

Faith, the criterion of knowledge: Remarks on a definition attributed to Aristotle by Clement of Alexandria

DENIS M. SEARBY*



1. Introduction

I propose to examine here a brief statement about faith and scientific knowledge that Clement of Alexandria attributes to Aristotle, which has not previously received any extended treatment as far as I know, and I intend to use it as a case in point to illustrate Clement's reliance on intermediary sources for his knowledge of Aristotle. In the process, I hope to suggest better Aristotelian parallels to this passage than the one normally offered by the editors of Clement.

Aristotle is not often cited by the Fathers of the Church.¹ When he is, it is not seldom in a tone of disparagement,² which may come as some surprise to those accustomed to thinking of Aristotle as "the" pagan philosopher of the Western Middle Ages. However, we must recall that, outside of a limited circle of commentators, Aristotle was really not much read by either Christian or pagan thinkers after, say, the second century A.D. Clement of Alexandria, writing around the year 200, is one of the last of the Fathers to show a positive appreciation of Aristotle's works and to display some direct knowledge of them, even if most of what he knew seems to have been second-hand information.³ This is not to imply that Clement was in any way

* Department of Classical Languages, SVC, 751 20 Uppsala, e-mail: denis.searby@klassiska.uu.se

¹ See A.J. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Évangile*, 2nd ed., Paris 1932, pp. 221-263 (*Excursus C: Aristote dans la littérature grecque chrétienne jusqu'à Théodoret*); D.T. Runia, *Festugière Revisited: Aristotle in the Greek Fathers*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 43.1 (1989), pp. 1-34. Runia provides a fuller list of references to Aristotle and the Peripatetics in the Greek Fathers to complement Festugière's study.

² Cf. Festugière *opus cit.* p. 223.

³ V. Rose made a first, incomplete collection of Clement's references to Aristotle in *Aristoteles pseudepigraphus*, Leipzig 1863. See also J. Bernays, *Zu Aristoteles und Clemens*, in *Symbola*

remiss in his studies. Quite the contrary, he was very well educated, albeit in an age in which anthologies, collections of anecdotes, and doxographies or popular outlines of philosophical doctrines were widely used both in education and literary composition.⁴ It can be proven that Clement made use of doxographical texts like the epitomes of Arius Didymus and of the same anthologies that Johannes Stobaeus would later use to compile his great *florilegium*.⁵

2. The Context

The Aristotelian citation I propose to examine occurs within Clement's discussion of the nature of faith in relation to scientific knowledge in that rambling work of his called the *Stromateis*.⁶ This is one of those philosophical issues which the rise of Christianity generated or at least brought into sharper focus, and Books Two and Five of Clement's *Stromateis* provide us with the first substantial extant discussion of it, whose content has been described as "the first Christian essay in aid of a grammar of assent".⁷ Clement discusses the subject with three different audiences in mind: (a) the pagan critics who held faith to be an unreasoning opinion, (b) the heretic Gnostics who regarded their own *gnosis* as superior to the faith of rank and file Christians, and, finally, (c) the group of believers tending toward an unreflective faith.⁸

After the introductory chapter to Book Two, Clement proceeds to a discussion of

philologorum Bonnensium in hon. Ritschelii collecta, Leipzig 1864-67, pp. 301-312. E.A. Clark, *Clement's Use of Aristotle. The Aristotelian contribution to Clement of Alexandria's refutation of Gnosticism [Texts and Studies in Religion 1]* New York 1977, pp. 16-26 deals with Clement's debt to Aristotle in his discussion of belief and knowledge, although as to the passage under consideration here she only mentions on p. 22 that it is not to be found in Aristotle. See pp. 86-88 for her conclusions, where she simply states that Clement's first-hand knowledge of Aristotle is open to debate. This book was probably a reworking of her doctoral thesis, *The Influence of Aristotelian Thought on Clement of Alexandria* (Columbia University diss. 1965), which has been unavailable to me; for an informative abstract see *Dissertation Abstracts International - A* 27/06 p. 2323 Dec. 1967, which affirms that "Clement's knowledge of Aristotelian teaching appears to have come from non-Aristotelian writers or through popular manuals and compilations."

⁴ Cf. H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, Oxford 1966, pp. 34-37.

⁵ There are many similarities between Clement and known doxographical passages; we will be touching on a few later in this article. On Arius Didymus, see D.E. Hahm, *The Ethical Doxography of Arius Didymus*, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 36.4 (1990), pp. 2835-3055. On Stobaeus, see O. Hense, *Ioannes Stobaios*, in *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Pauly-Wissowa) 9B (1916) cols. 2549-2586. Cf. also U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Euripides. Herakles I*, Berlin 1889, pp. 170-173, which deals specifically with Clement's use of an anthology that must have been used by Stobaeus.

⁶ For the texts from *Stromateis*, I use the standard edition by O. Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromata Buch I-VI*, Berlin 4th ed. 1985 (including useful notes by U. Treu). I also refer to the edition of *Sources Chrétiennes* n. 38: *Clément d'Alexandrie. Les Stromates. Stromate II*, ed. P.T. Camelot, Paris 1954.

⁷ Chadwick *opus cit.* p. 51.

⁸ Cf. Chadwick *opus cit.* pp. 52-53.

faith as the sole way to get to know God who is in Himself unknowable to us. “Faith”, he says, “is a voluntary anticipation, a pious assent”, and, citing the *Letter to the Hebrews*, “the substance of things hoped for, the proof of things unseen” (πρόληψις ἐκουσιός ἐστι, θεοσεβείας συγκατάθεσις, ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων, *Str.* II 8.4). Clement then describes faith as a rational commitment, προαίρεσις, and thus as a principle of action. Such a rational commitment, which is the beginning of intelligence, exercises a great influence on our cognitive faculty. The exercise of faith becomes in this way knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) built on a sure foundation. Clement is here allowing that merely human faith or conviction as a form of knowing is inferior to the stable possession of scientific knowledge. However, he immediately goes on to say that, for one who believes in Sacred Scripture, the Word of God is an irrefutable demonstration (ἀπόδειξις). This kind of faith exists, accordingly, on a higher level than ἐπιστήμη, and no longer derives its force from demonstration (οὐκέτ’ οὖν πίστις γίνεται δι’ ἀποδείξεως ὠχυρωμένη). Thus, Clement uses the term πίστις in more than one sense, here referring to both faith in Christ and, by analogy, a purely philosophical conviction of first principles.

3. The Text

The text I intend to concentrate on is found in *Stromateis* II ch. 4 section 15.5 and reads as follows:

Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ τὸ ἐπόμενον τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ κρίμα ὡς ἀληθὲς τὸδε τι πίστιν εἶναι φησι. Κυριώτερον οὖν τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἢ πίστις καὶ ἔστιν αὐτῆς κριτήριον.

«Aristotle says that faith is the judgement, consequent on scientific knowledge, that something is true. Faith is therefore more important than scientific knowledge and is the “criterion” of knowledge».

We find a similar reference in Book One, section 90 of Ἑλληνικῶν θεραπευτικῆ παθημάτων by Theodoret of Cyrhus⁹:

Καὶ γὰρ δὴ τὴν πίστιν Ἀριστοτέλης κριτήριον ἐπιστήμης ἐκάλεσεν.

«For, indeed, even Aristotle called faith the “criterion” of scientific knowledge».

It can, however, be shown that Theodoret is here relying on Clement for his information and, thus, is not an independent witness to the opinion attributed to

⁹ For the text of Theodoret, I use the edition of *Sources Chrétiennes* nn. 57-58: *Théodoret de Cyr: Thérapeutique des Maladies Helléniques*. Critical text, introduction, translation and notes by P. Canivet, Paris 1958.

Aristotle.¹⁰ However, it is interesting to note that Theodoret only attributes to Aristotle the latter part of the text in Clement, that “faith is the criterion of scientific knowledge”. It is not clear from the passage in Clement that these words are referred to Aristotle. They are introduced with οὖν, “therefore”, and may represent Clement’s own inference. Since it is unclear in Clement exactly which words are being ascribed to Aristotle, whether it is only the first or both the first and second sentences above, and since we do not have the means of deciding the issue, I will try to make my remarks applicable to both possibilities, although I am of the opinion that Clement is attributing both sentences to Aristotle. One of my chief reasons for this presumption is that this was the way Theodoret takes the statement. Another is the use of the word κριτήριο, which I think was likely to have been used in Clement’s doxographical source.¹¹

3.1. Why not a fragment of Aristotle?

It may well be asked at this stage why I am assuming a doxographical source here rather than an original work by Aristotle. I would answer, first of all, that our text does not occur in this form in Aristotle’s extant works. To what extent we may regard it as an approximative quotation of some extant Aristotelian passage is a question I will touch on later. However, it should be pointed out here and now that there is no sufficiently close parallel to be found in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* to allow for an easy comparison. Might it be a fragment of a lost work? How to decide what should and should not be included among the fragments of a given ancient author is a thorny issue, indeed, and an examination of the practices of different editors does not yield any very consistent criteria.¹² In fact, it would seem that the fewer extant texts we possess of an author, the more willing we are to define “fragment” in a very large sense, and *vice versa*. I think that the editors of Aristotle’s fragments have been quite right in excluding the passage under consideration from their collections, but I find that hard to reconcile with the inclusion, for example, of the following citation of Theophrastus in a collection of the fragments of that author:

Θεόφραστος δὲ τὴν αἰσθησιν ἀρχὴν εἶναι πίστεώς φησιν· ἀπὸ γὰρ ταύτης αἱ ἀρχαὶ

¹⁰ See P. Canivet, *Histoire d’une entreprise apologétique au V^e siècle*, Paris 1958, pp. 182-184. Cf. also Festugière *opus cit.* p. 259, Runia *opus cit.* p. 16.

¹¹ As will become clear, I think κριτήριο was in Clement’s doxographical source, but that πίστις probably was not.

¹² See the interesting discussion by C. Osborne, *Hippolytus of Rome. Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy*. London 1987, pp. 3-8. She discusses the importance of context for the interpretation of fragments cited by later authors, and, incidentally, deals with a citation of Heraclitus in Clement’s *Str.* VI 17.1. She notes on p. 7: “The ‘fragments’ are often paraphrases from memory, and may be adapted to the context in which they are used; they may be given in reported speech, the terms are sometimes glossed or changed to a more familiar wording”. I also recommend several of the papers in Glenn W. Most (ed.), *Collecting Fragments*, Göttingen 1997, especially A.C. Dionisotti, *On Fragments in Classical Scholarship* (pp. 1-33), A. Laks, *Du témoignage comme fragment* (pp. 237-208).

πρὸς τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐκτείνονται (*Strom.* II 2 9.5 = Thphr. fr. 13 Wimmer = fr. 301B Fortenbaugh).

«But Theophrastus says that sense is the starting-point of conviction; for starting-points extend from this to the reason in us and the understanding».

This occurs but two chapters before our own passage in the same book of *Stromateis*. Wimmer included it in his collection of the fragments of Theophrastus. It is also to be found in the most recent collection edited by Fortenbaugh *et alii*,¹³ which, however, is modestly entitled “Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence”. The title itself reveals a newer, more sophisticated approach to the study of those ancient philosophers whose writings have come down to us mostly in fragments. My reason for bringing this text up is my opinion that both it and our own text probably stem from the same source, namely some doxographical outline of Peripatetic philosophy, although the two passages have received different treatment at the hands of the editors of the fragments of the respective authors.

3.2. Clement’s references to Aristotle

To return to the passage under consideration. One objection to regarding it as a fragment is, of course, the realization that Clement often used intermediary sources for his information about various philosophical doctrines coupled with the natural reluctance to multiply unnecessarily the number of fragments attributed to Aristotle. Not a single one of Clement’s 31 references to Aristotle and the Peripatetics contains a verifiably exact quotation.¹⁴ His most direct references to the extant works are in the form of paraphrases and may, indeed probably, derive from some intermediary source. He has been used as a source for certain fragments, but, again, there is nothing to prove that he had direct knowledge of the original works.¹⁵ Significantly, he cites titles only on very rare occasions.¹⁶ We should bear in mind, however, that it is not always easy to determine when an author is citing from anthologies and popular outlines and when he is simply a well read person who likes to paraphrase other authors in words of his own.

¹³ *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*, ed. W.W. Fortenbaugh *et alii*, Leiden / New York / Cologne 1992- .

¹⁴ Cf. Runia *opus cit.* pp. 6-7.

¹⁵ See Arist. frs. 29, 100, 155, 176, 281, 540, 553, 616, 764, 775, 840, 841, 842, in O. Gigon, *Aristotelis Librorum Deperditorum Fragmenta*, Berlin 1987. These fragments are usually supported by references in other authors, and are often the kind of antiquarian notices that handed down in ancient literature without recourse to the original source.

¹⁶ He mentions titles in the following fragments: 155, 540, 553, 616, 775, all of which are titles of lost works (cf. n. 16 above).

3.3. The vocabulary: ἐπιστήμη and πίστις

A very cogent objection to the Aristotelian character of our text lies in its vocabulary. First, a few basic reminders with regard to the two key-words here, ἐπιστήμη and πίστις, even if they are so familiar to us. In philosophical Greek, ἐπιστήμη means sure and stable scientific knowledge as opposed to mere δόξα. For Aristotle, in particular, it is the kind of knowledge obtained through ratiocination and demonstration (ἀπόδειξις), starting from first principles of reasoning and proceeding through causes. (This is the kind of knowledge which Clement earlier claims to be inferior to the kind of faith or conviction that does not derive its force from ἀπόδειξις). As for πίστις, faith, it is, of course, a fact of great cultural significance that, apart from Greek-speaking Jews and Christians, Greek speakers almost never used the words πίστις and πιστεύειν to refer to faith in God. Rather, they used some form or derivative of the verb νομίζειν, meaning “to hold that”. The basic meanings of πίστις are: first (in an objective sense) trust and faith in others and (in a subjective sense) trustworthiness; second, that which gives confidence, such as pledges of good faith, or the very means of persuasion such as argument or proof. It is important to note that, in this part of the *Stromateis*, Clement is using the word πίστις to refer both to faith in God and his Divine Word and to rational conviction or faith in the first principles of science. This is made perfectly clear at the start of ch. 4, the chapter which provides the context for our own passage. There we read, for example, that “we Christians rest on faith, an unfailing criterion” (ἀμεταπτώω κριτηρίω τῆ πίστει ἐπαναπαυώμεθα, *Str.* II 12.1), and, a few sentences later, “if anyone should say that scientific knowledge is demonstrable with argument, let him know that the first principles are indemonstrable” (εἰ δέ τις λέγοι τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἀποδεικτικὴν εἶναι μετὰ λόγου, ἀκουσάτω ὅτι καὶ αἱ ἀρχαὶ ἀναπόδεικτοι, *Str.* II 13.4).

3.4. The vocabulary: κρίμα and κριτήριον

These two common words, ἐπιστήμη and πίστις, cause no difficulties for us. However, two other words do: κρίμα and κριτήριον. The use of the word κρίμα in the sense of judgement or verdict appears to be post-classical. It occurs in this sense in the *New Testament* and frequently in the Fathers. It does not occur at all in the extant works of Aristotle and is not especially common in later philosophical prose, although it is attested already in Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 397, where, however, it means “question for judgement”. For “judging” or “judgement” we would normally expect κρίσις. The choice of κρίμα, if it does not depend on Clement, would not have come from Aristotle but from some intermediary source.

The same may also be said of κριτήριον which I am here assuming also appeared in Clement’s source. Liddell and Scott define the word as “a means for judging or trying, standard, frequently of the mental faculties and senses.” It does occur in Aristotle but only once, in *Metaphysics* 1063a 3. It also shows up in Plato (cf. *Resp.* 582A 6, *Tht.* 178B 6), who is the earliest writer to use it. The term plays no important role in the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato. However, κριτήριον, especially in

the expression κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας, criterion of truth, is an important term in Hellenistic and later philosophy.¹⁷ A computer search reveals about 1200 occurrences of the different forms of κριτήριον in Greek authors on the *TLG* data-base from archaic times up to the early Middle Ages. The Church Fathers make a fairly liberal use of it, as does Diogenes Laertius, especially – and for our purposes significantly – in the doxographical summaries of Stoic and Sceptic doctrines. By far the most frequent use made of the word κριτήριον is by Sextus Empiricus who alone accounts for almost 10% of all the occurrences on the data-base.¹⁸ Sextus Empiricus, the great defender of Scepticism who was probably more or less contemporaneous with Clement, was a compiler who made wide use of doxographical summaries of the kind available to both Clement and Diogenes Laertius.¹⁹ We can see an example of that in Clement's citation of Theophrastus mentioned above, which is related to a doxographical passage in Sextus Empiricus that shows similarities both to a passage in Diogenes Laertius and to the doxographical epitome of Arius Didymus preserved for us by Stobaeus.

4. Doxographical parallels

The passage in Diogenes Laertius occurs in his summary of Aristotle's doctrine: κριτήρια τῆς ἀληθείας τῶν μὲν κατὰ φαντασίαν ἐνεργημάτων τὴν αἴσθησιν ἀπεφύνατο· τῶν δὲ ἠθικῶν, τῶν περὶ πόλιν καὶ περὶ οἶκον καὶ περὶ νόμους τὸν νοῦν (Aristotle defined sense-perception as the criterion of truth with regard to things involving appearances, and mind as the criterion of truth in moral actions concerning the State, the family and the laws, DL 5.29). This is a good example of a later philosophical term being used in a doxography in order to account for an earlier philosophical doctrine. It may moreover be directly related to our passage in Clement. In his *apparatus parallelorum* in his edition of Diogenes Laertius' *Vita Aristotelis*,²⁰ Düring cites as a parallel for the passage in DL both our text in Clement as well as the following fragment from Arius Didymus' Epitome of

¹⁷ See G. Striker, Κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας, in *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philol.-Hist. Kl.* II, 1974, pp. 51-110, for a survey of its use among Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics. She deals with the basic meanings of the word on pp. 52-55. I would note that there is a later English translation of Striker's book, which, however, I have not consulted.

¹⁸ Quite a lot has been written on the "criterion" in Sextus. Two articles which I have found useful are: J. Brunschwig, *Sextus Empiricus on the κριτήριον*, in his *Papers in Hellenistic Philosophy*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 224-243, and A.A. Long, *Sextus Empiricus on the Criterion of Truth*, in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* no. 25 (1978) pp. 34-49. See also the papers in P.M. Huby and G. Neal (eds.), *The Criterion of Truth*, Liverpool 1989.

¹⁹ On Sextus Empiricus as compiler, cf. *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1996) pp. 1398-99. I have not seen much recent written on the sources of Sextus, e.g. in the long bibliography compiled by J. Annas and J. Barnes in their *Sextus Empiricus. Outlines of Scepticism*, Cambridge 1994. One exception is K. Janáček, "Ainesidemos und Sextos Empeirikos", in *Eirene* 17 (1980) pp. 5-16.

²⁰ I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* [*Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* 5], Göteborg 1957.

Peripatetic doctrine: κριτήρια δ' εἶναι τῆς τούτων γνώσεως τὸν τε νοῦν καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν, τὸν μὲν νοητῶν, τὴν δὲ τῶν αἰσθητῶν (the criteria of the knowledge of things are intellect and sense-perception, intellect of intellectual objects, sense-perception of sensible objects, fr 16 Diels, *Doxogr. Gr.*, p. 456 = Stobaeus I ch. 58). Düring, however, neglected to mention the following very similar wording in Sextus Empiricus: οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη καὶ Θεόφραστον καὶ κοινῶς οἱ Περιπατητικοὶ ... διττὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ κριτήριον ἀπολείπουσιν, αἴσθησιν μὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν, νόησιν δὲ τῶν νοητῶν, κοινὸν δὲ ἀμφοτέρων, ὡς ἔλεγεν ὁ Θεόφραστος, τὸ ἐναργές (those associated with Aristotle and Theophrastus, and the Peripatetics in general ... also admit that the criterion is twofold, sense of sense-objects, and intellectual activity of the objects of the intellect, but common to both, as Theophrastus said, is self-evidence, *Adv. math.* 7.217-218, translation according to Thphr. fr. 301A Fortenbaugh; cf. n. 22 below for a further important parallel in Clement).

The passages just cited from Diogenes Laertius, Sextus Empiricus and Arius Didymus are all closely related. If I were to reproduce the full contexts, we would find even more connections between them, as well as connections between all of these and Clement's citation of Theophrastus mentioned above (*Str.* II 2 9.5). However, Düring's comparison of our present text with these passages may seem somewhat off the mark, inasmuch as these latter contain no reference to faith being the criterion of science. Although I doubt whether Düring devoted much thought to his reference, nevertheless, I think it can be defended. It is quite possible that Clement had in mind a doxographical passage like the one above explaining that Aristotle held "intellect" (νοῦς) to be the criterion of truth in intellectual matters. Clement is trying to show that there is a higher knowledge than ἐπιστήμη, science, affords, and that it is faith which establishes for us the truth-value of this higher knowledge. Whether or not Clement had direct knowledge of the logical works of Aristotle, he was familiar with the well known Aristotelian distinction between νοῦς and ἐπιστήμη.²¹ As noted above, ἐπιστήμη is knowledge gained through demonstration, but, according to Aristotle, it is not our only or even our highest mode of apprehending truth. We use νοῦς in apprehending the first principles, and, thus, while both these intellectual habits are infallible and always true, nevertheless, νοῦς is truer than ἐπιστήμη (cf. Arist. *An. post.* 100b 9-11), being more fundamental. If we recall, as I observed earlier, that in this part of *Stromateis* Clement is using πίστις in the sense of a conviction of the truth of first principles, then we can perhaps understand in what sense he can say that it is the criterion of scientific knowledge: he means that our conviction or faith in the conclusions of science, that is, our judgement consequent on scientific knowledge, rests on the more fundamental kind of faith in the insights of νοῦς which, thus, makes up the "criterion" of science, since, in order to

²¹ This is clear, for example, from Clem. *Strom.* II ch. 4 13.2: τεσσάρων δὲ ὄντων ἐν οἷς τὸ ἀληθές, αἰσθήσεως, νοῦ, ἐπιστήμης, ὑπολήψεως ... κοινὸν δὲ νοῦ τε καὶ αἰσθήσεως τὸ ἐναργές. If this is compared with the passage from Sextus Empiricus just quoted (*Adv. math.* 7.217-218) we find another very apposite example of Clement's reliance on doxographies. In the abstract of Clark's dissertation (see note 3 above), we read that "Clement knew the commonplace definitions of Aristotle's logic and possibly was familiar with the logical writings themselves."

judge the truth-value of scientific demonstrations we must have prior convictions not derived from demonstration. Although it is somewhat convoluted, I think this is more or less what Clement had in mind in attributing this definition to Aristotle, and, moreover, I believe that he is basing himself on a doxographical passage similar to the one used by Diogenes Laertius and Sextus Empiricus (whether or not it was Arius Didymus) but with πίστις standing for νοῦς. He is, after all, writing with an apologetic purpose and would have been inclined to use terms that produced a better Aristotelian parallel to his idea of a higher mode of knowledge through faith.

5. What if Clement used Aristotle directly?

5.1. The traditionally cited Aristotelian parallel to our text

We might pose the following objection: since Clement seems to show some knowledge of passages in the *Topics* in at least two other places in the *Stromateis* (cf. V ch. 1 6.1 and V ch. 9 59.2 with *Top.* 105a 3-9 and 100b 19), why may we not understand the present text as Clement's own interpretation of Aristotle? The question may seem especially reasonable considering that some of the editors²² of the *Stromateis* as well of Theodoret have compared our text with the following passage in the *Topics*:

οἶον ἐπεὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐπιστήμης ἴδιον ὑπόληψιν τὴν πιστοτάτην οὐδενὶ προσκέχρηται οὐτ' ἀντικειμένῳ οὐθ' ἅμα τῇ φύσει οὐθ' ὑστέρω, εἴη ἂν κατὰ τοῦτο καλῶς κείμενον τὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἴδιον (*Top.* 131a 23-26, cf. 130b 15-18).

«For example, he who has stated that it is a property of 'knowledge' to be 'the most trustworthy conception' has not introduced anything either opposite to the subject, or naturally simultaneous with it, or posterior to it, and so the property of knowledge will be correctly stated in this respect» (Loeb translation, Forster).

5.2. Other and better Aristotelian loci

My answer is the following. First of all, with regard to the two parallels to the *Topics* in Book 5, they are only rather approximative quotations and could just as easily themselves have come from either a doxography or an anthology, although, naturally, Clement's use of secondary sources does not preclude his also making use of original Aristotelian texts. Nor do I think the thesis that he drew the bulk of his knowledge about Aristotle from intermediary sources leads to the conclusion that he

²²E.g. Raeder (*Theodoret. Aff. gr. cur.*), and Canivet p. 184 n. 4. Canivet explains that by error Camelot and Mondésert in *Sources Chrétiennes* no. 38 (*Stromateis*) refer to *Topics* 4.5 126b 18, although they had Raeder's comparison in mind. This is a good example of how an inaccurate reference becomes even more inaccurate in later authors who simply follow it, rather like Theodoret following Clement here.

had an inadequate grasp of Aristotelian logic and epistemology. In fact, I would hold that at least the brief text under consideration is consistent enough with Aristotle's thought and that Aristotle would have agreed with it, even if he would not have employed the same terminology. At the same time, I am of the opinion that our text also shows Clement's relative ignorance of the logical works such as the *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics* and the *Topics*, because, if he had known them, he would have been able to find better Aristotelian support for his argument and, in general, for his views about the relationship between faith and scientific knowledge than that offered by the present meager citation or others like it. Indeed, I find it rather odd that scholars have referred their readers to the above quoted passage from the *Topics* as a parallel for our text, when there exist other, to my mind more obvious, comparable passages. I think most people will agree that theirs is not an entirely satisfactory reference, especially in view of the fact that in it Aristotle is just citing someone else's opinion in order to illustrate a type of argument and only incidentally bringing in the subject of πίστις and ἐπιστήμη. For example, look at the following five passages:

(1) ἅπαντα γὰρ πιστεύομεν ἢ διὰ συλλογισμοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἐπαγωγῆς (*An. pr.* 68b 14).

«For, we believe everything either as a result of deductive reasoning or induction».

(2) ἐπεὶ δὲ δεῖ πιστεῦναι τε καὶ εἰδέναι τὸ πρᾶγμα τῷ τοιοῦτον ἔχειν συλλογισμὸν ὃν καλοῦμεν ἀπόδειξιν, ἔστι δ' οὗτος τῷ ταδι ἐξ ὧν ὁ συλλογισμὸς, ἀνάγκη μὴ μόνον προγιγνώσκειν τὰ πρῶτα, ἢ πάντα ἢ ἓνια, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον· αἰεὶ γὰρ δι' ὃ ὑπάρχει ἕκαστον, ἐκείνῳ μᾶλλον ὑπάρχει ... ὥστ' εἴπερ ἴσμεν διὰ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ πιστεύομεν, κάκεινα ἴσμεν τε καὶ πιστεύομεν μᾶλλον, ὅτι δι' ἐκεῖνα καὶ τὰ ὕστερον. οὐχ οἷόν τε δὲ πιστεῦναι μᾶλλον ὧν οἶδεν ἄ μὴ τυχάνει μήτε εἰδῶς μήτε βέλτιον διακείμενος ἢ εἰ ἐτύχχανεν εἰδῶς. συμβήσεται δὲ τοῦτο εἰ μὴ τις προγιγνώσκει τῶν δι' ἀπόδειξεως οὐ μόνον δεῖ τὰς ἀρχὰς μᾶλλον γνωρίζειν καὶ μᾶλλον αὐταῖς πιστεῦναι ἢ τῷ δεικνυμένῳ, ἀλλὰ μηδ' ἄλλο αὐτῷ πιστότερον εἶναι μηδὲ γνωριμώτερον τῶν ἀντικειμένων ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ἐξ ὧν ἔσται συλλογισμὸς ὁ τῆς ἐναντίας ἀπάτης, εἴπερ δεῖ τὸν ἐπιστάμενον ἀπλῶς ἀμετάπειστον εἶναι (*An. post.* 72a 26 ff.).

«Now since the required condition of our knowledge or conviction of a fact consists in grasping a syllogism of the kind which we call demonstration, and since the syllogism depends upon the truth of its premisses, it is necessary not merely to know the primary premisses – either all or some of them – beforehand, but to know them better than the conclusion. For that which causes an attribute to apply to a subject always possesses that attribute in a still greater degree ... Hence if the primary premisses are the cause of our knowledge and conviction, we know and are convinced of them also in a higher degree, since they cause our knowledge of all that follows from them. But to believe in anything more than in the things which we know, if we neither actually know nor are in a better situation than if we actually knew it, is impossible; yet this is

what will happen if anyone whose conviction rests upon demonstration is to have no prior knowledge; because we must believe in the first principles (some if not all of them) more than in the conclusion. And if a man is to possess the knowledge which is effected by demonstration, not only must he recognize and believe in the first principles more than in that which is being proved, but nothing which is opposed to the first principles and from which will result a syllogism of the contrary error, must be more credible or better known to him than those principles; since one who has absolute knowledge should be unshakeable in his belief» (Loeb translation, Forster).

(3) ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν περὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἔξεων αἷς ἀληθεύομεν αἱ μὲν αἰεὶ ἀληθεῖς εἰσιν, αἱ δὲ ἐπιδέχονται τὸ ψεῦδος, οἷον δόξα καὶ λογισμὸς, ἀληθῆ δ' αἰεὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ νοῦς, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐπιστήμης ἀκριβέστερον ἄλλο γένος ἢ νοῦς, αἱ δ' ἀρχαὶ τῶν ἀποδείξεων γνωριμώτεραι, ἐπιστήμη δ' ἅπασα μετὰ λόγου ἐστὶ, τῶν ἀρχῶν ἐπιστήμη μὲν οὐκ ἂν εἴη, ἐπεὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἀληθέστερον ἐνδέχεται εἶναι ἐπιστήμης ἢ νοῦν ... (*An. post.* 100b 5 ff.).

«Now of the intellectual faculties that we use in the pursuit of truth some are always true, whereas others admit falsity; and no other kind of knowledge except intuition is more accurate than scientific knowledge. Also first principles are more knowable than demonstrations, and all scientific knowledge involves reason. It follows that there can be no scientific knowledge of the first principles; and since nothing can be more infallible than scientific knowledge except intuition, it must be intuition that apprehends first principles» (Loeb translation, Forster).

(4) ἔστι δὲ ἀληθῆ μὲν καὶ πρῶτα τὰ μὴ δι' ἐτέρων ἀλλὰ δι' αὐτῶν ἔχοντα τὴν πίστιν· οὐ δεῖ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστημονικαῖς ἀρχαῖς ἐπιζητεῖσθαι τὸ διὰ τί, ἀλλ' ἐκάστην τῶν ἀρχῶν αὐτὴν καθ' ἑαυτὴν εἶναι πιστὴν (*Top.* 100b 18 ff.).

«Things are true and primary which command belief through themselves and not through anything else; for regarding the first principles of science it is unnecessary to ask any further questions as to 'why', but each principle should of itself command belief» (Loeb translation, Forster).

(5) ἔτι διδακτὴ ἅπασα ἐπιστήμη δοκεῖ εἶναι, καὶ τὸ ἐπιστητὸν μαθητόν. ἐκ προγινωσκομένων δὲ πᾶσα διδασκαλία, ὡς περ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀναλυτικοῖς λέγομεν ... ἢ μὲν ἄρα ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶν ἕξις ἀποδεικτική, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα προσδιορίζομεθα ἐν τοῖς ἀναλυτικοῖς· ὅταν γὰρ πως πιστεύῃ καὶ γνώριμοι αὐτῶ ὡςιν αἱ ἀρχαί, ἐπίσ-
ταται (*E.N.* 1139b 25 - 34).

«Moreover, all scientific knowledge is held to be teachable, and what is scientifically knowable is capable of being learned. All teaching is based on what is already known, as we have stated in the *Analytics* ... Accordingly, scientific knowledge is a 'capacity' for demonstration and has, in addition, all the other qualities which we have specified in the *Analytics*. When a man believes something in the way there

specified, and when the starting-points or principles on which his beliefs rest are known to him, then he has scientific knowledge» (translation Oswald; for the passages alluded to in the *Analytiks*, see above no. 2; cf. also *An. post.* 73a 21 - 74a 3).

This last passage is also referred to by U. Treu in her remarks *ad locum* in Stählin's edition (4th) of *Stromateis*. I agree wholeheartedly with her reference to the *Ethics*, although I see the passages in the *Analytiks* and *Topics* as being prior (Aristotle refers to the *Analytiks* here in the *EN*). All these passages have in some way to do with the distinction between ἐπιστήμη and νοῦς. Treu, however, begins her note on our passage in this way: «dies kann gefälscht sein aus Arist. *Top.* V3 p. 130a 23 ... (diese Stelle bei Raeder, Theodoret. *Gr. aff. cur.* I 90); richtiger R.E. Witt Albinus 33 Anm. 13 "In *Strom.* II 15,5 Aristotle 'says' that πίστις is ἐπόμενον της ἐπιστήμη κριμα but Ar. *De an.* III 3 p. 428a 20 writes δόξη ἔπεται πίστις".» I do not think this last comparison is appropriate for three reasons: (a) the statement in question occurs in a discussion of imagination, and (b) Clement seems not to have been familiar with the *De anima* (cf. also Clark 1965, abstract, n. 4 above); and, most importantly, (c) it does not serve the purpose inasmuch as it relates πίστις to a weaker form of knowledge,²³ when what we want is a source for the priority of πίστις over ἐπιστήμη. In any case, I stand by my conclusion that Clement relied on a doxographical passage like those cited earlier, perhaps changing the terminology to suit his argument. The point is that the editors of Clement should rather refer the reader to doxographical parallels rather than vainly try to turn up Aristotelian parallels and that, if Aristotelian must needs be sought, then it were best to look for passages dealing with ἐπιστήμη and νοῦς, rather than πίστις, given Clement's earlier analogy of πίστις in Christ to πίστις in first principles.

6. Conclusion

To sum up: The problem was where Clement got his Aristotelian reference from, whether it represented a possible fragment, his own interpretation of Aristotle, or an intermediary source. I concluded that Clement's source was a doxography; it may well have been a doxographical passage very similar to the source used by Diogenes Laertius in dealing with νοῦς as a criterion of truth in his outline of Aristotelian teaching, although Clement would have recast it in terms of faith (νοῦς having to do with first principles according to Aristotle, which is how Clement is using πίστις in *Str.* II ch. 4); thus, what we have is Clement's interpretation of an intermediary source. Clement would have been better off had he turned to the original works of Aristotle to find support for his argument; there are other passages in Aristotle that furnish greater support for the thought of our text than that referred to by certain editors of Clement.

²³ On δόξα in Aristotle, I can recommend the still highly readable study, L.-M. Regis, *L'Opinion selon Aristote*, Paris / Ottawa 1935.

Rarely, it may be felt, have so many words been spent to expound so few. However, one of the pleasures of classical philology consists precisely in laying hold of a brief and not very significant text and tracing its connections to the great ideas and enquiries of human experience, such as the reciprocal relationship between faith and scientific knowledge. We have seen how Clement concluded that the criterion of scientific knowledge is the faith that we give to first principles. This idea in the mind of an educated Christian Greek like Clement would naturally tend to connect such a faith with the faith in the principle of all things (ἀρχὴ πάντων) which pagan Greek philosophy identified as God.²⁴ Even more so, for a Christian like Clement, faith in the first principle turns out to be faith in the Logos: it is suddenly no longer a question of believing in the truth of an abstract principle, but of believing in a Person whose very nature is the source of the validity of all principles. And this is precisely the argument Clement follows in order to establish the priority of faith in a God who reveals Himself. In the following chapter (*Str.* II ch. 5), he describes how the docile soul freely gives its assent to the Word of God revealed in the Logos, Christ, and thus is justified by faith. The Christian conception of faith ties together two strands of meaning in the Greek word πίστις: it is both a firm persuasion based on intelligent reason, and at the same time it is trust in a friend. The pagan philosopher believes because he knows, whereas the Christian believes because he loves.²⁵

²⁴ On this concept, see L.P. Gerson, *God and Greek Philosophy*, London / New York 1990, pp. 5-14 and *passim*.

²⁵ Cf. J.H. Newman, *Love the Safeguard of Faith against Superstition*, in *Oxford University Sermons*, London 1880, p. 236: "we believe because we love".