

[Accueil](#)[Revenir à l'accueil](#)[CollectionBoite\\_022 | Pères de l'Église](#)[CollectionBoite\\_022-1-chem | Noces spirituelles \[rayé : Chair \(Antiquité\) Virginité\]](#) Item[photocopie]

## [photocopie]

**Auteur : Foucault, Michel**

## Présentation de la fiche

Coteb022\_f0030

SourceBoite\_022-1-chem | Noces spirituelles [rayé : Chair (Antiquité) Virginité]

LangueFrançais

TypePhotocopie

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

## Références éditoriales

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

Droits

- Image : Avec l'autorisation des ayants droit de Michel Foucault. Tous droits réservés pour la réutilisation des images.
- Notice : équipe FFL ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).  
Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Partage à l'Identique 3.0 (CC BY-SA 3.0 FR).

Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 21/10/2020 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

---

## III. ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORS OF THE THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURY.

1. *Clement of Alexandria.*

The first to be mentioned in this paragraph is Clement of Alexandria. At the end of the Second Book of the *Stromateis* he gives a short doxographical survey of what pagan philosophers thought of marriage. He says that Plato saw marriage as organizing the immortality of the human race, but does not comment on this theory (138, 2). Somewhat further, in 139, 5, he gives the opinion of Hierocles and Antipatros<sup>32</sup>, according to whom a man who has not established his own successor, his like, in his place, lacks a natural perfection,—again without giving his personal view. In 140, 1 he sums up three reasons for the necessity of marriage: one marries for one's country, for the succession of children, and for the completion (*συντελειώσις*) of the world insofar as this depends on us. It does not seem as if this *συντελειώσις* is an allusion to the eschatological theme of the completion of the number of the Elect, for in 141, 5 he endorses Plato's opinion that those who do not marry and have no children, cause a shortage of men and dissolve the cities and the world which for its existence depends on them. The *συντελειώσις* means the preservation of this world by its being populated<sup>33</sup>. Clement leaves no doubt that he finds this abstinence from marriage reprehensible, for the *γένεσις* is something divine.

These last paragraphs of *Strom.* 2 are meant as an introduction to the Third Book, which is entirely concerned with the refutation of the Encratites. In this Book we find the fragments of EvEg which we discussed above. The only point that is relevant for our purpose is the way in which Clement criticizes the link that the Encratites put between marriage (*γένεσις*) and death. He does not seem to reject the authority of EvEg and tries very hard to interpret it in a non-encratite sense. So he takes the 'female' and the 'woman' to mean 'desire' (*ἐπιθυμία*, which is the root of a series of vices, 63, 3) and the 'male' 'temper' (*θυμός*, 92, 2-93, 1). In Salome's question ("Until when will men die?" 64, 1) *ἄνθρωποι* refers, not to visible man, but to the soul; the death of the soul is sin; in the same way *γένεσις* and *φθορά* are spiritualized: the *γένεσις* of vices is the *φθορά* of the soul; both necessarily have their place in this world until the general judgement. This need of a spiritual interpretation shows that Clement was puzzled by these apocryphal logia. Sometimes, however, he takes *γένεσις* and *φθορά* (or *θάνατος*) in their literal sense. So in 64, 2-3, still explaining the Lord's answer to Salome's question, and after having quoted *Rm.* 5, 12, 14, he says that it is by physical necessity of divine disposition (*φυσικῇ ἀνάγκῃ θείας οἰκονομίας*) that death follows birth, and that the unity of soul and body is succeeded by their dissolution. As woman is thought to be the cause of death because of her begetting, in the same way and for the same reason she can be said to be the mistress of life, for immediately after the transgression she who took the lead in this matter is called 'Life'.

Clement also tackles Tatian's exegesis of *Lk.* 20, 34-36, which, as we have seen, is not excluded by the text. He argues that "the sons of this world" should not be opposed to the sons of some other world. "Sons of this world" are all those who are born in this world. They engender and are engendered, for nobody enters into this life without birth, but this birth, which is subject to a corresponding death, will not fall anymore to the share of man once he has departed from this life. Clement then quotes *Mt.* 23, 9 ("One is your Father, in heaven"—"call no man your father upon earth"): God as the Creator is the Father of all, the earthly father is only the secondary cause (*συναίτιος*), or rather the agent (*διάκονος*) of birth; so He wants us to become again like little children, by the knowledge

32. See Stobæus *Flor.* 67, 21.25.

33. Cf. John Chrysostom, *In Joh. Hom.* 25 (24), 1

(PG 59, 150): man is created because this world had to be completed (*συντελεῖσθαι*).



