CIVIC CONCORD AND COSMIC HARMONY
SOURCES OF METAPHORIC MAPPING
IN 1 CLEMENT 20:3

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Introduction

In his Carl Newell Jackson Lectures on “early Christianity and Greek paideia,” delivered at Harvard in 1960, Werner Jaeger briefly analysed 1 Clement against the background of the Greek rhetorical tradition, comparing Clement to Demosthenes.\(^1\) By drawing on the topos that internal discord had overthrown great kings and powerful states, Clement had reverted to classical Greek tradition. Jaeger reminds us:

“…Concord (homonoia) had always been the slogan of peacemaking leaders and political educators, of poets, sophists, and statesmen in the classical age of the Greek polis. In the Roman period, Concordia had even become a goddess. … Philosophers had praised her as the divine power that yokes the universe and upholds world order and world peace. So we are not surprised, and yet again we are, when we see Clement refer in that wonderful twentieth chapter of his letter to the cosmic order of all things as the ultimate principle established by the will of God, the creator, as a visible model for human life and peaceful cooperation.”\(^2\)

Jaeger, who suggested that Clement used a Stoic source for his argument,\(^3\) was not the first and the only one to investigate the Stoic background of 1 Clement 20. Long before Jaeger, G. Bardy and Louis Sanders followed Rudolf Knopf’s commentary,\(^4\) and drew the attention to the parallels, especially between chapter 20 and several authors.\(^5\) It was Jaeger, however, who stressed the importance of the notion of ὀμόνοια. He argued that 1 Clement stands in the tradition of promoting concord

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\(^3\) Cf. *ibid.*, 15 with note 8.
using the genus *symbouleutikon*. In an unsurpassed study published in Dutch only, Willem van Unnik followed Jaeger in classifying *1 Clement* as a letter using symbouleutic (deliberative) rhetoric in order to bring about peace and concord in the strife torn Corinthian church. Following the line of argumentation of the letter, he demonstrated the parallel use of the notion of concord and peace by Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Lucian, Dio Cassius, Epictetus and Aelius Aristides.

Because Van Unnik ventures to prove his case that *1 Clement* should be classified as συμβουλή, he does not analyse the specific use of ὀμόνοια in 20:3. The use of the term concord to refer to cosmic harmony is less usual than its combination with peace in reference to civic unanimity. To use the word ὀμόνοια (“oneness of mind”, “unanimity”, “concord”) to refer to the ἀμοιβία in the universe is clearly a metaphor. I shall pursue this line of thought further.

In this regard, Van Unnik’s suggestion that *1 Clement* be studied against the background of the symbouleutic rhetoric of Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides deserves to be followed. A survey of the use of ὀμόνοια in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods has confirmed that in the use of the example of cosmic concord, Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides, *inter alia*, prove to be the closest to *1 Clement* 20:3. Since the origin and development of the notion of concord have been studied elsewhere, we can thus turn our attention to those cases where ὀμόνοια was associated with cosmic harmony.

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8 Cf. LSJ, s.v.


10 Incidentally, the linguistic evidence has pointed in a direction where I could follow the example of Abraham Malherbe’s oeuvre.