

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND HIS DOCTRINE OF THE LOGOS

BY

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Modern research on Clement tends to make him a late partisan of the “two-stage” concept of the Logos which we meet in the second-century apologists.¹ According to this, the Logos was embedded from all eternity in the Father, and became a second *hypostasis* when the Father brought it forth, “before the ages”, as his instrument of creation. This doctrine, which entails that only the nature and not the person of the Logos is eternal, was a heresy for most Christians after the Council of Nicaea, and there is no doubt that it had already lost ground in Alexandria by the time of Clement’s death. Origen denied it, and when Bishop Alexander alleged that Arius held a doctrine of two *logoi*,² he assumed that it would immediately be recognised as heresy. Arius did not maintain a doctrine of emanation, perhaps not even the doctrine of two *logoi*,³ and the purpose of this article is to show that we have no grounds for believing that either theory was any more acceptable to Clement than to his successors. In the first part I shall argue that the classic formulation of the “two-stage” theory, in which an outgoing word or *logos prophorikos* supervenes upon an immanent word or *logos endiathetos*, was not a universal datum in the time of Clement. In the second I shall challenge the philological and philosophical arguments that have been adduced to prove that he held the

¹ See H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass. 1956), 204-17. On Lilla and Osborn see below.

² Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* I.6. On Origen see below.

³ See e.g. G.C. Stead, “The Thalia of Arius and the testimony of Athanasius”, *JThS* 29 (1978), 31-4. Arius’ extant writings never assert that the title Logos is equivocal, and the confession which he and Euzoius presented to Constantine in 327 speaks of Christ as Logos in juxtaposition with clauses referring to the creation. That is, he is the Logos of the world, not of the Father. Since the Nicene council did not insist on the title Logos, and it figures in a different place in the formulary of Eusebius (Socrates, *HE* I.8), we must assume that Arius set some store by this sense of the term.

theory; then, examining the testimony of Photius in the third part, I shall give reasons for suspecting a misquotation. Finally, in defending the authenticity of another disputed passage, I shall propose that Clement taught the eternal generation of the Logos, and that he may have framed this doctrine as an antidote to the teaching of the Valentinian school.

I

First it should be observed that the “two-stage” theory cannot be ascribed with equal certainty to all the second-century apologists. It is plainly found in Tatian, who declares that the Logos “sprang forth” from the Father, having previously resided as a potency or *dunamis* within him (*Oratio* 5). It is not so clearly present in Ignatius of Antioch, who (if we follow the Middle Recension of his letters and do not emend the manuscript) spoke of Christ in his epistle to the *Magnesians* as “the Word who proceeds in silence from the Father” (8.3). Some readers have conjectured that this silence is the state of indeterminate or potential being which Christ enjoyed before his emanation from the Father as the Logos; others maintain, however, that Ignatius is alluding to the secrecy of the Father’s operations in the period when, as he writes to the Ephesians, the devil was kept in ignorance of the three mysteries that were fulfilled in Mary’s virginity, her labour and the Cross (*Eph.* 18). This second view is corroborated, not only by the parallel from *Ephesians*, but by the immediate context in *Magnesians*, for the author is plainly speaking of the incarnate Christ when he celebrates his “obedience in all things to the one who sent him”.¹ Even less can any case be built on Justin Martyr, for he also affirms a generation of the Logos from the Father (*Trypho* 61.1), but says nothing of any antecedent phase.

Athenagoras makes a better witness, as he writes that, whereas Christ is the Father’s offspring (γέννημα), he is in none the less ingenerate (οὐχ ὡς γενόμενον). This could be construed to mean that, while his person had a beginning, his nature was eternal; and this in turn could imply that he was immanently or potentially in the Father before he came forth and acquired his own identity (*Legatio* 10). That something of the kind is meant is clear from the subsequent statement that the Son, who from all eternity had been a rational principle in the Father’s mind and one with him in

¹ *Magnesians* 8.2. See further W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch. A Commentary on the Letters* (Philadelphia 1985), 120-122; M.J. Edwards, “Ignatius and the Second Century”, *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 2 (1998), 222-3.

the δύναμις of the Spirit, came forth to be the ἰδέα and ἐνέργεια of the entities that had hitherto lain inchoate in the elements of material creation. Nevertheless Theophilus of Antioch is the only writer of the second century who finds words to differentiate the two stages in the history of the Logos. In the first he is *endiathetos* or “immanent” to the Father, and in the second he is *prophorikos* or “uttered”:

Ἐχων οὖν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς ἰδίῳις σπλάγχνοις ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐξερευξάμενος πρὸ τῶν ὅλων. (*Ad Autolyicum* 2.10).

God, then, having his own *logos* dwelling in his own inward parts generated it, having emitted it with his own wisdom before the whole [of creation].

Ὡς ἀλήθεια διηγείται τὸν λόγον τὸν ὄντα διὰ παντὸς ἐνδιάθετον ἐν καρδίᾳ θεοῦ . . . ὅποτε δὲ ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἐβουλεύσατο, τοῦτον λόγον ἐγέννησεν προφορικόν, πρωτοτόκον πάσης κτίσεως. (*Ad Autolyicum* 2.22).

As truth relates, the *logos* which pervades all things [was] dwelling in the heart of God . . . But when God wished to make whatever he had resolved, he brought this *logos* forth as an utterance, the firstborn of all creation.

We cannot assume, however, that the usage of Theophilus is inherited from, or a legacy to, other Christian authors. He is, after all, unique in referring the term *sophia* to the Holy Spirit. No-one cites his work before Eusebius, and no-one before Eusebius' time returned to the combination *endiathetos/prophorikos* in expounding the generation of the Logos. In Clement's day Tertullian was a vigorous spokesman of the “two-stage” theory, opposing *ratio*, as the immanent, to *sermo*, as the exoteric Logos (*Adversus Praxean* 5); the adjectives *endiathetos* and *prophorikos* seem, however, to have had no interest for him. He was not afraid of Greek, since he acknowledges the word *probolē*, of Valentinian origin, as a precedent for his own use of *prolatio*. But *prolatio* is the lexical equivalent of *prophorikos*, and had Theophilus' usage been familiar to him, Tertullian would not have been obliged to make such a damaging admission.

Endiathetos, prophorikos and their cognates are attested, either singly or in conjunction, in contemporaries or predecessors of Clement, but none of the following instances seems to warrant the application of either term to the Second Person of the Trinity:

1. Though the coupling of the term is often supposed to have been a Stoic commonplace, there is only one example in the *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* of Von Arnim, and here the two locutions signify discrete phenomena, not successive phases in the evolution of one:⁵

⁵ J. Von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, vol. 2 (Leipzig 1903), 43.18; cf. *ibid.*, 74.4.

Φασὶν ὅτι ἄνθρωπος οὐχὶ τῷ προφορικῷ λόγῳ διαφέρει τῶν ἀλόγων ζῶων (καὶ γὰρ κόρακες καὶ ψιττακοὶ καὶ κίτται ἐνάρθρους προφέρονται φωνάς) ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐνδιαθέτῳ. (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* VIII 275).

The say that it is not by the uttered *logos* that man differs from the irrational beasts (for crows and parrots and jays also emit connected sounds), but by the indwelling one.

Here *logos endiathetos* denotes the human faculty of reasons, *logos prophorikos* any sound produced by a living creature, so long as some articulation is discernible. It is not said that the two are complementary, that *logos prophorikos* is characteristically the expression of a *logos endiathetos*; on the contrary, sounds emitted by an animal do not betoken thought, and we are not informed that thought has any natural propensity to disclose itself in speech. Nor does this distinction have any theological value for the Stoics; their God was never a *logos prophorikos*, simply the Logos immanent in nature. Even where, as in Philo of Alexandria,⁶ the adjectives *prophorikos* and *endiathetos* are complementary, they are carefully reserved, as I shall note below, for the *logos* in humanity, as distinct from that of God.

2. Irenaeus may be the first great Christian theologian who has not been credited with the two-stage theory. He employs the words *endiathetos* and *prophorikos*, but only in the rebuttal of a teaching that he imputes to his Valentinian adversaries:⁷ They maintained that the aeons of their system flowed from Silence, yet remained within the fulness of the Godhead. This, Irenaeus says, is a contradiction, for one of the aeons born within the Godhead is the *logos*, and speech and silence cannot coexist:

sic ubi est Sige, non erit Logos, et ubi Logos, utique non est Sige. Si autem endiatheton Logon dicunt, endiathetos est et Sige, et nihilominus solvetur ab endiatheto Logo. Quoniam autem non est endiathetos, ipsa haec ordinatio ipsorum emissionis significat. (*Adversus Haereses* II.12.5).

Thus where there is Silence there will be no Logos, and where there is Logos likewise there is no Silence. If, however, they say that the Logos is indwelling [viz., and therefore not uttered, and so not breaking the silence], Silence too is indwelling, and yet [on their assumptions] she will be divorced from the indwelling Logos. Since in fact it is not indwelling, this sequence of theirs indicates an emission.

⁶ *De Migratione Abraham* 83, and see below, n. 10.

⁷ Rousseau and Doutreleau (eds), *Irenée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies*, vol. 2 (Paris 1982), 108.

Irenaeus, who seems to be ironically lending terms to his opponent rather than quoting him, may not have wished to say that there was heresy in the terms themselves. Nevertheless he chooses not to employ either *endiatheos* or *prophorikos* in his own account of the generation of Christ the Word; nor does he say that either he or his rivals would have treated *endiatheos* as the regular counterpart of *prophorikos*. It seems that much the same lesson is to be drawn from this great pillar of orthodoxy as from Tertullian. Tertullian has adapted Valentinian nomenclature, but not the words *endiatheos* and *prophorikos*, to expound his two-stage theory; Irenaeus, eschewing both the two-stage theory and the jargon of Valentinus, regards these words as fitter to convey a heretic's doctrine than his own.

3. Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235) asserts two stages in the origin of the Logos. The first, however, is not a permanent attribute of the Father, as in Theophilus, but occurs in preparation for the second:

οὗτος οὖν μόνος καὶ κατὰ πάντων θεὸς λόγον πρῶτον ἐννοηθεὶς ἀπογεννᾷ, οὐ λόγον ὡς φωνήν, ἀλλ' ἐνδιάθετον τοῦ παντός λογισμόν . . . φωνὴν εἶχεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰς ἐν τῷ πατρικῷ {νῷ} ἐννοηθείσας ιδέας. ὅθεν κελεύοντος πατρὸς γίνεσθαι κόσμον, τὸ κατὰ ἐν λόγος ἀπετέλει τὸ ἀρέσκον θεῷ. (*Refutatio* X.33.1 and 2: Marcovich text, omitting his additions).

This God, then, alone and over all things, first conceives his *logos* then brings it forth, not a *logos* in the sense of speech, but the indwelling *logismos* of the universe . . . As a voice [the *logos*] had within it the ideas conceived in the paternal {mind}. Hence, when the Father commands that a world should come into being, the Logos in his unity with him performed what was pleasing to God.

Neither phase of the *logos* would appear to be eternal, and for all we are told, the phase when it is merely a conception in the mind may be instantaneous. We meet the term *endiatheos*, but not in apposition to the word *logos*, and not in a complementary relation to *prophorikos*; why does it come after the verb describing the generation of the *logos*, and how does it come to be qualified on the one side by “indwelling” and on the other by “of the universe?” Does Hippolytus mean to say that “the concept of the universe which once dwelt in the intellect of the Father is now projected as his *logos*”? Or rather that “this *logos* is now dwelling in the universe as its hegemonic principle?” The second sense would corroborate the view of his contemporary Origen, who argues that the appellation belongs to the Second Person, not because he is the “utterance” of the

Father, but because he is the architectonic principle in nature and the source of rationality in the soul.⁸

We may note here—as it has a bearing on the thought of Clement—that Hippolytus appears to be making use of the popular thesis of imperial Platonism, that ideas are the “thoughts in the mind of God”.⁹ We find an adumbration of this doctrine at *Republic* 597b-c, but most of Plato’s work suggests a more objective concept of the ideas, as the paradigmatic and regulative principles of all mundane phenomena. The ideas in Hippolytus are of both kinds, since they are first conceived by God and then projected with the *logos* for the purpose of creation. He thus has a little in common with those Platonists who distinguished the true ideas from the “enmattered forms” in sensible phenomena;¹⁰ he differs from them, however, in that he is positing two successive phases of the same ideas, while they believed that both types are eternal, and that those in the world are merely imitations or partakers of their archetypes in God. In the same way, Philo of Alexandria concedes that the divine *logos* is twofold, yet insists that this is not the same duality that we meet in the human *logos*. The relation between God’s *logoi* is mimetic, since the visible creation of one *logos* is an icon of the invisible creation by the other; or *logoi* are related by procession, as we intimate by applying the term *prophorikos* to speech and *endiathetos* to thought.¹¹ And just as it is obvious that Hippolytus is not a typical Platonist in his use of the word *idea*, so Theophilus seems to be untypical of Christians in his use of *endiathetos* and *prophorikos* as successive designations of the *logos* in its evolution from the mind of God.

II

One thing is certain: Clement nowhere formulates the two-stage theory as plainly as Theophilus. The thesis that he must none the less have held is based partly on philological considerations, drawn from Clement’s usage

⁸ *Commentary on John* 1.339.288 and 2.3.19-20; cf. below on *ibid.*, 1.24.151.

⁹ See Alcinous, *Didascalicus* 8.3; Apuleius, *De Platone* 1.6; A.M. Rich, “The Platonic Ideas as thoughts of God”, *Mnemosyne* 7 (1954), 123-33. On the possible contribution of Alexander of Aphrodisias see A.H. Armstrong, “The Background of the Doctrine that the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellect”, in *Entretiens Hardt 5: Les Sources de Plotin* (Geneva 1960), 391-425.

¹⁰ Proclus, *In Timaeum* 1d (I, 3.2 Diehl) states that the enmattered forms are ancillary causes, serving the purpose of generation, and clearly distinguishes these from their transcendent archetypes at e.g. 104f. (I, 344.12 Diehl).

¹¹ *De Specialibus Legibus* IV.127-9. Cf. n. 6 above.

of the term Logos, partly on philosophical affinities that he himself points out between his thought and that of Plato. The philological evidence is more suggestive than illuminating. Salvatore Lilla shows that Clement treats the Logos under three descriptions: first (a) as the totality of divine powers, secondly (b) as the cosmogonic principle, the *arkhē*; thirdly (c) as the cosmocratic or hegemonic wisdom of God, now present in the world.¹² So far his analysis is unexceptionable, but if we go on to say that these are not only different aspects, but three successive "stages of existence", we introduce more rigour (or at least more definition) into the scheme than was attempted by the author. Lilla himself does not go so far, and even his own citations show that Clement makes no distinction in nomenclature between cosmogonic and cosmocratic Wisdom, but applies to both the scriptural term Sophia.¹³

Behind this hypostatic phase, however, Lilla detects a previous one in which the Son resides as intellect in the Father, and was not yet set apart for tasks related to the world. This graduated progress is implied, on Lilla's view, by indications in the *Stromateis* that the Logos has at some time been identical with Plato's realm of ideas.¹⁴ A Christian who believed in the ideas would accord to them not merely ontological but temporal priority over a world that had a historical beginning; and it would thus not be unnatural to think of this inert state of the ideas as the nonage of the Logos, before he issued forth for the purpose of creation. It is certainly true that Clement was more likely to have made use of Platonic thought than any of his predecessors; but for that very reason, he was sure to have been aware that neither Plato's dialogues nor the Middle Platonists would have countenanced a gradual evolution of the ideas from the intellect that initially contained them. On the contrary, since neither has an origin in time, they must be either indissolubly united or eternally distinct. Among those who embraced the second alternative was Numenius, from whom Clement quotes the famous aphorism "What is Plato but an Atticizing Moses?"¹⁵ For Numenius there are two coeval intellects: the first is Plato's

¹² S. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 204-12.

¹³ See e.g. *Stromateis* VII.7.4. *Clemens Alexandrinus III*, ed. O. Staehlin, L. Fruchtel and U. Treu (Berlin 1970), 7. Cited by Lilla to illustrate function (c), it also alludes to his role (b) as creator; as elsewhere, it is in this role that he is called the *dunamis* of the father.

¹⁴ Lilla, *Clement*, 201-3.

¹⁵ See *Stromateis* I.150.4, cited at Fragment 8, n. 4 in E. Des Places, *Numenius: Fragments* (Paris 1973), 52.

Form of the Good, the second a “noetic world” containing the ideas.¹⁶ Dependent though it is upon the first, the second is not said to have proceeded from it or to have been its offspring; and if we were to imagine that the contents of the second had initially resided in the first, we should belie the eternal character of both.

It is true indeed that ideas in Plato sometimes possess dynamic properties—not because they undergo any motion in themselves, but because they initiate motion in subordinate phenomena. There must, as Socrates argues in the *Sophist*, be a principle of life—what Neoplatonists would later call a zoogonic potency—in those transcendent paradigms which give form and life to every living entity.¹⁷ They are thus productive by their very nature, without emerging from intellect; thus Lilla, who borrows phrases from the *Enneads* to illustrate both phases in the existence of the Logos, is happy to admit that in Plotinus the ideas do not subsist outside the mind that generates them.¹⁸ Even if the Logos were the realm of ideas, therefore, this would not imply that he ever possessed the static and unproductive mode of being which proponents of the two-stage theory attribute to him while he was merely immanent and potential in the Father. This point is made by Clement himself at *Stromateis* V.16.3, where he informs the Greeks ironically that *logos* is the “barbarian” equivalent for *idea* and that both denote the thought or *ennoëma* of the Deity. The contents of this thought, in his vocabulary, are not noetic entities but *dunamis*; here, if he has any understanding of the ideas in Platonism, he cannot mean that they exist potentially. The ideas are always actual, being simply and eternally identical with their properties, and leaving no residual substratum to be converted into essence. Consequently the true rendering of *dunamis* must be “power”.

We shall see below that “paternal *dunamis*” is a phrase employed by Clement to denote the Logos in his cosmic function. An analogy can be drawn between the Logos and an idea not because either is susceptible of development in itself, but because they engender constant and determinable processes in the world, and thus enable every agent and activity to attain its proper end. Elsewhere, as Eric Osborn notes,¹⁹ the term *idea* is not

¹⁶ See especially Fragments 16 and 19 on the methetic/iconic relation between the Second and First Minds; Fr. 41.6 on the intellectual universe.

¹⁷ See Plato, *Sophist* 248-252 for the argument that the Forms are by nature active. On the development of this thesis in Neoplatonism, see A.H. Armstrong, “Eternity, Life and Movement in Plotinus’ Accounts of Nous”, in *Le Néoplatonisme* (Paris, 1971), 67-76.

¹⁸ Lilla, *Clement*, 203: the mind is “the source of the ideas which exist only in it”.

¹⁹ E.F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge 1957), 41.

employed in Clement's work except where he quotes or paraphrases Plato. Thus Lilla²⁰ reports two passages in which mind is called the place of *ideas* (*Strom.* IV.155.2 and V.73.3): yet Plato is cited expressly in both, and even in the former, where he identifies mind with God, Clement makes it clear in the following sentence that he is still attempting to paraphrase the great philosopher. These statements, which are not endorsed and do not entail any parallel with the Logos, may help to explain why Clement was a somewhat tepid Platonist; they afford no proof that he ever conceived the Logos as an embryonic thought in the Godhead, rather than as an operative and cosmocratic power.

It is possible, then, that the world of ideas exists for Clement only through the procession of the Logos from the Father. For a comparable thesis, we need only look to an Alexandrian predecessor, who carried to an extreme result the negative or apophatic theology for which Clement too is famous. Whereas Clement and a number of Platonists maintained that God exists but is otherwise best described by negatives, Basilides (according to the satirical but valuable report of him in Hippolytus) has raised his God so far above the creatures as to deny him any defining attributes, even that of being.²¹ The realm of eternal essences, or ideas, was the seed of all things in the present world, but this is the υἰότης or Sonship, not the "non-existent God" who gave it substance (ὑποστήσας)²² as the totality of his own creative powers. Thus he is the superessential cause of the ideas, but he has never been the seat of them, for that would make him subject to affirmative predications. The Sonship is projected from this God as the Logos issues from the Father in Clement's Trinity, and notwithstanding the latter's moderation in the use of apophatic language, all the Platonic terms in his pronouncements on the Logos are compatible with the doctrine that the ideas reside uniquely and immutably in him after his procession from the Father. For that reason, he is more intelligible than his ineffable progenitor, who invests in him such powers as

²⁰ Lilla, *ibid.*, 201.

²¹ Hippolytus, *Refutatio* VII.21ff. On the authority of Hippolytus' report, see G. Quispel, "Gnostic Man: The Doctrine of Basilides", *Erano's Jahrbuch* 16 (1948), reprinted in his *Gnostic Studies* (Istanbul 1974). Even if we adopt a more sceptical position, such as that of W. Lohr, *Basilides und seiner Schule* (Berlin 1995), *Refutatio* VII.20-26 is unlikely to be the invention of Hippolytus, and may still be counted among the "Gnostic" documents available to Origen.

²² Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* As in Plotinus, *Enneads* V.16.1 etc., the verb ὑφίστημι means to give a more tangible form to something that already exists in essence.

will and wisdom so that these can serve as the regulative principles—in Plato’s terms, the ideas—of the world.

III

Modern scholars invoke the two-stage theory to explain the following fragment, which Photius quotes with a different aim—to show that Clement denied the incarnation of the Word:²³

Λόγους τε τοῦ πατρὸς δύο τερατολογῶν ἀπελέγχεται, ὧν ἥτιονα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπιφανῆσαι, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ ἐκείνων. φησὶ γάρ·
 “λέγεται μὲν καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς λόγος, ὁμωνύμως τῷ πατρικῷ λόγῳ. ἀλλ’ οὐ νῦν οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ σὰρξ γενόμενος· οὐδὲ μὴν ὁ πατρῶος λόγος, ἀλλὰ δύναμις τις τοῦ Θεοῦ οἷον ἀπόρροια τοῦ λόγου αὐτοῦ, νοῦς γενόμενος τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίας διαπεφοίτηκε”.

He stands convicted of a strange assertion of two *logoi* in the Father, of which it is the lesser that appears to humans, and indeed not even that. For he says: “The Son too is called *logos*, by homonymity with the paternal *logos*. But this is not the one who became flesh; nor indeed is it the Father’s *logos*, but a certain power of God, as it were an effluence of his *logos*, that, becoming mind, has permeated the hearts of men.”

The probable source is the *Hypotyposes*, only fragments of which remain. Casey dissents from Photius, yet accepts Zahn’s arguments for the authenticity of the passage,²⁴ and deduces that the *patrikos logos* must be Christ at rest, Theophilus’ *logos endiathetos*.²⁵ But if we accept this reading, we are at a loss to make sense of Clement’s description of the Son elsewhere as the ἐνέργεια πατρική of the Godhead (*Strom.* VII.7.7), where it is plain that he manifests this energy in the present world as Lord and Saviour. At VII.9.1 we are told that where he wills to be he is present as the δύναμις πατρική, not permitting the slightest task of governance to escape from his attention. Earlier in the same discussion, declaring that the Father has made everything subject to the paternal Logos, he not only makes it clear that

²³ Photius, *Bibliotheca* 109, from the text of R. Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque* II (Paris 1960). A slightly different version, in which it is the Son who is said not to be the paternal *logos*, and then it is the *logos* that becomes mind, appears at Staehlin *et al.*, *Clemens Alexandrinus* III, 202.

²⁴ Th. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur* III (Erlangen 1884), 14-5; R.P. Casey, “Clement and the two Divine *Logoi*”, *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1924), 43-56, here citing 45.

²⁵ Followed by Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 211; S. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A Study in Christian Platonism* (Oxford 1971), 200.

Christ retains this title as the present ruler of the cosmos, but, with his usual promiscuity of allusion, applies to him terms that apostolic writings had reserved for the risen Jesus.²⁶

Οὐ γὰρ ἐξίσταται ποτε τῆς αὐτοῦ περιωπῆς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ . . . οὐ μεταβαίνων ἐκ τόπου εἰς τόπον, πάντῃ δὲ ὧν πάντοτε καὶ μηδαμῇ περιεχόμενος, ὅλος νοῦς ὅλος φῶς πατρῶιον . . . τοῦτῃ πᾶσα ὑποτέτακται στρατιὰ ἀγγέλων τε καὶ θεῶν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ πατρικῷ τὴν ἀγίαν οἰκονομίαν ἀναδεδεγμένῃ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάζαντα. (*Stromatias* VII.5.5).

For the Son of God never quits his watch . . . Not changing from place to place, but being everywhere at all times and in no way circumscribed, he is wholly mind, wholly the Father's light . . . To him, the paternal Logos, the whole host of angels and gods has been subjected, for he has received the sacred economy through the one who subjected them.

In any case the final clause of the Photian excerpt does not seem to refer to the Second Person of the Trinity, but to "a certain power of God" that inhabits every human heart, namely the faculty of reason. This, as I shall argue, is also a possible meaning of the most important occurrence of the expression *logos prophorikos* in Clement's writings:

ὁ δὲ μεταδούς ἡμῖν τοῦ εἶναι τε καὶ ζῆν μεταδέδωκεν καὶ τοῦ λόγου, λογικῶς τε ἅμα καὶ εὖ ζῆν ἐθέλων ἡμᾶς. ὁ γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων λόγος οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ προφορικός, σοφία δὲ καὶ χρηστότης φανερωτάτη τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμις τε αὐτοῦ παγκρατῆς καὶ τῷ ὄντι θεία, οὐδὲ τοῖς μὴ ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀκατανόητος, θέλημα παντοκρατορικόν. (*Stromateis* V.6.3).

The one who gave us a share in being and life has also given us a share in *logos*, wishing us at the same time to live rationally and well. For the *logos* of the Father of all is not this uttered *logos*, but is the most manifest wisdom and goodness of God, an almighty power indeed and truly divine, nor is it incomprehensible even to unbelievers, being the will of the Almighty.

Everything that Photius says is here, except the blasphemous assertion that Christ is called the *logos* only by homonymity with the paternal intellect. In both texts a *logos* belonging to the Father is contrasted with an inferior one, introduced by the pronoun οὗτος; in Photius' quotation the obvious antecedent of the pronoun is ὁ υἱός, designating the Son of God, though not the incarnate Christ. Is he also the one described as οὗτος in the passage quoted here from Clement's *Stromateis*? There is nothing in the Greek to indicate this, and the most recent editor²⁷ reads οὗτος in the light

²⁶ *Stromateis* VII.5.5 = Staehlin *et al.*, *Clemens Alexandrinus* III, 5.

²⁷ A. le Boulluec, *Clément: Les Stromates* 5 (Paris 1981), vol. 1, 33 and vol. 2, 42-3. He

of the previous sentence, where *logos* is nothing more than the human faculty of reason. In that case, *logos prophorikos* would be best construed as “*logos* which is prone to display itself in utterance”. Alternatively, it is possible that it needs no antecedent and means simply “this *logos prophorikos* of ours”. On either reading the passage tells us only what no orthodox believer would think of doubting—that when we speak of the offspring of the Father as his *logos*, we must set aside the vulgar connotations of this term.

Photius was certainly capable of misreading Clement.²⁸ Let us suppose that Photius read the words λέγεται μὲν καὶ ὁ προφορικὸς λόγος (and not ὁ Υἱὸς λόγος) at the beginning of the passage that he cites. An erudite man, familiar with the usage of Theophilus and perhaps some later authors, he could easily have mistaken it for a Christological title. And thus he foisted on Clement at least two heretical distinctions—one between the Son and the paternal Logos, the other between the Son and the incarnate Christ—that are paralleled nowhere in his extant writings. Such an error would have been quite excusable, for what Clement really purposed—a simple warning against the facile application of a religious metaphor—would have been as supererogatory in the time of Photius as in ours. It was evidently not so in the age of Clement, when Hippolytus, in the passage cited above from his *Refutation*, thought it necessary to add that the appellation does not denote a voice or φωνή. Origen is likely to have been living in Alexandria when he argued to the same effect in his *Commentary on John*:²⁹

Συνεχῶς χρῶνται τῷ· Ἐξερεύσατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν,³⁰ οἴομενοι προφορὰν πατρικὴν οἰοεῖ ἐν συλλαβαῖς κειμένην εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ὑπόστασιν αὐτῷ, εἰ ἀκριβῶς πυνθανοίμεθα, οὐ διδόασιν, οὐδὲ οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ σαφηνίζουσιν, οὐδέπω φάμεν τοιάνδε, ἀλλ’ ὅπως ποτὲ οὐσίαν. (*Commentary on John* I.24.151).

They are continually citing *My heart has emitted a goodly word*, regarding the Son of God as the Father’s utterance, which consists as it were in syllables.

finds the solution in Philo, but not in those parts of Philo which are generally held to have fathered the Church’s doctrine of Christ as Logos.

²⁸ Thus at *Bibliotheca* 111, purporting to cite the actual words of *Stromateis* VII.110, he writes τὰ ζώπυρα τῆς ἀληθοῦς γνώσεως ἐγκατασπειράντων μαθήματα where Clement had τὰ ζώπυρα τῶν τῆς ἀληθοῦς γνώσεως ἐγκατασπειράντες δογμάτων. See Henry, *Photius, Bibliothèque* II, 213 n.

²⁹ *The Commentary of Origen on John’s Gospel*, ed. A.E. Brooke, vol. 1 (Cambridge 1896), 29-30.

³⁰ Cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11 for a “monarchian” citation of Psalm 44.2.

And in this way, if we make accurate inquiry, they deny him his substance, and fail to indicate his being—by which I mean not so much a certain mode as any being whatsoever.

If Clement shared the fears of his contemporaries, the text that offended Photius is most likely to have been, not a manifesto for the doctrine of two *logoi*, but a caution against mistaking Christ the Logos for his homonym, our daily medium of communication. We can take the next sentence as a repetition of the same lesson: this audible *logos*, permanently ensconced as it is in the human heart,³¹ is not the paternal intellect, but a power which God bestows as an emanation upon his creatures.³² Clement is merely stating, what is also his theme throughout Book 5 of the *Stromateis*, that if we apply to God the names of human things, they will not be true in the sense conferred upon them by our common mode of speech.

IV

This discussion removes the apparent conflict between the *Stromateis* of Clement and a fragment from his commentary on the First Epistle of John, which if genuine is the only surviving passage from his hand that expressly formulates a doctrine of eternal generation. The loss of the Greek original is a matter for regret, but not the facile scepticism that is too readily adopted when a text proves inconvenient to scholarship. The translator, Cassiodorus, was not a theologian or an apologist for Clement, but a polymath of the sixth century, who could easily have purloined a more illustrious name to sanctify a comment on the First Epistle of John:³³

Quod erat ab initio, quod vidimus oculis nostris, quod audivimus. Consequens evangelium secundum Joannem et conveniens etiam haec epistola principium spirituale continet. Quod ergo dicit "ab initio", hoc modo presbyter exponebat, quod principium generationis separatum ab opificis principio non est. Cum enim dicit "quod erat ab initio", generationem tangit sine principio filii cum patre simul exstantis: erat ergo verbum aeternitatis significativum non habentis initium, sicut etiam verbum ipsum, hoc est filius dei, secundum aequalitatem substantiae unum cum patre consistit, sempiternum est et infectum: quod semper erat verbum significatur dicendo: "in principio erat verbum".

³¹ On Psalm 44.2 in Alexandrian Christology see below, section 3, on Origen, *CommJoh* I.24.

³² Hence it is only "a certain *dunamis*", and Clement finds a use for the term ἀπόρροια, which he does not favour as a description of Christ.

³³ Staehlin etc., *Clemens Alexandrinus* III, 209-10.

That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have heard. In accordance and in keeping with the Gospel according to John, this letter also contains a spiritual principle. Thus when it says *from the beginning*, the elder explained it in this way, that the origin of his generation is not separated from the origin that is [or maybe "is in"] the Creator. For when it says "from the beginning", it alludes to the generation without beginning of the Son who exists coevally with the Father. For the word was indicative of an eternity with no beginning, just as the Word himself, that is the Son of God, in accordance with the equality of their substance, exists as one with the Father, is everlasting and uncreated. That the Word existed always is what it indicates by saying: *The Word was in the beginning* [John 1.2].

The allusion to a presbyter as the source of the exegesis is a mark of authenticity; parallels abound in the second century,³⁴ but a forger of any later period would have coined a bishop. "Equality of essence" in the Godhead is of course an anachronism in the third century, and particularly improbable in Clement, who reserves a peculiar essence for the Son but raises the Father above all genera and species.³⁵ None the less it was natural for a Christian of the sixth century to think that he perceived it if Clement had written something like ἐν ταύτῳ οὐσίᾳς. The meaning of this phrase will become apparent when we study Clement's *Excerpts from Theodotus*. The predicate of unity with the Father can be traced to John 10.30, and already has a cognate in Athenagoras, *Legatio* 10 where the Son is said to be one with the Father (ἐνὸς ὄντος τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ), as well as in Hippolytus, *Refutatio* X.33.2, cited above, where the Logos is κατὰ ἔν with the God whose mandates he performs. The second phrase is not attested in the second century, but the Latin of Rufinus indicates that Origen used it in his *De Principiis*.³⁶

If we ask why so little of this vocabulary finds its way into Clement's other works, we should remember that early Christians were reluctant to carry speculation further than was demanded by the present controversy. *Stromateis* V takes issue chiefly with those who hold, as pagans or believers, that Christianity ought not to be yoked with Greek philosophy; accord-

³⁴ E.g. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haereses* IV.31.1; cf. Hippolytus, *Ref.* V.55.2 on Irenaeus himself.

³⁵ *Stromateis* V.81; cf. *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 10 on the essence of the Son. One fragment (p. 291 in Staehlin *et al.*, *Clemens Alexandrinus III*) credits God with an *ousia* on the grounds that he is the underlying reality of all things.

³⁶ *De Principiis* 1.2.6: *unitas naturae*. See my "Did Origen Apply the Word *Homoousios* to the Son?", *JThS* 49 (1998), 658-70, esp. notes 19 and 44, for defence of the testimony of Rufinus.

ingly, there is none of the minute exegesis of scripture that an argument with heretics would entail. Clement's exegetic works have perished, but the *Excerpts from Theodotus* suffice to prove that his language became more technical when he undertook to confute a rival interpreter of scripture. Have we any evidence, then, to show what heresies Clement thought most dangerous to the reader of the First Epistle of John? I noted in my first paragraph that the notion of two *logoi* was attributed to Arius by Bishop Alexander in the fourth century, a fact which may imply that it was already a recognised heresy in his native Alexandria. In Clement's time the only proponents of any such belief would seem to have been the Valentinians, whose influence all would-be-orthodox writers of this epoch, and especially those in Egypt, felt obliged to counteract. A hallmark of this school is its appeal to Johannine writings, and indeed, with Basilides, they provide the earliest evidence for the currency of these scriptures in the Church. A commentary on the Fourth Gospel by Heracleon, a disciple of Valentinus, provoked the longest of Origine's exegetic works, from which we have already adduced his testimony to the eternal Sonship. It is only to be expected, then, that Clement would be tilting at the errors of this movement in a commentary on the First Epistle of John.

Clement's Valentinian contemporaries did not maintain an eternal generation of the Word who became incarnate; instead they apply this title, along with other Christological appellations, to consecutive modes of being. In the *Tripartite Tractate* it is the "spiritual Logos" who is "complete and unitary" (77.2); after his expulsion from the *plēroma* he is sterile (80.34), and once restored works only through the Demiurge and other subordinate archons (99.34-100.0 etc.). If Clement did not know this text, he was certainly familiar with the teaching of Theodotus, our knowledge of which is almost wholly derived from Clement's *Excerpts from Theodotus and the so-called Eastern School*. He indicates a distinction between the higher Logos and its lower image, as well as between the Logos and the Son. The Son in the *plēroma*, as the true Monogenes, bears the title Nous; the Logos dwells within the true Monogenes as its origin or *arkhē*,³⁷ and the Demiurge is his image or *eikon* on the lower plane (*Excerpta* 7). The Son, who remains in the bosom of the Father, is to be distinguished from his image, the second Monogenes (*Exc.* 7); this seems to be the same one who, as the offspring

³⁷ *Excerpta* 6. Parallels are listed in Staehlin *et al.*, *Clemens Alexandrinus* III (GCS edition, 1970), 107. Irenaeus, *AH* I.1.1., I.2.1 and II.11.1, consistently shows that the *arkhē* of John 1.1 is the Monogenes, in whom the Logos dwells.

of Sophia, is the image of the Pleroma (*Exc.* 32), and has emptied himself in leaving it for our sakes (*Exc.* 35). Yet it seems that a further distinction can be drawn between the psychic Christ, who supplicates the aeons of the *pleroma*, and the Jesus who came forth to be the “light of the world” (*Exc.* 41). The two are of course related, and we are told that Jesus Christ, having first put on the “seed of flesh” (*Exc.* 1) vouchsafed by his mother Sophia, underwent a gradual fashioning in knowledge until he was ready to put on the psychic Christ (*Exc.* 59). It is this Christ who remains at God’s right hand and cannot participate in the suffering on the Cross (*Exc.* 62).

At *Excerpta* 19 Clement records a claim that Christ as Logos is the image and son of an invisible Logos who abides unchangeably in the Godhead; it seems that by his “impassible generation”, this image took flesh not only at the nativity, but also in a sense at the creation, when he received οὐσία or essence in obedience to the “operative and overruling Cause”. It can be said therefore that “in the beginning” the unchangeable Logos (λόγος ἐν αὐτότητι) became a Son, but only by the circumscription (περιγραφή), not by the true conversion of his οὐσία. This can scarcely be Clement’s own opinion, as it affirms the identity of Christ on earth with the Creator at the cost of divorcing both from God the Logos, who is not credited with any distinct hypostasis. If this were Clement’s own view it would justify Photius’ claim that he dissociates the Logos in creation for his namesake in the mind of God. Yet Photius is also the compiler of these extracts and, as scholars have lamented,³⁸ his transcription rarely indicates whether Clement is expressing his own opinion or examining some rival which originates with Theodotus or another member of the “eastern school”.

Those who would ascribe these thoughts to Clement must reconcile them with his own rejoinder on behalf of Christendom in *Excerpta* 8. “We understand the Logos as God in God,” he declares, “unchangeable (ἐν αὐτότητι)”; and he adds that the Monogenes, unchangeably residing in the bosom of the Father, is the same one who became the illumination of the Church. In the clearest statement of his own position at *Stromateis* VII.8, Clement asserts that the Son is the cause of all the Father’s works, invisible to us because of the weakness of the flesh, and was for that reason forced to take “perceptible flesh” to reveal what can be done in obedience to divine

³⁸ See the remarks of B.F. Westcott, with particular reference to this excerpt in W. Smith and H. Wace (eds) *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. 1 (London 1900), 564.

commandments. Thus he takes no flesh before the nativity in Bethlehem; and yet it is this same being, who directs the world and became incarnate in it, who is both the “paternal energy” at the end of the previous chapter and the “paternal power” at the beginning of the next.³⁹ We now perceive that the words ἐν τῷτότῃτι, postulated above in retranslation from Cassiodorus, would not be an anachronism in Clement, though for him they signified the immutability of the Logos, not his consubstantiality with the Father as the Latin translator pardonably supposed.

The Valentinians thus deny what Clement affirms, the identity of God’s eternal Logos with the incarnate Jesus Christ. Could they also have been the addressees of *Stromateis* V.6.3, which warns against interpreting the term Logos in Christology as a synonym for ordinary speech? We have noted similar passages in Hippolytus and Origen; it is generally held that the targets of their censure are “monarchians”, who negated all distinctions in the Godhead.⁴⁰ In Clement’s day this heresy was not so well known in Egypt as in Rome, but his defence of Christ against Theodotus would not have been out of place in the polemics that his contemporaries hurled against the monarchians of the west. All Trinitarian heresies of antiquity (and some of the orthodoxies) stumbled at the Incarnation. One of the first indictments in Tertullian’s tract against Praxeas is that Praxeas has “crucified the Father” (*Adv. Praxean* 1). Monarchians who wished to avoid this blasphemy, unable to propose another member of the Trinity as the subject of the incarnation, were driven instead to say that Christ was simply a man on whom the Holy Spirit had descended. The author of this theory, says Hippolytus, was also one Theodotus—a Theodotus of Byzantium, whom scholars have been reluctant to identify with his namesake in the excerpts made by Clement (*Refutatio* VII.35). Yet Hippolytus’ Theodotus, who is not styled a monarchian, is said to have derived his views from “Cerinthus, the Ebionites and the Gnostics”—the latter term denoting a docetic sect whose doctrines are only adumbrated in the *Refutation* (VII.36.2). Enough is said to show that they had much in common with the Valentinians, who pass in modern scholarship for Gnostics. The Theodotus of Clement,

³⁹ Note, as above, that these appellatives are preceded by the synonymous “paternal Logos” at *Stromateis* VII.5.

⁴⁰ A. Orbe, “Origen y los Monarquianos”, *Gregorianum* (1991), 39-72, esp. 54-65. R. Heine, “The Christology of Callistus”, *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998), 56-91 touches on the influence of Theodotus of Byzantium, but without speculating further on his identity.

who belongs to an "eastern school", does not profess to be a disciple of Valentinus, but is evidently a student of his writings. As we have seen he also denies a true descent of the Logos into human form, maintaining that the Christ on earth is a likeness of the second *monogenes*, who is himself no more than an image of the first. His Christology is certainly not identical with that of the monarchians of Hippolytus, but his provenance and date are entirely congruent with those of the Theodotus whose speculations acted as a catalyst to theirs.

There may thus have been some collusion, whether knowing or inadvertent, between monarchian and Valentinian teachings. More common ground between them is suggested by Tertullian's report that Valentinus meant his aeons to be abstract properties rather than personal beings (*Adv. Valentinianos* 4.2). There are also passages in Irenaeus which imply that it is the unreality, rather than the number, of the Valentinian aeons that is the principal cause of censure. The argument quoted from him at the beginning of this paper is one instance, and there are others, like the following, which make little sense unless we assume that "logos" has the quotidian sense of the "word":⁴¹

Qui autem dicunt emissam esse Ennoeam, et ex Ennoea Nun, deinceps ex his logon, primo arguendi sunt improprie emissionibus usi; post deinde hominum adfectiones et passionis et intentiones mentis describentes, Deum autem ignorant: qui quidem ex quac obveniunt hominibus ad loquendum eos applicant omnium Patri, quem etiam ignotum omnibus dicunt. (*Adversus Haereses* II.13.4).

Now those who say that Ennoea (reflection) was emitted, and Nous (intellect) from Ennoea, and then *logos* from this, can be refuted first on the grounds that they are making illegitimate use of emissions; and secondly, that they are describing the affections and passions of human beings, but are ignorant of God, seeing that the things that occur in humans to enable them to speak are applied by them to the Father of all, whom they none the less declare to be unknown to all.

Irenaeus does not profess to understand his enemies, whom he first upbraids for introducing bodily divisions into a composite Godhead (II.13.5), then suspects of turning all their aeons into internal perturbations of the Father (II.13.6). Tertullian partly corroborates his mentor when he tells us that the aeons of Valentinus were abstractions, not the menagerie of intellects who populate the myths of his successors (*Adv. Valentinianos* 4.1-2). We need not believe either him or Irenaeus, and we fear that he is guilty of

⁴¹ Rousseau and Doutreleau, *op. cit.*, 114.

tendentious assimilation when he sneers that some monarchians who distinguish Christ from Jesus have succumbed to the heresy of Valentinus (*Adv. Praxean* 27). This study is concerned with the content, not with the validity, of arguments, and thus is it sufficient to note that Christians who were faithful to the episcopate could employ the same critiques against these two—ostensibly so different—schools.

The least tentative conclusion to be drawn from the present study is that Clement held no theory of two stages in the procession of the *logos*. Consequently we have no reason to quarrel with the evidence that he posited an eternal generation of the *logos* as a *hypostasis* distinct from God the Father. One purpose of his stating this was to counter the Valentinian dichotomy between Christ on earth and the only-begotten Son in the Pleroma. His caveat in the *Stromateis* against confusing the vulgar sense of *logos* with the Christological title may have been a corollary of the same debate. The text arraigned by Photius, which divorces Christ the Logos from the intellect of the Father, seems to have suffered in quotation, no doubt because the patriarch was unable to pierce the fog of ante-Nicene controversy. Only a malignant trick of history has tempted modern scholars to dispel the apparent heresy by attributing to Clement a two-stage theory of procession; this tenet, as Irenaeus shows, was one that cautious adversaries of Valentinian doctrine might be particularly unwilling to promote.

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