clement say about baths, parties and pagan temples, or why should Christians be careful when walking the streets of the city? Through the concept of the 'moral map' this article seeks to demonstrate that Clement held an ethical theory of city life and that for him, Alexandria served as a pedagogical platform: a moral map.

Introduction

Polis, Philosophy, and Perfection

In recent decades, Western culture has been shaped by the manifold emergence of asceticism. More and more Westerners attend yoga classes, practice mindfulness, are interested in different meditation techniques and other ways of cultivating their inner self. Monastic vocations might be few, yet some find it refreshing to take their vacations in a monastic setting; some monasteries even offer courses for laypersons. Silent worship and retreats have gained popularity not only in traditional Catholic and Orthodox circles but also among Protestants. It has become customary to follow different kinds of diets, not always out of religious motivation but nevertheless including the same kind of communal elements such as fasting or abstaining from certain foods together with a group of people either permanently or for a certain period of time. Contemporary asceticism also finds its place in gyms, and fits within the increasingly popular fitness culture. Though it is in many ways a part of modern Western urban life, asceticism has occupied a place both on TV, especially in reality shows, and the Internet, especially in social media. Ordinary people tell stories about how they got in shape, lost weight, changed their lifestyle, or found spiritual or other meanings for their lives. Often, but not necessarily always, these

forms of asceticism are related to urbanisation and city life; religious premises do not play the role they used to. It might be overly exaggerated to call these stories ‘modern hagiographies’ but sources of the selfie culture go back centuries in time when cities were quite different from what we are accustomed to in our day. The ideals have been different, but there seem to be universal elements included in the particular contexts in which different forms of asceticism have taken both their shape and place.¹

This study examines ascetic ideals and practices in early Christianity and analyses early Christian lifestyle within the context of city life in Late Antiquity, with a particular emphasis on Clement of Alexandria. This introduction discusses themes relevant for understanding the wider scope of the articles. First, I briefly introduce my five articles and then proceed to discuss what kind of attention asceticism has been drawing recently; I then sketch Clement’s view on Christian lifestyle, after which I proceed to discuss philosophy of city life in the Greco-Roman world. The study then turns to methodological questions and issues regarding identity; as also asceticism as a contextual phenomenon and ideals of ascetic character. I conclude with reflections on my contribution to scholarship.

¹ In this chapter I have modified and updated the list of modern ascetic activities in Western popular culture from that given in the introduction by R. Wimbush and R. Valantasis in *Asceticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Several phenomena could be added to the list, such as pilgrimages, the Taizé movement and spirituality and ecological awareness, but also more extreme and even violent forms of asceticism. In his *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2008), 57, 94-99, Richard Valantasis discusses two infamous cases of violent asceticism: The Branch Davidians, which he defines as a radically conservative ascetic community from the beginning of 1990s in Waco, Texas, and the September 11th terrorist acts in New York (2001). I find the use of the term ‘asceticism’ problematic in these cases because it does not give much help in understanding these tragic events. However, I find it plausible to try to make use of the concept in understanding different kind of communities, and to use it not only to provide insights into positive (and sometimes even trivial) lifestyle issues but also to make use of it in understanding terrifying acts of violence and submission.

Articles contained in this study

The first article of the collection at hand, ‘From City to Desert, and back again: the Social Function of Early Christian Asceticism,’ discusses early Christian city life with respect to the later ascetic tradition. By comparing two works, *Paedagogus* by Clement of Alexandria and *Vita Antonii* by Athanasius of Alexandria, the article illustrates that early Christian asceticism before the desert movement originated in the ordinary city life of the educated people who were part of the urban social elite. This article also discusses the history of ascetic practices and their place in ancient philosophy, especially in Platonism and Stoic thought. The major contribution of the article is to suggest demons and demonology as the link between city and desert asceticism. Temptations ancient ascetics faced in the desert seem to resemble closely those that were already central themes of city life more than a century before the desert movement and the rise of monasticism. Current understanding of ancient emotion theories provides modern scholarship valuable tools for ascertaining the philosophical roots of early Christian asceticism. This analysis contributes to our understanding of asceticism’s social function, a topic of great interest in scholarship on early Christianity.

The second article, ‘From Symposium to Gymnasium: Physical and Spiritual Exercises in Early Christianity’, discusses the relationship between sports and asceticism. In historical terms, the link between these two is essential, because *askein* was an athletic term before it was transformed into a monastic concept. The article focuses on specific virtues and pays attention to how physical ascetic performances take place in different contexts. This article also highlights the continuity between ancient popular philosophy and Christian thinking in Late Antiquity. In addition to such sports as walking, ball games and wrestling, the article pays

special attention to gender roles. Traditions of spiritual exercises in ancient philosophy are of fundamental significance to Christian asceticism.

Third, the article ‘The City of God and the Place of Demons: City Life and Demonology in Early Christianity’ discusses this important aspect of asceticism and links it to spatiality. Demonology is presented as a point in which the city becomes an essentially important environment, even in monastic asceticism. Even though many fourth-century ascetics decided to withdraw from city life, the city, with all its temptations, followed them to the desert. Demonology plays a major role in this dynamic: because of them the former life of the ascetic was constantly present in his new life, providing material for ascetic formation. This formation of identity took place in specific concrete surroundings. Ascetics sought the city of God and citizenship of Heaven, but found themselves in the place of demons instead.

‘Clement of Alexandria on Laughter: A Study on an Ascetic Performance in Context,’ my fourth article in this study, discusses one aspect of Christian lifestyle. Though laughter became an emergent theme in Christian asceticism, one of the earliest systematic treatises on the topic was not written in a monastic context but for the city life in an Egyptian metropolis. The treatise was composed by Clement of Alexandria in his *Paedagogus* around the year 195 CE in order to instruct his students both in their social setting and to cultivate their inner disposition. The immediate context for Clement’s instruction were the symposia of the upper class, whose social and historical aspects have been carefully analysed in scholarship. My article provides a context for Clement’s theory on laughter that goes beyond banquets and body. Clement’s view becomes understandable in the context of his theory of emotions and deification, themes on which he elaborates extensively in his writing. Excessive laughter should be avoided, whereas Clement considers moderate laughing

to be a sign of self-control. This view should be understood in the framework of his theory of controlling passions: ‘We become like God in relation to virtue’ (Paed. 1.12.99). Clement sees Christ as the healer of unnatural passions that disturb the soul. Thus within this framework Clement’s reflections on laughing should be seen as a part of his educational program which aims to achieve a respected social behaviour based on the likeness of God and freedom of the emotions. The gods of ancient mythologies laugh, but in ancient Christianity laughter becomes problematic, especially in the context of asceticism.

Finally, the fifth article of this work, ‘Clement and Alexandria: A Moral Map’, brings together different aspects of city life through the cohesive framework of a ‘moral map.’ Ancient Alexandria was not only a centre for early Christian thinking but also a cradle of asceticism. It did not merely provide Christians and other city dwellers with an impressive metropolitan milieu, but enriched their lives with both its intellectual traditions and social activities. In this regard, Clement, who taught in Alexandria in the late second century, gives an intriguing account of the morality of his surroundings. In this article, I offer a detailed analysis of how Clement understands Alexandria as a moral map, with particular emphasis on his *Paedagogus*. I will offer a close examination of a few key passages in order to ask: What does Clement say about baths? How does he feel about parties? Why is he critical of pagan temples? Why does he allow his disciples to attend the gymnasium? What is wrong with theatres and why should Christians be careful when walking the streets of the city? Through the concept of the ‘moral map’ I seek to demonstrate that Clement held an ethical theory of city life. The article contributes to the theme of spatiality and, in addition, illuminates the role of spiritual exercises in early Christian asceticism. Clement’s topographical use of *praemeditatio* is fundamentally important for his method of teaching a

Christian lifestyle to his students. The article also discusses how concord, a chief value of the ancient Roman society, is reflected in the practical precepts of Clement, to whom Alexandria served as a pedagogical platform: a moral map.

To summarize, the main aim of this study is to highlight the importance of city life in relation to early Christian lifestyle, and to clarify what Christian asceticism was in its very early stages. I also wish to clarify how large a role Clement of Alexandria had in the development of early Christian asceticism, through relating his practical instructions in the *Paedagogus* to his idea of deification. My studies also emphasize issues of identity and character.

Asceticism attracts attention

Of late, asceticism has garnered serious ecumenical interest. Nowadays Protestants are interested in monasticism and even monastic spirituality, as Greg Peters has emphasized.² From an ecumenical point of view, it is also worthwhile to pay attention to Sarah Coakley's recent book *The New Asceticism* in which she approaches contemporary church debates and scandals from a variety of intriguing perspectives. Coakley depicts recent ecclesial sex scandals in the light of Gregory of Nyssa's theology of desire, and gives space to voices from marginalised groups. Her intention is to

² Greg Peters, *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015).

Although the sixteenth-century Reformers, some of them even ex-monks, were often critical towards many forms of asceticism, repentance and flagellation as practiced in monasteries, there are also positive examples of how some of them found ascetic wisdom useful. Martin Luther, for example, was familiar with ancient ascetic texts (for example, the *Vita Antonii*), and uses the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, a collection of sayings of the desert fathers. Research on Pietism, Puritanism, and revival movements should also benefit from studies on asceticism, but however useful the concept could be to those fields, those discussions lie beyond the scope of this study. See Greg Peters, *Reforming the Monastery: Protestant Theologies of the Religious Life* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014).

move contemporary discussions forward from the current discourses of ‘libertinism’ and ‘repression’ by utilizing a nuanced theological critique.³ Coakley focuses on the connection between sexuality and spirituality. She makes the sharp observation that it is not a coincidence that in our time the quest for God as the ultimate object of human desire and frustration over patriarchal dominance coincide.⁴ Coakley also discusses modern extreme forms of asceticism, but also pays attention to daily life issues: how to wear one’s hair, use of the voice, the meaning of liturgical gestures, how to dress and walk.⁵ These kinds of issues are also central to this study and to how I find it important to emphasize asceticism as a part of daily life. I believe that it is not simply a coincidence that modern interest in spirituality finds asceticism to be a fascinating phenomenon.

In addition to ecumenical interest, in recent decades asceticism has garnered much attention in scholarship. By definition, ‘asceticism’ (deriving from the Greek verb *askein*,) refers to ‘training’ (physical, athletic), ‘discipline,’ ‘exercises’ or ‘repetition’ of practically any activity. As Teresa Shaw has emphasized, the use of athletic terminology served to highlight hard work and dedication.⁶ As a phenomenon, asceticism is extremely manifold, a characteristic which also makes it a fruitful ground for academic research. In *Asceticism*, the collection of essays edited by Richard Valantasis and Richard Wimbush, published twenty years ago, its editors divide the study of asceticism into four categories:

1. Origins and meanings of asceticism,
2. Politics of asceticism,
3. Hermeneutics of asceticism, and

³ Sarah Coakley, *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender and the Quest for God* (Bloomsbury: Continuum, 2015), see especially articles 1 and 5 on desire and ‘Anglican ascetics.’

⁴ Coakley, *The New Asceticism*, 20, 25.

⁵ Coakley, *The New Asceticism*, 15, 59-61.

⁶ Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998), 5-6.

4. Aesthetics of asceticism.

Within their framework ‘origins and meanings’ covers matters that motivate and structure ascetic practices; ‘politics’ is focused on functions asceticism has in a specific time and place; the section on ‘hermeneutics’ is mostly dedicated to methodological questions, and the section on ‘aesthetics’ to ‘representations or expressions of asceticism,’ such as emotions.⁷ As miscellaneous as the approach might seem, it reflects the nature of the phenomenon at hand. Asceticism cannot be seen only as a form of frugality or even rigorism, or, to use Shaw’s words, as a mere ‘self-denial of bodily pleasures and battle between flesh and spirit.’⁸ Instead, scholarship needs to pay attention to socio-cultural structures and history of asceticism in order to shed light on different ways of life. In my view, to accomplish this goal studies of asceticism need to take into account history of ascetic practices, the historical setting in which specific ascetics practice their way of life, key texts and figures, and refrain from making too narrow and fixed definitions.⁹ Asceticism emerged in a multilinear fashion in different contexts and many themes developed over the course of centuries. Yet, it is possible to detect both universal and particular features that are recognisable in different settings. Seeing connections between different lifestyles and their contexts requires constant re-evaluation, not only of methodological questions. As a phenomenon, ‘asceticism’ challenges our presuppositions and even prejudices.

⁷ Wimbush & Valantasis, ‘Introduction,’ in *Asceticism*, xxvii.

⁸ Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 7.

⁹ I agree with Wimbush and Valantasis on many points; my contribution is to put more emphasis on continuity of ascetic practices but in a more detailed manner than in Hadot’s *What is Ancient Philosophy?* In addition, in order to show how broad a concept asceticism is, my study emphasises topics such as sports and laughter, and pays little less attention to celibacy and nutrition.

As Coakley notes, asceticism is a term ‘seemingly almost doomed by its modern associations.’¹⁰ Even in scholarship, at times asceticism is used almost as a synonym for monasticism.¹¹ Furthermore, many ascetic studies are focused on two topics: fasting (or eating and drinking) and matters of sexuality (marriage or celibacy). In my view, this paradigm needs to be broadened.¹² The sources for my study would have provided enough material for a new study on eating and sex. However, instead of focusing intensively on these *loci classici*, I wanted to place a variety of other ascetic performances in historical and intellectual context. By doing so, I thus pay attention to urban lifestyle issues in relation to traditions of physical and spiritual exercises in the Late Ancient Greco-Roman milieu.

Clement of Alexandria and Christian lifestyle

In this study Clement of Alexandria, a Christian moralist from the end of the second century, occupies a central place. I argue that his view on city life, as he presents it in his work *Paedagogus*, is one of the key texts concerning the roots and development of early Christian asceticism. Clement’s *Paedagogus* is a manual providing his disciples with a detailed set

¹⁰ Coakley, *The New Asceticism*, 10-11.

¹¹ See Samuel Rubenson, ‘Christian Ascetism and the Emergence of the Monastic Tradition’ in *Asceticism* (eds. V. L. Wimbush & R. Valantasis, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 49-57); William Harmless, ‘Monasticism’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (eds., Susan Ashbrook Harvey & David G. Hunter, Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 493-518).

¹² Although they have a different focus compared to my studies, I find the approach of the following works very fruitful: David G. Hunter, ‘The Language of Desire: Clement of Alexandria’s Transformation of Ascetic Discourse’ in *Semeia 57: Discursive Formations, Ascetic Piety, and the Interpretation of Early Christian Literature*, vol. 1

edited by Vincent L. Wimbush (SBL Press, 1992, 95-111); Ville Vuolanto, *Family and Asceticism: Continuity Strategies in the Late Roman World* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 2008); V. Vuolanto, *Children and Asceticism in Late Antiquity: Continuity, Family Dynamics and the Rise of Christianity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

of instructions on eating, social life, sleeping, sports, appearances, makeup, clothing, and other topics.¹³ I have used the text published in the series *Sources chrétiennes* under the title *Le Pédagogue*.¹⁴ The latest critical edition is that of Miroslav Marcovich.¹⁵ With regard to Christian lifestyle and its ideal ascetic character, in this introduction and in the following articles I compare Clement's work with *Praktikos* by Evagrius Ponticus and *Vita Antonii* by Athanasius of Alexandria, along with histories of asceticism such as Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*.¹⁶ The specific methodology for comparing and analysing these works is reflected later in this introduction and in my articles.

Clement's recommendations take the city as a natural human environment:

Do we say, then, that the rational animal, I mean man, ought to do anything besides contemplate the divinity? I maintain that he ought to contemplate human nature, also, and live as the truth leads him, admiring the way in which the Educator and His precepts are worthy of one another and adapted one to the other. In keeping with such a model, we ought also to adapt ourselves to our Educator,

¹³ On the *Paedagogus*, see Martin Pujiula, *Körper und christliche Lebensweise: Clemens von Alexandria und sein Paidagogos* (Diss, Berlin: Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr., 2006); John Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), 68-105.

¹⁴ *Le pédagogue*. Texte grec, 3 vols. Sources Chrétiennes 70, 108, 158, eds. M. Harl, H.-I. Marrou, C. Matray, and C. Mondésert. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf (1:1960; 2:1965; 3:1970).

¹⁵ *Clementis Alexandrini Paedagogus*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich with the assistance of J.C.M. van Winden. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, 61. Leiden: Brill. 2002. Marcovich's text is based on the *Sources chrétiennes* edition and differs from it in minor points and annotation.

¹⁶ Information on editions and translations appears in the Bibliography. The textual history of Palladius' work is very complicated; I have used John Worterley's new English translation.

conform our deeds to the Word, and then we will truly live.¹⁷

According to Clement, the Christian lifestyle should be the fulfilment of philosophy.¹⁸ The precepts (*entolai*) of the divine Word (*logos*) are ‘worthy’ and ‘adapted’, providing ‘a model’ for a Christian to resemble Christ; only in that way, Clement insists, a Christian will ‘truly live.’ The precepts the Educator gives are, in Clement’s view, such that they can be fulfilled (*entolas autas ektelein dynasthai*).¹⁹

Up to the present Clement has been recognised as an important and interesting second-century author, but modern scholarship has paid most of attention to the *Stromateis*, his unfinished miscellaneous work, and has focused on Clement’s idea of Gnosticism and his discussion with groups that could be associated with ‘Gnosticism.’²⁰ However, Clement’s ascetical teaching plays a central role in these discussions and should be taken into account when situating him among his contemporary authors. Asceticism, as promoted by Clement, thus becomes a key element in his idea of the Christian lifestyle, *bios*, in Alexandria. On this point my reading differs from those scholars who have concentrated on Clement’s exegesis, philosophy and doctrine, or on his view on ‘Gnosticism,’ just to name but a few popular topics in Clement studies.²¹

¹⁷ *Paed.* 1.12.100.3. Trans Wood.

¹⁸ The concept of ‘Hellenism’ is complicated, but for Clement’s idea of Christianity as the fulfilment of the Greek *propaideia*, see *Strom.* 1.5.28.

¹⁹ Clement, *Paed.* 1.12.98.1.

²⁰ See especially *Strom.* 6 and 7 for Clement’s treatise on the perfect gnostic. For research on this theme, see: Judith Kovacs, ‘Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria’ in *The Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001), 3-25; Salvatore Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2005; original edition: Oxford University Press, 1971); Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Bd. 2, 1952).

²¹ This list is not exhaustive but in addition I refer to two major conferences, Colloquia Clementina I & II, that concentrated on *Stromateis* 7 and Clement’s exegesis (both

At the end of the first book of the *Paedagogus* (Paed. 1.12), Clement gives a delightful description of what it means to lead a Christian life in the city of Alexandria. This particular description lacks the polemics typical to apologetic literature (that often describes Christians as good citizens) and reveals intriguing connections to ascetic literature as well. As for Clement, Christians should fit in their city:

As there is one sort of training for philosophers, another for orators and another for wrestlers, so, too, there is an excellent disposition imparted by the education of Christ that is proper to the free will loving the good. As for deeds, walking and reclining at table, eating and sleeping, marriage relations and the manner of life, the whole of a man's education all become illustrious as holy deeds under the influence of the Educator.²²

Elsewhere Clement prays that Christ would guide him up to the city organized after Plato's model, yet he accepts the Stoic teaching of heaven as a city and claims that this ideal city has been described by the great Greek poets. However, the cities of this world are corrupted and need to be governed by law in a similar way in which the Church needs to be governed by the *logos*.²³ Christ the Educator is thus the key to the right kind of city life.

Clement describes the work of Christ the Educator using various terms. The Educator 'corrects,' 'diagnoses,' 'advises,' heals from passions, and 'counsels on the right way to live.'²⁴ Thus the Educator is trustworthy

held in Olomouc, first in October 21-23, 2010; and second in May 29-31, 2014. For the proceedings, see *The seventh book of the Stromateis. Proceedings of the colloquium on Clement of Alexandria* (Olomouc, October 21 –23, 2010, Eds. Matyáš Havrda, Vít Hušek and Jana Plátová; Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, 117; Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012).

²² Clement, *Paed.* 1.12.99.2. Trans. Wood.

²³ *Strom.* 4.26.14.

²⁴ Clement, *Paed.* 1.12.100.

because he is ‘the wisdom of the Father’ who ‘speaks with authority’ and has ‘good will’ towards mankind.²⁵

Clement also links his teaching on city life to deification, a theme that has attracted much scholarly attention lately for both academic and ecumenical reasons.²⁶ Clement emphasizes that Christ the Educator (*Paidagōgos*) ‘corrects the acts of disobedience,’ ‘offers councils on right way to live’ and to accomplish this, finally ‘uproots the desires that drag us into sin.’²⁷ This is the starting point of Clement’s pedagogical instruction on Christian lifestyle. Christian life begins in Baptism.²⁸ Thus the theme of adoption (*hyiothesia*) becomes central to Clement; it is also linked to identity issues that are crucial to what this study aims at arguing. According to Clement, the training Christ urges upon his followers leads to a moderate but sufficient life (*autarkeia*).²⁹ In the *Paedagogus* Clement discusses deification in concrete terms, as I have shown in my articles. This introduction also discusses the concept of deification.

²⁵ Clement, *Paed.* 1.11.97.3.

²⁶ Norman Russell’s *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) discusses Clement’s concept and vocabulary of deification at length. Emigré theologians such as Vladimir Lossky promoted deification as a central element in Eastern Christianity, especially after Palamas; but in recent years *theosis* has evoked much interest in the West as well. Deification was central to ecumenical negotiations between the Russian Orthodox and Finnish Lutheran Churches in the 1980s. In addition, since the 1980s it has been a central topic in Finnish Luther scholarship. Furthermore, the International Patristics Conference (held in Oxford, August 2015) included a week-long workshop on the Western fathers on deification. In a way, this workshop provides a parallel to Norman Russell’s work. There is also rising interest in deification in Augustinian studies. For a summary see Gao Yuan’s 2015 University of Helsinki dissertation *Freedom from Passions in Augustine*, chapter 5.

²⁷ *Paed.* 1.12.100.2. Trans. Wood, p. 89.

²⁸ *Paed.* 1.6.29-32.

²⁹ Clement, *Paed.* 1.12.98.4.

Philosophy of city life

The aim of the articles in this study is to explore asceticism in relation to city life. By ‘asceticism’ I refer to various kinds of training and exercises (*askein, gymnazein, meletai*). Defining ‘city’ (*polis*) is not an easy task either, but I trust the reader to grasp the context for ascetic practices in each of the articles compiled in this work. Sometimes ‘city’ refers to a concrete city with a name and history, sometimes to the general idea of *urbs* or *polis*, and (at times) to an inner city.³⁰ Expressions such as ‘city life’, ‘lifestyle,’ or a ‘way of life’ (*bios*) can function both as abstract guidelines and concrete actions in a given setting. Asceticism thus manifests as performances related to the ascetic’s identity and self-expression.³¹ In addition, it is not self-evident what should be regarded as *early* Christianity. Often the term refers to the so-called formative centuries up until the Council of Chalcedon (451); this periodization is also linked to the end of the Western portion of the Roman Empire (476). The latest source material analysed in this volume is from the fifth century, but special attention is paid to writings from the end of the second century and from the first half of the fourth century. In summary, my analysis is focused on ascetic practices in Late Antique city environments that provided specific Christian authors with their context, both in material and intellectual terms.

In recent decades, early Christian studies have been focused on issues of the body, which as well is an elemental dimension of asceticism.

³⁰ I have related the idea of an inner city especially to asceticism within the framework of the monastic movement (see especially articles 1 and 3 on demonology and city-related temptations in the *Life of Antony* and Evagrius). However, it is important to note that the idea can be detected in Marcus Aurelius, as explained by Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (trans. Michael Chase, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

³¹ I have utilized Valantasis’ expression ‘ascetic performances.’ Valantasis develops the concept in *The Making of the Self*, 8, 14, 101; my use of the concept is not as countercultural as is Valantasis’.

This field of research can be seen as a reaction to the doctrine-oriented approach that dominated the discourse early on from Adolf von Harnack and the Neoscholastics to the late 20th-century dogmatic theologians. As Sarah Coakley³² has pointed out, Peter Brown and his fellow scholars of Late Antiquity then shifted the emphasis from doctrine to asceticism, from orthodoxy to social constructions of power and identity.³³ Michel Foucault is one of the most significant contributors to this discourse.³⁴ However, this development was multilinear in character: the new paradigm emerged from many universities at the same time. According to Coakley, this approach depends upon Nietzsche and Freudianism; she identifies Foucault as a significant theorist for this branch of research but suggests that the Foucaultian paradigm has come to an end and that the time has come to move forward from the way in which Foucaultian analysis constructs power. Though not discussing Foucault's theory explicitly, the articles of this study intend to widen the scope of what is considered 'ascetic' and place different kinds of ascetical performances in historical

³² Sarah Coakley, *The New Asceticism*, 15-16.

³³ A groundbreaking article was Peter Brown's 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity' (*Journal of Roman Studies* 1971/61, 80-101). His influential contributions to the theme are many, but *The Body and Society* deserves to be singled out. In recent years Brown has focused on issues of wealth in the Roman Empire.

³⁴ Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley, New York: Vintage Books, 1990) is especially relevant to the aims of my study. However, with respect to my project, I find its first part, *La Volonté de savoir* (1976), more interesting than the material in which he discusses ancient philosophy. In fact, in the first part Foucault reveals his connections to Peter Brown and Pierre Hadot, both of whom are influential for my studies. My aim is not as much to discuss Foucault's historical reconstructions as it is to take modern discourse on asceticism a step further. The first part of Foucault's work implies a Church with power. Because I aim to see ancient Alexandria through the eyes of Clement, I argue that whatever the ecclesial structures in Alexandria were in his time, the Church was not the institution dominating the discourse on *mores*. Rather, at the end of the second century Christians needed to accommodate to their surroundings. Foucault's analysis can be contested in various ways. For example, Valantasis (*The Making of the Self*, 5, 85 100) argues that Foucault's theory actually concerns 'formation.' See also Malin Grahn's dissertation *Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Stoic Philosophy* (Helsinki, 2013).

and intellectual context in order to elaborate on both their philosophical background as well as how various ascetic performances take place in specific concrete surroundings.

Earlier scholars have argued that ancient Christians adopted several kinds of training methods from ancient philosophy. In particular, Pierre Hadot's works *What is Ancient Philosophy?* and *Philosophy as a Way of Life* have increased our understanding of this phenomenon. Hadot has argued that ancient philosophy was not just a theoretical discourse but rather a way of life, a *bios*, (or in Hadot's words: *manière de vivre*), based on the teachings of a particular school. This approach emphasizes ethics and social life, and often leads to theories of emotion as well. As Martha Nussbaum has pointed out in her work *The Therapy of Desire*, emotional therapy was central to ancient philosophical schools. Other noteworthy approaches on this topic are Richard Sorabji's *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, Simo Knuuttila's *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, and John Sellars' *The Art of Living* to name just a few.³⁵ Whereas previous scholarship has emphasised the uniqueness of Christian tradition, nowadays scholars tend to highlight continuity between pagan and Christian thought.³⁶

³⁵ Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Trans. Michael Chase, Harvard University Press, 2002); *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Edited with an introduction by Arnold I. Davidson. Transl. Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995); Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Martin Classical Lectures, New Series, vol. 2, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004); John Sellars, *The Art of Living: The Stoics On the Nature and Function of Philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). See also Winrich Löhr, 'Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project' in *Vigiliae Christianae* 64, 2010, 160-88.

³⁶ Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 18-20, provides some examples of this paradigm; see also Runar Thorsteinsson's analysis of Christian *agape* in relation to Stoic universalism in the conclusions of his study *Roman Christianity and Roman*

A human being is a city-dweller by nature, as Aristotle emphasised in the *Politics*.³⁷ This way of life requires rational, social and ethical capacities that enable co-operation between citizens and allows their coexistence, even their flourishing. City life is ‘political’ in the literal sense of the word, and thus *zōon politikon* becomes *polites*, a citizen. However, social respect does not come easily for a citizen: life in the *polis* requires serious effort in fulfilling one’s duties and acquiring commonly valued characteristics. In order to become virtuous, one needs not only traditions, teachers and institutions, but education and training, even therapy, as well.³⁸ In fact, many ancient philosophers emphasized that virtue is acquired by *askēsis*, constant training and repetition.³⁹ For some the term may evoke rigorist connotations related to Christian monasticism, such as flagellation methods used by monks in medieval monasteries and in ascetic movements such as the *devotio moderna* of the 15th century. For this reason it should be emphasised that for ancient Greek speakers *askein* referred to repetition (of something), (physical) training, or daily practicing of one’s business, for example, within the framework of ordinary city life.

Stoicism. A Comparative Study on Ancient Morality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁷ *Pol.* 1252b27-1253a17.

³⁸ This kind of (post-) Aristotelian setting is the basis for what Martha Nussbaum does in her *Therapy of Desire*. My intention is not to say, that in city-philosophy we are always dealing with the *polis* as it appears in Aristotle; historically that is not the case. Nor do I argue that city-philosophy is always to be viewed as the reception of Aristotle; that also seems to be unlikely. However, Aristotle discusses many issues (politics, philosophy, virtues, ethics) in relation to the city environment, which makes his thought interesting in relation to my studies. For an overall view, see Richard G. Mulgan, *Aristotle’s Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

³⁹ In this study, I discuss this aspect of training in particular in my article on sports ‘From symposium to gymnasium.’ However, it should be noted that though this aspect was central to Aristotle (see *EN* 1105a-b), in many other classical texts virtues are related to knowledge of the good, see Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Virtue Is Knowledge: The Moral Foundations of Socratic Political Philosophy* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 8-10. Aristotle also discusses the role of ‘not understanding’ (*agnoeō*) the nature of virtue in relation to unrighteous (*adikos*) behavior (*EN* 1114a).

To render biblical imagery, a city, *polis*, was from the very beginning the fertile ground from which the seeds of Christianity, began to grow in the Greco-Roman world. Early Christianity was an urban movement, and thus every reader of the New Testament already encounters many cities in the titles of the New Testament writings.⁴⁰ Scholars have emphasized the importance of cities in relation to the history of Christianity: for example, the rise of the ascetic movement happened at the same time as Roman municipal structures gave way to ‘episcopal cities’ due to the barbarian invasions. Claude Lepelley has emphasised that it would be anachronistic to consider the classical city declining at the same time as monasticism was on the rise. On the contrary, this development should not be seen in the light of conflict between the classical tradition and the emerging Middle Ages. Rather, the continuity of classical Roman city life in the fourth century should be noted.⁴¹ The articles in this study intend to place early Christian asceticism in context by emphasising city life and the social setting it provides. In Clement of Alexandria, and the *Paedagogus* in particular, the reader is not introduced to doctrinal argumentation typical to authors of the patristic golden age (to use the periodisation employed in Johannes Quasten’s *Patrology*), neither to famous saints nor holy places, neither Christian empire nor Catholic Europe. By taking the city as the space that construes early Christian asceticism and

⁴⁰ For the urban character of early Christianity, see Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (2nd ed., Yale: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁴¹ Claude Lepelley, ‘The Survival and Fall of the Classical City in Late Roman Africa’, in *The City in Late Antiquity*, ed. John Rich (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), 66–70. Regarding religious life in cities, I have found Augustine Thompson’s *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes 1125-1325* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005) intriguing, although it deals with a different context. Some medieval thinkers, Christine de Pizan for example, used the idea of a city allegorically in order to emphasize the role of different virtues, for this see Ilse Paakkinen, *Gender and Defence of Women in Christine de Pizan’s Thought* (Helsinki, 2016).

ascetic identity, my study is able to view its source material from a perspective that has often escaped scholarly attention: asceticism before monasticism and the desert movement.

The foundation of many Christian communities in relatively new provinces of the Empire, such as Ephesus, the capital of the province of Asia, was successful because this combined Christianity with the arrival of other Greco-Roman influences.⁴² The earliest writings of the New Testament, those of the Apostle Paul, are mostly related to the great cities of the Roman Empire. The existence of Paul's addressees in Corinth, Ephesus and Rome testify to the fact that from the beginning Christianity was an urban movement.⁴³ One of the climactic events in the Acts of the Apostles is when Luke narrates that Paul had reached Rome (Acts 28:14). For some, this arrival in Rome symbolizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church (see Acts 19:21).⁴⁴ Historically, Paul's Letter to the Romans is the earliest evidence of a Christian community in the *urbs aeterna*.⁴⁵ The Pastoral Epistles reflect their urban Greco-Roman context as a self-evident social setting. In some biblical writings the city is also discussed from a more theological point of view. Those early Christian authors of the first centuries who wanted to develop the theme of the invisible city of God had a considerable amount of material to hand.⁴⁶ For example, Augustine

⁴² For the 'crisis of the towns', see Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150–750* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971 [repr. 2006]), 60–69. For understanding Late Antiquity, see James O'Donnell, 'Augustine: His Time and Lives', in *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Eleonore Stump & Norman Krezmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 8–9.

⁴³ See Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 9–50.

⁴⁴ For example, in his commentary on Acts Jaroslav Pelikan, elaborates on the dialectic between Rome and Jerusalem. See Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press 2005), 291–2.

⁴⁵ See Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity*, 75.

⁴⁶ For background on the theme of two cities, see Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God. A Reader's Guide* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 23–4, 53–62. See also Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 1990). 'The city of

named his major work *De civitate dei* after Psalm 87:3: *glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God*.⁴⁷ The theme of citizenship of heaven had become fundamental in the early fourth-century monastic movement and a crucial identity factor for monks and other ascetics.⁴⁸ They saw themselves as withdrawing from cities to another kind of city: the city of God. Monks wanted to be citizens of Heaven.⁴⁹ In relation to earlier Christian tradition, the lifestyle of these monks was something new. As I have argued, Augustine's description of Christians as part of the Roman Empire in the beginning of *De civitate dei* is related to this debate on asceticism, city life and citizenship of Heaven.⁵⁰

Citizenship is an official matter (e.g., citizenship of Rome), but it is also a matter of identity and behaviour. In the Pastoral Epistles the author insists that Christians should behave themselves as others expect

God' is mentioned, for example, in Psalms 46:4 and 48:1. According to Paul, Christians are inhabitants of the heavenly city (Phil 3:20) and the Letter to the Hebrews says of Christians that they are looking for a better city to come: 'they desire a heavenly one (...) for God has prepared them a city' (see Heb 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14). The Book of Revelation also holds this kind of view of the new city, the heavenly Jerusalem that is yet to come (see e.g. Rev 3:10 and 21:2). However, it should be noted that the New Testament writings are not solely interested in the future celestial city of God, just as they are not merely about city life in the ordinary sense of the word. Eschatological views play different roles in individual biblical writings – as does the accommodation of different Christian groups to the society surrounding them. This dialectic between eschatological and accommodative views also illuminates what early Christians thought of public and private space, and how they saw themselves as part of their cities.

⁴⁷ Augustine, *Civ.* 2.21; 11.1.

⁴⁸ Samuel Rubenson, 'Christian Asceticism and the Emergence of the Monastic Tradition' in *Asceticism* (eds. V. L. Wimbush & R. Valantasis, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 49–57).

⁴⁹ This transition might seem more dramatic than it actually is. See Rubenson 'Christian Asceticism', on the education of monks; see also Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian: A Study in Primitive Monasticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

⁵⁰ See my article 'The City of God,' in the present work.

them to in order to gain their respect.⁵¹ The *Epistle to Diognetus*, written by an anonymous writer probably in the middle of the second century, also insists in an apologetic manner that:

Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by country, language or custom. ... But while they live in both Greek and barbarian cities, as each one's lot was cast, and follow the local customs in dress and food and other aspects of life, at the same time they demonstrate the remarkable and admittedly unusual character of their own citizenship.⁵²

According to this writer, Christians live in their cities like all other people and there is no sense of a distinct city of God which can be discerned apart from its concrete surroundings. Instead, the author insists, Christians manifest a citizenship (*politeia*) of their own. The distinction between the two cities was yet to come, but not even the generation immediately after Diognetus distinguished the city of God as a separate space from the terrestrial one. Instead, they began to write about city life in a very detailed manner.⁵³ The *Shepherd of Hermas* (especially the Commandments, 26–49, and the parable of the Two Cities, 50) is one of the most intriguing texts regarding the Christian way of life in the Roman world. A period of some years after Hermas (the precise number is a matter of debate), we meet Clement of Alexandria. As introduced above, Clement is one of the early masters of this genre. He writes about how to place

⁵¹ For the concept of *eusebeia* (a Stoic virtue) in the Pastoral Epistles, see Risto Saarinen, *The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon & Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 80, 107–10, 177–80.

⁵² *Diogn.* 5:1, 4, trans. by M. Holmes in *The Apostolic Fathers*. See also Pelikan's discussion on the passage in his *Acts*, 243.

⁵³ It should be emphasised that ethics was an essential part of philosophical discussions at the time when the the New Testament literature was written. For example, Runar Thorsteinsson (*Roman Christianity*, 93, 103–104) has analysed the concept of 'reasonable worship' (*logikē latreia*) in Paul's Letter to the Romans from this perspective.

Christians in their surroundings, how to contextualise their way of life in a given city.

Recently, scholars have paid much attention to how identities and movements take form in concrete historical settings. The most recent contribution to this discussion is *Spaces in Late Antiquity: Cultural, Theological and Archaeological Perspectives* (edited by Helsinki-based scholars), which asserts that spaces, such as cities and other geographical places, are not just a mere *coulisse* for human action, but also (...) as a tool for the creation of personal and collective identity exercised concretely and rhetorically. Places and spaces are not approached as neutral categories but as key factors in how individuals and groups construct their identities.⁵⁴ As one of the contributors to this volume, I find its way of approaching ancient city life extremely fruitful. I apply a similar kind of methodology in my method of analysing early Christian asceticism both in the city and in relation to the city context.

As a context for what we read in ancient texts, the city gained attention in scholarship from the 1980s on.⁵⁵ A profound new guide to cities important to early Christianity is *Early Christianity in Contexts*.⁵⁶ The topic of social space was introduced by the sociologist Henri Lefebvre⁵⁷ about half a decade earlier, but when it comes to scholarship on ancient

⁵⁴ *Spaces in Late Antiquity: Cultural, Theological and Archaeological Perspectives*, eds. Juliette Day, Raimo Hakola, Maijastina Kahlos and Ulla Tervahauta. Routledge: Taylor & Francis, 2016. Quote from the beginning of the editors' introduction.

⁵⁵ See John Rich, *The City in Late Antiquity*, ed. John Rich (London & New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁵⁶ William Tabbernee (ed.), *Early Christianity in Contexts. An Exploration across Cultures and Continents* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014). The emphasis of the book lies on the earliest Christian realia that has come down to us, but the work also gives useful textual references on history of Christianity.

⁵⁷ Lefebvre wanted to question the idea of spaces as mere geographical places or geometrically shaped areas place-markers (?) and to highlight the mental dimension of different spaces. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 1-6. Original edition: *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974).

cities, one of the most substantial recent contributions to the field came with *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* by Wolfgang Liebeschuetz. While Liebeschuetz's main focus is on matters of Roman administration, his work is of great value for understanding the history of Christianity, and especially how it was written in antiquity.⁵⁸ According to Liebeschuetz, the writings of Christian historians such as Eusebius and Socrates differ in genre from their non-Christian colleagues in how they make the Christian church an object of historiography. In fact, Liebeschuetz compares the history of the church to that of the cities. From Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* on, the church 'could be made the subject matter of historical writing like a city, a nation, or an empire.'⁵⁹ With regard to my studies, Liebeschuetz's findings have given an impetus to how to approach the history of Christian asceticism in an urban context.

Although Clement's contribution to early Christian asceticism is substantial, he does not regard asceticism as an historical matter.⁶⁰ The *Paedagogus* is not simply a fascinating behaviour manual, but contextual teaching par excellence. Unlike in later ascetic literature, the role of famous ascetics is not yet important for Clement. For example, Athanasius' *Vita Antonii*, Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*, and John Cassian's *Conferences*, not to mention the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and other collections of the ascetic wisdom, gives us a narrative of asceticism, usually one that is historically oriented. In addition to Eusebius, the works of Socrates and Sozomen also provide asceticism a historical context.⁶¹ Ascetic writings tend to be very

⁵⁸ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, 151.

⁶⁰ Cf. however Eusebius, HE 3.23; 3.30 where Clement's other works are referred to as historical evidence on ascetical matters (wealth and marriage in relation to the apostles).

⁶¹ For brief introduction to these works, see: Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 19-20 and chapter 9.

closely related to their historical context and what was happening when they were composed.⁶² Interestingly, many influential ascetic works are either directly related to Alexandria or have emerged from locations nearby.⁶³ Athanasius, who served as bishop of the city for almost half a century (including his several exiles), was able to make use of asceticism so that it served his political aims.⁶⁴ As a history of asceticism, the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* for example, tends to lack the polemics typical of the *Vita Antonii*. In the *Paedagogus* we encounter a work lacking a narrative supporting its subject matter: how to behave in a city?⁶⁵ Instead, the *Paedagogus* is filled with various practical instructions and ascetical topics, one after another, and thus anticipates many themes that later became crucially important for Christian ascetic identity. Clement is not the most polemic early Christian author, but his defence of the identity of his

⁶² David Brakke's study on Athanasius' politics of asceticism is an illuminating example of how certain ascetic issues came under wide public discussion. Another interesting case in this regard is the compilation of *Apophthegmata* by the circle of Abba Poimen at the beginning of the fourth century after the destruction of Scetis. See William Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 206-207. See also Samuel Rubenson, 'Apologetics of Asceticism: The Life of Antony and its Political Context' in *Ascetic Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau* (eds. Blake Leyerle & Robin Darling Young, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2013, 75-96).

⁶³ For example, many accounts in Palladius' itineraria are related to Alexandria (e.g. Hist. Laus. 1.1; 3.2; 4.1; 7.1; 46:1-3, 7); in addition, the famous ascetic cities of Nitria and Kellia are only about 50 km away from Alexandria (for a map, see Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 277). Harmless also begins his depiction of the phenomenon of asceticism by describing how the richest woman of her time, Melania the Elder, arrived in the city in the 370s in order to see the monks. See *Desert Christians*, 3-7.

⁶⁴ See David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995).

⁶⁵ Clement thus presupposes the connection between city life and asceticism. For an interesting parallel in Eusebius, see James E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 14-20. Clement's instructions also lack the political theory of the fourth century Christian Platonists such as Eusebius and Augustine, see Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 2003), 145-158.

community against those whom he calls *gnostikoi* is at times sharply explicated.⁶⁶

Methodological questions and ascetic identity

The past century has witnessed great interest in the subject of patristic research, an interest which has reflected the various ideological commitments of scholars.⁶⁷ In his *Dogmengeschichte*, Adolf von Harnack argued on behalf of contamination of early Christian thinking by Hellenistic philosophy.⁶⁸ Harnack, and many other 19th and 20th century Protestant scholars, wished to see Christianity as a religion of the Spirit as opposed to ritualism and bodily matters. A doctrine-centred approach also became very influential in other scholarly circles and the history of Christianity was often presented as an emergence of the Christian, or Catholic, or by some other measure authentic, *dogma* or *dogmata*. However, the idea of doing ‘patristic’ research was challenged later on. Modernist scholars elaborated on the thought of *specific* early Christian authors known as ‘The Fathers’ (*patres*). From approximately the 1950s onward, scholars

⁶⁶ See in particular *Paed.* 1.6. and my articles 1 and 5 in this volume. For the key texts of the history of asceticism, see Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 18-20, 275-299.

⁶⁷ The Fathers and their way of doing theology was also seen as a source for spiritual, theological and ecclesial renewal at the end of the 19th century. Perhaps the best examples of this are John Henry Newman, who converted to Catholicism after studying the fathers, and the theologians involved in the movement originally called the ‘Ressourcement’ but which soon was pejoratively labelled as the ‘Nouvelle Théologie.’ This movement generated much interest in the liturgy, mysticism and asceticism; anti-modernistic attitudes were challenged and the fathers became part of modern church politics, especially in the Second Vatican Council but also earlier, as in the case of John Henry Newman and the Oxford movement.

⁶⁸ Adolf von Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1922). There has been a significant amount of scholarly debate on Harnack’s thesis. In the light of recent scholarship, it is difficult to see Christians as simply introducing ‘Hellenism’ into their thought world. This kind of view of the process of reception presumes that there was such a thing as ‘Hellenism’ that could have been inserted into a Christian way of life. See David Brakke, Anders-Christian Jacobsen & Jörg Ulrich, *Beyond Reception: Mutual Influences between Antique Religion, Judaism, and Early Christianity* (Frankfurt am Main/ New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

such as Peter Brown became interested in the social power of martyrs, saints, and other significant individuals. They but depicted these individuals as a part of their community: not just holy individuals, but individuals with a social function. In this way, Late Antique studies highlighted asceticism and issues of the body and introduced a periodization different from that of the traditional doctrinally-focused research.

In this new paradigm, the relationship between the Fathers and philosophy was also seen in a new light. For example, Pierre Hadot's works depict Christianity as exhibiting surprising continuities in relation to ancient schools of philosophy. Historians of Christian dogma could not have detected these kinds of links in following their interests in doctrinal formulation and church politics. Although there was also much interest in doctrinal matters, what emerged more and more from the 1960s onward was the issue of identity. What does it mean to be a Christian?

The significance of identity questions is central to today's studies of early Christianity. Such New Testament scholars as Ernst Käsemann and E.P. Sanders, just to mention but a few, elaborated on the theme extensively and Heikki Räisänen has recently concluded that reflecting on the diversity among early Christians is useful in our own time as well.⁶⁹ However, whereas Räisänen avoids connecting ancient and modern Christian identities too closely, other New Testament and early Christian scholars have sought to build a bridge between them by paying attention to asceticism and ascetic practices in relation to personhood, community, and the issues regarding the inner self. Richard Valantasis' work *The Making of the Self* deserves to be singled out in this respect. Valantasis analyses ascetic identity and practices in a variety of early Christian texts and also elaborates extensively on the scholarly and intellectual history of

⁶⁹ Heikki Räisänen, *The Rise of Christian Beliefs*, 318.

asceticism. In the following I will briefly outline his view and suggest how to find new paths in exploring asceticism in relation to identity issues.

Valantasis holds that asceticism is universal by character though manifestations of it differ from culture to another.⁷⁰ There are, he says, four social functions of asceticism that construct and articulate the ascetic's new subjectivity. I find his theory illuminating and helpful in many respects, but also problematic. Valantasis places much weight on asceticism as counter culture: the new subjectivity distinguishes itself from the dominant culture. Re-envisioning the world is central to his theory; after reconstructing the world, asceticism provides ascetics with a 'method for translating... theoretical and strategic concepts into patterns of behavior.' This implies that asceticism results in a life different from how the ascetic lived formerly. Finally, Valantasis argues that asceticism 'initiates' the practitioner into social and psychological systems that 'activate' the new culture.⁷¹ Valantasis is very much in favour of promoting the symbolic universe as a framework for ascetic performances; the symbolic universe is also closely linked to asceticism as counterculture.⁷² In my view, Valantasis' theory has explanatory power and is useful for understanding this complex phenomenon. I suggest, however, that when studying early Christian asceticism we should pay more attention to continuity of ascetic practices. For this view this my studies are indebted to Hadot's work. Also, my research on Clement contests the notion of asceticism as counterculture because Clement, a second century Christian moralist, is manifestly dependent on non-Christian wisdom and ethics. Instead of a counterculture, I rather see Clement's view as fulfilment. Christianity takes pagan ethics to a new, higher level because the true logos (*orthos logos*) has

⁷⁰ Valantasis, *The Making of the Self*, 35, 40-42, 48-52.

⁷¹ Valantasis, *The Making of the Self*, 10-12.

⁷² Valantasis, *The Making of the Self*, 53-57.

been revealed in Christ the Educator, *paidagōgos*, whose ethical parenesis restores the divine image of God in all human beings. According to Clement, the process of deification starts in baptism, a ritual act that also constitutes the new self. However, this new self is not to be understood as contrary to the ‘old’, but rather as its fulfilment.⁷³ Clement (although eclectically) makes extensive use of ancient philosophy and considers the way of life he promotes as true philosophy. This is a feature we also encounter in later monastic asceticism.⁷⁴ I argue that Clement represents an integrative model of asceticism in relation to the dominant society. Clement’s views on marital and social life provide substantial support to this claim and yet in his thought both of these areas are related to asceticism.⁷⁵ Clement’s positive attitude towards Greek *paideia* is also noteworthy in this respect.⁷⁶

Although the integrative model of asceticism is central to Valantasis’ theory, he pays more attention to matters of counterculture, withdrawal, and the new self.⁷⁷ From the point of view of my research, I also wish to discuss the dynamics of withdrawal. For example, we can imagine a monk joining Evagrius’ circle in Kellia around the 390s. From the point of view of the dominant culture, say, Alexandrian city life, it looks as if the new monk is withdrawing from the ‘ordinary’ life. However, from the point of view of monks in Kellia, the newcomer is integrating himself into their circle: a new city. They might not appreciate the identity of this new brother to be described as a ‘new’ one. Instead, after the formation of

⁷³ In particular, Strom. 1.5-9.

⁷⁴ This kind of idea of fulfilment is also present in the first books of Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei*, although in more apologetic terms than in Clement’s *Paedagogus*; both of them deal with the theme of Christians as good citizens.

⁷⁵ See especially article 1 in this study on social function.

⁷⁶ On education, see the classic work of Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961).

⁷⁷ For the integrative model, see Valantasis, *The Making of the Self*, 45.

their new brother they might describe him as a penitent on his way to discovering his *true* self. This process can be defined in terms of the new monk facing his demons: all the anger, sorrow, boredom, frustration, and despair over his vocation. In his new context, his former life becomes an essential part of his formation. Methodologically, it is important to keep in mind that sometimes our knowledge of this process of formation comes from the ascetic himself (as in the case of Evagrius' *Praktikos*), and at times from someone other than the ascetic himself (the *Vita Antonii* is a good illustration of this). Instead of continuity, both the sources and the scholarship tend to emphasize discontinuity and change. In my articles I have sought especially to emphasise the continuity of ascetic identity and practices by relating the history of the practices to the formation of the ascetic's new identity. This approach is related to the themes of conversion and the usefulness of *paideia*, as many accounts of ascetic literature tend to emphasize the change of character due to the ascetics' conversion.⁷⁸ In addition, the myth of educated Greeks coming to the Egyptian countryside to learn ascetic wisdom from uneducated peasant-monks should be critically scrutinized because it establishes discontinuity between city life, education, and desert asceticism.⁷⁹ The desert and the city were not always very far from each other.⁸⁰

The methods used in the above-mentioned studies vary from textual analysis to other historical methods and archaeology, from

⁷⁸ See Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972; first edition: 1933).

⁷⁹ For example, Harmless' description of 'the new alphabet' (*Desert Christians*, 311-312) does not adopt a sufficiently critical distance from the myth. See *Apophthegmata Patrum* (coll. syst., Arsenius § 5) where Evagrius and Arsenius discuss the value of their education in relation to peasants who have become virtuous in the desert. (In the alphabetical collection, see §6.)

⁸⁰ See article 1 in this volume; see also Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 1.1 where Isidore is met at the streets of Alexandria.

constructive modern theology (dogmatics, Canon Law, ecumenics) to continental philosophy, and to postcolonial readings, gender studies and identity issues. All this highlights how a study on asceticism combines a wide range of disciplines and also makes ancient questions relevant for today's discussions about different lifestyles and matters of identity. The method used throughout this study is systematic textual analysis of source material in its historical context; Clement of Alexandria and his work the *Paedagogus* are centrally important for the aims of the analysis. It can be argued that Clement's paideutic instructions form a kind of 'Rule' long before any of the monastic rules known to us were written.⁸¹ Basically, Clement deals with and discusses most of the topics that emerge in later ascetic tradition. It is thus intriguing to take a look at Clement's sources and to compare his outcome to later ascetic literature.

Theriodization of early Christian asceticism and monasticism usually follows certain key figures and texts. In *Desert Christians*, William Harmless provides a profound introduction to these ascetics and ascetical texts. However, in my view, the historical literature of early Christian monasticism should be placed on a continuum with ascetic literature before monasticism. My intention is to highlight this by showing that in Clement's *Paedagogus* we find almost every ascetical topic that one can imagine. This brings us to matters of contextuality and comparison.

Asceticism in contexts

Table I delineates a comparison between Clement and later ascetic literature. This table presents certain ascetical *loci* that are discussed in more

⁸¹ In this particular question I disagree with Martin Pujiula's excellent study of the *Paedagogus*; cf. Pujiula, *Körper*, 342 where he concludes that Clement is 'kein Asket.' In this Pujiula agrees with, and provides also several references to German scholarship on the subject.

detail in the articles of this volume. Athanasius' *Life of Antony* and Evagrius' *Praktikos* serve as useful points of reference and provide a continuum on which, I suggest, we should place Clement and his pioneering work on Christian asceticism. However, before turning to the table, some remarks are in order to be able to situate the three chosen ascetics in a broader perspective.

According to Richard Valantasis, ascetics can be divided into five categories. The first of these is the combative subject, such as Antony the Great fighting demons in the desert. Second comes the integrative model in which asceticism provides a set of exercises that lead to transformation of the ascetic within the dominant culture. Third, there is an educative form of asceticism in which an ascetic submits himself to a master in order to proceed in training. Fourth is the pilgrim ascetic who constructs an ascetic identity by travelling and living without a stable address in this world. Fifth, there is the revelatory ascetic who sees visions and undergoes empowering experiences.⁸² In the context of my work, Clement represents the integrative type of ascetic with his idea of Christian city life in Alexandria. Athanasius' *Life of Antony* represents the combative type, but unlike Valantasis, I do not place much emphasis on this type of asceticism. I argue that historically the integrative model is extremely illuminating and provides us with fascinating insights regarding social functions of asceticism. For this reason, I find the comparison between Clement and Evagrius very illuminating: the latter represents the educative model of asceticism and thus comes close to Clement to some extent.⁸³ In my articles

⁸² Valantasis, *The Making of the Self*, 44-48.

⁸³ Many scholars would classify also Evagrius as a combative ascetic (see Brakke, *Demons*, 70-71; Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 327-329), but I have argued in my article on demonology that we should adopt a critical distance to Evagrius' use of militant vocabulary when he describes the interaction between monks and demons. The practice of discerning between different spirits highlights the continuum between pagan and Christian thinking: psychology and philosophy of the mind. See Richard

I have compared Clement to other authors as well, but in the following the comparisons are limited to the three influential ascetic works mentioned above.⁸⁴

In many ways, the subjects above stand in close relation to theories of emotion because emotions form the basis for a person's conduct.⁸⁵ One of the differences between Clement and later ascetic practice is that the *Paedagogus* promotes *metriopatheia*, whereas later monasticism, much indebted to Platonism and certain Stoic ideals, was dedicated to achieving *apatheia*.⁸⁶ Is it then anachronistic to claim that Clement discussed most of the topics relevant to ascetic literature decades, even nearly a century, before what we usually call the desert movement or monastic movement? A short answer would be: yes, it would. However, this study aims to show the connection between Clement and later asceticism through negation⁸⁷ in order to avoid anachronism. This kind of methodology also enables us to discern questions and themes that were not discussed in the *Paedagogus*: for example, withdrawal or narratives of famous ascetics. The essence of a tradition is to discuss the same questions in different contexts; these questions can be philosophical, theological, moral, historical or of some other kind.

Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD* (vol. 1, Duckworth 2004, s. 403-408). Readings that tend to highlight the combative aspect, in my view, do not always adopt enough critical distance from the violent imagery and drastic language in monastic sources.

⁸⁴ In this study I do not pay much attention to pilgrims and prophets, but it should be mentioned that historically pilgrimages and other travel narratives form an important branch of source material for studies of asceticism. As for the prophetic and visionary type of asceticism, I find the *Shepherd of Hermas* very interesting concerning early Christian lifestyle and asceticism. In addition, the final vision of *alia spectacula*, 'heavenly games,' in Tertullian's *De spectaculis* is noteworthy in this respect.

⁸⁵ See e.g. Clement, *Paed.* 1.1.1.1-2; 3.1.1-2; Evagrius, *Praktikos*, chapters 1-2.

⁸⁶ Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 120-121.

⁸⁷ For negation and anachronism, see Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 2-3.

TABLE I: EARLY CHRISTIAN ASCETICISM IN THREE CONTEXTS

	CLEMENT	ATHANASIUS	EVAGRIUS
SOCIAL LIFE	When invited to a party eat what is put forth for politeness: Paed. 2.1.9-10. Christians ought to behave themselves: Paed. 2.7.60. Youth allowed to go to gymnasia: Paed. 3.10.1. Moderate ones limit their talking: Paed. 2.7.58-59. Avoid indecent talk: Paed. 2.6.49. Better to be silent than argue: Paed. 2.7:53, esp. women, 58.	Antony was a wealthy Egyptian from a Christian family: Vita 1. Hospitality, Vita 17.	When obliged to spend time in cities or villages monks need to exercise self-control (<i>enkrateia</i>): Prak. 41. Hospitality also important.
MATTERS OF HOUSEHOLD	Do not use too valuable vessels but suitable and functional ones: Paed. 2.3.36-37. Creation not meant as wealth: Paed. 2.3.39. One should not worry about his possessions too much: Paed. 2.10.104. Indifferent attitude towards possessions: Paed. II 12.121.	After his parents died Antony took care of the house and his sister: Vita 2. He is tempted because of this: Vita 5.	
APPEARANCES	The purpose of clothing is to cover the body, modest, no coloured cloths. Women's clothes can vary more than men's: Paed. 2.10.105-108. Modest and functional footwear: Paed. 2.11.116-117. Cosmetics are superficial: Paed. 2.8. 61-62; so as jewelry: 2.12. 118, 129. Allegory of clothes: Paed. 3.1.	Antony's modest clothing and healthy appearance made him appear better than those wearing fine clothes and taking baths unlike him: Vita 93.	Clothing of the monk symbolizing his way of life: Prak., prol. 2-7.
GESTURES	Politeness in manners, Christians ought to be steady and calm: Paed. 2.7.60. No leaning on elbows or crossing of one's legs, constant change of position sign of uneducated: Paed. 2.7.54-55.	Moderate behaviour and indifference when in front of people: Vita 14. Antony not distinguished by his physical character but by being humble, calm, joyful and recognizable: Vita 67.	Gestures as signs of the passions of the soul: Prak. 47

EATING AND DRINKING	Simple food to sustain life, promote moderation, avoid gourmandizing and luxuries: Paed. 2.1. Reason should control the use of wine: Paed. 2.2.25. Water is the best beverage when thirsty.	Usually Antony ate once a day, at times every other and often even every fourth day after the sunset. His diet consisted of bread, salt and water: Vita 7. Refutation of fine foods: Vita 93.	If the soul desires various foods it should be limited to bread and water. Limiting water linked with continence. Prak. 16-17.
SLEEPING	Necessary for digestion and health; Christians should sleep half awake and as little as possible: Paed. 2.9.77-82. Bed clothing should be modest: Paed. II 9.77.	Sleeping on the ground or on a rug: Vita 7.	A soul is healthy when mental images are not followed by bodily movements. Images always indicate bad condition: Prak. 55.
LAUGHTER	Excessive laughter (and crying) should be avoided: Paed. 2.7.56. Moderate laugh sign of self-control, smile appropriate way of expressing happiness: Paed. 2.5.46. Severe face good: Paed. 2.5.47	When Antony came out of the fortress he did not laugh, nor was he too pleased to see the crowds: Vita 14.	
PHYSICAL EXERCISES	Physical exercises good for health and promote good character and virtues: Paed. 3.10.	Bodily labour: Vita 3. Antony in good physical shape after extreme asceticism: Vita 14.	Monks should be ready to die tomorrow, but treat the body as if living for many years: Prak. 29. Wrestling with demons: Prak.72. Ascetical practice purifies the passionate part of the soul. (Prak. 78) Charity and theology as the goal of ascetical life: Prak. 84.
DEMONS	Demons related to statues and wreaths (Paed. 2.8.73), can be avoided. Also related to eating, Paed. 2.1.15.4; 2.1.9.1	Fighting demons, Antony's way of life: Vita 5-13.	Demons fight city people with things, and monks in the desert by their thoughts (<i>logismoi</i>), (Prak. 48)

Historically careful analysis aims at revealing significant questions and their development without inserting later conceptions into earlier contexts. For example, although Clement indeed elaborates on many themes that became relevant to later ascetic tradition, it should be noted that some themes fundamental to later ascetic thought are missing from his work, and that the topics he shares with later ascetic literature take place in a different context. This is an important methodological challenge and requires careful attention when it comes to comparative analysis.

In the *Paedagogus* Clement does not promote social withdrawal (*anachoresis*). On the contrary, he wishes that the Christian way of life of his community would integrate his disciples into Alexandrian social life (mostly to that of the upper class) in a way that gains respect from those who are not part of his school.⁸⁸ The genre of the *Paedagogus* can be defined as philosophical exhortation. The practical treatises of the second book consist of several lecture-like treatises, many of them usually occupying a handful of pages in modern editions. They are not homilies, although Clement likes to back up his arguments with biblical examples and exegesis. However, similar instructions can be found in Epictetus and Musonius Rufus; as a Christian moralist, Clement comes very close to these Roman Stoic philosophers.⁸⁹ Comparing Clement to these authors has been central to the analysis in the articles of this study. Before some general notes, it will be useful to look at two topics more closely. Although articles in this study deal with eating and sleeping, the treatments in those articles are brief

⁸⁸ Cf. *Paed.* 2.13 where Clement mentions his idea of the spiritual city; see also Darling Young on *xeniteia* in Clement, 'Xeniteia According to Evagrius,' 234.

⁸⁹ The relationship between Clement and Musonius has long been a subject of debate. See, e.g., Charles Pomeroy Parker, 'Musonius in Clement' in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* vol. 12 (Goodwin Volume, 1901), 191-200; Paul Wendland studied this question extensively in his 1886 *Questiones Musoniae*; his view is discussed by Lilla, *Clement*, 99.

enough that I have chosen to discuss these intriguing ascetic topics here in order to emphasize their character as significant ascetic performances.

SLEEPING

Sleeping is an illuminating topic in ascetic literature. In this brief overview I discuss Clement, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa and two monastic rules on sleeping. The Platonic and Stoic background to the topic provides information on the philosophical roots of Christian asceticism and provides a basis for comparison between Clement and later authors. Ascetics adopted a critical stance towards sleeping because they believed that it made reason inactive. Discussing dreams also became a prominent topic in ascetic literature. These are examples of how Christians, especially within the monastic movement, continued discussions already found in Plato and Aristotle.

Clement asserts in the *Paedagogus*: ‘Falling asleep, indeed, is like dying, because it renders our minds and our senses inactive.’⁹⁰ Clement seems to follow Plato when it comes to sleeping; the influence of Philo is also visible in his treatise.⁹¹ For Clement, as for Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, and many other ascetics, sleeping is for digestion and resting from activity.⁹² This connection between sleeping and digestion is already apparent in Aristotle.⁹³ According to Clement, Christians should sleep ‘half-awake’; one should sleep only as much as is good for one’s health.⁹⁴ According to Clement, the sleeper is wasting his or her life:

⁹⁰ *Paed.* 2.9.80 trans. Wood.

⁹¹ See Clement, *Paed.* 2.9, 77-82.

⁹² Clement, *Paed.* 2.9.78. Elsewhere Clement says that the food his students eat should be ‘made so that it helps to be awake’ (*to deipnon estō... epitēdeion eis egrēgorsin*) *Paed.* 2.1.7.3, my translation.

⁹³ Aristotle, *De somno et vigilia* 456b18–30. See also 457b–32 where Aristotle discusses some problems of his theory.

⁹⁴ Clement, *Paed.* 2.9.79.1; 80.2.

In general, all of us must struggle against sleep, accustoming ourselves gently and gradually to utilize a greater proportion of our lives and not waste them in sleep. (Sleep, indeed, like a tax-collector, claims half the portion of our lives.) When we do manage to keep awake the greater part of the night, we should not allow ourselves, for any consideration, to take a nap during the day.⁹⁵

Referring to Plato (*Laws* VII 808b–c), Clement says that too much sleep is not good for body and soul. Even though Clement considers that sleeping itself is right and in accordance with human nature, he exhorts his students not to sleep because ‘the enlightened is awake before God and also lives this way.’⁹⁶ In his view, too much eating, drinking and luxurious living usually make one drowsy. In addition to the Platonic themes he applies, Clement’s view is also based on Stoicism from which he gets his idea of the active life. In the passage quoted above, Clement is talking about actual sleep in the sense of rest, but this is not the only lesson in his treatise. It seems that Clement also places much stress in his teaching on the theme of ‘waking.’ In his view, being awake is the basis for the soul’s keeping a right focus in daily life.

For Clement, a soul that constantly focuses on God makes the body of a man like those of the angels. In this respect, he resembles Platonic thought. For Clement, practicing wakefulness is the same as obtaining eternal life. Clement also makes it clear that it is not the soul but the body that needs rest.⁹⁷ According to Clement, contemplation is linked to being awake – *not* to sleeping.⁹⁸ From this perspective we can also

⁹⁵ Clement, *Paed.* 2.9.81; trans. Wood, 163. According to John Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria*, 85–86, Clement’s reference to the ‘tax-collector’ is originally an epigram by Ariston of Chios. For a summary of Clement’s passage on sleeping see Ferguson, *idem*.

⁹⁶ Clement, *Paed.* 2.9.79.3 and 81; my translation.

⁹⁷ Clement, *Paed.* 2.9.82. According to Clement, the soul is *aeiknētos*, *Paed.* 2.9.82.1.

⁹⁸ Clement, *Paed.* 2.9.80.

understand the point of Gregory of Nyssa's tenth homily *In Canticum*: the soul being awake before God. However, for more evidence to back up this assertion, we must turn to Origen, who taught in Alexandria as well as Caesarea, and whose influence on Gregory is commonly known.

Origen, in the fifth homily on Genesis, considers the sleeping Lot as an example of how pride and vainglory can attack a person when he or she is not 'knowing and sensing' (*nec sentire nec intelligere*).⁹⁹ He considers the drunkenness of Lot shameful and uses it as a cautionary tale. According to Origen, too much drinking is a vice par excellence leading to improper and unvirtuous behavior.¹⁰⁰ Origen's view on sleep, then, seems to suggest that while one is sleeping the senses and the intellect are inactive. But it is important to note that what happens to Lot does not actually refer to sleeping in the sense of having a rest but to being alert to the vices of pride and vainglory that can arise at any time. Origen says they are Lot's daughters because they 'do not come from the outside.' Origen exhorts his hearers to wake in order to avoid the troubles these vices inflict.¹⁰¹

Origen's tropological, or, moral, reading of the passage is interesting for two reasons. On the one hand, his homily can be read as if he seems to suggest that sleeping (in the sense of having a rest) is problematic. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as about giving oneself up to carnal desires while the soul or intellect is sleeping. I think the latter meaning is that which Gregory expresses in his homily. However, the previous interpretation is also very influential in early Christian ascetic tradition. For example, in his *Asketikon* Basil of Caesarea develops a

⁹⁹ Origen, *Gen. hom.* 5.6.

¹⁰⁰ Origen, *Gen. hom.* 5.3.

¹⁰¹ 'Quae idcirco filiae dicuntur, quia non nobis extrinsecus superveniunt, sed de nobis et de actum nostrorum velut quadam integritate procedunt. Vigila ergo, quantum potes, et observa, ne de his generes filios, quia qui de his nati fuerint, non introibunt in ecclesiam Domini.' Origen, *Gen. hom.* 5.6., my trans.

negative attitude toward sleeping as a bodily need.¹⁰² The same attitude is also found in the *Rule* of St. Benedict.¹⁰³ It was not unusual for monastic writers to associate being awake with the monastic life. This notion echoes how Plato describes human condition as ‘dreamy’ (*oneirōxis*) in the *Timaeus*.¹⁰⁴

David Brakke has emphasized how fourth-century Egyptian monks read Proverbs 6:4–5 allegorically and extended their interpretation to moral vigilance as well. By this vigilance they also countered their demons and provided sleep deprivation with a biblical basis.¹⁰⁵ And, for example, if we examine the monastic rules of both Basil and Benedict, it is evident that they order that monks not sleep too much.¹⁰⁶ They also relate the organization of religious life to waking up from deep sleep.¹⁰⁷ Some thought that sleeping is dangerous and that monks, for example, could be tempted by demons by their arousing dreams.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand some, like Augustine, were more hesitant to blame the dreams themselves.¹⁰⁹ All this indicates that when it comes to being awake we are dealing with both a Biblical and a very popular theme in early Christianity and ascetic literature.

It is also worth remembering that Christian ascetics were not the first to elaborate on this theme. ‘Sleep and dreams played an important role

¹⁰² See Prologue 10 and chapter 32 in St. Basil’s *Shorter Rule* (trans. Silvas), pp. 272–273, 292.

¹⁰³ See *RB1980* § 22 for the rather moderate arrangements of the *Rule* concerning sleeping.

¹⁰⁴ *Tim.* 52b–c.

¹⁰⁵ Brakke, *Demons*, 86.

¹⁰⁶ *RB1980* § 4:37; *RBas* § 55. See also The Shorter Responses in *The Asketikon of St. Basil* § 32 (p. 292).

¹⁰⁷ *RB1980*, Prol. 8 (with reference to Romans 13:11); Olivier Clément, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, 24.

¹⁰⁸ For further references see Peter Brown, *Body & Society*, 230–232; Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 140, 149 n136.

¹⁰⁹ Augustine, *Civ.* 18.18.

in ancient popular morality,' says Mika Perälä in the section on ancient theories on sleep and dreams in the *Sourcebook for the History of the Philosophy of Mind*.¹¹⁰ For example, Plato already gives instructions on how one should go to bed only after arousing the rational part of the soul to avoid harmful things (*Republic* 571b3-572b1).¹¹¹ This notion can also be found in Clement, and it remained an essential part of the Christian ascetic tradition after him, though in a monastic context.

EATING

Eating (as well as drinking) is an ascetic *locus classicus*. Matters of nutrition and habits of eating were also central for many non-Christian philosophers. As is the case with many ascetic authors, Evagrius as well opens his list of the principal demons with *gastrimargia* (gluttony). Clement does so as well; he begins his series of practical treatises in the second book of the *Paedagogus* by discussing eating. Clement considers moderation and control of one's emotions fundamental to a proper Christian way of life, which constitutes the basis for deification. According to Clement, training (*askeō*) and assuming virtues (*aretē*) make an advanced Christian become 'a God walking around in flesh' (*en sarki peripolōn theos*).¹¹² In my article 'Clement and Alexandria: A Moral Map' I discuss parties and social events, but here I wish to highlight the fact that Clement's idea of deification must also be viewed in relation to his demonology. What follows also sheds more light on my research on early Christian demonology.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Edited by Simo Knuuttila & Juha Sihvola, 2014, 173.

¹¹¹ See Mika Perälä in Simo Knuuttila & Juha Sihvola (eds.), *Sourcebook for the History of the Philosophy of Mind*, 2014, 184–185.

¹¹² Clement, *Strom.* 7.101.16: 4; *Paed.* 3.6.35:2–3. For Clement's language of deification, see Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 122–3.

¹¹³ On demonology, see especially articles 1 and 3 in this volume.

In the *Protreptikos*¹¹⁴ Clement discusses demons in relation to dramas and other spectacles, whereas in *Paedagogus* Clement relates demons to eating at banquets, garlands, beauty and ornaments, and merchandising. Clement repeatedly plays with the words *eu-daimona* and *daimona* in order to show the superiority of the Christian lifestyle he promotes in opposition to that of those who do not live in accordance with the *logos*.¹¹⁵ Clement considers Christians striving towards perfection, which he describes in terms of deification, and denotes activity that in his view is in contrast with the reasonable way of life with the term *kakodaimōn*.¹¹⁶ In this context, it would be exaggerating and misleading to translate the term as ‘possessed by demon(s)’ because what Clement means by it is related to basic daily habits he thinks should be done with reason and modesty. By *daimōn* he refers to an inner demon, thus applying a Stoic approach.¹¹⁷ I argue that the term *kakodaimōn* should be seen in contrast to Clement’s idea of deification and ideal way of life. According to him, Christians should not act like *kakodaimones* in relation to matters such as eating (but also in relation to ornaments and commodities such as gold, for example); instead, they should live according to reason and behave themselves.¹¹⁸

In the *Paedagogus* a good example of Clement’s instructions on behaving properly is the topic of eating at banquets. Where eating is concerned, and in this context eating together with others, Clement warns his students about the dangers of gluttony (*daimōn likhnotatos*) using

¹¹⁴ Clement, *Protr.* 1.2.2.8 (LCL 92, 6–7).

¹¹⁵ Clement, *Paed.* 1.9.82.3; 2.1.15.4; 2.9.78.1.

¹¹⁶ On deification, see *Paed.* 1.12.98.3 (*ektheō*); 1.13 (*theosebeia*); *Strom.* 7.16.101.5 (*theos en sarki*). See also Russell, *Deification*, 85.

¹¹⁷ See in particular Keimpe Algra, ‘Stoics on Souls and Demons: Reconstructing Stoic demonology’ in Willemien Otten and Nienke Vos (eds), *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 71–96; more references appear in my article on early Christian demonology in this study.

¹¹⁸ *Paed.* 2.1.2.2; 2.12.118.5; 3.3.22.1.

dramatic figures of speech.¹¹⁹ In his view, modesty should always be kept in mind as too fine dining transforms the occasion into a feast for demons or ‘a table of demons’ (*trapeza daimoniōn*).¹²⁰ According to him, the worst demons are called *koilidaimones*, demons of gluttony.¹²¹ Eating too much fine food, then, is presented in the *Paedagogus* as an unreasonable activity which lies in contrast to modesty and deification. If someone possesses wrong eating habits, Clement considers it a major obstacle to deification and the practice of the virtues. For Clement, eating, is a central ascetic performance in the context of the social life of the Alexandrian upper class.

Appearances and the ascetic character

It is illuminating to compare Clement with Greco-Roman philosophers and note similarities between them, but also to extend the analysis to later ascetic Christian literature.¹²² Thus Clement becomes a mediating figure between the old and the new.¹²³ How did traditional Greco-Roman philosophy become transformed into the true philosophy of the monks of the desert? Here I follow Pierre Hadot’s argument about Christianity as a way of life. According to Hadot, we should look at fourth century monasticism keeping in mind that the monks understood themselves as true philosophers, the fulfilment of their intellectual tradition.¹²⁴ However, their lifestyle takes place and shape in a different context than that recommended by Clement. Interestingly, this change of context does not

¹¹⁹ *Paed.* 2.1.15.4; see also 2.1.18.1.4 and cf. *Paed.* 2.1.3.1.

¹²⁰ *Paed.* 2.1.9.1; 2.1.10.6. ‘The table of demons’ refers to 1 Cor 10:21 (as noted by Marrou in SC 108, 24 footnote 14), but it is also found in the LXX; see Is 65:11.

¹²¹ *Paed.* 2.1.15.4.

¹²² In my articles, I have provided numerous references to substantiate this claim. A particularly good example is ‘Clement and Alexandria: A Moral Map.’

¹²³ Brown pays attention to this aspect but does not consider Clement as a mediator. See *The Body & Society*, 249-250.

¹²⁴ Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 130-140.

much affect the topics the readers of the *Vita Antonii* or the *Praktikos* came across. The table above (TABLE I) provides only a limited selection.

In addition to discussing ascetic topics, the monk's spirituality and inner disposition is fundamentally important. The monk's inner life adjusts itself in accordance with the given context. Thus, in my view ascetic performances are: 1) expressions of the ascetic's inner state, and 2) reactions to the ascetic's context. The ascetic's character is based on these elements. Although intuition might suggest the contrary, asceticism is all about appearances. This might best be illustrated by Evagrius' letter to Anatolius (in some manuscripts the letter is found in the beginning of the *Praktikos*) in which he gives a symbolic description for each part of the monks' habit. After Evagrius, John Cassian utilized this symbolism, but metaphors regarding one's vestments are already present in Clement.¹²⁵ Regarding clothes, Clement emphasized modesty and practicality. He also maintained that too fine clothing represents the vanity of this world.¹²⁶

Famous ascetics impressed people. In the prologue of his *Historia Lausiaca*, Palladius hopes that Lausus would be empowered by the ascetics' appearance.¹²⁷ In addition, Athanasius places much emphasis on the appearance of Antony:

His face was full of grace, and he had this remarkable gift from the Lord: if he was standing in the middle of a crowd of monks and someone whom he did not know wanted to see him, immediately he would go to that monk; ignoring the others, the monk would run to him, as though drawn by his eyes. Antony was not any different from others in

¹²⁵ For an English translation of the letter, see that of John Eudes Bamberger (pp.12-15) in his translation of the *Praktikos*. For a comparison between Cassian and Evagrius, see Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 314, 379-383. Clement, Paed. 3.1.1. In part, this imagery has Biblical roots as well (e.g., Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27). For Evagrius and his influence, see *Evagrius and his Legacy* (eds. Joel Kalvesmaki & Robin Darling Young, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2016).

¹²⁶ Paed. 2.10.105-115.

¹²⁷ Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, prol. 2; 15-16.

height or size, but he was different from them in makeup of his character and in the purity of his soul. Because his soul was tranquil, Antony was also imperturbable from the outside; as a result, he had a joyful face and from the movements of his body one could sense and perceive the makeup of his soul.¹²⁸

Note the way Athanasius describes Antony's character vividly. He places much emphasis on the relationship between Antony's inner disposition and his external appearance. These kinds of features are already present in Clement.¹²⁹ It is important to note, however, that these qualifications are not particularly ascetic by nature but emerge from Greco-Roman medical thought. Matters of health are constantly present in ascetic literature.¹³⁰ This kind of approach was also common to the moralist tradition of first two centuries. Musonius Rufus 'compares physicians and philosophers,' Plutarch thought that philosophy and medicine treat the same issues. Galen emphasized medical ethics in his *Quod optimus medicus sit quoque philosophus* and stated that doctors should lead a virtuous life.¹³¹ Earlier in this introduction I have referred to Clement as a 'moralist.' This attribute suits him for a variety of reasons, but especially because of how he sees Christ as a doctor or healer (*iatros*) whose orders are the guide to a better life.¹³² Peter Brown's description of an ideal character for a man in Late Antiquity puts the pieces together:

The maintenance of exacting codes of deportment was no trivial issue for the men of the second century. Entrusted by the formidable Roman government with the task of

¹²⁸ Athanasius, *Vita*, 67.1-6; trans. Tim Vivian and Apostolos N. Athanassakis in *The Life of Antony: The Coptic Life and the Greek Life* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2003, CS 202), 201.

¹²⁹ See especially my articles on sports, laughter, and Alexandria as moral map.

¹³⁰ See, for example, Palladius' discussion on healthy body in *Hist. Laus.*, prol. 14.

¹³¹ For further references, see Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 28-29; Plinio Prioreschi, *A History of Medicine: Roman Medicine* (vol. 3, Omaha, NE: Horatius Press), 618.

¹³² *Paed.* 1.2.6.1.

controlling their own cities, the elites of the Greek world (for whom and by whom the bulk of our evidence was written) learned rapidly and well how to bring upon their peers and their inferiors the ‘gentle violence’ of a studiously self-controlled and benevolent style of rule: ‘avoidance of discord, gentle but firm control of the populace’ were their principal political and social aims. They praised in each other qualities of gentleness, accessibility, self-control, and compassionate feeling. They expected to be treated in this courteous manner by the Emperor and by his representatives, and they were prepared to extend these gentle virtues to their royal dependents: a man was to be ‘fair-minded and humane’ to his slaves, ‘a father’ to his household servants, and, always, ‘at his ease’ with his fellow-townsmen.¹³³

Brown’s larger description in the same context also combines passages from Galen and other physicians. It is interesting that things such as walking style, use of one’s voice and rhythm of speech were constantly under scrutiny by other men. Everyone needed to prove their inner disposition by means of their conduct. This is the context in which the prescriptions of Clement’s *Paedagogus* open up to us; Clement discusses all the topics mentioned above. Clement’s goal was to make sure that the formation of his students reached its goal.

Character is a matter of formation; and formation of one’s character always takes place in a certain context, whether it be a city, desert, or monastery. As I have argued, the *Vita Antonii* describes the transition of ascetic practices from one place to another, from city to desert.¹³⁴ It is known with certainty that Evagrius was a reader of the *Vita*, but whether he was a reader of Clement is a more complicated question.¹³⁵ Whether or

¹³³ Brown, *Body & Society*, 11.

¹³⁴ See article 1 in this study.

¹³⁵ There are many studies focusing on Clement and Evagrius. For example, see : Antoine Guillaumont, ‘Le gnostique chez Clément d’Alexandrie et chez Évagre le Pontique’ in *Alexandrina. Mélanges offerts à Claude Mondésert* (Paris, 1987, 195-201). According to Guillaumont, it is likely that Evagrius read Clement. See: *Un*

not Evagrius read the *Paedagogus*, I find it very fruitful to compare the *Paedagogus* and the *Praktikos* because both of them describe, in their own context, a way of life for a person who is in a state of formation. They are both manuals for an ascetic Christian lifestyle, but thus far scholarship has paid more attention to the relationship between Clement's portrait of the gnostic in *Stromateis* and later ascetic tradition.

Contributions to scholarship

Table I above lists several *topoi* of ascetic literature. However, it might puzzle the reader as to why sexuality seems to be missing from this catalogue although the theme has been thoroughly discussed both in ascetic literature as well as in the scholarship. My method does not omit the topic, but rather places it in a broader context. In Clement, the context for sexuality is private household and marital life. He deals extensively with the topic, but he always emphasises the context. Whether it be procreation, the relationship of the spouses, or the natural use of one's organs, Clement locates the topic of sexuality within the matters of household and family life.¹³⁶ In the *Praktikos*, on the other hand, Evagrius deals with sexuality in the framework of celibacy and renunciation of one's family and marital life. Sexuality thus enters into discussion under the rubric of his demonology.¹³⁷ A similar observation can also be made of the *Vita Antonii*, in which demons remind Antony of his former city life and family duties. As depicted in the *Vita*, Antony encounters his issues around sexuality in

philosophe au désert: Evagre le Pontique (Paris: Vrin, 2004), 162. See also Robin Darling Young, 'Xeniteia According to Evagrius of Pontus' in *Ascetic Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau* (eds. Blake Leyerle & Robin Darling Young, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2013, 229-252), p. 231.

For the relationship between Evagrius and *Vita*, see Brakke, *Demons*, 232.

¹³⁶ Clement, *Paed.* 2.10.83-99; *Strom.* 3.

¹³⁷ Evagrius, *Praktikos* 5, 8, 19, 33-36

dreams and visions, usually evoked by demons.¹³⁸ Demonology thus becomes an instrument in dealing with city life and social issues within the context of the desert and withdrawal; although the context changes, specific topics remain. In addition to appearance, asceticism is about the inner disposition of the ascetic; it is this setting that places basic social needs and bodily issues under scrutiny and theorization. Thus the articles of this volume approach these questions from a variety of perspectives.

Although I have used the work of Pierre Hadot and Peter Brown extensively in my studies, in this introduction I adopt a critical stance toward their arguments. I still find Hadot's approach intriguing, but wish to highlight the proposition that the philosophical way of life always needs a discourse (Hadot was aware of this, but there is a danger that his work might be read in a reductionist manner which omits philosophical debates).¹³⁹ I argue that in early Christianity the discourse on deification is one of the central elements defining the Christian philosophy and lifestyle. Thus I have been able to point this out in the articles collected in this study, there is still much work to be done.¹⁴⁰ It is essential to note that the concept of *bios* needs a theory-based discourse in order to be a philosophically justified way of life. On the other hand, as much as I find Peter Brown's approach very inspiring, I think that it too is problematic. For example, the

¹³⁸ *Vita* 6, 9, 10. On Athanasius' account of dreams (and nocturnal emissions and demons), see David Brakke, *Athanasius*, 88-99.

¹³⁹ This is also understandable from the point of view that Hadot was the first to place such a scholarly emphasis on this topic. Later on, e.g., Martha Nussbaum was able to develop the therapeutic aspect of philosophy in her *The Therapy of Desire*. Comparing the works of Hadot and Foucault, John Sellars has been able to discuss what Hadot calls 'spiritual exercises' in a more detailed manner within Stoic tradition, see Sellars, *The Art of Living*, ix, 21-31.

¹⁴⁰ In the future, especially the language of participation needs to be elaborated; in this study I have been especially interested in the early stages of Christian views on deification and especially its connections with Stoic philosophy. In later centuries the theme was developed in a Platonic framework by Maximus the Confessor and Pseudo-Dionysius.

narrative of *The Body & Society* runs from one famous (male) ascetic to another, and, although the topic of sexual renunciation requires it to some extent, Brown sees ascetics and society within the framework of sexuality. Thus Brown makes sexual renunciation the central feature defining asceticism. In my view, this approach needs to be broadened and the theme of asceticism as renunciation needs to be revisited. I wish to broaden this discourse with two notes on (a) ‘sexuality and the self,’ and (b) the ‘social nature of human beings.’ My criticism focuses more on the presuppositions regarding human nature and psyche in Hadot and Brown than their historical analysis.

I agree with Sarah Coakley that the research on asceticism in the last decades has been dominated by specific Freudian features.¹⁴¹ In this approach, the sexual drive is a force that very much defines identities. There are ascetic techniques by which this force can be controlled; unless this force is controlled, saints give up when facing temptations, ascetics stop practicing their art, monks leave their monasteries, and nobody is ready to fight and face demons on their own ground. Why? Because in this view, every ascetic is constantly in danger of getting tired of renouncing what is natural for every person. However, this is not the only way to depict what asceticism is. I find Coakley’s analysis of ‘desire’ very welcome in this respect.¹⁴² Through use of the concept of desire as defined by Coakley, we can adopt a critical distance to Freudianism and see sexuality as a positive feature and an element of ascetic identity. The only option is not to see it as something that has to be renounced but as something that can be enacted positively in different frameworks, celibacy being one of them. To follow Coakley’s reasoning, but not her precise words, Freudianism might

¹⁴¹ Coakley, *New Asceticism*, 12, 14-16; see also Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 20-23.

¹⁴² Coakley, *New Asceticism*, 13, 31-34.

have been to recent scholarship something similar than Platonism was to early Christianity. In both of these discourses, the focus is on controlling and analysing one's impulses. However, it is possible to find ascetic texts such as *De virginitate* by Gregory of Nyssa, one of Coakley's favourites, or, as I have done in my studies, the *Paedagogus* of Clement of Alexandria, works in which we are not introduced to sexual renunciation and withdrawal from city life in contrast to many ascetic works. Rather we are introduced to a Christian discourse on sexuality in which God is the ultimate object of human desire and thus a parallel force to sexual appetite.

When it comes to presuppositions in scholarship on early Christianity, in addition to focusing on how matters of sexuality, and being critical of how the human libido and striving for political power serve to structure human social life, theologians and historians of the period should also take new perspectives of human sciences into account.¹⁴³ Some scholars like to emphasize the body as a bridge between 'nature and culture.' Anthropologists such as Mary Douglas emphasise symbolic acts, whereas other theorists, such as Michel Foucault, emphasize the role of power and knowledge. In this approach, the body and questions of embodiment become important. My contribution to this discussion is to discuss a variety of topics mostly other than sexual matters and celibacy¹⁴⁴ and thus to open anticipated themes in the field of asceticism studies.¹⁴⁵

Many ascetics were highly educated before they decided to leave the world: i.e., to leave their social status and duties. Evagrius of Pontus

¹⁴³ Asceticism is a field of research that can be approached from various perspectives in addition to historical and text-centered methods: e.g., it can be approached as well by means of cognitive, gender, and social studies.

¹⁴⁴ See *Celibacy and Religious Traditions* ed. Carl Olson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), page 4; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (with a new preface by the author; New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁴⁵ For anticipated themes see Harmless, 'Monasticism,' 509.

serves as good example in this respect. After working at the imperial palace in Constantinople he went through series of events including an affair, flight, and symptoms that resemble genuine burnout. When Evagrius had recovered in Jerome's monastery (situated in the Holy Land) he was advised by Melania the Elder to become a monk. Evagrius then headed towards Nitria, a city of monks in the desert. The systematic collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* provides us with a conversation Evagrius had with Abba Arsenius in which Arsenius highlights the vanity of the education of this world, saying harshly that both of them have gained nothing from their education.¹⁴⁶ However, it is noteworthy that the discussion between these two highly educated gentlemen shows serious contempt for the education they had received, whereas in Clement, who embraced Greek philosophy and literature, this kind of position towards Hellenistic *paideia* could not explicitly have been held. However, Clement could join Evagrius and Arsenius in their respect for simple peasants who provided for themselves by performing bodily labour and thus became virtuous.¹⁴⁷ This account also becomes crucial in Clement's treatise on sports, and especially his use of the term *antourgia*.¹⁴⁸ Asceticism results in concrete actions.

It seems that when it comes to the *polis* and its social life, Clement's idea of developing the virtues bears resemblance to that of Aristotle's notion of human beings as social creatures living in community with each other. The social aspect of virtues is also present in Plato, whose teachings Clement utilises in his work, and also in Stoicism which was a popular philosophical school in the time of Clement, especially in great

¹⁴⁶ *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Arsenius 5; This passage is also found in Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 312.

¹⁴⁷ Clement, *Paed.* 2.1.9.4.

¹⁴⁸ For more on this topic, see my article 'From Symposium to Gymnasium.'

cities. This raises again the issues of Greek *paideia* and the social nature of the virtues. Though it is a complicated task to try to define the function of different virtues by means of their content, it is noteworthy to point out that Clement was (though electively) able to work out a set of ascetical instructions and thus make use of teachings of various ancient philosophical schools.¹⁴⁹

The problem results in the question as to which terms ascetical practices are universal and to what extent they take a particular form due to certain surroundings, time and place. If one compares a simple instruction in Clement, *Vita* and Evagrius such as 'Do not eat too much', it becomes evident that eating too much means different things in Clement's circle, in Athanasius' narrative, and in how Evagrius instructs his apprentices.¹⁵⁰ In the *Paedagogus*, the precept integrates the ascetic into Alexandrian social life and aims at giving a good impression, the enjoyment of hospitality and leading a Christian way of life as if it were the fulfilment of Greco-Roman ideals. In this way, Clement's asceticism is integrative in essence.¹⁵¹ Evagrius, on the other hand, warns his disciples about the demon of gluttony (*gastrimargia*) who reminds the ascetic about the issues of health, and of how practicing virtue might result in misfortune and even illness.¹⁵² According to Evagrius, this demon among other *logismoi*, (bad thoughts) aims at stirring up passions in order to make the ascetic stop the practising of virtue. Evagrius teaches that an ascetic cannot control the demons, but that he can decide whether or not to follow their advice.¹⁵³ In his view, asceticism aims at purification: 'The ascetic life is a spiritual

¹⁴⁹ See O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 6-7 on how different schools were political.

¹⁵⁰ This is what Valantasis (*The Making of the Self*, 12) calls the third social function of asceticism, perceptual transformation of understanding the context in which ascetics operate (eg., 'world' and 'monastery').

¹⁵¹ *Paed.* 2.1.10.

¹⁵² Evagrius, *Praktikos*, 7.

¹⁵³ Evagrius, *Praktikos*, 6.

method of cleansing the affective part of the soul.¹⁵⁴ This is the spiritual meaning of the ascetic way of life that involves social withdrawal and discipline. However, it also has integrative elements because a monk, after renouncing the world and the city he was a part of before his conversion, now joins the new city of the desert.

Renunciation and integration may thus contain the same theoretical elements and philosophical reasoning, but merely a simple change of context can make an ascetic practice, even the same precept, appear in a totally different light. In the light of the material discussed in the articles of this dissertation, future study of asceticism would benefit from exploring the integrative side of ascetic practices. After all, many famous ascetics have been used as instruments for creating social cohesion: as model Christians, and as examples of humility and submission to ecclesial authorities, one of Athanasius' favourite themes in the *Vita*.¹⁵⁵ Of course, this kind of representation became possible only after asceticism and famous ascetics became objects of historiography through the works of historians such as Eusebius, but Athanasius' role is fundamental in this regard.

It is time to move forward from Freudian and Foucaultian paradigms, despite the fact that in both Christian self-understand and in scholarship the history of Christian asceticism has been seen as: history of famous and charismatic individuals or holy men (most of them men), then as a social construction closely related to identity of a group of Christians (Brown); then as a construction of power and as repression (Foucault); as a way of expressing desire for God (Coakley); and in many other terms as

¹⁵⁴ Evagrius, *Praktikos*, 78 (trans J.E. Bamberber).

¹⁵⁵ According to Athanasius, obedience to ecclesial authorities is part of Antony's character; see, e.g., *Vita* 67:1-2; 69.2. David Brakke reflects extensively on this point in his monograph on the politics of asceticism in Athanasius.

well. In Freud's theory, individuals are driven by their libido and unconscious desires, whereas in Foucault these impulses are repressed by social structures and discourses that enforce power upon individuals. In addition, it might be fruitful to combine postmodern approaches with scholarship emphasising the universality of human nature. After all, asceticism deals with very basic human needs, whether psychological, biological, ethical or social by nature.

My intention regarding asceticism is to view city as a context of not just co-habitation but also co-operation that requires respect for and from others. Traditions are important in this respect, too, as are also education and methods of training in the process of making individuals a part of city life:

Seek the acquaintance of holy men and women as through a window that admits light so that through them you may be able distinctly to perceive your own heart too (as in a neatly written book) and, by comparison with them, be able to assay your own slackness or lack of application. The skin of the faces flourishing with their white hair and the wearing of their clothing, the lowly nature of their discourse, the piety of their words, and the grace of their thoughts – all this will empower you, even if you fall into *accidie*, for people's attire, their footstep, and the laughter of their teeth will report on them, as the wisdom says. Now that I am beginning the narratives, I will not leave those in cities, in villages or in deserts unknown to you in my discourse. It is not, however, the place where they lived that is being looked for, but the nature of their endeavor.¹⁵⁶

These words of Palladius do not only summarize the intention of their author. They also express the tension between individual ascetics, their character, context, and their way of life. They note, however, that asceticism is simultaneously related to certain geographical places, such as

¹⁵⁶ Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, prol. 15-16 (trans. John Wortley, p. 7).

deserts, towns, and cities with their particular social scene, history, and traditions, and at the same time also include ‘the nature of ascetics’ endeavours’ in a universal manner. This dialectic between particular and universal, geographical and mental, social and solitude, forms the basics of the dynamics of ascetic practises the articles of this study explore.

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